

# About NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOL ACCREDITATION



## How does NLSA allow for different levels of schools?

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) has relevant and appropriate accreditation processes for all three levels: early childhood (including child care), elementary and secondary. However, adaptations and suggestions for evaluating and reporting plans and progress on some standards need to be made to allow for differences. Notes of clarification and special helps for early childhood directors, elementary principals and secondary administrators are available for schools that apply. The associated manuals assist administrators from all three levels to understand the fundamental differences in the processes that apply to their schools.



## How does a school apply for NLSA?

1. The school administrator expresses initial interest to the district education executive. Contact options are:
  - a. See the listing of LCMS districts' NLSA commissioners;
  - b. Visit [www.lcmsdistricts.com](http://www.lcmsdistricts.com) to find the address and/or phone number of the district office; or
  - c. Contact the NLSA office at [school.ministry@lcms.org](mailto:school.ministry@lcms.org) or 800-248-1930, Ext. 1294.
2. The district education executive or the NLSA office sends the initial information and an application form to the school.
3. The school reviews the initial information. If interested, the school administrator completes three copies of the application form (see below for the link to the document) and submits them, along with the application fee (\$450), to the district education executive for his or her signature. Additional district accreditation fees and forms may be required.

4. The district education executive signs the forms, keeping one copy, and sends two copies to the NLSA office along with the school's application fee. The district education executive suggests a trained consultant for the school.
5. Upon receipt of the application and fee, the NLSA materials associated with the accreditation process may be downloaded from the Lutheran School Portal ([www.luthed.org](http://www.luthed.org)). The school is now ready to begin work on its self-study process. The NLSA director affirms the trained NLSA consultant who will assist the school with the process. The NLSA office must receive the application and fee at least nine months before the site visit occurs, and the team visit must occur within three years from the time of application to NLSA or a second application must be filed and another fee paid.

## Does NLSA have other accrediting partners?

NLSA has developed co-accrediting partnerships with many of the well-respected secular regional accrediting agencies. Reciprocity allows a school to gain accreditation from two agencies through the use of a simple process. Contact the NLSA national office to obtain more information about the benefits of co-accreditation.

NLSA has reciprocity with the following secular regional accrediting agencies:

- › AdvancED (representing schools previously accredited by NCA, SACS and NASCU)
- › Middle States (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools)
- › WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges)

## Can Lutheran early childhood centers be accredited?

The accreditation needs of LCMS early childhood centers can be accommodated by using a process designed by early childhood educators specifically for early childhood centers. NLSA standards for early childhood centers are challenging, appropriate and relevant. Early childhood centers desiring co-accreditation with the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are encouraged to visit the NAEYC website for more information ([www.naeyc.org/academy](http://www.naeyc.org/academy)). When the center successfully completes the NAEYC accreditation process, it can become accredited by NLSA using an abbreviated process.

## Are NLSA materials located on the Lutheran School Portal?

Current news and information about National Lutheran School Accreditation is located on the Lutheran School Portal at [www.luthed.org](http://www.luthed.org). Follow the NLSA link on the “National” page. This site is updated frequently with important information for schools accredited by NLSA. The Lutheran School Portal is a membership site, and a username and password are required for access. For further information regarding access to the portal, contact [school.ministry@lcms.org](mailto:school.ministry@lcms.org).

## What standards are addressed in NLSA?

### NLSA Standards for Accredited Schools:

- › The school is purpose-driven.
- › The school is governed and administered effectively following written policy.
- › A qualified and competent staff serves the school.
- › The school’s curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.
- › Student services and activities are offered to meet the needs and foster the growth of each student in a safe and healthy environment.
- › Buildings, grounds and equipment provide a safe and healthy environment that serves to enhance student learning.

In order to become accredited in good standing with NLSA, a school must comply fully with the 30 required indicators of success.

### NLSA Standards for LCMS Early Childhood Centers:

- › The center is driven by its Christian mission.
- › The center demonstrates its Christian mission through relationships with congregation, community, staff, students and families.
- › The center is governed and administered effectively according to written policy.
- › A qualified and competent Christian staff serves the center.
- › Teachers and staff members relate appropriately and effectively with all children.
- › The center maintains a safe and healthy environment that supports student learning.
- › The center implements a written curriculum that integrates the faith, is developmentally appropriate and is supported with the necessary materials and resources.

There are 220 specific indicators (practices and documentation) that quantify an early childhood center’s compliance with early childhood standards defined by National Lutheran School Accreditation.

## Who oversees NLSA?

### The National Accreditation Commission

The National Accreditation Commission, composed of representatives from various participating districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Lutheran Church—Canada, governs NLSA. The process is owned and operated by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a service of LCMS School Ministry.

### NLSA Executive Committee

- › Trip Rodgers — Chairperson
- › Scott Schumacher — Chairperson Elect
- › Drew Gerdes — Secretary
- › Terry Schmidt — National Director

| LCMS District            | NLSA Commissioner |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Atlantic                 | Ben Herbrich      |
| California-Nevada-Hawaii | Joel Wahlers      |
| Central Illinois         | Trip Rodgers      |
| Eastern                  | Vacant            |
| English                  | Cristina Peterson |
| Florida-Georgia          | Glenn Moenning    |
| Indiana                  | Clifford Dietrich |
| Iowa East                | Mark Grewe        |
| Iowa West                | Merirlee Sump     |
| Kansas                   | Jane Limback      |
| Michigan                 | Bruce Braun       |
| Mid-South                | Tom Geyer         |
| Minnesota North          | Muriel Stark      |
| Minnesota South          | Cletus Pfeiffer   |
| Missouri                 | Bill Unzicker     |
| Nebraska                 | Stuart Tietz      |
| New England              | Jim Krupski       |
| North Wisconsin          | Jerry Joter       |
| Northern Illinois        | Keith Wilharm     |
| Northwest                | Jeff Allen        |
| Ohio                     | Heidi Malone      |
| Oklahoma                 | Katherine McGrew  |
| Pacific Southwest        | Kim Violette      |
| Rocky Mountain           | Michelle Fischer  |
| South Dakota             | Sarah Sailer      |
| South Wisconsin          | Terry Hubbard     |
| Southeastern             | Ken Waibel        |
| Southern                 | Donna Behnken     |
| Southern Illinois        | Robert Mayhew     |
| Texas                    | David Glienke     |