

School Improvement Plan

Bethel Lutheran School

School Years: 2013-2014 – 2017-2018

Table of Contents

Part 1: Beliefs, Mission, Vision.....	2
Part 2: Needs Assessment.....	4
Faculty Survey.....	4
Parent Survey.....	5
Congregational Member Survey.....	6
Former Student Survey.....	7
DSTEP Data.....	8
Part 3: School Profile.....	9
Part 4: Performance Goals.....	10
Part 5: Goals Assessment.....	12
Part 6: Intervention Strategies.....	14
Part 7: Staff Development.....	15
Documentation.....	16

Part 1: Beliefs, Mission, Vision

Bethel Lutheran School Mission:

Empowered by God's Word, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran School exists to assist parents in educating, encouraging and equipping children for time and eternity.

An 8th grade graduate of Bethel Lutheran School should:

- Demonstrate a strong faith in and knowledge of Jesus through words and actions
- Show an appreciation for the regular study of God's Word
- Share and defend his faith
- Demonstrate a knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Show willingness to take risks, think critically and independently, and solve problems
- Apply knowledge to real-world situations
- Exhibit self-discipline, self-responsibility, and self-confidence
- Show willingness to be a servant-leader
- Show technological competence
- Demonstrate a sufficient amount of knowledge in the content areas for studies in high school

Bethel Lutheran School Vision:

In order to carry out our mission statement and to help our graduating 8th graders attain the desired characteristics as listed above, we will:

1. Assist parents in the training of their children (We will help parents take seriously their responsibility of raising their child(ren) in the way of the Lord and communicate that we are helpers in this effort)
2. Center everything under our auspices on the message of Christ crucified
3. Develop and maintain a K-8 curriculum which enables our students to meet and/or exceed all academic standards and which is taught in the light of God's Word
4. Demonstrate spiritual leadership, from faculty to staff to Board of Education
5. Provide opportunities for students to develop individual talents and gifts (academic, musical, athletic) and to succeed with their God-given abilities
6. Provide a safe environment where students can work towards our goals and their goals

Items that would help carry out vision statements:

- Make mission statement more prevalent as a reminder to faculty and parents of the reason we exist as a Lutheran Elementary School (newsletter, website, parent meetings)
- Make it a priority to encourage parents to use Christ Light principles at home, home devotions, and regular prayer, and to attend church and Bible class/Sunday school regularly
- Planned encouragement and support of parents and students from individuals and/or a group outside of the faculty (Board of Education, Elders, or an Evangelism group to be formed)
- Ongoing curriculum mapping and curriculum improvement plans
- Develop and keep current a more rigorous school safety plan
- Develop and maintain a strong administrative plan to manage and safeguard all information
- Set up the faculty environment as a professional learning community

Part 2: Needs Assessment

Summary of Survey of Faculty

A survey was distributed to the Faculty of Bethel Lutheran School. They were asked to complete a survey regarding their perception of the Lutheran School. Four Faculty members completed and returned the survey.

The Faculty was asked if they felt Bethel's students were performing according to school and state standards. Two Faculty members strongly agreed the students were and two Faculty members agreed. There were no additional comments mentioned in this area.

Two Faculty members strongly agreed and two members agreed that the classrooms at Bethel meet the learning needs of the students. They contributed success in this area to the small class sizes which allows them the ability to work individually with students and accommodate the lesson plans to better meet their needs. They noted it was sometimes difficult to provide as much individualized attention as needed due to the high volume of classes. They also noted technology as an area to look for further improvement in this area.

Lastly, Faculty members were asked if the curriculum could be improved. One member indicated they strongly agreed it could be improved, two agreed it could be improved, and one member had no opinion. From their comments the Faculty felt that as long as Bethel keeps the curriculum current and continues to have an active plan for upgrading the curriculum, the needs of the school would be served well.

