

## STANDARD 4: PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

*A qualified and competent staff serves the school.*

### Overview

Maintaining a qualified and competent staff is an essential quality related to an accredited Lutheran school. The performance of the instructional, administrative, and auxiliary personnel, functioning as a unit, should reflect the stated philosophy and objectives of the school.

### Potential Evidence

Potential evidentiary documents provide support as the subcommittee determines the rating for each General Indicator of Success. The list includes suggestions for the documentation but is not all-inclusive. The school reviews the list of potential evidence and determines those established at the school. Additional evidence that is not listed in the potential listing may also be presented. Evidence or lack thereof assists the school in reaching an agreement on a rating. Potential evidence does not need to be included in the Self-Study but is to be available for the Validation Team to review.

- Faculty Handbook
- Job descriptions for all non-administrative school positions
- Teacher portfolios
- Professional personnel files related to teacher qualifications and competency.
- List of teachers' professional organization memberships
- Policy and procedures for preparing volunteers.
- Policies related to support staff.
- Current salary and benefit scale
- Qualification and training of school volunteers
- New teacher induction guidelines
- Survey results

### Potential Practices

Like potential evidence, potential practices are identified to demonstrate how well the school is meeting the indicators. A practice describes something that is being done at the school. It is often supported with written documentation, but it can be observed in classroom activities or daily routines. Schools are to identify the practices in place. A list of suggested practices is included in the Self-Study Report, but it is not all-inclusive. The identification of practices allows the subcommittee to arrive at a rating that reflects the condition currently in place at the school. It is the combination of evidence and practices that provide the support for an indicator rating.

- Peer-to-peer observations
- Teacher visits and observations in other schools
- Participation in accreditation work
- Effective vetting, preparation, and support for new teachers
- Teacher home visits

## Required Responses

Narrative responses are to be written for all questions at the beginning of each Standard area and included in the Self-Study document. The answers to these questions provide a school with the opportunity to describe how it meets the needs of students. This also allows the school to indicate any nuances that are unique to the school's learning environment.

### 1. State the educational requirements and/or credentials for professional personnel.

The educational requirements and credentials for professional personnel within our school are outlined to ensure the delivery of high-quality education across all levels. Kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers are mandated to possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, accompanied by state certification or licensure from Oklahoma, or actively pursuing such credentials. Similarly, teachers responsible for three-year-old and four-year-old preschool (Pre-K) classes must hold at least one of the following qualifications: a bachelor's or associate degree from an accredited institution, a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, or equivalent experience in the early childhood field. Recent legislative changes, such as the passage of SB1119 during the 2022 session, have broadened opportunities for adjunct teachers, removing previous limitations on teaching hours per semester for individuals with distinguished qualifications in their respective fields.

### 2. What is the current student-teacher ratio?

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Student-Teacher Ratio</u>
Preschool	8 to 1
PreK through 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	16 to 1

### 3. Describe the staff development process in place to help teachers learn and grow professionally.

Our staff development process at our school is designed to support teachers in their professional growth and ensure they have the resources and skills necessary to excel in their roles. Here's an overview of our approach:

- **Needs Assessment:** We regularly conduct needs assessments to identify areas where teachers require further training or support. This involves one-on-one meetings or observations to gauge areas of strength and areas for improvement.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** We provide various professional development opportunities throughout the year, including workshops, seminars, conferences, and online courses. These opportunities cover a wide range of topics, including curriculum development, classroom management techniques, educational technology, and teaching methodologies.
- **Observation and Feedback:** Regular classroom observations and feedback sessions are conducted to provide teachers with constructive feedback on their teaching practices. This feedback helps teachers identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, guiding their professional development efforts.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to create a culture of continuous learning and growth where teachers feel supported, valued, and empowered to excel in their profession.

