

NLSA
Visiting Team Report
Ongoing Improvement



Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran School
2950 Highway 55
Eagan, Minnesota 55121

April 16, 2013

Forward

Becoming accredited is a strenuous task. Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran School (TLO) and its administration are to be highly commended for their efforts in this accreditation process. The self-study document and the various arrangements for the accreditation team were done well. It is the hope and prayer of the members of the visiting team that the enclosed document is one that is accurate and helpful for the continued improvement of TLO.

The committee hereby expresses sincere gratitude to the faculty, staff and students at TLO for the opportunity to serve on the visiting team and for the many acts of kindness and hospitality shown to us during our visit. Each of us on the committee has grown as a result of the experience. TLO is obviously a good school with much to offer the community of Eagan. The school speaks out for the Christian faith to the students and to the community very effectively.

This report is carefully written and includes specific recommendations which should be considered by the school and the supporting congregation. Not every recommendation needs to be done, but each should be seriously considered.

The three members of the visiting team were given responsibilities for writing portions of the team's report. This report combines the talent of all members of the team. The report has been written and edited by the team as a whole, with only minor editing and summarization done by the team captain.

Wherever possible, specific, practical recommendations have been made to help remedy the concerns expressed.

The team members pledge their continued support and assistance should you care to call upon us in the implementation process.

May the Lord richly bless the faculty and constituents of TLO so that, with the Lord's help, they might continue to proclaim His Gospel ever more effectively through your school.

Limitations on the Distribution, Use, and Scope of this Document

It is the official intent of the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission that this report be considered a privileged document, to be submitted by the captain of the visiting team directly to the administration of the school, the distribution of the report and its availability for public consideration beyond that point rest solely in the hands of the school administration.

Neither the captain nor the other members of the visiting team are authorized to release any of the information contained in this report without the approval of the administration of the school.

The primary purpose of the visiting team has been to examine the educational ministry of the school, including courses of study, learning materials, student needs and interests, staffing, and facilities. The visiting team has attempted to assess the effectiveness of the total school program in meeting the School

Improvement Plan the school has established for itself and in meeting national NLSA standards. It has not been the purpose of the visiting team to evaluate individual teacher performance. The use of this report as an official assessment of any staff person's professional competency would be in violation of the process and the intent under which the school evaluation was conducted. Such use would be inherently invalid since at no time during the team visit has the team been concerned with the evaluation of individual teacher performance.

Accreditation is a process that centers on the self-study conducted by the individual school. The visiting team and its subsequent report are meant to assist the school in its own process as a guideline for continual growth. Neither the team nor its report can be presumed to be the authority for validating any claims regarding health, safety, or personnel issues. Such matters are the sole responsibility of the school.

1. Visiting Team Biography

Team Captain: Joel Witt

Present Position: Principal, Faribault Lutheran School

Education: AS, Industrial Technology, Black Hills State University, Spearfish SD, 1988
BS, Elementary Education, Concordia University, Seward NE, 1993
MA, Elementary Administration, Concordia University, Seward NE, 2008

Areas Examined: Mission and Vision, Personnel, Instruction

Accreditation Experience: Principal of two schools becoming accredited
Served as Captain of RCLS Accreditation Team, 2012

School Consultant: Cletus Pfeiffer

Present Position: LCMS teacher/principal, Retired

Education: BS, Concordia-Seward; MS and Ed. S., Mankato State University-Mankato, MN

Areas Examined: Relationships, Administration, Finance, Evaluation

Accreditation Experience: Principal at three schools becoming accredited
Served as consultant for six schools preparing for accreditation
Served as captain or member on 22 teams
NLSA Commissioner from Minnesota South District to National Accreditation
Commission

Team Member: Jane Jaenke

Present Position: Second Grade Teacher Osseo Fairchild School District

Education: BA Elementary Education Concordia University St Paul, MN
MEd School Administration Concordia University Mequon WI

Areas Examined: Curriculum, Student Services, Health and Safety, Facilities

Accreditation Experience: Eau Claire Lutheran School, Standards Based Accreditation, 2007
Immanuel Marshfield WI, Captain Re-accreditation Standards Based, 2008

2. Accreditation Recommendation

On the basis of our review of the School Profile, the NLSA Standards Checklist, the narrative statements, and the School Improvement Plan for Trinity Lutheran School, we:

