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A Classical Delphi Study: Identifying the Essential Leadership Characteristics, Traits, and Skills of Lutheran School Leaders

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A Classical Delphi Study: Identifying the Essential Leadership Characteristics, Traits, and Skills
of Lutheran School Leaders

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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Abstract

Principals play a key role in the success and sustainability of Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) schools. This study examines the qualities, characteristics and traits possessed by successful Lutheran school leaders to provide a framework for developing current and future leaders of Lutheran schools. Today's Lutheran school administrator must understand and be effective in financial planning, marketing, curriculum and instruction, community outreach and strategic planning in addition to the more traditional areas of curriculum and instruction, employee evaluation, and other school management tasks. Today's successful Lutheran school administrator must be a leader and not just a manager. Thus, Lutheran schools must identify the leadership skills leaders need to be a successful administrator and how to develop those leadership skills in leadership training programs for Lutheran school administrators. To put it simply, to be competitive and successful, Lutheran schools need to be led and not managed.

The study utilized the Delphi Method, a research method that utilizes experts on the subject who respond to a series of surveys, to gain consensus on the characteristics, traits, and qualities possessed by excellent Lutheran school administrators. Survey participants included the leaders of Lutheran school Leadership Development programs and current Lutheran school principals. The survey data led to fifteen traits, characteristics, and qualities that provide for excellent Lutheran school principals. Utilizing leadership frameworks from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the LCMS Lutheran Schools of Excellence Leadership Framework, and the School Leader Paradigm developed by the *School Leader Collaborative*, the researcher developed and organized the fifteen traits, characteristics, and qualities into four leadership categories:

Leadership of the Call:

- Integrity
- Ministry and Mission
- Worker Care
- Leadership (Servant Leadership)

Personal Leadership:

- Growth
- Self-Inventory
- Learner

Relational and Social Leadership:

- Communication
- Relationships
- Collaboration
- Mentoring/Coaching

Systems Leadership:

- Finance
- Vision
- Innovator
- Strategic Plan

These four categories and fifteen traits will serve as foundation criteria in developing and training Lutheran school leaders. Lutheran school sustainability and growth depends on the excellence of its leaders, and this study will provide an understanding of the characteristics, traits, and skills a successful Lutheran school should possess.

Acknowledgements

It has been a long winding journey to get to the completion of this dissertation. From the difficulty of dealing with the challenges of COVID that impacted educational ministries of the Missouri District, to my own bouts with COVID that consumed time to return to health, and the passing of my Father during it all. I give thanks to my wife Kristin, and our children Holly and Samuel who always loved, cheered, and encouraged during it all!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction of the Problem of Practice

Why do Lutheran schools exist?

“I am afraid that the schools will prove the very gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures and engraving them in the heart of the youth. What would it profit us to possess and perform everything else and be like pure saints, if we meanwhile neglected our chief purpose in life, namely, the care of the young? When schools flourish, all flourishes.” - Martin Luther

Education was a priority for Lutherans who emigrated to the United States from Germany and Scandinavia in the early 1800s. “A major concern of the new immigrants was to establish schools for their children, as this was a strong educational tradition handed down from Martin Luther himself” (Kieschnick, 2006, p. 1).

When Saxon immigrants, who later formed The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, arrived in Perry County, Missouri, a school was established within days of their arrival. The school was founded before the church was. When the LCMS itself was established in 1847, it began with twelve congregations and fourteen schools.” (Schmidt, 2016, p. 22).

While most early Lutheran schools were built to serve the Lutheran community, some early schools were also founded with the distinct purpose of outreach. Until the 1970s, Lutheran schools did not charge tuition to members of the Lutheran church congregation operating the Lutheran school. However, this has changed over the last decades to a point where today only five out of 62 Lutheran schools in Missouri do not charge tuition for members of their church congregation.

Historically, Lutheran schools were opened to teach children to obey all that Christ had commanded and to prepare its students for a church-work vocation. The students who attended

Lutheran schools were mostly from Lutheran families, typically attended a Lutheran grade school, and then attended the local Lutheran high school (if there was one). The Lutheran school principal, faculty, and staff were graduates of one of the 10 Lutheran universities that trained teachers to teach in a Lutheran school. In addition, the entire faculty/staff were members of the Lutheran church where they taught and were required to be active in the congregation. However, the model for today's LCMS school has changed. With a challenging economy and fewer students who attend a Lutheran college to prepare for a career in church work, Lutheran schools are faced with the challenge of competing with area private and public schools for students. Lutheran schools tend to be insular in nature and are hesitant to be involved with outside organizations. A good example of this is a question posed by a Lutheran school administrator to fellow administrators using a Listserv (2017) designed specifically for Lutheran school principal interaction:

I have a parent who is very excited about getting our students involved in a speech competition that is sponsored by the Association of Christian Schools International. In order to participate, we would have to pay dues (only \$50). I admit that I have not thoroughly checked out all that this group stands for. I am feeling concerned that doctrinally we would not be in the same place. I know that this is a group for Christian Schools. However, it appears that Lutheran Schools don't belong. I am curious if anyone has any wisdom to share regarding this organization. I am just wanting to proceed with caution. Has anyone ever participated in any of there [sic] activities. (p. 1)

With the comment that Lutheran schools do not belong and a concern on the theological alignment of doctrine, it is apparent that making even simple decisions as to whether a student should enter a speech contest is driven by school identity and a fear of entanglement with those

who are not aligned theologically. Is this a hindrance to the success of a Lutheran school and a Lutheran school administrator?

Successful and enduring organizations understand the fundamental reason they were founded and stay true to that reason. It is therefore wise to ask the question “What problem is the school designed to solve?” Why Lutheran? After all, there are a lot of other Christian schools and Christian teachers, and there are public schools paid for by property taxes that do not charge tuition. To understand the leadership of the Lutheran school, it is important to discern why Lutheran schools exist. Without understanding the purpose of an organization, how can one understand leadership of the organization? Are Lutheran schools of today outreach-oriented and concerned not only with ministry of educating Lutheran students but also with educating the unchurched members of other faiths, as well as Lutheran students?

Lutheran Schools: From Parochial to Community

Lutheran schools are in transition. That transition is occurring faster along the coast than in the Midwest. From the beginning of Lutheran schools through the 1980s, Lutheran schools were parochial schools where all students were members of Lutheran churches that sponsored the Lutheran schools. Today, Lutheran schools are typically more diverse in their student populations, with a substantial portion of the student body comprised of non-Lutheran families. Transitioning from schools of the past that were comprised of a mostly Lutheran student-body to Lutheran schools of today where most students are non-Lutheran has been difficult. Many principals and educators of Lutheran schools that are nearing retirement age have graduated from Lutheran elementary schools that were parochial in nature. Now, they are teaching in Lutheran schools that are no longer parochial. This has caused Lutheran educators to ponder the question, *Who are We? Are we a parochial school, a Christian school, a mission school, or a service*

school? These questions provide the starting point for Lutheran administrators as they prepare to serve and sustain Lutheran schools in the future.

Historically, the enrollment of community children in Lutheran schools has been contested. There have been arguments about whether Lutheran schools are exclusively for Lutheran children (parochial), or if they should be a ministry to the community. Frederick Conrad Wyneken, the second president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, stated in 1857, “May the congregations consider more and more the important mission work done through our schools among our unbelieving countrymen, and then may they realize that the Lord has entrusted especially the little children to our care” (Schmidt, 2018). It is critical that Lutheran schools remain faithful to the Lutheran confessions; we must teach the children about the Lutheran faith. However, at the same time, we must engage the community through Lutheran schools and serve all who desire to attend a Lutheran school.

The future of Lutheran schools and the powerful ministry they can have depends on the schools’ ability to grow, change, adapt, and position themselves for the future rather than living on what has worked in the past. The number of Lutheran schools closing their doors is alarming and should serve as a call to examine how to adapt Lutheran education in today’s environment while staying true to the foundation of Lutheranism. Lutheran schools must have leaders that possess the skills and abilities to take a Lutheran school from a survival mode to a thriving mode.

Challenges Facing Lutheran Schools

Lutheran schools in the United States and abroad are at a crisis point in finding well-qualified and skilled Lutheran-trained leaders. The lack of Lutheran-trained school leaders that possess the necessary skill set to sustain and grow Lutheran schools has created a school sustainability crisis in the Lutheran school system. It is my desire to explore why Lutheran

schools in the Missouri District - LCMS and in the United States are struggling to compete and sustain themselves as institutions of learning, and what role the head administrator plays in Lutheran school sustainability and growth.

According to Terry Schmidt, former Director of Schools for the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, “By 2018, 40 percent of Lutheran school administrators now serving are expected to retire, creating a significant leadership void. Many schools already are feeling that pinch. Every week, I get calls asking for candidates who might fill vacancies. “They say, ‘Give me a list [of names]’ ... something I can’t always do,” (Plummer Krull, 2015, p. 1). Leadership in the Lutheran schools is necessary as the Lutheran school system is experiencing school closures throughout the country. At the 2016 Convention of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, much attention was placed on supporting the needs of our Lutheran school system and addressing the problems the Lutheran school system is facing. In an address to the LCMS Convention, the Chair of the Floor Committee on Parochial Schools, Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy, spoke to the crisis and hope of the Lutheran school system: “Despite 458 Lutheran schools having closed since 2005, there are still 1,173 LCMS early-childhood preschools, 804 elementary schools, 91 domestic high schools and three international schools, with a total of some 200,000 students attending these schools” (Reinsel, 2016, p. 1). Reinsel (2016) provides reference to four resolutions passed at the 2016 LCMS Convention which focus on Lutheran schools and the need to strengthen the Lutheran School System:

Resolution 8-01 encourages a continuation and strengthening of a Lutheran ethos for all Lutheran early-childhood, elementary and high schools. Lutheran ethos is who we are, but also how we are with one another, what we can expect from one another and what we can promise those who come to our schools.

[Resolution] 8-01A is meant to provide teachers, administrators and boards with some markers or descriptors of what a Lutheran ethos looks like in one of our schools.

Resolution 8-02 responds to the prediction that “40 percent of the current Lutheran school administrators are anticipated to retire within the next five years.”

To remedy this upcoming issue, the resolution encourages more efforts to recruit and educate new administrators. The resolution also seeks more funding for SLeD (School Leadership Development), a program under LCMS School Ministry that “recruits and equips administrators for LCMS schools.

Resolution 8-03, “To Support the Quality and Sustainability of Lutheran Schools through the Work of the Blue-Ribbon Committee on Lutheran Schools”, recognizes the need for a blue-ribbon committee to do research on the reason for the decline in the number of schools and in total student enrollment. As mentioned above, since 2005, 458 LCMS schools have closed, with a resulting enrollment decrease of some 99,000 students.

Resolution 8-04, “To Preserve the Religious Freedom of Our Parochial Schools,” recognizes the increasing threat of federal and state mandates and encourages all Lutheran schools to “maintain their commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.” (p.1)

Overview of Private Education in the United States

Public schooling is mandated by each state and allows every child to have a tuition-free K-12 education (Center on Education Policy, 2007). However, many families, for various reasons, instead choose to send their child(ren) to nonpublic schools. In 2013, private religious schools made up 7.5% of K-12 students in the United States compared to 3.7% for public charter

schools, 1.9% for private non-religious, 3% for homeschooled, and 83.9% for traditional public school (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). According to the Council of American Private Education (CAPE) in 2013-2014, there were 34,756 nonpublic schools in the United States (25% of all schools) serving 5,751,000 (10% of all U.S. students) students.

The Council of American Private Education (CAPE) is a consortium of private and parochial schools throughout the United States and serves as an advocacy group as well as being a provider of data collection information for nonpublic schools. The CAPE Private School Statistics Chart below provides a look at the percent of students attending various religious school systems. The chart also provides a look at the change over time as to which religious school districts are gaining or declining in their enrollments.

Private School Statistics at a Glance	
PK-12 Enrollment (2015-16)	5,751,000 (10% of all US students)
# of Schools (2013-14)	34,576 (25% of all US schools)
Enrollment Source: National Center for Education Statistics (see table) School Source: National Center for Education Statistics (see table)	

Figure 1. Private School Enrollment Statistics

Where do private school students go to school?		
	Years 91-92	Years 15-16
Catholic	53.0%	38.8%
Nonsectarian	14.8%	21.8%
Conservative Christian	12.0%	13.5%
Baptist	5.8%	3.9%
Lutheran	4.4%	3.3%
Jewish	3.4%	6.1%
Episcopal	1.8%	1.8%
Adventist	1.5%	1.0%
Montessori	1.1%	2.6%
Calvinist	0.9%	0.4%
Friends	0.3%	0.5%
Islamic	0.1%	0.8%

Figure 2. Where do private school students attend school?
(Council of American Private Education, 2017).

According to CAPE statistics, the largest private/parochial school system in the United States is the Catholic school system. The Lutheran school system is one of the largest parochial school systems in the United States and is the largest Evangelical school system in the United States (<https://www.lcms.org/education>). The Lutheran system is second to the Catholic school system in the number of schools and the number of educators. Private and Parochial schools serve a large percentage of the school-aged population in the United States. The private and parochial school systems provide an alternative to the public system; in addition, these schools alleviate student overcrowding and funding issues for public schools. Private and parochial schools serve a vital role in the United States.

Problem Statement

School leaders frequently ascend through the ranks from teacher to principal and on to serve as superintendent or executive director. This is especially true in Lutheran schools as passions, interests, and qualifications allow. Those in school leadership receive formal leadership training from an educational leadership program from a university. Schools and their supporting organizations seem to have ideas, documents, research, and evidence of their expectations for school leaders; however, from my experiences, many school leaders do not know or utilize the research to improve their leadership, particularly in Christian schools, but especially in Lutheran schools.

Lutheran schools lack qualified and capable leaders to fill the administrative openings in Lutheran schools. The problem is how to resolve this deficit of qualified and capable leaders so that Lutheran schools are sustainable and growing their educational ministries. Many of the administrators in Lutheran schools lack the necessary leadership skills to meet today's demands placed on a Lutheran school administrator. Today's Lutheran school administrator must understand and be effective in financial planning, marketing, curriculum and instruction, community outreach and strategic planning in addition to the more traditional areas of curriculum and instruction, employee evaluation, and other school management tasks. Today's successful Lutheran school administrator must be a leader and not just a manager. Thus, the problem of practice is how to identify the leadership skills necessary to be a successful administrator and how to develop those leadership skills in leadership training programs for Lutheran school administrators. To put it simply, to be competitive and successful, Lutheran schools need to be led and not managed.

Purpose of the Study, Conceptual Framework, and Research Questions

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify the leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders that promote sustainability. Studying Lutheran school leadership warrants further investigation as it is vital for the sustainability of Lutheran schools. One of the ways to provide for that sustainability is to ensure that the leadership of such educational communities are well-prepared and well-equipped to lead. This study will allow for current and future Lutheran school administrators to develop additional skills to enhance their professional abilities. The study will also provide educational professionals seeking to enter the field of Lutheran school administration a blueprint to understand what skills are desirable for leadership. Lutheran school leaders are often challenged in their school settings as they navigate the organizational influence of parents or church leadership and leadership in education. The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the characteristics, qualities, skills, behaviors, and practices of a lead Lutheran school administrator who is serving as a leader of a successful Lutheran school. As Bill Cochran, former Director of School Ministry for the LCMS, recently stated in an interview, “Our (LCMS) schools rise and fall with the leader. If our schools have leaders, they are successful; if our schools have managers, they can maintain but will not grow and excel” (Cochran, 2018). The need for effective leadership in schools is not unique to the Lutheran school system. The primary goal of the outcome of this study was to identify the leadership traits, characteristics, and practices Lutheran school leaders should possess to ensure the sustainability of Lutheran schools. The study utilized the Delphi Method to interview field experts and to identify the leadership traits, characteristics, and practices of lead administrators at successful Lutheran schools.

Conceptual Framework

Administrator leadership contributes to school effectiveness through the direct influence of the administrator's leadership abilities. "The leadership of the school administrator has a direct impact on sustainability and school success" (Marzano, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2006, Snowden & Gorton, 2002). Examining Lutheran school leaders' qualities, traits, and characteristics and understanding the successful practices of Lutheran school leaders will provide for the successful identification, recruitment, training, and retention of successful Lutheran school leaders. The researcher used the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools LeadIt Survey and the LCMS National Office of School Ministry's Schools of Excellence: Leadership document as an initial framework for identifying leadership qualities, traits, and characteristics among Lutheran school leaders. The framework provided the researcher an understanding of initial concepts used by Lutheran leadership development programs to identify leadership traits, qualities, and characteristics that sustain Lutheran schools and how to train and develop current and future leaders with these characteristics and qualities. This study sought a deeper examination of Lutheran school leaders and the traits, characteristics, qualities they possess and utilize to sustain and grow Lutheran schools.

Research Questions

1. What are the leadership factors that contribute to the effectiveness of an administrator of a Lutheran school?
 - a. What are the key traits, attributes, qualities, and characteristics of an effective Lutheran school leader?
 - b. What are the leadership behaviors and practices of a successful lead administrator of a Lutheran school?

- c. How can Lutheran school leaders be effectively trained to successfully lead and sustain Lutheran schools?
2. How can leadership practices be used to provide sustainability and growth at Lutheran schools?
3. What can we learn from highly successful Lutheran school leaders?

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

The researcher used the Delphi Method, a research method that utilizes experts on the subject who respond to a series of surveys, to gain consensus among the experts in this study. Patton (2002) asserted, “There is a very practical side to qualitative methods that simply involves asking open-ended questions of people . . . in real-world settings in order to solve problems, improve programs, or develop policies” (p. 136). As stated by Hsu and Sanford (2007), “The Delphi technique is a widely used and accepted method for gathering data from respondents within their domain of expertise” (p. 1). As asserted by Patton (2002), “A qualitative design needs to remain sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry” (p. 255). Linstone and Turoff (2002) note that the use of the Delphi Method is appropriate when “the problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis” (p. 4).

The researcher specifically chose an expert panel involved in Lutheran school administrator development programs to participate using four-rounds of the Delphi Method. At the conclusion of the Delphi rounds, the expert panel came to a consensus on the leadership traits, qualities, and characteristics of a successful Lutheran school principal.

The first three rounds of this Delphi study consisted of sequential surveys with the first survey consisting of open-ended questions. Round Two and Round Three surveys took each

response from each study participant and then asked each participant to rate the response using a five-point Likert Scale. The researcher used a five-point Likert-Scale to determine when consensus was achieved by the participants. Round Four of this Delphi study was an optional focus group during which the researcher asked the participants to acknowledge that the researcher had identified their responses correctly and had truly identified consensus on their responses. If participants found that the researcher erred in identifying the responses, the participants had the opportunity to identify the errors and the researcher corrected the errors prior to the next survey round.

Potential Significance of the Study

Education was a priority for Lutherans who emigrated to the United States from Germany and Scandinavia. “A major concern of the new immigrants was to establish schools for their children, as this was a strong educational tradition handed down from Martin Luther himself” (Kieschnick, 2006, p. 1). Built on a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod provides for the faith growth of students at all educational levels so they know--or come to know-- Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. LCMS schools provide a quality education that focuses on the whole child.

Historically, Lutheran schools were opened to prepare its students for a church-work vocation. The students who attended the Lutheran schools were from Lutheran families, typically attended a Lutheran grade school, and then went to the local Lutheran high school. However, the model for today’s LCMS school has changed. With a challenging economy, and fewer students who attend a Lutheran College to prepare for a career in church work, Lutheran schools are faced with the challenge of competing with area private and public schools for students.

There is a growing concern among Lutheran school leaders regarding the sustainability of Lutheran schools. Along with declining enrollments, Lutheran schools are faced with changing student demographics, lack of success in building non-tuition revenue streams such as third-source funding, rising tuition costs, a lack of strategic planning, and increased competition with private and public schools (Breseman, Cochran & Sommermeyer, 2011). For Lutheran schools to thrive, the system must have excellent leaders. Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs, Lutheran school leaders, and Lutheran school boards, as well as others, will benefit from and utilize the results of this study.