### 4. Describe the content and frequency of staff meetings and evaluate their effectiveness.

Our staff meetings are structured to ensure that communication flows smoothly, issues are promptly addressed, and planning for upcoming events is coordinated effectively. Here's an overview of the content and frequency of our staff meetings, along with an evaluation of their effectiveness:

- **Daily "Mini-Teacher" Meeting:** These meetings occur during devotions and involve all teachers. They serve as a platform to synchronize calendars, discuss any emerging issues in our school or classrooms, and plan forthcoming events. The daily frequency ensures that communication is timely and relevant, allowing us to address concerns promptly and stay updated on important matters.
- **Monthly Meetings with Lead Administrator:** Our teachers meet with the lead administrator on a monthly basis. These meetings provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussions, strategic planning, and feedback exchange. The monthly frequency allows for regular check-ins and ensures that our administrative team is aligned with the needs and priorities of the teaching staff.
- **One-on-One Meetings as Needed:** Teachers have the option to request one-on-one meetings with the lead administrator as needed. This ensures that individual concerns or issues can be addressed in a personalized and

confidential manner. The availability of one-on-one meetings reflects our commitment to supporting the particular needs of our staff members.

- **Open-Door Policy:** The lead administrator maintains an open-door policy for both school staff and parents, fostering a culture of transparency, accessibility, and collaboration. This policy encourages open communication and ensures that concerns or feedback can be shared freely and addressed promptly.

Overall, our staff meetings have proven to be highly effective in keeping our teachers and staff informed and aligned with school goals and activities. The daily "mini-teacher" meetings provide a platform for real-time communication and coordination, ensuring that everyone is on the same page regarding schedules, issues, and events. The monthly meetings with the lead administrator offer opportunities for deeper discussions and strategic planning, while the availability of one-on-one meetings ensures that individual needs are met. The open-door policy further enhances communication and accessibility, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. In summary, our staff meetings play a crucial role in promoting effective communication, collaboration, and alignment among our teaching staff, contributing to the overall success of our school community.

**5. Describe ways in which teachers demonstrate their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and their dedication to the Lutheran teaching profession.**

- All teachers are practicing Christians and are involved in joint school-church activities.
- Staff integrate religious teachings into secular lessons whenever possible, ensuring that faith permeates our school day.
- Teachers exemplify Christ-like discipline, approaching student behavior with compassion and understanding.
- Teachers actively participate in weekly chapel sessions with their classes.
- Teachers incorporate religion lessons and daily devotions into classroom activities.
- Each school day begins with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, the Pledge to the Christian flag, and Luther's Morning Prayer, with all teachers and students present. The day concludes with teachers praying with their students, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.
- Teachers lead students in prayer before meals and snacks and in moments when a child expresses a particular concern.

**6. Describe the entire induction process, including background checks for staff members.**

When applying for a teaching position at Good Shepherd Lutheran School, candidates are required to complete an application form and submit a resume. Our lead administrator conducts interviews with each applicant, often including a current faculty member and our Pastor. Following the interview process, qualified candidates have their information presented to our school board for final approval before any offer is extended. Background checks are carried out through MinistrySafe, and references are thoroughly checked. Our school board deliberates on the applicants, considering the information gathered and making a final recommendation after prayerful consideration.

All staff working with children at Good Shepherd, including teachers, administrators, and volunteers, are subject to MinistrySafe background checks.

**7. Describe the ways teachers and staff members are equipped with current instructional technology.**

Teachers and staff members are equipped with current instructional technology through a variety of methods aimed at enhancing teaching practices and supporting student learning. Professional development sessions are conducted to familiarize our teachers with the latest educational technology tools and platforms. These sessions may be led by in-house experts, external consultants, or technology vendors, and they cover topics such as the effective integration of digital resources, educational apps, and online learning management systems. Additionally, ongoing support is provided through workshops, seminars, and one-on-one coaching sessions to ensure that teachers feel confident and proficient in utilizing these tools in their classrooms. The school invests in providing access to state-of-the-art hardware, including computers, tablets, and audio-visual equipment, enabling teachers to incorporate technology into their classroom practices effectively.