The Faculty was very generous in providing additional feedback in the open comment section of the survey. In general, the faculty highlighted school strengths as the traditional areas of education and liberal arts foundation, the Saxon Math program, catechism, bible history, Christ-centered education, small class sizes, and the ability to cater to individual student needs. They also noted areas for possible improvement as online expanded studies, science, independent study programs, spelling bee and handwriting contests, and after school enrichment programs.

Summary of Survey of Parents

Parents with children in Bethel Lutheran School were asked to complete a survey regarding their perception of the Christian Day School. Nine parents completed and returned the survey.

Six parents strongly agreed that communication between teachers and students is effective and supportive. Two parents agreed, and one parent had no opinion. Parents reported what they saw to be important success factors regarding good communication between teachers and students.

When asked if the communication between teachers and parents is effective and supportive five parents strongly agreed, two parents agreed, and two parents had no opinion. Parents reported what they appreciated about communication between teachers and parents and what they saw as areas of improvement.

Parents were asked whether they felt communication between the Board of Education and parents was effective and supportive. Five parents reported they strongly agreed the communication was effective and supportive. Three parents agreed. One parent had no opinion.

Parents were also asked how they felt about communication between the parents. Four strongly agreed that it is effective and supportive, four agreed, one parent disagreed. Parents participating and being involved were noted as important in this area.

In general the summary suggests that parents feel good about the general communication amongst the school, its faculty, the BOE, and parents themselves. It is important to note the areas that the parents noted as critical so the school can continue to do well managing those key areas. It is also important to note areas where parents have pointed out as possibilities for improvement and to work to improve the levels of communication even further.

Summary of Survey of Congregational Members

A survey was distributed to the Congregational Members of Bethel during a Bible class. They were asked to complete a survey regarding their perception of Bethel Lutheran School. Ten members completed and returned the survey.

Six Members strongly agreed and four Members agreed that students at Bethel exhibit quality performance of their Christian education. One Member commented about amazement at the amount of memory work the children do and the fact they learn the Word of God.

Eight Members strongly agreed and two Members agreed that students at Bethel excel in academic performance as compared to the national average. Members noted that students have received awards in science, math, and oral interpretation. They credited success in this area to the one-on-one teaching environment.

Members were asked if they felt a strong relationship exists between the school and the congregation. Six Members strongly agreed, two Members agreed, and two Members had no opinion. Members commented about the unwavering commitment and pointed out the financial obligation that is committed to support the school. They also noted there is always room for improvement and suggested more work could be done in communication through bulletins, newsletters, the internet, and more personal face-to-face interaction.

When asked if a strong relationship exists between the school and the parents six Members strongly agreed, three Members agreed, and one Member had no opinion. Members rated this area as strong and noted that parents help with cleaning the school and know first-hand from parents with children in the school that the relationship is strong.

When asked about the relationship between the teachers and students five Members strongly agreed, four agreed, and one had no opinion. Members commented on their observation of respect and Christian love between the teachers and students. They credited this to the one-on-one relationships that exist in the school between the teachers and the students.

Members were generous in providing many other comments in the open comments section that are too comprehensive to include in this summary. In general the Members felt that a positive Christian environment exists at the school and that students are well prepared for the next step in their educational journey when they move on. Members almost unanimously felt that Bethel should continue to work on improving the communication and relationship between the church and school.

Summary of Survey of Former Students

A survey was distributed to former students of Bethel Lutheran School. They were asked to complete a survey regarding their perception of Bethel Lutheran School. Four responses were returned.

Former Students were asked if Bethel prepared them for the next level of their educational path. They rated this category with high marks. Three students said they strongly agreed and one student agreed. One student commented that their freshman year in high school was easier than 8th grade at Bethel. The students said they felt more prepared than their classmates.

Former Students were also asked if Bethel fulfilled their education needs. Again they rated this area strong. Three students said they strongly agreed and one student agreed. They commented that no subject or area of study was left out of their education.