Characteristics of a Successful School

The Wallace Foundation Report (The Wallace Foundation, 2012), a study based on the effectiveness of public-school principals, reported five effective leadership strategies for a quality sustained school:

- “Shaping a vision for academic success for all students;
- Creating a climate hospitable to education;
- Cultivating leadership in others;
- Improving instruction;
- Managing people, data, and processes” (p. 4).

In 2001, the LCMS National Office of Lutheran School Ministry asked a group of distinguished Lutheran school leaders that made up a Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Lutheran Schools to provide the components of an excellent Lutheran school. As Director of Lutheran Schools, Bill Cochran worked with a team of administrators to identify areas of Lutheran School Excellence. The following areas of Lutheran School Excellence (Cochran, 2002, p. 1) was identified with a rubric provided to measure success in each area (See Appendix C):

- Academic Excellence
- Culture
- Finance
- Governance
- Leadership
- Mission/Purpose/Vision
- Spiritual Development
- Master Teacher
- Instruction

Sustainability of a Lutheran School

The success and sustainability of Lutheran schools rise and fall with the quality of the leader. A talented leader will have the vision, skills, and abilities to see the needs of the future and to provide a strategic plan that positions the school for sustainability (Cochran, 2018).

According to Mullaney, et. al., (2008) in their study of the sustainability of two Lutheran schools in the Chicago area:

Often when reviewing Lutheran school sustainability, the discussion revolves around finances and enrollment. While lack of financial resources and declining enrollment are the obvious answers to the inability of Lutheran schools to remain sustainable, much more encompasses sustainability. To embrace sustainability of Lutheran schools, Lutheran educators must embrace the topics of mission/moral purpose, vision, governance, communication, leadership, community, quality, change, stakeholder involvement, continuous improvement, and accountability. Lutheran-school administrators should consider themselves change agents in their roles as executive

directors, principals, directors, and assistant principals. (pp. 29-40)

Sustainability of schools is a top concern for the Lutheran school system, the Catholic System and Christian schools as well as independent schools throughout the country. The Association of Christian Schools International sponsors an annual Global Leadership Conference focused on professional development and issues impacting Christian schools. Swaner's (2020) study found the following information from surveying Christian education leaders:

During the 2019 Global Christian School Leadership Summit (GCSLS) drew over 1,100 Christian education leaders from North America and across the world. Attendees were asked in the post-event survey, "What do you think is the number one priority that Christian schools need to tackle right away?" Their top response was *enrollment and sustainability*. Paradoxically, for Christian education to be sustained into the future, the way Christian education looks and functions—the underlying models by which schools operate—must change. Sustainability is not finding a way to continue current practices into the future, as much as we might wish it. Rather, sustainability means ensuring the school's *mission* continues into the future, which likely will require that schools look very different from the past or today. (p. 1)

Excellent leadership is a key component of school sustainability for all schools. While there may be many external and internal factors that impact school sustainability, it is the role of an excellent leader to identify and successfully respond to those factors if the school is going to continue to survive and thrive. According to Cheney and Davis, "...the most effective schools are led by principals who are equipped with the skills and possess the attitudes required to be exceptional school leaders" (2011)

Definition of Terms

When discussing Lutheran Schools there are certain terms that the researcher uses need to be reviewed for those who may not be familiar with Lutheran Education.

1. **LCMS:** refers to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. “The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was born near the American frontier in the quarter-century before the Civil War. From its very beginning, each new congregation built for itself a school alongside the church” (Schnake, 1999, p. 11). The LCMS is a conservative Lutheran church denomination located primarily in the United States. It has over 2 million members and is divided into 35 districts containing 6,151 churches, 880 elementary schools, 1,200 early childhood centers, 90 high schools and 3 international schools (Membership and Congregation Statistics, 2014). The researcher is the Education Executive for the Missouri District – LCMS and seeks to provide leadership growth and sustainability for Lutheran schools; therefore, this paper will focus exclusively on LCMS schools. These schools are commonly referred to as parochial because they teach religious doctrine and promote a faith-based education. Parochial schools, therefore, differ from private schools that do not promote a particular faith. Parochial and private schools create non-public schooling alternatives. Teachers at LCMS schools are either Called or contracted.
2. **Lutheran Elementary School:** Lutheran Elementary schools in the LCMS are most often connected to a church congregation. Some schools are part of an association and are connected to a group of congregations. Elementary schools can vary in terms of grade levels ranging from K-5 to K-8. Seven hundred of the 880 elementary schools hold accreditation through National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA). The average size

of a Lutheran elementary school is around 100 students. Seven schools maintain enrollment in excess of 500 students (LCMS, 2014).

3. **Lutheran High School:** A school that serves grades 9-12 or may be a middle and high school and serving grades 6-12 or 7-12 and is operated by one congregation or operated with the support of several congregations and considered an association high school. A Lutheran high school may also operate independently and have no sponsoring congregation(s).
4. **Lutheran Teachers and/or Principals:** Teachers/Principals of the Lutheran schools who received their certification from colleges and universities that are **affiliated** with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
5. **Colloquy Program:** provides teachers/principals who have not graduated with a Lutheran Teacher Diploma from a Concordia University the education needed to be eligible for a Call in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.
6. **Called or Called principal:** “This call, historically known as a ‘divine call’ expresses a special and unusual relationship between teacher and church (a professional relationship of mutuality). The **Call** is understood here as being spiritual, and including God as a third partner in what is essentially a triangular relationship” (p. 10). Typically, **Called** teachers come from the Concordia University System. Students in the teacher education program take a series of theological course work that enables them to receive a **Call**.
7. **Lutheran School Lead Administrator:** The term “lead school administrator” refers to any individual who is the overall leader of the organization. Lutheran school lead administrators have many different titles (principal, headmaster, head of school, etc.). For

the purpose of this study the Lutheran School Lead Administrator will be the one who is the top administrator at a Lutheran school.

8. **Contracted or contracted principal:** is a Lutheran school teacher or principal who is not eligible to receive a Call because he/she has not been Synodically trained (has not attended one of the Concordia University System schools and taken the proper theological coursework) or received his/her colloquy (theological coursework that can be taken through schools in the Concordia University System that enables one to become **Called**).
9. **LCMS School Ministry:** The National Office responsible for interacting with Lutheran schools throughout the United States and the world.
10. **SLeD Program:** LCMS School Ministry School Leadership Development Program. The SLeD program identifies and trains current and future administrators for Lutheran schools.
11. **LEA:** Lutheran Education Association. LEA is a membership organization for Lutheran school teachers that provides many resources and a triennial conference for Lutheran educators. LEA also sponsors a yearly conference for Lutheran school administrators.
12. **ALSS:** Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools. ALSS is a membership organization specifically for Lutheran secondary schools. ALSS provides multiple resources and sponsors an annual conference for Lutheran secondary school administrators. ALSS also provides leadership development training for Lutheran secondary school administrators and works with the Van Lunen Fellowship Program to provide Executive Training for Lutheran school administrators at all levels.
13. **Leadership:** leadership is related to strategic, long-term sustainability and decision making that is related to the strategic and long-term sustainability of the school.

14. **Management:** is related to short-term operational goals and issues that provide for the day-to-day and year-to-year operation of a school.
15. **Sustainability:** Providing for the current and future needs of the school. Davies (2007) defines sustainable leadership as “the key factor that underpins the longer-term development of the school” (p. 11).
16. **Delphi Method:** The Delphi Method is a research process that collects responses from topic experts using a series of data collection surveys and researcher analysis techniques until a consensus is reached.
17. **Panel of Experts:** A group of research participants that are identified as experts and have agreed to be participants in this Delphi research study.

Assumptions

As someone who oversees 114 Lutheran early childhood, elementary and high schools in the Missouri District – LCMS and also interacts nationally and globally with the Lutheran education system, I have a vested interest in the sustainability, growth, and success of Lutheran schools. As the Education Executive for the Missouri District – LCMS I frequently interact with Education Executives of other LCMS districts, school officials at the National Office of LCMS School Ministry, and top officials of the LCMS University System, all of whom have expressed many concerns, including the lack of leaders to fill open administrator positions at LCMS schools. These leaders of LCMS school ministry have also expressed the concern that for Lutheran schools to succeed we must attract, develop and retain excellent Lutheran school leaders to fill open administrative roles and sustain and grow Lutheran schools through their work. The expert panel that participated in the research and data collection for this study represent multiple Lutheran school leadership programs; therefore, the researcher can assume that the information can accurately be extrapolated and generalized for Lutheran school

leadership programs and Lutheran school leaders throughout the Lutheran system as they all operate similarly and have leaders who are trained and Called in the same general manner. In fact, it is common for Lutheran school administrators to move from one LCMS District to another through the Call System. Also, many Lutheran school administrators have been trained in the Concordia University System or successfully graduated from the Colloquy Program and have participated in a Lutheran school leadership program.

Everyone has his/her own lens through which he/she will view, interpret, and analyze the questions, data, and information presented. The researcher assumed that all research participants were honest, provided their true opinions, and were not swayed in the responses by my position as the Education Executive for the Missouri District – LCMS. I assume that the findings are useful and that leaders in the Lutheran school leadership training programs and current and future Lutheran school leaders will use this study. The researcher also assumes that the information will be useful to Boards of Education at Lutheran schools as they seek to fill administrator positions in Lutheran schools.

Delimitations and Limitations

The researcher's scope of the study was limited to analyzing the leadership of Lutheran school administrators in the Missouri District – LCMS. The study focused on analyzing the characteristics, traits, and qualities of successful Lutheran school leaders.

Delimitations

The study centered on Lutheran school administrators. The study utilized Lutheran school administrators identified by LCMS Education Executives. The administrators were located in six LCMS Districts. However, there are 35 LCMS Districts, so this was a small sample of the Lutheran school administrators.

Limitations

As is common in qualitative research, the analysis of this data is subject to different interpretations by different readers. Because of the interpretive nature of qualitative research and because I am a former Lutheran school administrator and a current Education Executive for the Missouri District - LCMS, researcher bias may have been present in the analysis. I do not have oversight of any of the participants in this study; I have known several of the participants professionally for many years and have worked with some of them on various projects. The Delphi Method helped to combat researcher bias. A strength of the Delphi Method is the sequential surveys given to the participants that provided the researcher with perpetual feedback and consensus-building from the participants. This in turn yielded greater levels of accuracy in the study (Jones, 2004).

Context

Forty percent of all Lutheran elementary and secondary school principals are expected to be at or past retirement age by the year 2020. “How do you ensure that your school is going to be around for another 100 years? We all know the answer to that question – LEADERSHIP. I don’t believe that all of those schools needed to close, they were just missing Leadership” (Anderson, n.d.). It is all too common to read that Lutheran schools, Catholic schools, and other Christian and private schools will close at the end of the school year. “Parents reacted with anguish and anger as word spread that 12 K-8 schools and one high school, Cardinal Gibbons in the Morrell Park neighborhood of West Baltimore, would be shut down in June (2010)” (Hirsch, 2010). “In the first decade of this new century, more than 1,000 Catholic schools were shuttered....” (Smarick, 2011, p. 1). Since 2005, “LCMS congregations have closed 458 schools” and “enrollment has dropped by 99,113 students” (Ross, 2017, p. 1).

According to Glavin (2014), the LCMS and its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in the United States. According to LCMS statistics (Schmidt, 2020) the LCMS has the following number of schools, students, and educators:

Lutheran School Statistics:

Total Number of Schools — 1,885

Early Childhood Centers — 1,741 Elementary Schools — 828 High Schools — 97

Total Number of Students — 142,469*

Early Childhood — 63,483* Grades K-8 — 62,989* Grades 9-12 — 16,124*

Total Number of Teachers — 21,222

Rostered Teachers — 10,498 Active — 5,446 Candidate — 1,459 Emeritus — 3,593

Non-rostered Teachers — 11,042.

Positionality of the Researcher

A researcher's positionality impacts a study based on personal beliefs and the relationship to the topic and participants in the study. "The researcher's beliefs, values systems, and moral stances are as fundamentally present and inseparable from the research process as the researcher's physical, virtual, or metaphorical presence when facilitating, participating and/or leading the research project" (Derry, 2017). The very nature of choosing a topic demonstrates positionality as it is an interest and/or desire of the researcher to write on the topic. "Positionality refers to the researcher's role and social location/identity in relationship to the context and setting of the research" (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017, p. 6). "Interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher" (Denzin, 1986, p. 12).

As a life-long member of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, I have been impacted by its views and have a long history of knowing its school system. While growing up, I did not

attend Lutheran schools but instead, I was schooled from K-12 in the public education system. I received my Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from LCMS colleges, but I have frequently taken classes at public universities and received my Educational Specialist Degree from a public university. I have taught as a substitute and a long-term substitute in public schools; however, for the last twenty-five years all my teaching and administrative positions have been in Lutheran schools or as an Education Executive for the Lutheran School System.

As the Education Executive for the Missouri District – LCMS I interact with all principals in the Missouri District – LCMS, recommend individuals from the Missouri District – LCMS to the National School Ministry – LCMS's SLeD program, and interact frequently with Directors of Schools from all of the other LCMS Districts and therefore have direct and indirect knowledge of principals throughout the Lutheran school system. The Director of Schools for the Missouri District – LCMS is a high-profile position in education in LCMS school ministry and has frequent professional interactions with all members of the National Office of LCMS School Ministry. In addition, the Director has frequent contact with the executives of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

I have had the opportunity to meet many Lutheran educators and administrators during my time with the Lutheran school system. During the last four years I have had to find Lutheran administrators for several Lutheran schools who experienced a need to fill a school leadership position either because of the retirement of the current administrator or because the current administrator had accepted a Call to another Lutheran school.

During my time in the Lutheran school system, I have seen multiple Lutheran schools close. My many experiences have caused me to be passionate about the need for school administrators who are leaders and not managers and who can provide sustainability and growth

for Lutheran schools. It was important that I recognized how my experiences impacted the lens through which I performed my work for this study. I acknowledged and worked within my biases. Many of the positionalities I mentioned could have resulted in biases, but they could have also provided me access to the individuals, materials, and resources needed to complete my study.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter One of this study provides background information and provides a stated purpose for the work. The researcher shares brief reviews of research, research questions and hypotheses are in this section. The researcher defines general terminology and assumptions regarding the study. Chapter Two contains a comprehensive review of related literature. The primary focus of the review is to provide findings from similar studies as well as articles related to the problem of practice. The literature review covers such areas as leaders versus managers, why leaders are important to the sustainability and growth of schools, the decline of Lutheran schools because of the void of leaders, the leadership void in Lutheran schools, attributes of effective school leaders and effective training of school leaders. Chapter Three focuses on the research methods used to conduct this study. This section outlines the survey instrument, interview protocols, focus group process, and procedures used for analysis of the data. Chapter Four highlights the results of the study. The research questions as identified in Chapter One are reviewed and answered in this chapter. The researcher uses narratives with graphs, charts, and visual representations to describe the findings. In Chapter Five, the final chapter, the researcher provides a summary of the study, limitations of this study, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Summary

Leading a Lutheran School

All endeavors of a Lutheran school should be faith-based. Jesus reminds us that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). In Lutheran schools God is always at work and those who have been placed in the school as workers have been Called to do His work. It is important that Lutheran schools base all of their work, all of their decisions, all of their planning, and all leadership on this mission and unique Lutheran identity. In his address to Lutheran school administrators, Frost stated (Frost, ALSS):

Any school can be passionate about great curricular and co-curricular programs, provision of state-of-the-art facilities and improved student results. For a Christian school, however, assets such as these, along with other specific programs that might align with ‘being the best’, are always dependent on the right people and must emanate out of the mission and core beliefs.

Lutheran school leaders will often aspire to their school being a “good” school. Leaders of Lutheran schools will comment about having good academics, good athletics, a good fine arts program, good faith-based programs, and a good overall school. These leaders will not set a priority of competitiveness, but rather embrace that the school is a Lutheran school serving students from Lutheran churches and families seeking a faith-based education. Convincing parents to pay for a “good” school versus sending their child to a “free” public school is often a losing proposition in today’s hypercompetitive school market. As Jim Collins states in his book, *Good to Great*, “Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great. We don’t have great schools, principally because we have good schools” (Collins, p. 1, 2007). Lutheran school leaders need to make a conscious decision to

pursue greatness for their schools. Greatness means to be great academically, financially, co-curricularly, spiritually, and in all other areas of education.

Lutheran school leaders may choose not to pursue greatness because they feel it may imply running a school like a business or comparing itself against other schools. This is not the case. Each school is unique and must pursue greatness within its uniqueness. “It is the relentless pursuit of being the best you can be with the resources you have” (Frost, 2007). This comes back to the leader of a Lutheran school providing an identity for the school. “When a school knows its identity, it can then pursue greatness within that framework. Effective school leaders know how to focus the work of the school on the essential. They have a clear mission or purpose for the school and identify goals that align with that mission. They communicate the purpose and goals in a meaningful way such that all stakeholders understand what they need to do” (McIver, Kearns, Lyons, & Sussman, 2009, p. 12).

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

A review of the literature reveals that little attention has been given to the skills and abilities that a leader must possess to provide for the sustainability of schools, especially Lutheran schools. In fact, educational leadership research has generally neglected to consider its role in relation to faith-based schools (Grace, 2003, 2009; Lawton & Cairns, 2005). The literature on effective practices of Christian school leaders is present but lacks the breadth and depth of research found for school leaders in public schools and overall school leadership.

There is a wealth of research conducted about effective leadership in education, especially when it comes to leadership and academic progress of students. In addition, there is much research conducted on effective leadership in business and industry, the military, and in various other settings. However, there is little research about an effective leader in nonpublic schools, Christian schools, and especially Lutheran schools. The literature that is present on leadership in nonpublic schools, Christian schools, and even Lutheran schools, focuses on the school setting and academic progress of students, but there is little research on leadership qualities and abilities that provide for school sustainability and growth.

Little research appeared in the literature focusing on Christian school leaders in the United States and very little research was present on leadership in Lutheran schools. Blase and Kirby (2009) found the following: “Empirical research provides few detailed pictures of the everyday social and behavioral dynamics of effective school-based leadership” (p. 2). The research that is present for leadership in Christian schools focuses mostly on the role of the administrator as a spiritual leader for the school and the importance of the school’s values in relation to family (Cardus Education Survey, 2011). The literature review suggests that leaders in

Christian schools view their roles as not that of spiritual leader but rather as an intellectual leader.

The research that is present on leadership in nonpublic schools mostly focuses on the importance of the leader's role in student achievement. However, research is present that examines the changing job functions of the school leader in a nonpublic school including charter schools and Christian schools. Included in this research is the acknowledgement of the inadequacy of current administrator preparation programs in providing the necessary skills and abilities for the changing role of a school leader in a Christian school. Also, the literature review acknowledges the need for Christian school leaders to develop leadership behaviors and not a managerial-focused role as the school leader. In examining the literature, it is noted that the school leader has a significant impact on the success of all schools; however, the role of a leader in a Christian school is magnified and is a leading factor in the sustainability of the school.

According to Bolman and Deal (1995), many pathways lead to effective leadership. Focus, passion, wisdom, courage, and integrity emerged as important qualities of an effective leader (76). Sergiovanni (2005) states that,

Love becomes a duty and an obligation when one views school leadership as a vocation or a calling. Love is the basis for the practice of servant leadership. Servant leadership requires that one loves the purposes, goals, and intents that define the leader's work and that of the school. (p. 100)

It is asserted in literature and in anecdotal discussion that effective leadership is key to successful and sustainable nonpublic schools. Leadership is especially important to Lutheran schools as the Lutheran school system is structured differently than most systems and creates more reliance on the leader at the individual school level. Lutheran schools do not have a

superintendent of schools like a public Catholic school system. The Lutheran school system has a district level leader that serves to advise Lutheran school leaders, but schools are autonomous and do not have to take the suggestion or guidance of the district level leader.

An effective school needs effective leadership to set and achieve its goals. “Leadership acts as a catalyst without which other good things are quite unlikely to happen” (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 28). Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) concluded that effective leadership is a predictor of student achievement. In fact, when examining the factors that contributed to student achievement, the authors found that effective leadership was second only to effective classroom instruction.