**8. How are non-Rostered teachers informed of the teachings and doctrine of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod?**

- **Orientation and Training:** Our non-rostered teachers undergo orientation and training sessions when they join our school. These sessions often include an overview of our school's mission, values, and religious identity, as well as an introduction to the teachings and doctrine of the LCMS.
- **Professional Development:** Our non-rostered teachers participate in ongoing professional development opportunities provided by our school or the LCMS district through CUEnet. These opportunities may include seminars and courses focused on Lutheran theology, doctrine, and educational philosophy.
- **Curriculum and Resources:** Our school uses curriculum materials and resources that reflect the teachings and doctrine of the LCMS. Our non-rostered teachers receive guidance and support in implementing these materials effectively, ensuring that students are exposed to Lutheran teachings in their academic studies.
- **Faculty Meetings and Discussions:** Our non-rostered teachers engage in faculty meetings and discussions where topics related to Lutheran faith and doctrine are discussed. These meetings provide opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and collaboration among teachers in integrating Lutheran principles into their teaching practices.
- **Chapel Services and Worship:** Our non-rostered teachers participate in chapel services, where they have the opportunity to experience and learn about Lutheran theological themes firsthand.
- **Mentorship and Support:** Our non-rostered teachers receive mentorship and support from rostered colleagues, such as our pastor and our commissioned teacher, who can provide guidance, answer questions, and facilitate their understanding of Lutheran teachings and practices.
- **Personal Study and Reflection:** Our non-rostered teachers are encouraged to engage in personal study and reflection on Lutheran theology and doctrine outside of formal training sessions such as CUEnet. They can access resources such as books, articles, online courses, and devotional materials to deepen their understanding and appreciation of Lutheran faith and tradition.

## Required Evidence

Required Evidence must be attached to the Self-Study Report and used to assign a rating and complete the written comments for each General Indicator of Success. Place an "X" in the box and attach the required documentation.

- School's staff development plan
- Non-discriminatory salary and benefit scale or policy
- MinistrySafe Training (or comparable program) for all school employees, coaches, and sponsors (encouraged to have all volunteers also trained)

## Required Indicator of Success

Required indicators must be answered "YES" and supported by evidence and comments for the school to be accredited in good standing. Place an "X" in the box and identify supporting evidence and practices.

### 4:01\* All school personnel express and demonstrate agreement with the stated school purpose.

- YES
- NO

#### Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

At Good Shepherd Lutheran School, alignment with the stated school purpose is not just a formality but a fundamental principle embraced by all school personnel. From teachers to administrators, every member of our team expresses and demonstrates unwavering agreement with our school's purpose. This shared commitment is evident in their daily actions, interactions, and instructional practices, all of which are guided by our mission to provide quality education rooted in Christian values. By consistently embodying and promoting our school's purpose, our personnel create a cohesive and supportive environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and spiritually.

#### Comments:

N/A

## General Indicators of Success

General Indicators of Success help the school quantify its compliance with the Required Standards. The assignment of a rating for each General Indicator of Success is determined by the evidence and the practices that support the rating. Each general indicator is to be rated by the subcommittee using the criterion below with the corresponding point value. A written response is required for every indicator in the "Comments" section.

**Highly Functional (4)** — This is an area of outstanding strength of the school. It not only meets ALL the benchmarks related to the General Indicator of Success but is supported by extensive documentation and/or observable practices that exceed expectations related to the indicator. This indicator establishes practices for other Lutheran schools to consider. The Validation Team verifies that these practices and/or documentation exceed the Operational (3) level.

**Operational (3)** — This is the expected rating for a strong Lutheran school. ALL benchmarks must be met completely for this indicator to be considered Operational. The condition is supported with documentation and/or observable practices that support the rating.