- recommend NLSA accreditation. do not recommend NLSA accreditation
- recommend a provisional NLSA accreditation (see report summary)

Name of Team Captain: Joel J. Witt

Signature of Team Captain  Date: 4/16/2013

Team Checklist:

1. YES NO The school has successfully completed NLSA Phase I.
2. YES NO The school has successfully completed the Standards Checklist.
3. YES NO The exhibits are appropriate and complete.
4. YES NO The school indicated satisfactory compliance with the NLSA Standards.
5. YES NO The narrative summary statement for each section indicates valid, reasons for incomplete compliance or non-compliance.
6. YES NO The needs assessment adequately identifies school and student needs.
7. YES NO The School Improvement Plan states valid, student-centered goals for improving the school's program based on identified needs and NLSA standards.
8. YES NO The School Improvement Plan provides for an adequate process for addressing the identified goals, including objectives and strategies to be used, a time frame, and methods for evaluation.

3. Standards Checklist Report

Recommendation #1 – Standard 3 (Administration)

Concern: With his new position with LCMS MNS District, Mr. Martens can be pulled in a number of directions.

Recommendation: The team strongly recommends that the TLO board of Christian education monitor Sean's level of involvement. This monitoring should be done to protect Sean's physical and mental health, preventing overwork and burnout.

Recommendation #2 – Standard 4:08 (policies and training)

Recommendation: The visiting team would strongly encourage TLO board of Christian education to pursue the writing of a volunteer manual.

Recommendation #3 – Standard 4:17 (salary)

Concern: TLO is not meeting the recommended district pay scale guideline.

Recommendation: The church council and board of Christian education are encouraged to examine ways to align the TLO pay scale with recommended district pay scale guidelines.

Recommendation #4 – Standard 5:05

Concern: TLO has an electronic format of scope and sequence for its curriculum. The format and accessibility is not user friendly for teachers or parents.

Recommendation: For the interest of teacher usage and parent information, TLO should prepare documents that are user friendly for teachers to reference and document and for parents to learn about the learning objectives for their children. A visiting team member is willing to consult and assist TLO in this process.

Recommendation #5 – Standard 5:12

Concern: TLO's written curriculum is not available electronically to make updating easier when changes are made.

Recommendation: TLO should convert the paper copy of the current curriculum to electronic files to be updated during the curriculum revision cycles.

Recommendation #6 – Standard 9

Concern: Handrail is missing from the lower set of stairs under the balcony by the lower level exit to playground.

Recommendation: Replace missing handrail.

Recommendation #7 – Standard 9

Concern: The soccer goal closest to the cemetery does not appear to be tethered to the ground on the backside to prevent tipping over.

Recommendation: Secure the soccer goal to prevent tipping.

4. School Improvement Plan Report

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) included three goals

Goal 1: Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran Church and School thinks, plans, and acts in line with the Great Commission.

Goal 2: New Partnerships and tools are leveraged to expand the opportunities of Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran students.

Concern: Goal 2, Objective 1, Strategy C, Action 3 states that “tablets” specifically will be used. The team recommends that the school not limit itself to the realm of tablet technology but remains open to all types of technology that will fulfill the objectives.

Goal 3: The church and school facility provides a safe, appealing, and appropriate learning environment for students.

Concern: Goal 3 is a carryover from TLO’s accreditation 7 years ago. The team strongly recommends that the concerns in this goal are addressed in a timely manner.

5. Report Summary

The visiting team recommends that Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran School be granted NLSA accreditation.

Strengths –

- Sean Martens provides Christ centered vision and leadership to the staff and families of TLO.
- The staff of TLO shows appreciation of each other's individual gifts, talents, and abilities.
- The ministry of the TLO staff is appreciated by all with whom we spoke.
- The development of students who not only excel on an academic level but also as solid, Christian citizens is seen as a foundational strength of TLO.
- It was very evident that both Trinity Lone Oak congregation and Pastor Kroonblawd are financially and spiritually supportive of the school.

Concerns-

- A clear protocol for communication and action on the occasions when Sean is absent from the building should be reviewed by all members of the church and school staff.
- With the school's increasing emphasis on classroom technology, the board of Christian education will need to empower staff through inservice and training sessions centered on new teaching techniques and strategies.
- The school should consider exploring the niche that it fulfills, those things that set it apart, in the Eagan community to assist in promoting itself to families.