Defining Leadership

In their study of leadership Kouzes and Posner (2002) make the statement that “exemplary leadership and credible leaders make a difference in the world” (p. 385). Leadership can be complex and difficult to define completely. According to Yuhl (1994), “the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no one definition” (p. 3). However, a review of literature does provide a working definition that provides direction when researching school leadership. “At the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions: providing direction and exercising influence” (Leithwood & Rheil, 2003). According to Leithwood (1995), effective leadership is an exceptionality that is “hard to find, worth trying to learn about and emulate, and carries with it a high degree of respect and value” (p. 7). Drucker (2001) puts forth that leadership is the “ability to convert creativity, mental ability, and knowledge into results; thus, the ability to achieve” (p. 192). “Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership

team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers” (Gardner, 2007, p. 17).

Leaders are those who can induce “a group to pursue objectives held by the leader” (Gardner, 1990, p. 1). Leaders have a vision, they understand excellence and instill the concept in others, and they can sell their vision to others. Successful leadership practices lead to successful schools (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). To define leadership qualities of Lutheran school administrators, the office of National Lutheran School Ministry, in the early 2000s, worked with Cornerstone Consulting to develop a framework for Excellence in Leadership for Lutheran Schools (See Appendix A).

Leadership vs. Management

There is frequently a discussion about leadership and management. In schools the terms are frequently used as synonyms, or they are viewed to be used in conjunction, noting that a leader must manage and lead at the same time. In this study the researcher noted that leadership and management are both necessary; however, there should be a distinction between the two and what defines effective leadership versus effective management. Yvette Gyles (2020) provides a concise distinction between leadership and management in *Leadership: The 5 Practices of Effective Leaders*:

There are a host of definitions of management and leadership – and certainly too many to mention in this article. At **mc** we often use two of the simplest definitions offered by management guru Peter Drucker:

- **Leadership:** from an ancient Greek word meaning *pathmaker*
- **Management:** from an ancient Greek word meaning *pathfollower*

Drucker also speaks about managers *doing things right*, and leaders *doing the right thing*.

At **mc** we've translated Drucker's ideas onto some key activities shared by managers and leaders, such as planning, resources, and people management

Issue	Manager	Leader
Planning	Sequence and task	Overview and result
Thinking	Assess risk and be rational	Challenge and be intuitive
People	Supervise and support	Motivate and encourage
Change	Maintain status quo	Actively promote change
Resources	Allocate and monitor	Identify and seek out
Focus	Detail conscious	Big picture

(p. 1)

The concepts of leadership, management and administration overlap and have been accorded different emphases over time and in different contexts. Day and Sammons have put forth the following table of leadership concerns and managing concerns:

Leading concerns	Managing concerns
Vision	Implementation
Strategic issues	Operational issues
Transformation	Transactions
Ends	Means
People	Systems
Doing the right thing	

(Day & Sammons, 2014, p. 11).

To further the concept that leadership skills are different than management skills, Day and Sammons (2014) also provide key dimensions of successful leadership, stating that:

The key dimensions of successful leadership are identified as:

- defining the vision, values, and direction
- improving conditions for teaching and learning
- redesigning the organization: aligning roles and responsibilities
- enhancing teaching and learning
- redesigning and enriching the curriculum

- enhancing teacher quality (including succession planning)
- building relationships inside the school community
- building relationships outside the school community
- placing an emphasis on common values. (p. 7)

It is clear that a school leader provides vision, has a strategic plan, instills new ideas and sells these to the constituencies, while a manager emphasizes the functions, behaviors, and operational tasks of a school.

The position requirements of nonpublic school leaders in the 21st century has changed. In discussing his resignation at the end of the 2018-2019 school year a Lutheran school principal stated, “I used to be able to focus on students and classroom learning, now I have to focus on finances, fundraising, and so much more” (Briggs and May, 2019). This principal’s viewpoint is supported by research. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) in its annual Trendbook states that leadership requirements and expectations of today’s leader have indeed changed. In fact, “Outdated leadership skills are contributing to a leadership gap and needless turnover in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations” (NAIS Trendbook, 2019, p. 91). The lack of necessary leadership skills and more traditional management skills of many leaders is creating a leadership gap. In addition, the training of future leaders also lacks the necessary elements to provide for leaders that will possess the necessary skills and abilities to fill the growing number of available leadership positions. According to The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) there will continue to be a leadership gap in the foreseeable future. “The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) studied 2,239 leaders from 24 organizations in three countries and found that ‘organizations today are experiencing a current leadership deficit and can expect a leadership gap in the future’” (NAIS Trendbook, p. 95, 2019). The NAIS Trendbook

(2019) has put forth a list of leadership skills and their ranking for leaders of today versus the leaders five years from now:

Comparison of Leadership Skill Importance: Now Versus Future (5 Years from Now)

Now	Future
1. Change management	1. Inspiring commitment
2. Inspiring commitment	2. Leading employees
3. Taking initiative	3. Taking initiative
4. Building collaborative relationships	4. Strategic planning
5. Leading employees	5. Change management
6. Strategic perspective	6. Building collaborative Relationships
7. Strategic planning	7. Strategic perspective
8. Composure	8. Employee development
9. Participative management	9. Participative management
10. Being a quick learner	10. Being a quick learner

(p. 94)

Christian schools face the same struggles as non-religiously affiliated schools when it comes to the changing needs of its leaders. The lack of leadership skills and traits is a cause of leadership attrition at Christian schools. The leader of a Christian school must possess leadership skills and traits that have changed from the prior managerial traits and skills of school leaders. “The managerial challenges and job complexity for K-12 Christian schools has resulted in high attrition rates for school leaders. One in five leaders of private schools turns over each year” (Independent School Management, 2016).

In Lutheran schools the leader must have the skills and abilities to successfully position Lutheran schools for sustainability. To be successful, Lutheran schools to be successful they

must have leaders who possess the leadership traits and skills needed today instead of the management skills that would have sufficed in years past. It may be said that there are many trends that are negatively impacting Lutheran schools; however, with leaders who possess the correct leadership skills and traits, Lutheran schools will be positioned so that these trends do not negatively impact Lutheran schools. “Trends are often blamed for the crises and failures experienced by Lutheran schools yet trends themselves cannot be changed by leaders. It would be more accurate to say that successes and failures of Lutheran schools are caused by how effectively and creatively church and school leaders and their followers address these trends” (Maier, p. 8, 2013).

Leadership in schools is changing and becoming more comprehensive and more complicated. It is not only in the nonpublic school world that leadership is vital to a school’s future, nor is it only in nonpublic schools that leadership skills and demands have changed. Stein (2016) wrote in *Schools Need Leaders - Not Managers: It’s Time for a Paradigm Shift*:

In the world of public-school education everything depends on good leadership. Sadly, many of our schools’ administrators can’t differentiate the difference between leading and managing; far too many of them don’t know the first thing about fundamental leadership principles. In short, they don’t understand the fundamentals of Mission Oriented Leadership, the need for top-down leadership, or the critical differences between leadership and management. (p. 1)

As leadership has changed over time it continues to be vital to the success and sustainability of schools.

All too frequently the leader of a school is adept at managing but not at leading. While management is an important aspect of running a school, it is leadership that sustains and grows

schools. The main difference between leaders and managers is that leaders have people follow them while managers have people who work for them. Lutheran school administrators must be managers as they are accountable for the daily functions and operations of a school; however, they must also be leaders who provide vision, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, and a strategic plan for the school. The key to determining if Lutheran school administrators are leading or managing first is understanding the difference and then recognizing if Lutheran school administrators have the skills, abilities, and talents to lead.

The Principal Preparation Program (2009) in *Making Sense of Leading Schools* outlines seven critical functions a good leader needs to be successful regardless of the type of school:

The study states that the principal does not have to enact all seven functions themselves but needs to be responsible for them all to be carried out including:

1. **Instructional Leadership:** Assuring quality of instruction, modeling teaching practice, supervising curriculum, and assuring quality of teaching resources.
2. **Cultural Leadership:** Teaching to the symbolic resources of the school (e.g. its traditions, climate and history).
3. **Managerial Leadership:** Tending to the operations of the school (e.g. its budget, schedule, facilities, safety and security and transportation).
4. **Human Resource Leaders:** Recruiting, hiring, firing, inducting, and mentoring teachers and administrators; developing leadership capacity and professional development opportunities.
5. **Strategic Leadership:** Promoting a vision, mission, and goals and developing a means to reach them.

6. External Development Leadership: Representing the school in the community, developing capital, public relations, recruiting students, buffering, and mediating external interests and advocating for the school's interests.
7. Micropolitical Leadership: Buffering and mediating internal interests, maximizing resources (financial and human).

It is essential that leaders be skilled, prepared, and trained for the multiple roles they must serve nonpublic schools to be successful. A study performed by Independent School Management found that the top three *stability markers* for sustainability of K-12 non-public schools have been identified as (a) cash reserve/debt/endowment mix, (b) strategic plan/strategic financial plan, and (c) executive leadership (Independent School Management, 2015). While executive leadership is one of the top three markers, in nonpublic schools, the executive leader is responsible for achieving the other two markers outlined by ISM. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for a nonpublic school's sustainability to have an excellent leader who is responsible for achieving the three ISM *stability markers* for sustainability. As Kurland, Peretz, and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2010) found in their research studying leadership styles, the leader has the primary responsibility for enrollment, the quality of the educational programs, and the main responsibility for the financial health and well-being of private schools. It is the leader of the school that is responsible for all aspects of a school's success or failure. The leadership of the school administrator has a direct impact on school success, including faculty and student behaviors, faculty and student self-efficacy, and teaching practices of faculty (Marzano, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2006; Snowden & Gorton, 2002). As stated by Nichols (2006) in his study of Christian school leaders, there is a strong relationship between Christian school closure and failed leadership.

A successful school leader sets the course for school sustainability and growth. The leader can provide a vision and strategic plan that provides for the school's current and future success. "Much of what leadership is about has to do with change. Leadership is about setting a course for the future and enlisting others to work toward that vision" (Maier, p. 10, 2013).

Effective Leadership

The extensive responsibilities of today's school leaders require a depth of understanding in finance, curriculum, child development, human resource management, time management, community and public relations, and effective communication skills. Some leadership traits and practices may be more effective than others when guiding a school through these challenging times. We consistently hear seasoned school leaders note that the role of the Christian school leader has changed dramatically over the past decade, that the expectations of boards have changed, and that priorities have shifted (Whitepaper: Characteristics of Christian School Leaders, p. 1, n.d.).

What does effective leadership look like? Smith and Andrews (1989) noted the following: "The principal who is a strong leader functions as a forceful and dynamic professional through a variety of personal characteristics, including high energy, assertiveness, ability to assume the initiative, openness to new ideas, tolerance for ambiguity, a sense of humor, analytic ability, and a practical stance toward life" (p.8). Siccone (2012) presented five essential sets of skills for school leaders:

1. Confidence in self and others
2. Communication skills to listen, speak, and write for effective, productive outcomes
3. Collaboration as a team effort to solve problems, reach goals, and

- planning strategies
4. Coaching to develop the team of professionals for individual and organizational growth
 5. Continuous improvement as opportunity for growth for the organization for a purpose (p. vi)

The Christian School Leadership Framework (CSLF) describes the competencies and behaviors considered most important to the performance of heads of Christian schools. The CSLF is built on three major categories: (1) Leadership from the Heart, (2) Relational Competencies – essential personal skills or processes, and (3) Strategic Competencies – key content areas (Association of Christian Schools International, 2014, p. 1).

Former Director of Lutheran School Ministry, Bill Cochran (2008), in conjunction with a team of Lutheran school leaders whom he assembled, developed essentials for effective school leaders:

- Administrative Performance - Exceptional leadership requires administrators that are dedicated to visionary leadership and empowering management. An effective school leader must:
- 1) possess exceptional abilities in data analysis, staff motivation, and public communication;
 - 2) assure that marketing and public relations are effectively being accomplished;
 - 3) be both visionary and empowering; and
 - 4) have a clear commitment to sharing the Gospel message. (p. 18)

Attributes of Effective Educational Leaders

A study on educational leadership in the Hawaii public school system found the most important attributes of a successful administrator, in order of highest to lowest correlation of

importance are “vision and leadership, collaborative team building skills, ethical decision making, effective management skills, curriculum and instructional knowledge, and understanding broader social context” (Daniel, 2004, p. 20). Though it is important to understand the context of what characteristics correlate to successful leadership, it is equally important for school leaders to understand his/her leadership styles. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has developed a study guide designed to enhance one’s understanding of their leadership style (Glanz, 2002, p. 1). Lutheran school leaders must identify the necessary tools for success. Lutheran schools can be an extremely insular environment. It is necessary to examine best practices of leaders in other school systems, whether the school systems are public, private, Christian, or otherwise. In an article by Derrick Meador (2017) entitled *10 Things a Successful School Principal Does Differently*, a list of effective traits for a principal to model are listed and are effective in any school system:

1. Surround themselves with good teachers
2. Lead by example
3. Think Outside the Box
4. Work With People
5. Delegate Appropriately
6. Create and Enforce Proactive Policies
7. Look for Long-Term Solutions to Problems
8. Become an Information Hub
9. Maintain Accessibility
10. Students are the First Priority. (pp. 1-4)

Effective Leadership Practices of Superintendents in Christian Schools

Research points toward effective leadership in Christian schools having an impact on spiritual growth, health, sustainability of the school as well as organizational stability, vision, and growth for students, families, staff, and the school community. Christian and Catholic education organizations have established standards and benchmarks for effective schools; however, it is worth noting that they have not established standards or benchmarks for effective leaders within their schools (Bootsma, p. 36, 2018).

Kowalski (2006) painted a gray picture of the conditions: “Unlike their business counterparts, superintendents face more explicit legal constraints, a high dependency on government for resources, less decision-making authority, and more intensive external political influences” (p.1577).

While Kowalski’s above quote focuses on the realm of leadership; there are clear expectations for management of the school by the superintendent. Kowalski (2006) made this point clear: As a manager, a superintendent makes and enforces rules, controls material and human resources, strives for objectivity and rationality, and pursues efficiency. As a leader, a superintendent focuses on philosophy, purpose, and school improvement. Although leadership is clearly more essential to the central purposes of schooling, management is neither unimportant nor counterproductive to effective education. (p. 225).

Leadership Void

Observations on the Leadership and Decline of Lutheran Schools

Decline of Lutheran Schools in the United States

In the Missouri District - LCMS, as well as on a national level, is that many Lutheran schools lack a leader (principal, headmaster, head of school, whatever the school-based leader is

titled) with the necessary skill set to sustain and grow a Lutheran school. In addition, from approximately 2008-2018, almost 40% of the leaders of Lutheran schools (principals, headmaster, head of school, etc.) will have retired (Plummer Krull, 2015, p.1). “According to the 2009 NAIS leadership and governance report, 68 percent of sitting U.S. independent school heads plan to retire or change jobs by 2019. We are now in the midst of that transition, and the numbers will likely accelerate as the baby boomer school heads who delayed retirement in response to the financial crisis begin to leave their jobs” (Kane & Barbaro, 2015, p. 1). “Many baby boomers are retiring from lengthy tenures at their schools, opening positions to younger, first-time heads. While it is beneficial for schools when their heads have long tenures, the average tenure has dropped to around seven years” (Stewart, 2015, p.1). As the Director of Lutheran Schools for the Missouri District - LCMS, my responsibility is to find leaders for those schools that have an open position and to develop future leaders to fill such roles. As noted by Liethwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004), “there are no documented instances of troubled schools turning around or improving without the work and influence of solid, inspiring, talented leadership” (p. 4). It is not only troubled schools, but all schools that need solid, inspiring, talented leadership, for schools that lack it could easily see sustainability threatened through such ineffective leadership.

Training School Leaders

The job functions of a Christian school leader have changed; however, the training in terms of receiving an administrative degree has not. According to Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) in their work on principal selection,

First, in regard to principal selection, our results suggest that characteristics that can be directly observed on a resume – such as the selectivity of the school from which a

candidate received their master's degree – are probably less important than characteristics that cannot, such as leadership skills and motivation. (p. 3)

Mendez-Morse (1992) found that,

The leadership literature of the 1970s and 1980s, with its focus on effective leaders, revisited personal traits as determinants of leadership abilities. It primarily contributed to understanding the impact of personal characteristics and individual behaviors of effective leaders and their role in making organizations successful. (p. 16).

When Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield (1980) began studying what makes some principals more effective than others, they learned that the demographic characteristics of principals such as race, age, sex, level of education and years of experience were unreliable predictors of a leader's effectiveness (Hord, Rutherford Huling-Austin & Hall, 1987). Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) observed principals during their study and found that they often had many of the same characteristics:

- A set of clear goals,
- Self-confidence,
- An acceptance for uncertainty,
- A tendency to test the limits of interpersonal and organizational systems,
- A sensitivity to dynamics of power,
- An investigative perspective,
- An ability to be in charge of their jobs

These researchers also saw the principal's position as more than just a list of skills that needed to be performed by the principal. The principal as a person is often defined by a leadership style and a capacity for personal interaction (De Bevoise, 1984, pp. 17-18). “Other attempts to

examine leadership have yielded information about the types of behaviors leaders exhibited in order to determine what makes effective leaders effective” (Mendez-Morse, 1992, p. 13).

Mendez-Morse (1992) asserts that

The review of leadership literature has led to an initial identification of the six characteristics of leaders of educational change which are:

- having a vision,
- believing that the schools are for learning,
- valuing human resources,
- being a skilled communicator and listener,
- acting proactively, and
- taking risks. (p. 50)

The lack of individuals who are willing to be principals is nationwide and one faced by public and private schools. The *Principal Shortage* (2017) states:

According to the Institute for Education Statistics, one in five principals working in schools in the 2011-12 school year left their school by the 2012-13 school year.

Additional research shows that one out of every two principals is not retained beyond their third year of leading a school. School leaders who are retiring, transferring schools, or pursuing new opportunities within the education sector are not being replaced by enough qualified candidates. As a result, many school districts across the country report principal vacancies and a serious lack of qualified applicants to replace them. (p. 1)

As Gregory Hine of Ascension Catholic School in Overland Park, Kansas states, “It is a general finding of this body of recent research that, upon consideration of many factors, there is a nationwide shortage of qualified individuals wishing to assume roles in school administration”

(Hine, 2003, p. 2). According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals, a national poll of superintendents provided the following reasons not to become a school principal:

- 58% compensation insufficient for responsibilities
- 25% too much time required for the job
- 23% too stressful

(Guterman, 2007, p. 1).

In Lutheran schools, one of the antidotal theories of why Lutheran school teachers do not desire to be an administrator at a Lutheran school is the fact that there is not a significant pay difference between serving as a Lutheran school teacher to serving as a Lutheran school administrator. At the 2017 Conference of Education Executives and College Placement Directors (CONFEDEx), Mike Spinks from the Concordia Plan Services stated, “Lutheran school teachers tend to be paid comparable to public school teachers. However, on the administrator side, there is a lot of room for improvement as there is usually only a 3%-5% increase in pay from teacher to administrator” (CONFEDEx, 2017).

Addressing the Leadership Void in Lutheran Schools

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) has a program that is attempting to address the need for school leaders in Lutheran schools. Investing in future leaders by training those leaders is also a central topic in the literature. Stueber (2000) advocated for training that prepares principals to be effective leaders in Lutheran schools. In 1996, the LCMS Office of National Ministry started the School Leadership and Development (SLeD) program to train future and current leaders of Lutheran schools throughout the system (Plummer Krull, 2015, p. 1). Each year LCMS district education executives nominate outstanding Lutheran educators to participate in a nationwide SLED program. From its inception in 1996 to 2016, the SLeD program has “graduated” approximately 400 participants. In an article about the SLeD program,

Terry Schmidt, former Director of Lutheran Schools, stated in an article by Plummer-Krull (2015):

In 2015, the SLeD program received more nominations than the 25 available slots could handle. That number is only about half the instructors the program once served, pointing to another challenge facing LCMS School Ministry leaders — finding funding to continue a project that, over the years, has depended on charitable granting agencies.