Lastly, Former Students were asked if Bethel prepared them with a sound Christian education that prepared them for the outside world of unbelieving peers. Two students strongly agreed and two students agreed. They commented that Pastor was an amazing teacher and role model and that their Christian education was the most important part of their education that they received while at Bethel.

Former Students were generous in providing much additional feedback in the open comment section. In general they felt that Math, Reading, English, Catechism and Bible History were the strongest classes. They also commented on the positive supportive environment. Conversely, they felt that Science and Advance Math are areas that could be improved.

Summary of DSTEP Data

Data was gathered on the performance level of the students of Bethel Lutheran School on the DSTEP in the years of 2010, 2011, and 2012. The purpose of this report is to summarize that data and draw conclusions from it.

Firstly, some observations must be noted. It was typical from 2010-2012 that the students of Bethel Lutheran School performed at or above the state norms. There are also years when the students of Bethel performed noticeably below the state norms in at least one subject area (2010 Grade 3 Math, 2011 Grade 4 Math, 2012 Grade 5 Math, 2010 Grade 8 Reading). It is note-worthy that the sample from Bethel is considerably smaller than that of the state. This fact likely explains any great disparities in test scores between the two samples. The following statement can be made: In general, students of Bethel Lutheran School performed near, at, or above state norms from 2010-2012.

Based on these observations, several conclusions may be drawn. In general the data gathered suggests that the curriculum of Bethel is closely aligned to state standards. If students are performing well on tests based on a set of standards, the students likely have a suitable level of mastery on those standards. The reading curriculum and programs of Bethel, especially, seem to be supportive of student success in that area. It seems that, based on the data, closer attention and better support may need to be given to certain identified groups.

The upcoming changes in academic standards will affect future data of Bethel. Continued attention to academic standards must be paid during the transitional phase if the level of success of Bethel students is to stay at or rise above the current level.

Part 3: School Profile

Our projected enrollment is based on the assumptions that half of the possible incoming students of Bethel will enroll and that an acquisition of one new student outside the congregation membership will take place each school year (represented in each Kindergarten class). Enrollment projections are as follows:

- 2013-2014 school year: we project a total number of 28 students. This total includes the following number of students in each grade: 5 in Kindergarten, 2 in 1st grade, 3 in 2nd grade, 2 in 3rd grade, 4 in 4th grade, 4 in 5th grade, 3 in 6th grade, 4 in 7th grade and 1 in 8th grade.
- 2014-2015 school year: we project a total number of 29 students. This total includes the following number of students in each grade: 4 in Kindergarten, 4 in 1st grade, 2 in 2nd grade, 3 in 3rd grade, 2 in 4th grade, 4 in 5th grade, 4 in 6th grade, 3 in 7th grade and 3 in 8th grade.
- 2015-2016 school year: we project a total number of 30 students. This total includes the following number of students in each grade: 4 in Kindergarten, 4 in 1st grade, 4 in 2nd grade, 2 in 3rd grade, 3 in 4th grade, 2 in 5th grade, 4 in 6th grade, 4 in 7th grade and 3 in 8th grade.
- 2016-2017 school year: we project a total number of 30 students. This total includes the following number of students in each grade: 3 in Kindergarten, 4 in 1st grade, 4 in 2nd grade, 4 in 3rd grade, 2 in 4th grade, 3 in 5th grade, 2 in 6th grade, 4 in 7th grade and 4 in 8th grade.
- 2017-2018 school year: we project a total number of 30 students. This total includes the following number of students in each grade: 4 in Kindergarten, 3 in 1st grade, 4 in 2nd grade, 4 in 3rd grade, 4 in 4th grade, 2 in 5th grade, 3 in 6th grade, 2 in 7th grade and 4 in 8th grade.

Note: The Kindergarten class of 2017-2018 is still growing.

Current school statistics (2013-2014):

- Bethel Lutheran School's percentage breakdown of race includes 24 Caucasian students (88.9%) and 3 Native American (11.1%).
- Bethel's student population's primary language is English.
- No students receive free or reduced lunches.