**Emerging (2)** — Improvement is required in this area. If one or more benchmarks are not fully met, the rating must be Emerging. This indicator is recognized as important by the school but is inconsistently applied. Any benchmark not fully met must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

**Not Evident (1)** — There is observable conflict or deficiency with this indicator at the school. A majority of the expected benchmarks are not met or addressed with sufficient practice, evidence, or documentation. This rating may result in the assignment of Provisional Status. This must be addressed in the School Action Plan.

### 4:02: Christ-centered teachers have the qualities and qualifications necessary for success in their defined areas of service.

Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.

- All teachers demonstrate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a dedication to teaching in the Lutheran school.
- Full-time faculty members are on the Roster of the LCMS, eligible to be on the Roster of the LCMS, or have completed or are actively enrolled in the Colloquy or Seminar Program through the Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet).
- Teachers have been prepared and vetted following prescribed federal and state mandates for background checks and training.
- Full-time professional staff members have an appropriate teaching certificate(s) from the state and meet requirements for their specific assignments.

Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School

Highly Functional (4)     Operational (3)     Emerging (2)     Not Evident (1)

#### Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:

Christ-centered teachers at Good Shepherd Lutheran School possess the essential qualities necessary for success in their defined areas of service. Each staff member demonstrates a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a deep dedication to teaching within the Lutheran school context. Full-time faculty members meet specific requirements, including being on the Roster of the LCMS or having completed or actively enrolled in the Colloquy or Seminar Program through CUEnet. They have undergone rigorous background checks and training as mandated by federal and state regulations. While the majority of our teachers hold the required degrees, a few do not, yet they are proficient and prepared to deliver quality education. Recent challenges, including unforeseen departures and difficulty in finding degreed teachers willing to accept our starting salary, have prompted adjustments, including raising the starting salary to ensure competitiveness. Despite these challenges, the commitment and performance of our current teachers have been commendable, and it remains our objective to fill vacant positions with degreed teachers as opportunities arise. Through continuous efforts and adherence to our school's philosophy, we strive to maintain the highest standards of education and spiritual guidance for our students.

#### Comments:

N/A

**4:03: Teachers are informed of and subsequently evaluated and supported in the continuing pursuit of professional growth and development.**

*Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.*

- Programs for teacher supervision/evaluation/growth have been adopted and are implemented by the administrator.
- Teachers engage in professional development, including spiritual growth, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.
- Teachers attend workshops, conferences, seminars, and training that are appropriate to their position and discipline.
- LCMS Rostered teachers are provided opportunities to attend LCMS events.
- Teachers hold membership in professional organizations.
- The school provides opportunity, training, and support so that teachers may effectively and appropriately engage technology in classroom instruction.

*Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School*

**Highly Functional (4)**     **Operational (3)**     **Emerging (2)**     **Not Evident (1)**

**Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:**

- All teachers hold memberships in the National Lutheran Education Association.
- All teachers participate in LCMS district conferences.
- Our lead administrator organizes an in-service session for all staff members at the start of each school year, after the Christmas holiday in January, and at other times as needed.

**Comments:**

*This section was included in our 2018 NLSA School Action Plan.*

*Concern: A more specific professional development plan needs to be developed and implemented.*

*Action Taken: Title 2 funds were researched and have been used to allow teachers to attend conferences yearly.*

**4:04: Teachers and support staff are empowered and equipped to effectively accomplish their assigned tasks.**

*Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.*

- New teachers receive a thorough orientation and are supported by experienced, assigned teaching mentors.
- Teachers demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction and modeling of Christ-centered values.
- Policies related to teachers and support staff are established and practiced.
- The average student-professional personnel ratio is appropriate for the age and level of the students and ensures optimal student growth.
- The number of staff members is adequate to provide effective instruction and supervision for students at all school activities.
- The nondiscriminatory salary and benefit scale is adopted and implemented for all personnel.

*Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School*

- Highly Functional (4)**     **Operational (3)**     **Emerging (2)**     **Not Evident (1)**

**Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:**

Our teachers and support staff are empowered and equipped to effectively accomplish their assigned tasks, ensuring a high standard of education and support for our students. New teachers undergo an orientation process and receive ongoing support from experienced colleagues, fostering their professional growth and success. Our educators continuously demonstrate and enhance their knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction and the modeling of Christ-centered values. Additionally, we have established and practiced policies related to teachers and support staff to provide clear guidance and expectations. With a student-teacher ratio limited to 16 students per class, we ensure optimal student growth and individualized attention. Our staffing levels are carefully maintained to guarantee effective instruction and supervision across all school activities. Furthermore, we prioritize equitable compensation with a nondiscriminatory salary and benefit scale, ensuring fair and competitive remuneration for all personnel. Through these measures, including competitive salaries and comprehensive benefits, we demonstrate our commitment to empowering and supporting our dedicated educators and staff members.

**Comments:**

*This section was included in our 2018 NLSA School Action Plan.*

*Concern: Analyze and work to update all the employees' pay compared to the Oklahoma District Salary scale.*

*Action Taken: At our last reaccreditation review, our starting teacher's salary was \$25,000/year, which was well below the district's guidelines. Our current starting teacher's salary is \$42,600/year, which is equal to the district guideline. Our starting hourly pay rate was \$7.25/hour, but it is now \$10.50/hour.*



**4:05: Employees and volunteers serving in support roles have the qualifications and training necessary for success in their defined area of service.**

*Schools must demonstrate with documented evidence and practice that they comply with the following to function at the "operational" level. Place an "X" in the boxes below which currently apply to the school.*

- Support staff (e.g., teacher assistants, student teachers, nurses) meet state requirements for their specific assignments.
- Appropriate policies related to support staff are established and practiced.
- Adequate training for support staff is provided.
- Appropriate policies and training for volunteers are in place.
- Staff members understand and relate appropriately with students and their families.

*Place an "X" in the Rating Box that Reflects the Actual Condition of the School*

**Highly Functional (4)**     **Operational (3)**     **Emerging (2)**     **Not Evident (1)**

**Identify and list supporting Evidence or Practices:**

We prioritize ensuring that employees and volunteers serving in support roles have the qualifications and training necessary for success in their defined areas of service. Our support staff, including teacher assistants, meet all state requirements for their specific assignments. We have established and practiced appropriate policies related to support staff, providing clear guidelines and expectations for their roles. Adequate training is provided to support staff to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their positions. Our staff members are trained to understand and relate appropriately with students and their families, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for all members of our school community. Through these measures, we uphold high standards of excellence and professionalism in our supporting roles, ultimately contributing to the success and well-being of our students.

**Comments:**

N/A

## Summary and Response Actions

Summary and response actions related to the school's strengths and items needing improvement are to be provided. Subcommittees carry on the primary work of evaluating the school's compliance with the assigned Standard through a thoughtful and purposeful evaluation of each of the General Indicators of Success. Based on any general indicator ratings of "1" or "2", the school must develop specific plans to improve. Plans must include specific targeted completion dates and assignments. At the discretion of the school, actions may be developed for indicators that have been rated as "3".

**A. Are the Required Indicators of Success met for Standard 4?**

YES

NO

**B. Based on evidence, what are the strengths of the school related to Standard 4?**

At Good Shepherd Lutheran School, our greatest assets are our teachers. They are dedicated and committed to our school's mission and exemplify Christian values in their practice. Our teaching staff is highly qualified, comprising experienced educators with relevant degrees.

**C. Based on the evidence, what are the challenges of the school related to Standard 4? All areas identified as "emerging" [2] or "not evident" [1] must be addressed in the School Action Plan.**

N/A

**D. What is the school's average rating for all General Indicators of Success for Standard 4, rounded to the nearest tenth?**

STANDARD	RATING
4:02	2
4:03	3
4:04	3
4:05	3
Total:	11
Average: (Total ÷ 4)	<b>2.8</b>