(p. 1)

In 2016 the SLeD program lost its funding and was cancelled. It was then reinstated at the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod Convention in June 2016 (Reisner, 2016, p.1). However, in a conversation with the then Assistant Director of Lutheran Schools, Dr. Becky Schmidt, the SLeD program is not only about the number of SLeD participants, but the quality. According to Dr. Schmidt, in 2017 the SLeD program had empty seats because there were fewer nominations to the program. Also, because of a concern for the quality of some of the participants over the last twenty years and their track to leadership positions, the nomination process changed in 2017. Today, all nominations must be approved by the District's Education Executive (Director of Schools). Prior to this policy, educators that desired to be in the SLeD program would self-nominate and be chosen by a committee based on the applicant's required submission materials.

The Importance of Leadership to a School's Success

Researchers Ewert (2013), Chakrabati and Roy (2011), McMillan, (2007) and Burris, and McKinley (1990) contended that critical issues such as financial challenges, stiff market competition, and lack of dynamic leadership capabilities are typical characteristics that most private and Christian schools share. McMillan (2007) argued that "often Christian schools hire great managers but fail to hire great leaders" (McMillan, 2007, p. 3). Ewert (2013) argued that all

private Christian schools face tough administrative challenges including affordability and competitive challenges imposed by school of choice, charter schools and homeschooling. However, leaders can develop internal and external forces that provide a successful path for their schools and not succumb to these challenges as managers would. According to Vance Nichols in his research on factors endangering Christian schools in America, “A major overarching finding across the research was that nearly all factors identified by participants invariably intersected with and were related to either: (1) leadership failure at the school site level; (2) cultural changes; or both” (Nichols, 2018, p. 1).

The question may be *Does leadership make a difference?* There are some examples of visionary leaders that are providing direction for Lutheran schools. In 2009, Luther High School South in Chicago closed. Luther South faced many of the same problems that other Lutheran schools face: escalating, excessive and extensive debt; declining enrollments; aging facilities; and lack of a strategic plan. Amid Luther South closing, Rev. Paul and Judith Andersen stepped in with a new vision of how to provide Lutheran education in Southwest Chicago. The Andersen’s envisioned refurbishing the high school and opening a “new” Lutheran high school at the same site, but one that concentrated on Math, Science, and Fine and Performing Arts. Concurrently, they espoused the idea of housing offices of other Lutheran social organizations at the site of the high school to help offset expenses. The long-term vision is a site that today offers a Lutheran school from K-12, Lutheran social service agencies, a Christian bookstore, and eventually senior housing. The goal is that the site will become a beacon of hope and outreach to the community (Bussert, 2011, p. 5). The question is, *Will this dream come to fruition?*

At the Summer 2017 conference of Lutheran District Educational Executives, school leadership was the main topic. Franklin Covey’s *The Leader In Me* school transformation

process was introduced as a possible direction in leadership for Lutheran schools. Two representatives from Franklin Covey spent a day discussing *The Leader In Me* theory and how it has been successfully utilized to turn around schools all over the United States. Much time was spent on the transformation of A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, N.C., and Matt Miller, Principal of Wren Hollow Elementary School in Ballwin, Missouri was in person to describe how he utilized *The Leader In Me* program to turn around two schools in Missouri. Emphasis was placed on the ability of the school leader to make the necessary changes for a school to be successful (Presentation by Fanklin Covey Institute, Nashville, June 21, 2017). If the leadership of Lutheran schools is not addressed, the Lutheran system may become extinct. The story is written just like that of the Catholic school system in the Archdiocese of Chicago's Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools (2013):

Between 1964 and 1984, 40 percent of American Catholic high schools and 27 percent of Catholic elementary schools closed their doors” and the rate has not decreased. Those that remained open “proved less well grounded in the Catholic faith and therefore less capable of passing on a robust Catholicism to their students. This reality should lead to some serious soul searching among Catholic educators and clergy. We need to do things differently!

It is true in the Lutheran system, just like in the Catholic system, that we need to do things differently. Lutheran schools are struggling because they are trying to make the traditional model of Lutheran schools work in a society that has radically changed. “In order to respond to this change in society, congregations need a different model for Christian school ministry. But schools do not change easily” (Galvin, 2016, p. 4). Lutheran school sustainability has been challenged as 456 Lutheran schools closed from 2005-2016, becoming one of the reasons that

the LCMS established a Blue-Ribbon Commission on the Future of Lutheran Schools (Reinsel, 2016, p.1). For Lutheran schools to effectively address the sustainability crisis of its school's effective school leaders are needed. Doing things differently starts with leaders who possess the vision, knowledge, and fortitude to do things differently. The way to sustain Lutheran schools is through leadership. "According to Borman and his team (2000), success and failure depend on the leadership and culture of a school. As such, as is the case in other types of organizations, ineffective leadership is often reported as an essential internal cause of failure in schools (Mintrop & MacLellan, 2002; Watts, 2000)" (Murphy and Meyers, 2008, pp. 265-266).

School Leadership Training

Many states and private school systems have developed leadership training programs for both public schools and nonpublic schools alike because of the need for quality leaders. Due to retirements and frequent turnover, there is a growing need for administrators throughout the country. Our country does and will need a cadre of quality leaders. According to Dr. Roger Dorson in the Missouri Leadership and Development Series Executive Summary (2018), "Effective leadership is the hallmark of successful schools. Cultivating that capacity in every Missouri principal is essential to the success of each student. The Missouri Leadership Development System is the right approach, at the right time, for the right reasons" (p. 2).

States like Arkansas, Missouri, and Ohio, in recognizing that developing leadership means developing a successful school, have developed programs for school leaders. The Catholic school system and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod school system have recognized the same and have developed leadership programs for current and future school leaders. Leaders who possess the necessary skills and abilities to successfully lead schools must be identified and placed as school leaders for schools to thrive. Bennis (1989) stated:

To survive in the twenty-first century, we are going to need a new generation of leaders – leaders, not managers. The distinction is an important one. Leaders conquer the context – the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous surroundings sometimes seem to conspire against us and will surely suffocate us if we let them – while managers surrender to it. (p. 7)

For Lutheran school sustainability there is indeed a need for leaders, not managers, and those leaders must be identified, prepared and placed as leaders in Lutheran schools.

A principal's ability to foster teacher engagement largely depends on his or her own innate talents, refined and complemented by learned skills and knowledge (Gallup, p. 34). School administrators must embrace a new perspective of leadership infused with a learning mindset as opposed to the role of a commander (Reeves, 2006).

Training and Equipping Lutheran School Administrators

Forty percent of all Lutheran elementary and secondary school principals are expected to be at or past retirement age by the year 2020. Fewer church worker students have matriculated from the Concordia University System (training for Lutheran school teachers) over the last 20 years which has created a significant void in providing a replacement pool for retiring Lutheran school teachers and administrators. Among the current teachers and administrators in Lutheran schools nationwide, 71% are not rostered (Being rostered is the education and certification process of the Lutheran Church –Missouri Synod to ensure the theological grounding and to bring a Christian world view into the Lutheran school and the Lutheran school classroom).

Several of the Concordia universities provide a master's degree in Education Administration. However, the master's degree requirements are virtually the same as those offered in a public institution. There are no special courses offered by the Concordia University System that provides for the skills that today's Lutheran school administrator must possess, such

as greater understanding of finance and budgeting, fundraising, enrollment/admissions, marketing, board development, school facilities, legal matters specific to religious institutions, etc.

In 1996, The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's National Office of School Ministry introduced the School Leadership Development (SLeD) Project. Since its inception, the SLeD project has had 400 participants. Marsha Hafer, a 2015 SLeD cohort participant, stated, "An answer to prayer...the SLED program puts us in relationships with people facing the same situations" (Plummer Krull, 2015, p. 1). All SLeD participants have a coach assigned to them for the year-long program. The SLED project covers a variety of topics including: the importance of marketing, strengthening technology, developing parent relationships, and building a network of support (Plummer Krull, 2015, p. 1). It is important for future leaders and those searching for leaders to understand the training that is available to Lutheran school administrators. It is equally as important for those designing and leading school leadership development programs to know how useful the training is and has been to its participants, such as gathering statistical information on how many current Lutheran school administrators have received training that is additional to a master's degree, or, if a Lutheran school administrator has a Master's Degree or any additional training may help leadership development program designers and schools looking to hire administrators understand an individual's likelihood of success in his/her leadership role.

Lutheran school administrators are required to perform many duties that their public-school counterparts are not. It is necessary for Lutheran school administrators to have the opportunity for training that is specific to their role. By providing training from a Lutheran ministry perspective, Lutheran school administrators recognize the critical aspects of being a Lutheran school administrator and developing a Lutheran school of excellence. Lutheran schools

rise and die with leadership. It is important to understand the training that is available and how that training is specific to Lutheran school administrators.

In its program description, the Van Lunen Fellowship Program (2020) states:

In today's educational environment, the expectations placed upon the head of a Christian school exceed the executive management skills most have developed prior to the start of their professional roles. School heads contend with the complex challenges of culture among students and families, rising expectations among parents in a highly competitive educational and co-curricular landscape, and decreasing value placed upon the traditional values of Christian education. There are demands for professional expertise in marketing, communications, organizational development, strategy, revenue growth, and financial management. Too many school heads are crushed by the weight, and the Christian school movement suffers. (p. 1)

Characteristics of Successful Lutheran Schools

For Lutheran schools, success is measured by more than grades, standardized test results, and college admission rates. According to *Christian Education a Key to LCMS Ministry* (2008) Lutheran schools have been established and exist for six reasons:

to nurture faith, to grow in grace and knowledge, to teach the Word, to establish and communicate Christian values, to equip for Christian service, and to reach out to others with the Gospel message. Not all Lutheran schools exist for all six of these reasons; the typical Lutheran school's existence can be traced to at least two or three of these reasons. (p. 4)

According to Perry Breseman, Associate Director of Congregations and Schools for the Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod from 2005-2012, "successful Lutheran schools (including elementary, middle, and high schools) are Christ-centered, academically strong, responsibly managed, and

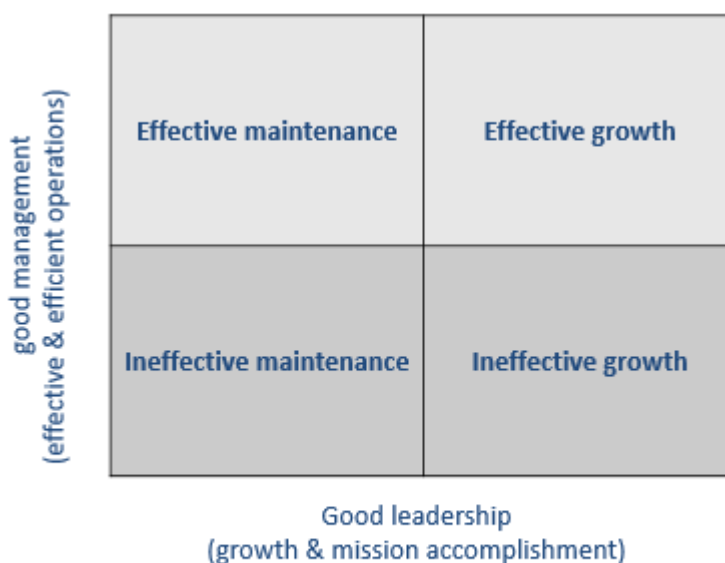
technologically advanced” (Breseman, Funding Academy I, 2010).

In *Characteristics of Successful Schools*, public schools a successful leader is described as one who:

1. demonstrates flexibility in dealing with change and a willingness to experiment.
2. makes decisions based on attaining the most positive results for students rather than on adhering to or maintaining an established system.
3. analyzes disaggregated data from multiple sources and uses it to inform decisions.
4. uses technology effectively to lessen the load of routine tasks and to provide more effective communications.
5. recognizes individual differences in staff and students and provides opportunities to meet their needs.
6. facilitates and builds consensus that guides rather than mandates.
7. uses a blend of top-down and bottom-up decision-making processes.
8. inspires, persuades, and influences others by their own actions and attitudes.
9. stays current on educational research and trends and provides the same information to stakeholders.
10. responds to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families.
11. maintains a focus on the possibilities and opportunities instead of the barriers.
12. cultivates support for the school and its mission among all segments of the community, school board, district personnel, and other concerned individuals and groups. (p. 3)

The Jim Collins book *From Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't* about how to take a company to greatness, has led to a study of how to take and enact the same principles in schools. According to Collins, one of the six components of a great

organization is what he referred to as a *Level 5 Leader* (Collins, 2001). Dr. Gene Frost, Head of School at Wheaton Academy, followed *Good to Great* with a study attempting to apply Collins's principles to Christian secondary schools and reported his findings in his book *Learning from the Best*. In *Learning from the Best*, Frost refers to *Level 5 Leadership* as servant leadership (Frost, 2007). Frost had provided a chart, depicted below, showing his quadrants of good management and good leadership.



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Figure 3. Management vs. Good Leadership.

In her work “*Ten Traits of Highly Effective Principals: From Good to Great Performance*,” author and educator Elaine K. McEwan-Adkins, Ed.D. identifies the following characteristics for successful leaders: “A highly effective principal is: (1) a communicator; (2) an educator; (3) an envisioner; (4) a facilitator; (5) a change master; (6) a culture builder; (7) an activator; (8) a producer; (9) a character builder; and (10) a contributor” (McEwan, 2003, p.12).

In addition to the Leadership components put forth by other scholars and school leaders, the LCMS National Office of School Ministry has put forth a *Leadership Framework*. In 2006, Bill Cochran, Director of Lutheran Schools at that time, worked with a group called *The*

Cornerstone Factor to develop a Leadership Framework for Lutheran school administrators. In figure 1 below, the LCMS National Office of School Ministry outlined the leadership model toward excellence for Lutheran school administrators.

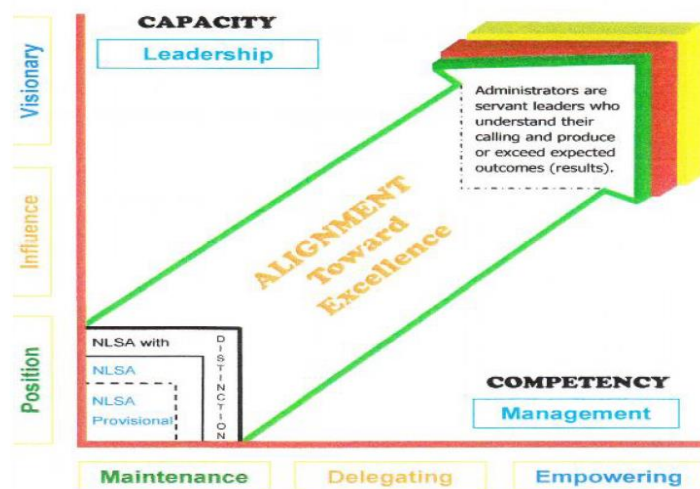


Figure 4. Alignment Toward Excellence for Lutheran School Administrators.

(Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Office of School Ministry)

The LCMS National Office of School Ministry saw a need to address leadership in our Lutheran schools, mainly because of the number of Lutheran schools that were and are closing as well as the number because of administrators that are retiring. With just under 500 Lutheran schools closing from 2005 to 2017, there is a need to stem the tide. Couple the school closings with the fact that from 2014-2020 40% of current Lutheran school administrators are projected to retire, there is clearly a need to address how to keep Lutheran schools viable and sustainable (Bergholt, 2017).

While these traits characterize a successful principal, the leader of a Lutheran School functions more in the role of what a public school would consider a superintendent or what the business world would consider a chief executive officer because of the leader's responsibilities to report to a board, oversee the finances of the school, and set a strategic plan. A successful

leader, from discussions with former directors of LCMS School Ministry, Terry Schmidt (2016) and Bill Cochran (2018), and from Lutheran Schools of Excellence documents, for the purposes of this study, exhibits the following behaviors and abilities:

1. provide a financially responsible fiscal plan with a balanced or surplus budget and a revenue stream that does not have more than 85% generated from tuition and has placed the school in a financially healthy position which can be confirmed by an independent audit confirming the school as an ongoing concern.
2. provide a strategic plan that includes academic success, financial stability, professional development, marketing, and student recruitment.
3. provide a technology plan that provides students and educators with the most appropriate technology for their academics.
4. lead his/her school through National Lutheran Schools Accreditation or another regionally or nationally accepted accreditation body.
5. develop the nine components and characteristics of Excellent Lutheran Schools as outlined by Dr. Bill Cochran during his time as Director of Lutheran Schools for the LCMS Office of School Ministry (Cochran, pp. 18-19).
6. generate a Christ-centered environment that faculty and guests can qualitatively identify.
7. be a servant-leader.

Addressing the Leadership Challenge in Lutheran Schools

Leadership is a key element of a school's success; therefore, it is disconcerting that many heads of Lutheran schools will be retiring from their positions, leaving a leadership void (if not quickly filled) in the next few years. This trend of aging leadership is not only occurring in the Lutheran high school system but is a trend found nationwide. "According to the U.S.

Department of Labor statistics, more than 50% of the nation's 93,200 principals will be retiring over the next 15 years" (Daniel, 2004, p. 4).

While retirement is a key factor in producing vacant principalships, it is not the only factor. "In recent years, a number of reports depict the principalship as being in a state of crisis largely precipitated by two troubling factors: (1) School districts are struggling to attract and retain an adequate supply of highly qualified candidates for leadership roles; and (2) Principal candidates and existing principals are often ill-prepared and inadequately supported to organize schools to improve learning while managing all of the other demands of the job" (Davis, et.al., 2005). Lutheran universities have seen a substantial decline in the number of students enrolled and graduating from the system with a Lutheran Teaching Diploma. The decline of graduates with a Lutheran Teacher Diploma directly impacts the number of potential Lutheran school leaders. According to Bill Schranz, Chair of the Concordia University Placement Directors, the number of students graduating from the Concordia University System with a Lutheran Teacher Diploma has declined by 310 students in five years, and the overall decline in students graduating with a Church Vocation Degree has declined by 431 students in that same time . (Schranz, CONFEDEx, 2016).

The Concordia University System projects a continued decline in the number of students in the Lutheran Teacher Degree program and in the Church Worker Vocation programs. At a time when the need for Lutheran teachers and principals is increasing, the number of those entering the profession is decreasing. As the public system is finding it difficult to fill leadership positions, the Lutheran school system historically has more difficulty filling leadership roles. With the void in available leaders, schools are all too often driven to accept someone who is

willing to take the position but lacks the skills necessary to successfully lead the school.

According to Beadle (2017):

Too often the board is willing to accept a leader with the right heart but without the capacity to lead in a changing environment. The results are stagnant schools and a staggering three-year average tenure for heads of Christian schools. Leaders feel safer maintaining instead of leading. Christian school boards and leaders must provide both vision and leadership that create a value proposition for parents and students with the same level of planning, accountability, and communication. (p. 2)

Reasons for Declining Pool of Principals

The Lutheran school system is attempting to address the leadership issue through various programs. The LCMS National Office of School Ministry has run the School Leadership Development Program (SLeD) for aspiring leaders since 2001 except for 2016 when the program was not funded. In those 16 years, 605 Lutheran school teachers and/or administrators participated in the SLeD program, yet there is still a significant deficit in the number of leaders ready and capable to fill the open leadership positions in Lutheran schools. In addition to retiring, many administrators are leaving the Lutheran school system for positions in other school systems or are leaving the field of education.

In addition to the SLeD program, the Association for Lutheran Secondary Schools has partnered with the Van Lunen Fellowship Program to train current heads of school in the management of schools in today's educational environment. Each year, The Van Lunen Fellowship program accepts twenty-two current heads of Christian schools in the United States and Canada into a year-long cohort to learn from instructors and from each other about the

unique skills needed to be successful leaders in their current or future positions. Van Lunen places special emphasis on the skills needed to guide and lead today's Christian school "with the complex challenges of culture among students and families, rising expectations among parents in a highly competitive educational and co-curricular landscape, and decreasing value placed upon the traditional values of Christian education" (The Van Lunen Center, n.d., para. 1). The leader of a Christian school, including a Lutheran school, is expected to possess professional expertise in marketing, communications, organizational development, strategy, revenue growth, and financial management. Too many school heads are crushed by the weight, and the Christian school movement suffers (The Van Lunen Center, n.d., para. 1).