Part 4: Performance Goals

The performance goals of Bethel Lutheran School, to be carried out between the 2013-2014 and 2017-2018 school years, follow:

1. The faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will work to design a tutoring system which involves students and congregation volunteers providing small group or one-to-one assistance for students of Bethel, especially in Math.
2. The faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will use the school's curriculum mapping software on a continual basis in all subject areas and report its work to Bethel's Board of Education.
3. The principal of Bethel Lutheran School will gather at least one email address per family at Registration Night. Email addresses will be disseminated, upon the permission of each family, to the faculty, staff, Board of Education, and parents/guardians of Bethel so that quick, direct communication may be fostered.
4. The faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will take a form of professional development on differentiated instruction at least once every five years.
5. The faculty and/or Board of Education of Bethel Lutheran School will seek out volunteers to serve as "teachers' assistants" to help especially with those students not being instructed at the time.
6. The Board of Education of Bethel Lutheran School will create a schedule which provides provisions for the regular update of student computers and will include the necessary means in its annual budget to make said updates.
7. The Board of Education of Bethel Lutheran School will include in its annual budget the means to accommodate the improvements to Bethel's curriculum deemed necessary by the faculty's continual curriculum mapping (see 3).
8. The students of Bethel Lutheran School will participate in an annual spelling bee.
9. The principal of Bethel Lutheran School will provide an update on school and Board of Education happenings to the congregation in the form of a written bulletin insert, at least quarterly.

10. The principal of Bethel Lutheran School will provide an update on school and Board of Education happenings to the congregation in the form of a short verbal presentation after worship, at least quarterly.
11. The Board of Education of Bethel Lutheran School will conduct a study before 2015 on the possibility of one-to-one computing (student use of iPads, Chromebooks, or other devices).
12. The faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will take a form of professional development on Science (instruction or content study) at least once every five years.
13. The faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will take a form of professional development on an instructional practice (or practices) related to the Common Core State Standards at least once every five years.
14. The students of Bethel Lutheran School will engage in “base group” discussions on a regular basis, aimed at developing communication skills.
15. The students of Bethel Lutheran School will use journals (whether daily journals, learning logs, or other) on a regular basis, aimed at developing higher-order thinking and a range of writing.
16. The students of Bethel Lutheran School, with in-class reading, will read 50% informational text by Grade 4 and 55% informational text by Grade 8, aimed at developing skills in citing evidence to answer questions.

Performance Goals 1-2: From Summary of DSTEP Data of Bethel Lutheran School

Performance Goal 3: From Summary of Survey of Parents that Attend Bethel School

Performance Goals 4-8: From Summary of Survey of Faculty

Performance Goals 9-11: From Summary of Survey of Congregational Members

Performance Goal 12: From Summary of Survey of Former Students

Performance Goals 13-16: Based on school preparations for referencing of Common Core State Standards

Part 5: Goals Assessment

Evidence must be given that each performance goal assessment is met. A copy of each piece of evidence is either to be kept in the administrator's files (hard copy) or on the school server (electronic copy).

Progress Chart

Goal Number	Targeted Completion Date	Evidence Towards Completion
1	August 2014	
2	Ongoing	-Trial use of Planbook.com during 2013-2014 school year
3	August 2013 (and August of every school year)	-Family email addresses collected from online registration in 8/13
4	Ongoing	-Faculty took 2 MLC webinars ("Understanding Learner Differences" and "Differentiating Instruction") on 10/9/13 and wrote a paper on how to more effectively use differentiated instruction in the school
5	August 2013 (and August of every school year)	-Volunteer forms were handed out on Registration Night of 8/13 -A volunteer is used in the lower grades classroom during the 2013-2014 school year
6	June 2013 (and revisit before each school year)	-Updates to student computers were included in the 2013-2014 budget -Updates to student computers are part of the initial 2014-2015 budget
7	June 2013 (and revisit before each school year)	-Budget allocations were made in 2013-2014 for Math (K-8), Science (3-8), and Social Studies (5-6) curriculum -The initial 2014-2015 budget allocates money for English (1-8) curriculum
8	Ongoing	-Written bulletin insert on 12/15/13
9	Ongoing	-Oral report on 12/8/13
10	Ongoing	
11	December 2014	-Chromebooks were purchased for grades 5-8 for the 2013-2014 school year
12	Ongoing	
13	Ongoing	-Weekly faculty meetings focused on the skill of citing textual evidence (8/13-9/13)