Several Lutheran Church Missouri Synod District Education Executives have joined together to address the void of leaders and the lack of leaders possessing the necessary skills to lead Lutheran schools by forming the Future Lutheran Administrators Midwest Educators (FLAME) training. FLAME is an intensive program that brings together future Lutheran administrators from Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The future administrators are chosen by their LCMS District Education Executive to participate in the year-long program. The program's goal is to have the participants ready and prepared to take a leadership position at a Lutheran school and/or to enter the SLeD program on completion of the FLAME program.

Parochial schools across the United States are facing the challenge of maintaining operations. All are faced with similar issues. "Confronted with falling birth rates and demographic shifts, rising tuition, the growth of charter schools, and other challenges, parochial schools are seeing their enrollments plummet" (Marcus, 2015, p. 1). One such example in the Lutheran system is Trinity Lutheran School. After 145 years of operation, Trinity Lutheran School in Port Huron, Michigan, is closing at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Trinity's

principal, Tim Owens, attributes the closure to financial struggles because of lower enrollment, competition from public ‘academy’ schools, and parents no longer able/willing to pay tuition at Trinity (Rath, 2017, p. 1). It is not just the Lutheran school system that has seen several school closings in the last decade; the Catholic system is also experiencing a rash of school closings.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association (2017):

In the 10 years since the 2006 school year, 1,511 schools were reported closed or consolidated (19.9%), while 314 school openings were reported. Due to different definitions used by dioceses for consolidations, closings and their transitions into new configurations, along with actual new schools opened, the actual decrease in number of schools since 2006 is 1,064 schools (14.0%). The number of students declined by 409,384 (17.6%). The most seriously impacted have been elementary schools. (p. 1)

The Archdiocese of Chicago stressed the need for Catholic school leadership in its 2013-2016 Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools that states, “Research has shown school leadership to be the single most important factor in the success of a school. Principals in the Archdiocese of Chicago must effectively fill many roles: religious and secular educational leaders, managers, marketers, counselors to families and staff, and fiscal officers” (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2013, p.13). The importance of principal leadership was noted in case studies of two Washington State schools undergoing reform (Borko, Wolf, Simone, & Uchiyama, 2003). The case study concluded that principal leadership was “perhaps the single most important factor because of its impact on the other five dimensions [professional community; program coherence; technical resources; knowledge, skills, and dispositions of individual teachers; and learning opportunities for teachers] of school capacity” (Borko, Wolf, Simone, & Uchiyama, 2003, p. 196). Thomas

Sergiovanni has reinforced the importance of leadership factors in effective schools with his five domains – technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural (Sergiovanni, 1995).

Changing Role of School Leadership

“Principals shape the environment for teaching and learning. The most effective principals create vibrant learning communities where faculty and staff collaborate to help every student fulfill his or her potential” (NEA Education Policy and Practice, 2008, p. 1).

A recent Wallace Foundation study *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning* indicated that effective principals perform five key practices well:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students.
 - Creating a climate hospitable to education.
 - Cultivating leadership in others.
 - Improving instruction.
 - Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.
- (Wallace, 2013).

The role of the principal has changed and evolved over time as schools have evolved over time. With increased job responsibilities brought on by community expectations, government requirements, and a need to respond to various constituencies, the role of the school principal continues to change. According to *The 21st Century Principal* (2004):

A fundamental difference in contemporary schools is that principals are now ensuring systemic change rather than simply managing schools and the people in them. Effective principals have been described as the “lynchpins of school improvement” and the “gatekeepers of change” (ERS 2001). These characteristics stand in stark contrast to the roles of protector-of-the-status-quo, authoritarian manager-of-day-today-business, and school-wide disciplinarian that characterized the job of yesteryear. (p. 4)

School leaders are responsible for many aspects of the school's success. While many may assume that effective school leadership comes from a focus on curriculum and instruction, today's school leaders have many responsibilities they must address that go beyond the realm of curriculum and instruction. "Today's school leaders must guide instruction, manage campuses and deal with parents and the community. The job of being a principal is nothing if not an exercise in juggling dozens of duties and being in many places at the same time. More than a few people have suggested the job is essentially impossible" (Hechinger Report, 2011, p. 1). In Lutheran schools the school leader has duties that include internal and external constituencies. The Lutheran school leader is tasked with working well with the pastor of the congregation(s), overseeing curriculum and instruction, providing teacher observation reports, overseeing both internal and external communication, serving as an admissions guide, developing a strategic plan, and being a fundraiser. As put forth by Davis et. al. in the School Leadership Study Commissioned by the Wallace Foundation when speaking about public school principals: "They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs" (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005, p. 3).

Summary

Nonpublic school enrollment has been declining for years and only recently has started to level. Nonpublic schools and especially those with a religious affiliation serve a significant

number of families, and their closures could have a negative impact on public schools and on school choice for families. “In fall 2015, some 5.8 million students (10.2 percent of all elementary and secondary students) were enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools. Thirty-six percent of private school students were enrolled in Catholic schools, 39 percent were enrolled in other religiously affiliated schools, and 24 percent were enrolled in nonsectarian schools. (The Condition of Education, 2018). Unfortunately, for several years nonpublic schools faced for several years a substantial number of school closings. “According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between the 1999–2000 and 2005–06 school years, the K–12 faith-based education sector lost nearly 1,200 schools and nearly 425,000 students” (*Preserving a Critical National Asset*, 2008). As President Bush stated in the White House Domestic Policy Report: *Preserving A Critical National Asset: America’s Disadvantaged Students and the Crisis in Faith Based Urban Schools*, “They (religious schools) are part of our Nation’s proud story of religious freedom and tolerance, community development, immigration and assimilation, academic achievement, upward mobility, and more. To lose these schools is to lose a positive, central character in the narrative of urban America” (*Preserving a Critical National Asset*, 2008).

The leader of a faith-based school is the most important determinant if the school will be sustainable or will fail. It is the leader of the school that directly impacts all other areas of the school and sets the vision for the future, thus the sustainability of the school or the failure of the school. Identifying the qualities of successful leaders is important, but it is also necessary to identify those who possess these skills, so they can be tapped for leadership positions. Knowing the qualities is only part of the process because those who possess those qualities must be trained, developed, and encouraged as they fill leadership roles. The sustainability and success of

all schools, but especially Lutheran schools, depends on having an excellent leader running the school.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership impacts the success and sustainability of Lutheran schools. The study sought to identify leadership traits, practices, and characteristics that a successful Lutheran school administrator must possess and how those traits, practices, and characteristics lead to success as a school leader and sustainability for the school. The study also identifies how the leadership abilities of the Lutheran school administrator address the challenges that are currently stressors on the success of Lutheran schools.

This study will examine the leadership qualities of school leaders from Lutheran schools in the Missouri District – LCMS. The Missouri District – LCMS schools, just like Lutheran schools across the country, are experiencing declining enrollments and closures. The focus of this dissertation is to identify and understand the leadership traits and practices that a Lutheran school leader must possess for a Lutheran school to sustain and thrive. The study will then be utilized in the development and professional growth of current and future Lutheran school leaders. The research will utilize the Delphi Method to collect data from a panel of experts on leadership traits, qualities, and the development of successful Lutheran school principals.

According to Amos and Pearse (2008),

The Delphi technique is typified by five main characteristics which are discussed in more detail below, namely (1) its focus on researching the future or things about which little is known, (2) reliance on the use of expert opinion, (3) utilizing remote group processes, (4) the adoption of an iterative research process, and (5) the creation of a consensus of Opinion. (p. 96)

In addition, a focus group interview of a panel of experts provided triangulation for the researcher and feedback on the survey questions. This approach provided rich information about the leadership characteristics, traits, and qualities of successful Lutheran school leaders.

“Classical Delphi, and most derivations thereof, is valued for its potential to gather data from the best participants (panel of experts) without regard for location. Data can be collected via e-mail or file sharing software (such as Google docs). This feature of Delphi allows researchers to use a sample that is most appropriate for a study rather than most convenient or cost-effective, a common critique of qualitative dissertations” (Sekayi, D., & Kennedy, A., 2017, p. 2761).

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

1. What are the leadership factors that contribute to the effectiveness of an administrator of a Lutheran school?
 - a. What are the key traits, attributes, qualities, and characteristics of an effective Lutheran school leader?
 - b. What are the leadership behaviors and practices of a successful lead administrator of a Lutheran school?
 - c. How can Lutheran school leaders be effectively trained to successfully lead and sustain Lutheran schools?
2. How can leadership practices be used to provide sustainability and growth at Lutheran schools?
3. What can we learn from highly successful Lutheran school leaders?

Theoretical Framework

Vital to the sustainability of Lutheran schools is both the examination of the qualities and characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders and ~~also~~ the building of leadership programs that identify and develop those qualities so well-qualified individuals can assume leadership positions in Lutheran schools. Having well-qualified leaders is vital to the sustainability of Lutheran schools. The research used the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools (ALSS) LEADiT (Leadership Evaluation and Development Tool) for Executive Directors and the Lutheran Schools of Excellence for Administrators will be utilized as a framework reference for the study. The LEADiT tool provided the researcher guidance on domains and possible questions to ask as he coded surveys in Rounds Two and Three of the Delphi Study. In addition to the above, The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders standards that are designed for all levels of public-school educational leadership (i.e., principals, assistant principals, etc.) was also utilized to determine domains and coding for surveys in Rounds Two and Three. The following is a list of these standards for school leaders as put forth by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015):

- 1) Mission, Vision, and Core Values: “Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student” (p. 9).
- 2) Ethics and Professional Norms: “Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p.10).

- 3) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness: “Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p. 11).
- 4) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: “Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and wellbeing” (p 12).
- 5) Community of Care and Support for Students: “Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student” (p. 13).
- 6) Professional Capacity of School Personnel: “Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p. 14).
- 7) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff: “Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p. 15).
- 8) Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community: “Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and wellbeing” (p. 16).
- 9) Operations and Management: “Effective educational leaders manage school operation and resources to promote each student’s academic success and wellbeing” (p. 17).
- 10) School Improvement: “Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p. 18).

In addition to identifying and training for leadership skills, traits, qualities, and characteristics, it is also important to identify how successful Lutheran school leaders are trained and developed. It is important for the sustainability of Lutheran schools that current leaders and future leaders know and understand the qualities and behaviors of successful leadership that lead to sustainable Lutheran schools. These successful traits must be taught in a Lutheran school Leadership Development Program. Ultimately, this will help with the recruitment, development, and retention of successful Lutheran school leaders. Professional development programs for Lutheran school leaders can be built around the qualities and skills necessary for leadership so that qualified individuals are recruited and Called to Lutheran schools.

Research Design: The Delphi Method

The Delphi Method, developed by Norman Dalkey and Olaf Helmer of the Rand Corporation in the early 1950s, was created “to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts” (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963, p.458). The researcher used the Delphi Method to gain consensus among the experts in this study. Patton (2002) asserted, “There is a very practical side to qualitative methods that simply involves asking open-ended questions of people . . . in real-world settings in order to solve problems, improve programs, or develop policies” (p. 136). Hsu and Sanford (2007) explained: “The Delphi technique is a widely used and accepted method for gathering data from respondents within their domain of expertise” (p. 1). Linstone and Turoff (2002) note that Delphi is appropriate when “the problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis” (p. 4). They further describe Delphi as a four-phase process (Linstone & Turoff, 2002):

1. Exploration of the subject under discussion, where panelists contribute information pertinent to the issue,

2. The process of reaching an understanding of how the group views the issue, i.e., where the panelists agree or disagree, and what they mean by relative terms such as importance, desirability, or feasibility,
3. Exploration of disagreements to bring out the underlying reasons for the differences,
4. A final evaluation is prepared and fed back to panelists for consideration. (p. 5)

As stated by Jones, the Delphi Method is, “appropriate for knowledge generating [while equally] providing validity and theoretical structure” (2004, p. 1). Jones also states, “developing a consensus tool by using reflective teams to interpret qualitative [analysis]” (2004, p. 108) strengthens a study.

A strength of the Delphi Method is the sequential surveys that participants complete that provide the researcher with perpetual feedback and then build consensus from the participants. This, in turn, yields greater levels of accuracy in the study (Jones, 2004).

The primary purpose of this Delphi study was to determine the leadership traits, qualities, and characteristics of effective and successful Lutheran school principals.

In Phase One of this Delphi Study the researcher enlisted a panel of experts who were selected from Lutheran school leadership development programs. The expert panel then provided the researcher names of Lutheran school principals whom they identified as successful Lutheran school principals who exhibited successful traits, qualities, and characteristics of Lutheran school principals. Through the Delphi Method the panel of experts provided consensus concerning the necessary traits, qualities, and characteristics of successful Lutheran school principals and their leadership practices. Phases Two and Three were developed from an analysis of the Delphi panel findings (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017, pp. 2757-2758). Phase Four provided the research findings based on the consensus of the expert panel. Using the Delphi Method, the research presented in

this study is a hybrid method that contains both quantitative and qualitative results providing data collection and analysis of the opinions of experts

(Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017, pp. 2757-2758).

Through an iterative process, a panel of experts identified appropriate traits, qualities, characteristics, knowledge and competencies necessary to be a successful Lutheran school principal. Following the Delphi Method, the study consisted of four rounds. The first survey round consisted of open-ended questions. The following rounds consisted of sequential surveys (e.g., beginning with open ended followed by a five-point Likert- Scale). The researcher used the five-point Likert-Scale to develop consensus and through each round of scoring, the Likert-Scale responses led to a final round consisting of participants verifying the findings.

Research Context

The study included leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs. There are several separate Lutheran school leadership development programs including the School Leadership Development (SLeD) Project that is run by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Future Administrator Candidate Training (FACT) Program that is run by the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools (ALSS), the Pathways Program run by the Chicago Lutheran Education Foundation, and the Future Lutheran Administrators- Midwest Educators that is run by a coalition of LCMS District Education Executives from six districts (North and South Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio). In addition to the four LCMS leadership development programs, many Lutheran school principals also participate in the Van Lunen Leadership Program. While the Van Lunen Program accepts and trains principals of any Christian school, several Lutheran school administrators have participated in leadership program. Two of the faculty members are associated with the LCMS, including the Executive Director of

the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools. The Director of LCMS Lutheran Schools is a graduate of the program, as is this researcher.

Delimitations

The researcher's focus in this study is ~~focused~~ on the beliefs and experiences of leaders of Lutheran school leadership programs and Lutheran school principals they identified as successful leaders and did not include Lutheran schoolteachers, students, or leaders of other school administration leadership programs who may identify additional aspects to what they believe are characteristics, traits, and behaviors, that a successful school principal must possess. Hsu and Stanford (2007) cite Jones and Twiss (1978) who suggest "the principal investigators of a Delphi study should identify and select the most appropriate individuals through a nomination process" (p. 3). There are a limited number of leadership programs for Lutheran schools; therefore, the pool of experts is small ~~as well~~. The researcher used nineteen individuals who are considered the head of a Lutheran school leadership program as experts for this study. In the first survey, the researcher asked study participants to provide names of excellent Lutheran school administrators who would be good for this study. The first name listed was contacted (by the researcher) and asked to participate in the study. This provided two participant groups for the study: one composed of leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs and a second participant group composed of current Lutheran school administrators.

Limitations

Linstone and Turoff (2002) identified five potential limitations associated with the Delphi approach:

1. imposing monitor views and preconceptions of a problem upon the respondent group by over-specifying the structure of the Delphi and not allowing for the contribution of other perspectives related to the problem.
2. assuming that Delphi can be a surrogate for all other human communications in a given situation
3. poor techniques of summarizing and presenting the group response and ensuring common interpretations of the evaluation scales utilized in the exercise
4. ignoring and not exploring disagreements so that discouraged dissenters drop out and an artificial consensus is generated,
5. underestimating the demanding nature of a Delphi and the fact that the respondents should be recognized as consultants and properly compensated for their time if the Delphi is not an integral part of their job function (p. 6).

Additional limitations include poorly written questionnaires, time-consuming method, neutral responses to quicken participants completion of the survey, participants may withhold information, and high-level of participant attrition because of the multiple rounds of surveys. Strengths as well as limitations are summarized in the following Table found in Hung, et. al. (2008):

TABLE 1
Advantages/Strengths and Limitations/Weaknesses of the Delphi Method

Advantages/Strengths	Limitations/Weaknesses
Consensus-building	Group pressure for consensus-may not be true consensus
Future forecasting	Feedback mechanism may lead to conformity rather than consensus
Bring geographically dispersed panel experts together, overcoming spatial limitations	No accepted guidelines for determining consensus, sample size and sampling techniques
Anonymity and confidentiality of responses	Outcomes are perceptual at best
Limited time required for respondents to complete survey	Requires time/participant commitment
Quiet, thoughtful consideration	Possible problems in developing initial questionnaire to start the process
Avoids direct confrontation of experts with one another (encourages honest opinion, free from group pressure)	May lead to hasty, ill-considered judgments
Structured/organized group communication process	Requires skill in written communication
Decreasing somewhat a tendency to follow the leader	Potential danger of bias-surveys are open to manipulation by researchers
Focused, avoids unnecessary side-tracking for panelists	Selection criteria for panel composition
Ties together the collective wisdom of participants	Time delays between rounds in data collection process
Possibly motivational and educational for participants	May force a middle-of-the-road consensus
Cost effective and flexible/adaptable	Concerns about the reliability of the technique
Validity, as the content is driven by panelists	Drop-outs, response rates
Fairly simple to use	
Beneficial for long-range educational planning and short-term decision making	
Applicable where there is uncertainty or imperfect knowledge, providing data where little exists before	
Best used as establishing the basis for future studies	
Accommodates a moderately large group	

(p. 193)

The researcher took several steps to address the perceived weaknesses in the Delphi Method used for this study. A key element in a successful Delphi Study is keeping the participants engaged in the process. The researcher selected as participants individuals who were identified as directors for Lutheran school leadership development programs and/or individuals that were nominated by program directors for Lutheran school leadership development programs. To avoid group pressure for consensus, the researcher kept anonymity of the participants ~~was kept~~ throughout the survey process. The researcher invited each participant group to attend a final focus group session utilizing Zoom. Participants were informed that attendance at the final focus group meeting was optional, but if they were to attend the virtual focus group, they would most likely recognize the other participants, so anonymity would be lost. The researcher sought advice from Education Executives from other LCMS Districts to examine the survey questions to ensure they were well-written and easily understood. To provide for the correct analysis of participant responses, as Ludwig suggests, participants were provided with: (a) statistical feedback related to their own rating on each item, (b) how the group of participants rated the same item, and (c) a summation of comments made by each participant. This feedback process makes the Delphi respondent aware of the range of opinions and the reasons underlying those opinions (1997, p. 4). Providing the summary allowed participants to have the ability to validate their responses. In addition, and discussed later in this chapter, the researcher used other methods to address the perceived weaknesses of the Delphi Study, such as reflexivity, member checking, and peer debriefing.

Selection Process

The Delphi Study relies on experts chosen in the area of the study to participate in four rounds of surveys leading to a consensus by the group of experts. It is important for the

researcher to identify the criteria utilized to define an *expert* for the purposes of the study.

Skulmoski et al. (2007) identify four criteria required of an expert for the purposes of a Delphi study: “knowledge and experience with the issues under investigation; capacity and willingness to participate; sufficient time to participate in the Delphi; and effective communication skills” (p. 4). “The pool of experts is likely to consist of: positional leaders, authors of publications in the area of study, and investigators’ acquaintances who have firsthand understanding of a particular issue” (Hung et al., 2008, p. 193). For this study the researcher’s definition of expert included: directors of LCMS leadership development programs, directors of leadership programs, that include LCMS participants, and who hold a minimum of a master’s degree in Education Administration or similar field of study. If a director of an LCMS leadership program nominated an individual he/she felt would be a good participant in the study, the nominee had to hold a minimum of a Master’s Degree in Education Administration or similar field of study and at the time of the study meet at least one of the following criteria: served as an instructor in a school leadership development program designed for LCMS school leadership development and/or include LCMS participants in the leadership development program, served as an LCMS school principal with five or more years of experience as an administrator, served as a mentor or coach and was assigned to an LCMS leadership development program or a program that provided for participation of LCMS school leaders, and was recognized by colleagues for his/her expertise as an LCMS school leader, principal, or administrator.

Participants

The researcher utilized a purposeful selection so the researcher could “intentionally select individuals...to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). The researcher recognized the importance of the selection of the panel of experts for the validity and

results of the study and selected the lead directors of various Lutheran school leadership development programs. There are several separate Lutheran school leadership development programs including the School Leadership Development (SLeD) Program that is run by the Lutheran Church Missouri – Synod (LCMS), the Future Administrator Candidate Training (FACT) Program that is run by the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools (ALSS), the Pathways Program run by the Chicago Lutheran Education Foundation, and the Future Lutheran Administrators- Midwest Educators is run by a coalition of LCMS District Education Executives from six districts (North and South Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio). In addition to the four LCMS leadership development programs, many Lutheran school principals also participate in the Van Lunen Leadership Program. While the Van Lunen Program accepts and trains principals of any Christian school, several Lutheran school administrators have participated in their leadership program and two of the faculty members are associated with the LCMS, including the Executive Director of the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools. Also, the Director of LCMS Lutheran Schools is a graduate of the program, as is this researcher.

Research Ethics

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher received permission from the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville Institutional Review Board (IRB). In addition, the participants provided written consent to participate in the study. Per ethical study guidelines the researcher kept the study participants' identities and institutions confidential. A commitment to ethical conduct and the regulation of such was consistent throughout the study with the professional conduct outlined by the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 2010).

Instruments used in Data Collection

The researcher utilized electronic survey instruments and interviews by Zoom to collect data from an expert panel who responded in a four-round process. The expert panel consisted of leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs. The researcher collected data and tabulated the mean of each response as rated on a 1-5 Likert-scale, percentages of participant responses on the level of importance, and factors reaching 75% or above consensus.

Delphi studies may be conducted using a face-to-face discussion model or a remote access model (Day & Bobeva, 2005, p. 105). The researcher collected data for this study through in-depth, semi-structured open-ended and Likert-scaled electronic surveys using the Delphi Method. The researcher gave surveys in three phases: discovery of issues, clarification and organization of ideas, and rating the issues for importance (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Schmidt, 1997). The researcher took responses from each round and collected and analyzed them; this method served as the basis for the subsequent rounds and provided the controlled feedback that is needed for a Delphi Study (Hsu & Sandford, 2007, Rowe & Wright, 1999, Schmidt, 1997).

The first-round included an open free response survey (See Appendix A) in which the panel of experts responded to open-ended questions corresponding to the research questions (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Schmidt, 1997). The second-round survey asked experts to verify that the researcher correctly interpreted their responses and placed them in the appropriate category and to rate each response using a 5-point Likert-scale as well as to refine the categorization of the factors (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Schmidt, 1997). The third-round survey asked the experts to again rate each factor for importance using a 5-point Likert scale. The researcher analyzed the ratings of each response for level of consensus based on a rating reaching 75% consensus or higher. Round Four was an optional focus group session to provide

participants an opportunity to confirm their responses and to provide feedback on the scores while providing confirmation of consensus. The researcher also presented the results to the participants and asked for any additional feedback concerning the surveys, participant responses, ratings of each response, and an opportunity to ask any questions. During the Delphi process, a range of answers decreases as the rounds continue and the experts converge toward consensus (Rowe & Wright, 1999); this was the case with the surveys in this Delphi Study.

Through surveys, interviews, and the focus group at the end of the survey rounds, the researcher mined rich data. The multi-method approach utilized by the researcher helped with validity as well, providing triangulation. Reflexivity was vital as the researcher serves as the Director of Schools for the Missouri District-LCMS, one of the largest LCMS Districts and the LCMS District where the headquarters of the LCMS is located. This fact could have caused some issues with the perception of the survey questions, the interpretation of the data, and compilation of the survey results. Therefore, the researcher addressed validity of the study by utilizing respondent validation and peer review from fellow District Education Executives.

It is important to establish trustworthiness to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While several methods can be utilized to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research, the researcher in this study did so by utilizing reflexivity, member checking and peer debriefing. For peer debriefing, the researcher utilized a focus group that consisted of Education Executives that are part of the researcher's regional LCMS Education group. Four of the seven Education Executives in the regional group agreed to discuss the study, take and provide feedback on the surveys, and provided general thoughts throughout the length of the study. The researcher's regional executives provided their thoughts and feedback following each Survey Round. In addition, at

the end of the study, the researcher discussed the study and received feedback from all six Education Executives in his regional LCMS Education Executive regional group.

Member Checking

“Member checking is primarily used in qualitative inquiry methodology and is defined as a quality control process by which a researcher seeks to improve the accuracy, credibility and validity of what has been recorded during a research interview” (Barbour, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Doyle, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking is also known as participant verification (Rager, 2005), informant feedback, respondent validation, applicability, external validity, and fittingness (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). The participants either agree or disagree that the summaries reflect their views, feelings, and experiences, and if accuracy and completeness are affirmed, then the study is said to have credibility (Creswell 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)” (Harper & Cole, 2012, p. 2). Member checking occurred following each survey round and at the conclusion of the study with a culminating focus group session using Zoom. Following each survey round, the researcher provided each participant’s responses back to the responding participant and asked for the participant to verify their responses. The researcher then received back the verified responses and made any necessary changes requested by the participant. However, no participants requested any responses be changed. During the study’s concluding Zoom session, the researcher again requested study participants to verify their answers and the overall results of the study.

Peer Debriefing

The researcher engaged a trusted group of fellow LCMS Education Executives and shared with them the data and analysis as the study progressed. For peer debriefing, the researcher utilized 7UP, a group of LCMS Regional Education Executives to which he belongs;

the group includes the Education Executives from the following LCMS Districts: Florida-Georgia, Texas, Kansas, Mid-South, Southern, Oklahoma and Missouri. This is a well-rounded group of Education Executives who come from LCMS Districts with schools that have diverse characteristics and backgrounds and that are experiencing enrollment, financial, and leadership issues. These Education Executives are knowledgeable about Lutheran schools, the challenges they face, the unique leadership aspects facing Lutheran schools, and the basis for this dissertation. This group of peers, as well as additional LCMS Education Executives, provided an excellent review, gave feedback, challenged assertions and assumptions, and asked the needed questions about methodology and interpreting the surveys (Creswell & Miller, 2003).

Data Confidentiality and Storage

The researcher created transcripts of the final focus group session and is keeping the transcripts as well as the completed surveys in a locked cabinet. All transcripts and surveys will be destroyed after three years. The researcher maintained confidentiality by ensuring that participant names with their comments were not identified in this study.

Measurement Scale

The researcher utilized the Likert-Scale for the participant surveys. The Likert-Scale allowed the researcher to ascribe quantitative value to qualitative data which then allowed for statistical measurement. The survey used an interval scale as recommended by Linstone and Turoff (2002); the survey had a five-point Likert-Scale with a range 1 = *Definitely Not Important*, 2 = *Not Important*, 3 = *Slightly Important*, 4 = *Important*, 5 = *Definitely Important*.

Summary

The researcher utilized the Delphi Method to identify leadership traits, practices, and characteristics that successful Lutheran school administrators must possess, and how those traits,

practices, and characteristics provide for school sustainability and success in his/her role as a school leader. A purposefully chosen panel of experts participated in the Four-Round Delphi Method providing a consensus on the traits, practices, and characteristics of a successful Lutheran school principal. The Delphi Study Method provided results that can be implemented in the development and training of current and future Lutheran school principals.

Chapter 4: Results

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership impacts the success and sustainability of Lutheran schools. The study sought to identify leadership traits, practices, and characteristics that a successful Lutheran school administrator must possess and how those traits, practices, and characteristics provide for school sustainability and success in his/her role as school leader. The study also identifies how the leadership abilities of the Lutheran school administrator addresses the challenges that are currently stressors on the success of Lutheran schools. The findings of the study consist of:

1. The questions and responses in Survey Round One,
2. the development of Survey Round Two with the findings in Survey Round One, and
3. the consensus findings from the results of Survey Round Three with the additional information provided from the Zoom focus group session.

The Delphi Method provided a means for collecting and organizing data from a panel of experts. Linstone and Turoff (2002) noted, “Delphi may be characterized as a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem” (p. 3). The descriptive Delphi Method allowed the researcher to collect data from the panel of experts while allowing the panel to remain anonymous which, per the Delphi method, removes group think (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

The participant responses to surveys were completed according to the following time period:

TABLE 2 (Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)
Round 1, 2, and 3 Allocated Completion Time

Round	Allocated Time Period
Round 1	December 15, 2020- January 8, 2021
Round 2	January 27, 2021 – February 12, 2021
Round 3	March 25, 2021 – April 2, 2021
Focus Group	June 7, 2021

TABLE 3 (Lutheran school administrators)
Round 1, 2, and 3 Allocated Completion Time vs. Actual Completion Time

Round	Allocated Time Period
Round 1	March 4, 2021- March 11, 2021
Round 2	March 18, 2021 – March 26, 2021
Round 3	April 14, 2021 – April 21, 2021
Focus Group	May 28, 2021

The researcher desired to have a one-week period for participants to provide their responses to the survey and then to provide the participants with the next survey the following week; however, both the researcher and the panel of experts required more time than expected on all three rounds. With holidays, spring breaks, COVID-19 issues, and ongoing school and life events, the allotted time period for the research did not work as originally planned.

Pilot Study

The researcher enlisted a sub-group of LCMS District Educational Executives who met the criteria for the official study; however, they did not participate in the official study. The pilot study experts did participate in examining and responding to each Delphi round to help establish

the validity of the study by reviewing the process and responding to the questions which provided to the researcher valuable feedback on the clarity and purpose of each question and response. Of the six originally asked pilot study participants, only two completed all three Delphi rounds.

Sources of Data

The study included eight leaders of programs that develop Lutheran school leaders and eight current administrators of Lutheran schools. All participants responded to three rounds of surveys and then participated in a concluding Zoom session to discuss the findings of the study. Leaders of programs that develop Lutheran school leaders had served in their current roles from two years to seven years with an average of 4.22 years. In addition, all but one of these individuals served at least five years as an administrator of a Lutheran school. The Lutheran school administrators that participated in the study had served in their current roles from one year to ten years with an average of four years. All of the Lutheran school administrators in the study had served for more than five years as an administrator of a Lutheran school, so while they may have been in their current position for a short time, all had multiple years of experience. All the Lutheran school administrators that participated in the study had attended one or more of the Lutheran school leadership development programs.

Population

The population of leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs which for the purpose of this study includes the LCMS School Leadership Development Project (SLeD), Principal 360 which is part of the Chicago Lutheran Education Foundation (CLEF), the Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools (ALSS) leadership program, Future Lutheran Administrators – Midwest Educators (FLAME), and the Van Lunen Fellows Executive

Leadership Program. The population of leaders of Lutheran elementary and high schools includes principals and/or executive directors (or equivalent title) at LCMS schools who were identified and suggested by leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a study's population as a "group or elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (p. 29). According to LCMS school statistics, there are 1950 Lutheran schools. The LCMS School Ministry Office does not keep specific school records on the current number of Lutheran school administrators at each level; therefore, the population is an estimate that equals the number of Lutheran schools – 1950. Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs were selected because of their expertise. Participants for the study were selected from a cohort of individuals nominated by leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs. According to Schwandt (2015), a sample is not chosen for "their representativeness but for their relevance to the research questions" (p. 277). Participants for the study were selected from a cohort of individuals nominated by leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs. Ludwig (1997) stated, "Who is invited to participate in a Delphi futuring exercise should be carefully considered. Randomly selecting participants is NOT acceptable. Instead, characteristics and qualifications of desirable respondents should be identified, and a nomination process used to select participants" (pa. 6).

Participants

The participants in the study met the researcher's criteria to be considered expert qualified panelists. LCMS Education Executives served as an initial focus group for the study and provided names of leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs they felt would be good study participants for the research. The study participants were all noted for their

leadership in the various Lutheran school leadership development programs and had either served in these programs or have been developing Lutheran school leaders for more than five years. The Lutheran school administrators who participated in this study were all recommended by the Lutheran school leadership development study participants. The Lutheran school administrators had all served as Lutheran school administrators for more than five years, and all had attended at least one of the Lutheran school leadership development programs. Both participant groups had the qualifications that support being experts in the field of Lutheran school leadership.

Leaders

The eleven participants in the study consist of 9.09% in the age range from 36-40 (1), 18.18% in the age range from 41-45 (2), 9.09% (1) in the age range from 46-50, 9.09% (1) in the age range from 51-55, 27.27% (3) in the age range from 61-65, and 27.27% (3) in the age range over 65 with two people not answering the question. Eleven participants, 100%, identify as white or Caucasian with two participants not answering the question. Four (36.36%) participants hold a master's degree, two participants (18.18%) have an Education Specialist Degree, four (36.36%) have a Doctorate – Ph.D., and one (9.09%) has a Doctorate – Ed.D.

Lutheran school leadership development program leaders ranged in age from one participant who is 36-40 years of age to three participants who are over 65 years of age (See Table 4). Six study participants ranged in age from 61 years of age or older with five participants under the age of 55.

TABLE 4

Participants' Age (leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Age	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
36-40	1	9.09%
41-45	2	18.18%
46-50	1	9.09%
51-55	1	9.09%
61-65	3	27.27%
Over 65	3	27.27%

n=11

TABLE 5

Participants' Gender (leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Gender	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Male	9	82%
Female	2	18%

n=11

TABLE 6

Participants' Ethnicity (Lutheran School Administrators)

Ethnicity	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
White or Caucasian	11	100%

n=11

TABLE 7

Participants' Level of Education (leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Level of Education	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Master's Degree	4	36.36%
Education Specialist Degree	2	18.18%
Doctoral Degree	5	45.45%

n=11

TABLE 8

Participants' Years Served as a Lutheran School Principal (Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Years of Service	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
1-5	1	11.11%
6-10	1	11.11%
11-15	0	0.0%
16-20	1	11.11%
21-25	2	22.22%
26-30	1	11.11%
31-35	3	33.33%
Did not respond	2	22.22%

n= 11

TABLE 9

Participants' Years Training other Lutheran School Administrators (leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Years Serving as Trainer	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
1-5	4	36.36%
6-10	3	27.27%
11-15	1	9.09%
16-20	1	9.09%
21-25	1	9.09%
26-40	1	9.09%

n=11

TABLE 10

Participants' Age (Lutheran school administrators)

Age	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
36-40	2	28.57%
46-50	2	28.57%
51-55	1	14.29%
61-65	2	28.57%

n=7

TABLE 11

Participants' Ethnicity (Lutheran school administrators)

Ethnicity	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
White or Caucasian	7	100%

n=7

TABLE 12

Participants' Gender (Lutheran school administrators)

Gender	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Male	5	71%
Female	2	29%

n=7

TABLE 13

Participants' Level of Education (Lutheran school administrators)

Level of Education	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Bachelor's Degree	1	14.29%
Master's Degree	5	71.43%
Doctoral Degree	1	14.29%

n=7

TABLE 14

Participants' Years Served as a Lutheran School Principal (Lutheran school administrators)

Years	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
1-5	2	28.57%
6-10	2	28.57%
11-15	1	14.29%
21-25	2	28.57%

n=7

TABLE 15

Participants' Years Training other Lutheran School Administrators (Lutheran school administrators)

Years	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
1-5	4	57.14%
6-10	1	14.29%
11-15	0	0.0%
16-20	2	28.57%

n=7

Principals and Executive Directors

The eight participants in the study consisted of 28.57% in the age range from 36-40 (2), 28.57% in the age range from 46-50 (2), 14.29% in the age range from 51-55 (1), and 28.57% (2) in the age range from 61-65 with one person not answering the question. All eight participants, 100%, identified as white or Caucasian. One participant held a bachelor's degree, five participants held a master's degree, and one individual had a Doctorate – Ph.D. Participants' service as a principal or executive director of a Lutheran school ranged from 1-5 years to 21-25 years with 28.57% (2) serving 1-5 years, 28.57% (2) serving 6-10 years, 14.29% (1) serving 11-15 years, and 28.57% (2) serving 21-25 years. All seven respondents served as trainers in one or more of the Lutheran school administrator development programs with 57.14% (4) being involved in the training of Lutheran administrators for 1-5 years, 14.29% (1) for 6-10 years, and 28.57% (2) for 16-20 years.

TABLE 16: Percentage of Expert Panel Membership Participation for Delphi Study by Rounds

Delphi Round 1	Experts Enlisted	Experts that Completed Survey	% Response Rate
	9	9	100

n=9

TABLE 17: Percentage of Expert Panel Membership Participation for Delphi Study by Rounds

Delphi Round 2	Experts Enlisted	Experts that Completed Survey	% Response Rate
	9	8	89

n=8

TABLE 18: Percentage of Expert Panel Membership Participation for Delphi Study by Rounds

Delphi Round 3	Experts Enlisted	Experts that Completed Survey	% Response Rate
	8	7	88

n=7

TABLE 19: Percentage of Expert Panel of Lutheran school administrators Participation for Delphi Study by Rounds

Delphi Round 1	Experts Enlisted	Experts that Completed Survey	% Response Rate
	7	7	100

n=7

TABLE 20: Percentage of Expert Panel of Lutheran school administrators Participation for Delphi Study by Rounds

Delphi Round 2	Experts Enlisted	Experts that Completed Survey	% Response Rate
	7	6	86

n=6

TABLE 21: Percentage of Expert Panel of Lutheran school administrators Participation for Delphi Study by Rounds

Delphi Round 3	Experts Enlisted	Experts that Completed Survey	% Response Rate
	6	5	83.33

n=5

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Data analysis is intended to summarize the data collected from the experts in response to all survey questions during Delphi Rounds One, Two, and Three. According to Creswell (2007), data analysis provides the researcher the opportunity to make sense of the data, communicate the findings through themes and patterns, and formulate interpretations.

Delphi Method

The Delphi Method typically consists of four rounds. In the first round, the Delphi process traditionally begins with an open-ended questionnaire. The open-ended questionnaire serves as the cornerstone of soliciting specific information about a content area from the Delphi subjects (Custer, Scarcella, & Stewart, 1999). Linstone and Turoff [1975] suggest four broad, distinct phases to Delphi use including:

- Phase 1 - Characterized by exploration of the subject under discussion. Each individual contributes additional information believed to be pertinent.

In the first round of this study, participants responded to open-ended questions in a SurveyMonkey survey. The researcher then collected, collated, and coded the responses. A total of nine Lutheran school leadership development program leaders participated in Survey One, seven participated in Survey Two, and seven participated in Survey Three. A total of seven Lutheran school administrators participated in Survey One, six participated in Survey Two, and five participated in Survey Three. Both participant groups responded to the following open-ended questions in Survey Round 1.

The following questions guide this research:

1. What are the leadership factors that contribute to the effectiveness of an administrator of a Lutheran school?
 - a. What are the key traits, attributes, qualities, and characteristics of an effective Lutheran school leader?
 - b. What are the leadership behaviors and practices of a successful lead administrator of a Lutheran school?

- c. How can Lutheran school leaders be effectively trained to successfully lead and sustain Lutheran schools?
2. How can leadership practices be used to provide sustainability and growth at Lutheran schools?
3. What can we learn from highly successful Lutheran school leaders?