		-Faculty wrote a paper on the benefits of standards-based assessment in connection with MLC webinar on differentiating instruction (10/9/13)
14	August 2013, ongoing	-Base groups were used twice weekly in the upper grades classroom in the 2012-2013 school year -Base groups are used once weekly in the upper grades classroom in the 2013-2014 school year
15	August 2013, ongoing	-Journals were used at least weekly by all students in the 2012-2013 school year -Journals are used at least weekly during the 2013-2014 school year
16	May 2018	

Part 6: Intervention Strategies

To address identified student and content needs, the following strategies will be used:

1. Need identified: Extra Educational Opportunities

The faculty and parents/guardians of Bethel Lutheran School will actively seek out local and regional educational opportunities for students (ie: writing contests, spelling bees, educational challenges/"bowls") to allow them to use their knowledge and skills. Students will be encouraged to participate as part of a school group, or on an individual basis, and contact information will be provided to interested parties.

2. Need identified: Study Hall and Tutoring

The principal and faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will establish a study hall to be available 3-5 days per week during the school day. The study hall is to be staffed by volunteer tutors, and will provide an opportunity for students to have quiet study time and assistance with basic homework questions as needed while peers are receiving instruction in the classroom. In addition, the upper grade teacher of Bethel Lutheran School will establish a 15-minute time period each school day in which students will be able to bring forth more difficult questions with which the tutor is unable to assist the student.

3. Need Identified: Increased Parent Involvement

The parents/guardians of Bethel Lutheran School will volunteer their time for various school activities in thoughtful consideration of the needs of their children. A sign-up sheet will be in place at Registration Night listing available opportunities (hot lunch, driving for field trips, tutoring, etc.) with the expectation that each family will dedicate a recommended minimum of 2 hours of time per school year, not including cleaning duties.

4. Need Identified: Plan to Address Individual Student Needs

When an educational need has been identified for an individual student, and current school resources are not sufficient to meet the need, the principal and faculty of Bethel Lutheran School will develop an action plan for addressing the need, and will implement corrective measures.

Part 7: Staff Development

- Teachers are required to take 6 credits every 5 years to remain certified.
- Formal Continued Education
 - Mr. Haag needs to take South Dakota Native American Studies course before 2015-2016
 - Mrs. Kuznicki will need to take South Dakota Native American Studies course before 2017-2018
 - See Performance Goals 5, 13, and 14
 - 1 one-credit workshop will be taken each summer
 - Courses to be taken will be determined by student needs and faculty interest
- Faculty In-Services
 - 2 scheduled per school year
 - 1 potentially partnered with Good Shepherd
 - 1 MLC webinar
- Faculty Meetings
 - 1 per month
 - Informal, collaborative professional development centered on current, pertinent issues
 - Minimal, if any, costs for books and materials
- Teachers' Conferences
 - The Dakota/Montana spring Teachers' Conference will be attended by all teachers in May of each year
 - The Dakota/Montana/Nebraska fall Teachers' Conference will be attended by all teachers in October of each year
- Leadership Institute Modules (LIM)
 - LIMs are opportunities for the principal to develop skills pertinent to his leadership role
 - Plan for one unit of LIM per school year

Documentation

The Board of Education and principal are responsible for the proper documentation of all the aspects of the school improvement plan, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Regularly review school improvement plan and document any needed changes
- Document any changes in student performance for selected goals
- Review data at regular intervals to judge success of interventions
- Report results of analysis to school community