The study included nine experts who served in leadership positions and were involved in Lutheran leadership development programs and seven Lutheran school principals/executive directors who were currently serving in Lutheran schools and had participated in Lutheran leadership development programs. The researcher used a group of Lutheran school leaders in the development of the first survey, and this group provided input and feedback on the study on an ongoing basis. The first survey of the Delphi Study consisted of open-ended questions utilizing SurveyMonkey. The researcher sent each perspective participant an email to their work email account containing an invitation to participate in the study and a link to Survey One (See Appendix A). The researcher sent separate surveys to Lutheran leadership program experts and to Lutheran school administrators. This provided for separate paths in determining expert opinions and consensus of responses to the survey questions. While the responses of each participant group could have been compared for results, the process of allowing each group to formulate its own responses and following those responses through each of the following survey rounds meant that the researcher did not have the ability to perform an Anova analysis of variance test.

Round Two and Round Three of a Delphi Study focused on the expert's achieving consensus on their responses in Round 1, per the Delphi Methodology; and then completing the study with Round Four that consists of a focus group. For Survey Round Two and Survey Round

Three, the expert panelists identified each response as 1 = *unimportant*, 2 = *somewhat important*, 3 = *important*, 4 = *very important*, or 5 = *essential*. The researcher calculated Round Two and Round Three survey responses by multiplying the number of responses in each score position then dividing the sum of numbers by the number of responses. This provided the mean for each response and a percent out of 100 for each response. The closer the mean was to 5 or 100% meant the more important the response was deemed by the expert panel. The researcher analyzed all responses to each study question from both participant groups to determine domains and to determine if the response received a Likert-scale score sufficient to be included in subsequent survey rounds. All responses to each question in Survey Round One were included in Survey Round Two, and the responses in Survey Round Two that received a Likert-scale score of 70% and higher were included in Survey Round Three. The researcher coded the responses for broad themes and then utilized all responses for Survey Round Two. Round Two responses were coded by the researcher for consistency in broad themes, and survey responses that received a rating of 75% or higher were utilized for Survey Round Three. In Survey Round Three, the researcher asked study participants to again use the Likert-scale to rate each response to generate a consensus. Likert-scale scores of 4.1 to 5 were deemed to be the most important responses and the domains associated with those responses were deemed to be the most important domains.

Following each survey round the researcher reviewed the participant responses, scored each response using the Likert scale, and associated each response with a central theme. Following these steps, a peer was utilized to review the scores and themes. After each survey round the researcher provided study participants the opportunity to modify their responses, confirm their responses, or to provide additional comments. One participant provided an additional comment in Round Two; this comment was a suggestion to ask participants to rank

their responses as well as to score their responses. The researcher has addressed this comment in Chapter Five under Suggestions for a Future Study.

Survey Questions and Participant Responses

The first survey question asked participants to describe a successful Lutheran school. The researcher had a desire to determine the tenants of a successful Lutheran school to then have insight into how the traits of a successful Lutheran school administrator provide for the sustainability of Lutheran schools based on the traits provided by the experts who were surveyed. In their consensus in Delphi Survey Round Three, the study participants included the following as descriptions of a successful Lutheran school:

TABLE 22

Description of a Successful Lutheran School (Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Ministers to students and families on a daily basis	Mission/Ministry	4.86	97.14
Relationships thrive	Relationships	4.57	97.14
Grounded in Scripture	Lutheran	4.86	97.14
Christ-centered	Ministry	4.86	97.14
Emphasis on spiritual, physical, and social development	Mission/Ministry	4.57	91.43

n = 7

TABLE 23
Description of a Successful Lutheran School (Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Provides high quality Christian education	Excellence	5	100
Fiscally Responsible	Finance	4.6	92
Daily sharing God's love with students	Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Preaches Gospel of Jesus Christ	Mission/Ministry	4.8	90
Driven by growth: Academic growth, spiritual growth, enrollment growth	Growth	4.4	88
Everyone is working toward a common mission	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Knows Mission and Pursues it with Excellence	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
God is at the center of everything	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Strong Academics	Excellence	4.4	88
Effective Financial Practices	Finance	4.4	88
Effective Communication System	Communication	4.2	84
Holy Spirit Driven	Mission/Ministry	4.2	84
Visionary Leadership	Visionary	4	80
Emphasis on spiritual, physical, and social development	Mission/Ministry	4	80
Humility of the leader	Humility	4	80
Creates and sustains relationships	Relationships	4	80
Grounded in Christian faith, embracing Biblical inerrancy and the foundation of Lutheran ethos	Mission/Ministry	3.8	76

integrated into its fabric			
Tuition and Third Source Funding meet the financial needs	Finance	3.8	76
Management practices that include attention to detail	Detail Oriented	3.8	76
Understands the Customer Model	Relationship	3.8	76
A positioning and culture that lends itself to community	Relationship	3.8	76
A leader that understands spirituality and how it informs instruction and practice	Mission/Ministry	3.8	76
Power of collaborative work	Collaboration	3.8	76

n = 6

The next survey question asked the study participants to identify the most important traits, qualities, or characteristics of a successful Lutheran school leader. Study participants responded with the following statements: What are the most important traits, qualities, or characteristics of a successful Lutheran school leader?

TABLE 24
Most Important Traits, Qualities, or Characteristics of a Successful Lutheran School Leader
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Integrity	Integrity	5	100
Relationship Builder	Relationships	4.57	91.43
Desire to improve	Learner	4.43	88.57
Humble Servant	Servant Leadership	4.29	85.71

n = 7

TABLE 25
Most Important Traits, Qualities, or Characteristics of a Successful Lutheran School Leader
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Integrity	Integrity	5	100
Visionary	Visionary	4.6	92
Knowledge of Administrative Procedures: budgeting, hiring, etc.	Leadership	4.4	88
Open to Learning	Learner	4.4	88
Strong Communication Skills	Communication	4.4	88
Effective Communicator	Communication	4.4	88
Adapts and grows and gets others to do the same	Adaptability/Growth	4.2	84
Relationship Builder	Relationships	4.2	84
Vision awareness	Strategic Planning	4.2	84
Ready for something new each day	Adaptability	4	80
Servant Leader	Mission/Ministry	4	80
Problem Solver	Decision Maker	4	80
Desire to improve	Growth	4	80
Innovative	Innovative	4	80
Good Listener	Listener	4	80
Ministry-Mindedness	Mission/Ministry	4	80
Strategic	Strategic	4	80

n = 6

In Question Three, study participants were asked to identify the most important leadership challenges that Lutheran school leaders face and what characteristics, traits, qualities, a Lutheran school leader must possess to successfully address these challenges. Responses from the study participants are identified in TABLE 26:

TABLE 26

The most important leadership challenges that Lutheran school leaders face and what characteristics, traits, qualities, a Lutheran school leader must possess to successfully address these challenges (Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Financial Challenges	Finances	4.57	91.43
Maximizes resources	Finance	4.43	88.57
Resiliency	Resilient	4.29	85.71
Strong Communication skills	Communication	4.29	85.71
Understands Principal/Board Dynamics	Governance	4.29	85.71
Enrollment challenges	Enrollment	4.14	82.86
Be a reader and constant learner	Learner	4	80
Ability to Prioritize	Prioritizing	4	80
Awareness of one's abilities and limitations	Leadership Inventory	3.86	77.14
School Culture (changing faith formation of staff as their faith and background may no longer resemble that of the students)	Lutheran Culture	3.71	74.83

n = 7

TABLE 27

The most important leadership challenges that Lutheran school leaders face and what characteristics, traits, qualities, a Lutheran school leader must possess to successfully address these challenges (Lutheran school leaders)

Response	Domain	M	%
Hiring and retaining quality faculty members	Personnel	4.8	96
A leader must advance Christian Education with passion and excellence	Excellence	4.6	92
A need for the leader to advance Christian Education with passion and excellence	Enthusiasm of Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Quality faculty members	Personnel Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Ability to prioritize	Strategic Planning	4.6	92
Awareness of one's abilities and limitations	Self-Inventory	4.6	92

Financial challenges – must have knowledge of budgeting and business acumen	Finance	4.6	92
Ensuring that Christ Crucified is proclaimed each day and that students are equipped to participate in the Great Commission	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Curriculum	Excellence	4.4	88
Keeping Christian Education affordable while covering the cost to educate students	Mission/Ministry Finance	4.4	88
Maximizing resources (financial and others)	Strategic Planning	4.4	88
Strong communication skills	Communication	4.4	88
Must not get distracted from the Mission	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Ability to adapt/adopt/ignore when assessing what is being “thrown” at them	Adaptability	4.2	84
Ability to give and receive feedback	Growth	4.2	84
Learn from others	Learner	4.2	84
School culture (changing faith formation of staff as their faith and background no longer resemble that of the students)	Mission/Ministry	4.2	84
Business Mindedness (understanding business principles)	Finance	4.2	84
Commitment to Theology	Mission/Ministry	4.2	84
Understands Principal/Board Dynamics	Governance	4.2	84
Team focus	Relationships	4.2	84
Resiliency	Resiliency	4.2	84
Development of an improvement plan	Strategic Planning	4.2	84
Understanding of current culture	Cultural Awareness	4	80
Humility	Humility	4	80
Financial Strain	Finance	4	80
Bringing value to the school	Value	4	80
Ensure proper instructional assessment practices are in place	Excellence	4	80

Ability to build a case for the school	Leadership	4	80
Public Perception	Excellence	4	80
Providing teachers a proper salary and benefits	Finance	4	80
Ability to develop others as leaders	Leadership	4	80
Enrollment challenges – declining Enrollment	Enrollment	3.8	76
Understanding when to be a mentor/coach/colleague/boss, brother/sister in Christ when dealing with another and given the moment/topic	Adaptability/Relationships/Mission/Ministry	3.8	76
Logistical challenges	Logistics	3.8	76
Declining Enrollment	Enrollment	3.8	76
Staying organized and having a system that works for this purpose	Organization	3.8	76

n = 6

Question Five asked study participants to identify the most essential skills necessary for leading a successful Lutheran school. Question Five was an effort by the researcher to further identify the essential skills and to cross-reference those skills with leadership traits, qualities, and characteristics that study participants identified in Question Three. TABLE 28 identifies the responses to Question Five:

TABLE 28

What are the most essential skills for leading a successful Lutheran school?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Relationships	Relationships	4.86	97.14
People Skills	Relationships	4.71	94.29
Staffing (recruitment and retention)	Personnel	4.57	91.43
Keeping the Joy in Ministry	Mission/Ministry	4.43	88.57
Time and Money Management	Finance	4.43	88.57

Development of positive culture and climate	Culture	4.43	88.57
Spiritual and Mental Health of the Leader	Mission/Ministry	4.29	85.71
Team Building	Leadership	4.29	85.71
Future Sustainability of the school	Sustainability	4.29	85.71
Scripture, worship, prayer	Mission/Ministry	4.29	85.71
Caring for Others	Worker Health	4.14	82.86
Leading the school community	Leadership	4.14	82.86
Understanding one's abilities and limitations	Leadership Inventory	3.86	77.14
Demonstrate and instill Joy of Ministry	Mission/Ministry	3.86	77.14
Conflict Management	Mission/Ministry	3.71	74.29

n = 7

TABLE 29

What are the most essential skills for leading a successful Lutheran school?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Running a team	Leadership	4.4	88
Leading with vision for the future and optimism	Strategic Planning	4.4	88
Team-building deeper conversations with the team you have in place, addressing issues	Relationships Accountability	4.4	88
Effective Communication	Communication	4.4	88
Spend time in the Word, Sacrament, and prayer	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Innovation and constant evaluation of what is happening	Innovation Strategic Planning	4.4	88
Retention of quality workers and effective out-counseling of ineffective workers	Personnel	4.2	84

Budgeting and Development	Strategic Planning	4.2	84
Interpersonal skills	Relationships	4.2	84
Ability to communicate business and ministry principles simultaneously to all stakeholders	Communication	4	80
Being a good listener	Listener	4	80
Financial skills	Finance	3.8	76

n = 6

Question Six focused on the sustainability of Lutheran schools and the traits, characteristics, and abilities that a successful Lutheran school leader possesses to achieve Lutheran school sustainability.

TABLE 30

How do effective Lutheran school leaders provide for the sustainability of Lutheran schools? (Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Relationship Building	Relationships	4.86	97.14
Passion (for the Gospel and for Lutheran schools)	Ministry	4.57	91.43
Have an effective leader	Leadership	4.43	88.57
Enrollment (establishing enrollment goals and pipelines, recruitment and retention plan, a healthy family-school communication plan)	Enrollment Finance Communication	4.29	85.71
Remind constituents of God's faithfulness before, now, and in the future	Mission/Ministry	4.14	82.86
Lead with showing faith, love, hope	Mission/Ministry	4.29	82.86
Demonstrate joy of serving	Mission/Ministry	4	80

n = 7

TABLE 31

How do effective Lutheran school leaders provide for the sustainability of Lutheran schools?
(Lutheran School Administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Provides high quality Christian Education	Excellence	5	100
Preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ	Mission/Ministry	4.8	96
Fiscally Responsible	Finance	4.6	92
Daily sharing of God's love with students	Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Driven by growth: Academic growth, spiritual growth, enrollment growth	Growth	4.4	88
Everyone is working toward a common mission	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Knows Mission and Pursues it with excellence	Mission/Excellence	4.4	88
God is at the center of everything	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Effective Financial practices	Finance	4.4	88
Strong academics	Excellence	4.4	88
Holy Spirit Driven	Ministry	4.2	84
Effective Communication system	Communication	4.2	84
Grounded in Christian Faith, embracing Biblical inerrancy and the foundation of Lutheran ethos integrated into its fabric	Mission/Ministry	4.2	84
Creates and sustains relationships	Relationships	4	80
Humility of the leader	Humility	4	80
Emphasis on spiritual, physical, and social development	Mission/Ministry	4	80
Visionary leadership	Vision	4	80
Power of collaborative work	Collaboration	3.8	76

Management practices that include attention to detail	Detail Oriented	3.8	76
Tuition and Third Source Funding meet the financial needs	Finance	3.8	76
Understands the customer model	Enrollment	3.8	76
A positioning and culture that lends itself to community	Culture	3.8	76
A leader that understands spirituality and how it informs instruction and practice	Mission	3.8	76

n = 6

The researcher sought not only to examine the characteristics, traits, and abilities of a successful leader but to also determine how a Lutheran school leadership development program can develop these desired qualities in leaders. The researcher designed question Seven to extract from participants the most important knowledge and skills a successful Lutheran school leadership program should develop.

TABLE 32

What is the most important knowledge and skills of a Lutheran school leader that is effectively developed in a Leadership training program?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Mentoring and Coaching of each participant	Mentoring	4.29	85.71
Discussion of current leaders' experiences and observations	Collaboration	4.14	82.86
Networking (training on how to network with other leaders and building peer networks)	Networking	4.14	82.86

n = 7

TABLE 33

What is the most important knowledge and skills of a Lutheran school leader that is effectively developed in a Leadership training program?

(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Hands-on experiences – put knowledge and skills into practice	Learner	4.6	92
Mentoring and Coaching of each participant	Mentoring/Coaching	4.4	88
Support system	Mentoring	4.4	88
Cohort Experience	Networking	3.8	76
Emphasize time – give family first and best	Organization	3.8	76

n = 6

The researcher sought to identify the characteristics of a successful Lutheran school, identify the traits, characteristics, and abilities of a successful Lutheran school leader, and then to determine effective training of Lutheran school leaders. Questions Eight to 17 sought to identify how to successfully train and develop Lutheran school administrators in the traits, characteristics, and abilities that lead to successful and sustainable Lutheran schools.

TABLE 34

What strategies are effective in training Lutheran school leaders?

(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Coaching and Mentoring	Mentoring	4.29	85.71
Establish a need for continuous learning	Learner	4.14	82.86
Network building – sharing challenges, joys, and prayers!	Networking	4.14	82.86

n = 7

TABLE 35

What strategies are effective in training Lutheran school leaders?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
School pays for leadership development and encourages participation	Learner	4.4	88
Mentoring – provide encouragement and feedback	Mentoring	4.4	88
Spend meaningful time and sharing advice	Relationships	4.2	84
Rely on a life of kneeling at the foot of the cross each day	Mission/Ministry	4.2	84
Understand humble service	Humility	4.2	84
Participate in professional cohort	Collaboration	4	80
How to procure needed resources	Finance	4	80
How to confront conflict with confidence	Leadership	4	80
Skill development session	Self -Inventory	3.8	76
Teach about the qualities of a leader rather than the skills of a leader. Quality of character will guide a person to effective implementation of skills, but skills won't necessarily lead to a quality character	Integrity	3.8	76
Best practices conference	Collaboration	3.8	76

n = 6

TABLE 36

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Instructional Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
A culture of Professional Growth and Development	Learner	4.71	94.29

n = 7

TABLE 37

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Instructional Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
A culture of Professional Growth and Development	Learner	4.8	96
Student development and success	Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Spiritual Formation of Students	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88

n = 6

TABLE 38

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Spiritual Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Spiritual Health of Self	Church Worker Health	4.43	88.57
Calling	Mission/Ministry	4.29	85.71
Spiritual Health of Faculty and Staff	Worker Wellness	4.29	85.71

n = 7

TABLE 39

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Spiritual Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Spiritual Health of Self	Self-Care	4.6	92
Spiritual Health of Faculty and Staff	Church Worker Care	4.4	88

n = 6

TABLE 40

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Relationship Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Effective Communication with all constituents	Communication	4.86	97.14
Self-awareness	Leadership Inventory	3.86	77.14

n = 7

TABLE 41

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Relationship Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Biblical Encouragement of others	Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Effective communication with all constituents	Communication	4.4	88
Cultural Awareness and Competency	Culture	4	80

n = 6

TABLE 42

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Lead People Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Inspire a Shared Vision	Vision	4.86	97.14

n = 7

TABLE 43

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Lead People Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Inspire a shared vision	Visionary	4.6	92
Developing People	Relationships	4.4	88
Team Building	Relationships	4.2	84
Leading the Board	Leadership	3.8	76

n = 6

TABLE 44

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Drive Results Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Planning and Execution	Strategic Plan	4.71	94.29
Decision Making	Decision Making	4.14	82.86

n = 7

TABLE 45

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Drive Results Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Planning and Execution	Strategic Plan	4.8	96
Challenge the Process	Innovative	4.4	88
Decision Making	Decisive	4.4	88
Performance Reviews	Excellence	4.2	84

n = 6

TABLE 46

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Advancement Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Serve as the Face of the school	Leadership	4.57	91.43

n = 7

TABLE 47

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Advancement Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Teacher Recruitment and Retention	Personnel	4.8	96
Student recruitment, admissions, and retention	Enrollment	4.4	88
Serve as the "Face of the School"	Leadership	4.2	84
Fund Development	Finance	4.2	84
Marketing and Communication	Communication	4	80

n = 6

TABLE 48

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Operational Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Financial Oversight and Management	Finance	4.86	97.14
Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	4.57	91.43

n = 7

TABLE 49

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Operational Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Financial Oversight and Management	Finance	4.4	88
Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	4.4	88

n = 6

TABLE 50

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Innovation Leadership?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Strategic Planning – future casting	Strategic Planning	4.71	94.23
Ability to honor past but implement for the future	Strategic Planning	4.57	91.43

n = 7

TABLE 51

What are the most important elements of a Leadership Framework for Innovation Leadership?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Analysis and implementation of financial, educational, and other trends	Innovation	4.4	88
Strategic Planning – future casting	Strategic Planning	4.4	88
Change Management	Innovation	4.2	84

n = 6

TABLE 52

What do you see as the themes of the characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders?
(Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs)

Response	Domain	M	%
Character	Integrity	4.71	94.29
Lead from a Christian Perspective	Mission/Ministry	4.71	94.29
Christian Compass (Biblically minded in personal and professional life)	Mission/Ministry	4.71	94.29
Mission and Ministry Minded	Mission/Ministry	4.57	91.43
Work Ethic	Mission/Ministry	4.43	88.57
Positive Attitude	Positivity	4.43	88.57
Strategic Planner	Strategic Plan	4.43	88.57
Decision Maker	Decision Maker	4.29	85.71

n = 7

TABLE 53

What do you see as the themes of the characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders?
(Lutheran school administrators)

Response	Domain	M	%
Character	Integrity	4.8	96
Work Ethic	Mission/Ministry	4.8	96
Lead from a Christian Perspective	Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Mission and Ministry Minded	Mission/Ministry	4.6	92
Strategic Planner	Strategic Plan	4.4	88
Problem-Solving	Discernment	4.4	88
Positive Attitude	Positivity	4.2	88
Christian Compass (Biblically minded in personal and professional life)	Mission/Ministry	4.4	88
Decision Maker	Discernment	4.4	88
Communication Skills	Communication	4.2	84
Collaborative Skills	Collaboration	4.2	84
Organizational Skills	Organization	4	80
Financial Knowledge and Ability	Finance	4	80
Innovator	Innovator	4	80

n = 6

Coding and Development of Themes

The researcher coded each survey for themes; however, each participant's survey response to each question in Survey One was utilized for Survey Two. The researcher then coded Survey Two, and a statistical analysis was done, with each response given a score out of 100%. Each participant was provided the opportunity to change or add to responses in each survey round; however, participants did not change any responses. Participants were also provided the ability to submit their own responses to any question. Additional participant responses were then coded and, if appropriate, added to the next survey round. The five-point Likert scale is considered an interval scale, and the mean is ~~very~~-significant. From 1 to 1.8, it means strongly disagree; from 1.81 to 2.60 means disagree; from 2.61 to 3.40 means neutral; from 3.41 to 4.20 means agree; from 4.21 to 5 means strongly agree (Abdelrasheed, 2018). Therefore, the researcher noted the mean score that 4.21 to 5 as the more important responses provided by the study participants. The researcher also noted the themes that correspond with a response that received a mean of 4.21 to 5 and interpreted these themes as the most important or essential.

As the researcher read participant responses to each question on Survey Round One to Round Three, the researcher highlighted words and phrases associated with each coding category. Coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act. Also, the researcher was aware that a code can sometimes *summarize, distill, or condense* data, not simply *reduce* them. Madden (2010) notes that such analytic work does not diminish but 'value adds' to the research story (p. 10)" (Saldana, 2016, p. 4). The researcher noted that a participant's response may be a possible theme, the response was highlighted and marked with as descriptive phrase. When the researcher noted the same phrase or theme used by an additional participant, or if the additional participant's response used a similar word or phrase, the response was tallied, and

themes emerged. If the researcher did not find a participant's response to fit a theme, the response was then recorded as a separate response and the researcher noted it, however, the researcher did not move the response to the next survey round to gain consensus.

In Round Three the top-rated responses from leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs to the question of what do the characteristics of a successful Lutheran school include:

1. Ministers to students and families on a daily basis
2. Relationships thrive
3. Grounded in Scripture
4. Christ-centered

Each of the above responses received a mean of 4.86 on a 1-5 rating Likert-scale with 5 being *essential*. The one additional response to this question that received a 4.57 mean was *Emphasis on Spiritual, Physical, and Social Development*. The researcher placed these participant responses in the domains of *Ministry and Mission* and *Relationships*.

Lutheran school administrators provided ten responses that had a mean of 4.21 or higher on a 1-5 Likert-scale to the question Describe a Successful Lutheran School:

1. Provides high quality Christian education (5)
2. Fiscally Responsible (4.6)
3. Daily sharing God's love with students (4.6)
4. Preaches Gospel of Jesus Christ (4.5)
5. Driven by growth: Academic Growth, spiritual growth, enrollment growth (4.4)
6. Everyone is working toward a common mission (4.4)
7. Knows Mission and Pursues it with Excellence (4.4)
8. God is at the center of everything (4.4)
9. Strong academics (4.4)
10. Effective Financial Practices (4.4)

The response of *Provides High Quality Christian Education* provided a consensus response of *essential* (5) by all Lutheran administrator participants in the study.

Two responses to the question of *What are the most important traits, attributes, qualities, or characteristics of a successful Lutheran school leader* received a mean score of 4.57 or higher

from leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs:

1. Integrity (this received a perfect score of 5)
2. Relationship Builder (4.57)

Two additional responses received high mean scores with *Desire to Improve* receiving a 4.43 and *Humble Servant* with a 4.29 mean score. *Integrity* has been deemed to be the one essential characteristic of a successful Lutheran school leader as it is the only response receiving a perfect score of 5 on the 1-5 Likert scale.

In their responses to the most important traits, attributes, qualities, or characteristics for a successful Lutheran school leader, Lutheran school administrators' six responses that had a consensus 4.21 score on a 1-5 Likert-scale were:

1. Integrity (5)
2. Visionary (4.6)
3. Knowledge of Administrative Procedures: budgeting, hiring, etc. (4.4)
4. Open to Learning (4.4)
5. Strong Communication Skills (4.4)
6. Effective Communicator (4.4)

The Lutheran school administrators once again had a complete consensus score of essential (5) on one response, *integrity*.

The researcher's question asking study participants *What are the most important leadership challenges that Lutheran school leaders face* and *What characteristics, traits, qualities, and knowledge a Lutheran school leader must possess to successfully address these challenges* yielded five responses with a Likert-scale mean score of 4.21 or higher:

1. Financial challenges (4.57)
2. Maximize resources (4.43)
3. Resiliency (4.29)
4. Strong communication skills (4.29)
5. Understands Principal/Board Dynamics (4.29)

With a mean Likert-scale score of 4.57, or 91.43% score, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs set *Financial Challenges* apart from their other responses and deemed this response as the most important. In addition, the response of *Maximizes Resources* was the next highest response with a Likert-scale mean of 4.43, and this researcher categorized both responses in the *Finance Theme*. Successful Lutheran school leaders must understand the importance of *Finance*, and address the school components of *Finance*, to be successful and have sustainable Lutheran schools.

In their responses to *What are the most important leadership challenges that Lutheran school leaders face* and *What characteristics, traits, qualities, and knowledge a Lutheran school leader must possess to successfully address these challenges*, Lutheran school administrators provided twelve responses that had a consensus mean of 4.21 or higher on a 1-5 Likert-scale:

1. Hiring and retaining quality faculty members (4.8)
2. A leader must advance Christian Education with passion and excellence (4.6)
3. Quality faculty members (4.6)
4. Ability to prioritize (4.6)
5. Awareness of one's abilities and limitations (4.6)
6. Financial challenges – must have knowledge of budgeting and business acumen (4.6)
7. Ensuring that Christ Crucified is proclaimed each day and that students are equipped to participate in the Great Commission (4.4)
8. Curriculum
9. Keeping Christian Education affordable while covering the cost to educate students (4.4)
10. Maximizing resources (financial and other) (4.4)
11. Strong communication skills (4.4)
12. Must not get distracted from the Mission (4.4)

In their responses to the question *What are the most essential skills for leading a successful Lutheran school*, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs provided ten responses with a consensus Liker-scale of 1-5 mean of 4.21 or higher:

1. Relationships (4.86)
2. People skills (4.71)
3. Staffing (recruitment and retention) 4.57
4. Keeping the joy in Ministry (4.43)
5. Time and Money Management (4.43)

6. Development of positive culture and climate (4.43)
7. Spiritual and Mental Health of the Leader (4.29)
8. Team Building (4.29)
9. Future Sustainability of the school (4.29)
10. Scripture worship, prayer

Responding to the question on *What are the most essential skills for leading a successful school*, Lutheran school administrators provided eight responses that received a mean of 4.21 or higher on a 1-5 Likert-scale:

1. Running a team (4.4)
2. Leading with vision for the future and optimism (4.4)
3. Team-building deeper conversations with the team you have in place, addressing issues (4.4)
4. Effective communication (4.4)
5. Spend time in the Word, Sacrament, and prayer (4.4)
6. Innovation and constant evaluation of what is happening (4.4)

In their responses to *How do effective Lutheran school leaders provide for the sustainability of Lutheran schools*, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs provided four responses with a 1-5 Likert-scale mean score of 4.21 or higher:

1. Relationship Building (4.86)
2. Passion (for the Gospel and for Lutheran schools) (4.57)
3. Have an effective leader (4.43)
4. Enrollment (establishing enrollment goals, and pipelines, recruitment and retention plan, a healthy family-school communication plan) (4.29)

In their responses to *How do effective Lutheran school leaders provide for the sustainability of Lutheran schools*, Lutheran school administrators provided ten responses with a 1-5 Likert-scale mean score of 4.21 or higher:

1. Provides high quality Christian Education (5)
2. Preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ (4.8)
3. Fiscally Responsible (4.6)
4. Daily sharing of God's love with students (4.6)
5. Driven by growth: Academic Growth, spiritual growth, enrollment growth (4.4)
6. Everyone is working toward a common mission (4.4)

7. Knows Mission and Pursues it with excellence (4.4)
8. God is at the center of everything (4.4)
9. Effective Financial practices (4.4)
10. Strong academics (4.4)

Survey questions 8-14 focus on the training of Lutheran school leaders. Responding to *What are the most important knowledge and skills of a Lutheran school leader that is effectively developed in a Leadership training program*, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs had only one response higher than a consensus mean of 4.21 on the 1-5 Likert-scale: *Mentoring and Coaching of each Participant* (4.29).

Responding to *What are the most important knowledge and skills of a Lutheran school leader that is effectively developed in a leadership training program*, Lutheran school administrators provided three responses higher than a consensus mean of 4.21 on the 1-5 Likert-scale:

1. Hands-on experiences-put knowledge and skills into practice (4.6)
2. Mentoring and Coaching of each participant (4.4)
3. Support system (4.4)

Questions 9 - 16 examined themes within Leadership Framework for Christian schools as proposed by the Association of Christian Schools International: Instructional Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Relationship Leadership, Lead People Leadership, Drive Results Leadership, Advancement Leadership, Operational Leadership, Innovation Leadership.

Instructional Leadership

1. A culture of Professional Growth and Development (4.71)

Spiritual Leadership

1. Spiritual Health of Self (4.43)
2. Calling (4.29)
3. Spiritual Health of Faculty and Staff (4.29)

Relationship Leadership

1. Effective Communication with all constituents (4.86)

Lead People Leadership

1. Inspire a Shared Vision (4.86)

Drive Results Leadership

1. Planning and Execution (4.71)

Advancement Leadership

1. Serve as the Face of the school (4.57)

Operational Leadership

1. Financial Oversight and Management (4.86)
2. Strategic Planning (4.57)

Innovation Leadership

1. Strategic Planning – future casting (4.71)
2. Ability to honor past but implement for the future (4.57)

Lutheran school administrators provided the following responses to Questions 9 to 16 which examine themes within a Leadership Framework for Christian schools as proposed by the Association of Christian Schools International: Instructional Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Relationship Leadership, Lead People Leadership, Drive Results Leadership, Advancement Leadership, Operational Leadership, Innovation Leadership.

Instructional Leadership

1. A culture of Professional Growth and Development (4.8)
2. Student development and success (4.6)
3. Spiritual Formation of Students (4.4)

Spiritual Leadership

1. Spiritual Health of Self (4.6)
2. Spiritual Health of Faculty and Staff (4.4)

Relationship Leadership

1. Biblical Encouragement of others (4.6)
2. Effective communication with all constituents (4.4)

Lead People Leadership

1. Inspire a shared vision (4.6)
2. Developing people (4.4)
- 3.

Drive Results Leadership

1. Planning and Execution (4.8)
2. Challenge the Process (4.4)
3. Decision Making (4.4)

Advancement Leadership

1. Teacher Recruitment and Retention (4.8)
2. Student Recruitment, admissions, and retention (4.4)

Operational Leadership

1. Financial Oversight and Management (4.4)
2. Strategic Planning (4.4)

Innovation Leadership

1. Analysis and Implementation of Financial, Educational, and Other trends (4.4)

The final question asked participants to identify themes emerging from the characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders. Responses from the leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs that exceeded a 1-5 Likert-scale mean of 4.21 or above included:

1. Character (4.71)
2. Lead from a Christian Perspective (4.71)
3. Christian Compass (Biblically minded in personal and professional life) (4.71)
4. Mission and Ministry Minded (4.57)
5. Work Ethic (4.43)
6. Positive Attitude (4.43)
7. Strategic Planner (4.43)
8. Decision Maker (4.29)

Lutheran school administrators provided nine responses that exceeded a 1-5 Likert-scale mean of 4.21 or above included:

1. Character (4.8)
2. Work Ethic (4.8)
3. Lead from a Christian Perspective (4.6)
4. Mission and Ministry Minded (4.6)
5. Strategic Planner (4.4)
6. Problem-solving (4.4)
7. Positive Attitude (4.4)
8. Christian Compass (Biblically minded in personal and professional life) (4.4)
9. Decision Maker (4.4)

The researcher attempted to seek similarities and differences from the leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs and Lutheran school administrators by generating separate responses from each expert panel. While the responses contained some similarities and some differences, there were strong similarities in the themes generated from the responses from each participant group.

Summary of Results

Discussion

Utilizing leadership frameworks from the Association of Christian Schools International (ASCI), the LCMS Lutheran Schools of Excellence Leadership Framework, and the School Leader Paradigm developed by the *School Leader Collaborative*, the researcher developed and organized the fifteen traits, characteristics, and qualities into four leadership categories:

Leadership of the Call:

- Ministry and Mission
- Integrity
- Servant Leadership

Personal Leadership:

- Growth
- Self-Inventory
- Learner
- Resilient

Relational and Social Leadership:

- Worker Care
- Communication

- Relationships
- Mentoring/Coaching

Systems Leadership:

- Finance
- Vision
- Innovator
- Strategic Plan

Several themes were mentioned more frequently than others: *Communication, Relationships, Finance, Strategic Plan, Learner, and Mission/Ministry*. *Integrity* is noted as a theme, although the researcher did not code more than one statement for the theme *Integrity* because it was evident that *integrity* was the most important theme. The study participants noted integrity in their responses and gave integrity the highest score of all responses. It was evident that the theme of *Integrity* emerged as the most important theme. Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs gave it a score of 97.6%, and Lutheran school administrators gave it a score of 100%.

Themes that emerged from the experts' responses:

Leadership of the Call

Ministry and Mission

Study participants provided many statements that the researcher coded as being in the *Ministry and Mission* theme. The study participants affirmed the coding as they agreed on multiple responses that certainly fit the *Ministry and Mission* theme, and they affirmed that should be the case as a Lutheran school administrator must be *Ministry and Mission* minded. The foundation of all Lutheran schools is to show God as the Creator, to show Him in all subjects

that are taught and activities that are held, and for all to know that God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins so that we may have eternal life. If a school does not proclaim these foundational concepts, it then simply does not possess the identity of a Lutheran school.

“It’s a key leadership of the Lutheran school administrator to envision and develop a set of school and classroom practices and procedures, activities and experiences, that will effectively enable teachers and students to practice the presence of God in all aspects of their daily lives as they experience and consider God’s grace in and through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Cochran, N.D., *Lutheran School Administrator’s Handbook*, p. 14). Lutheran school administrators are trained in Lutheran Doctrine in one of two ways: through their bachelor’s degree program when they attend a Concordia University and receive the Lutheran Teaching Diploma; or, if they did not attend a Concordia University for their undergraduate degree, by successful completion of the Colloquy Program, a program consisting of eight courses and an exit interview to ensure that the individual knows and understands the Bible from a Lutheran perspective and identity. While a Lutheran school administrator does not have to have a Lutheran Teaching Diploma (LTD) to serve as a Lutheran school administrator, a school whose administrator does not have an LTD or a Colloquy clearly makes it more difficult for the school to maintain and grow its Lutheran identity. One study participant commented that *Mission and Ministry* statements should be a given and that respondents should have focused more on other themes as the other themes will be the ones to create Lutheran school success and sustainability.

Integrity

Integrity ranked at the top of the list for both participant groups in the study. Helm (2010) provides some clear dispositions of educational leaders which consist of the following: humility,

honesty, empathy, fairness, and most of all integrity. These are also top characteristics of a Lutheran school leader put forth by both participant groups in this study (p. 6).

Integrity, while only mentioned once by each group of experts, received the highest rating of all responses from both groups of experts, just as it did in Helm's study. It is interesting, but not unexpected, that both groups responded independently with their responses and that by far both groups found *Integrity* to be the most essential trait for a Lutheran school leader. Given a Lutheran school leader's Christian background and education, there is an expectation that he/she is a person of integrity. We also recognize that Christians, like all people, are sinful beings, so while this is an expectation, it cannot always be true in all situations and in all leaders.

Worker Care

“The Synod's current emphasis on church worker wellness is a direct result of the 2016 LCMS convention which passed Res. 18-02A with 98.47 percent of delegates voting in favor. The resolution calls for the Board for National Mission to ‘Develop Policies for Assessing Worker Wellness and Making Recommendations for Worker Care.’ Four other resolutions addressing worker wellness were also passed in 2016” (Ludwig, 2016, p.1). It is clear that *Worker Care* is a priority of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and it is quite clear that participants in this study find that being attentive to *Worker Care* is a quality of a successful Lutheran school leader.

Study participants noted the need for the leader to practice self-care, be in the Word, partake of the Sacraments, pray, lead a healthy lifestyle through proper diet and exercise, and to pursue intellectual growth. Leaders must be healthy to be able to care for their workers, a healthy leader leads to a healthier workplace and workforce. The good news is there is a growing research base that clearly defines the dispositions, skills, and knowledge needed for effective

school leadership today. The disheartening news is that few educators are being measured against these criteria prior to becoming principals (Gateways to the Principalship, p.1).

Leadership (Servant Leadership)

The researcher identified the theme of *Leadership* from the participants' responses, and then conversation in the focus groups led to the encompassing category of *Leadership*. Responses of confronting conflict, knowledge of administrative procedure, the need to be a strong leader, a need to develop others as leaders, and an understanding of how to develop and run a team all led the researcher to the creation of this *Leadership* domain. Study participants agreed that the *Leadership* theme was a fitting characterization and noted that there is a difference between leading in these areas and managing in these areas. A comment from a study participant noted that all too often Lutheran school administrators avoid confrontations, do not address negative issues/concerns, and are not knowledgeable on how to organize and develop an effective team. According to Marzano et. al. (2005), effective school leaders are highly visible, accessible, and present through contact and interactions with staff, students, and parent community. Study participants were clearly stating their survey responses and in the focus group discussion the need for successful leaders to lead and not manage.

In the Lutheran community, some may see the need to rephrase *Leadership* to that of *Servant Leadership*. In 1 Peter 5:5b we are instructed, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.'" And in Philippians 2:3-4 we are told, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others." Lutheran school leaders are Called to their positions and when they are

installed in their positions of leadership, they affirm their Calling and adherence to Lutheran Doctrine.

According to Greenleaf (1977) and Marzano et. al. (2005), in the *Servant Leadership Model*, the leader is placed in the center, not at the top of the hierarchy. The leader understands the personal needs of those within the organization, helps to heal wounds caused by conflict within the organization, is a steward of resources, develops the skills of those within the organization, and is an effective listener. Banke et al. (2005) further stated, “Characteristics of spiritual leadership most frequently described were having a personal, ongoing relationship with God, developing relationships with constituents, being humble, being accessible, being a mentor, being an encourager, and being a support of all members of the school community” (p. 10).

Personal Leadership

Growth

Growth received a high rating as the respondents focused on the need of a successful Lutheran school and a successful Lutheran school leader to focus on enrollment, academic, and spiritual growth. The participants noted that a school and its leader must constantly seek growth in all areas; otherwise, the school is maintaining or even retreating. *Growth* needs to be reasonable, manageable, defined, and evaluated. There should not be *Growth* for the sake of *Growth* but rather a planned growth with metrics, evaluation, and refinement.

Self-Inventory

Several of the Lutheran school leadership development programs incorporate some type of self-assessment for participants. The Van Lunen Program utilizes Strengths Finder, the ALSS FACT program utilizes a self-assessment tool that was developed in conjunction with Concordia Plan Services, and some Lutheran schools rely on a Gallup Leadership Assessment tool, or other

tools to assess strengths of the individual. The concept is that a successful Lutheran school leader must know his/her abilities/strengths as well as his/her limitations and areas of weakness.

Lutheran schools are just in the beginning stages of utilizing analytics from self-assessment instruments to identify individual results and compare the results to known predictors of success in each position such as principal or director of admissions. The 2021 Lutheran Educators Association Conference provided a breakout session option led by Dan Gehrke, Executive Director of Denver Lutheran School, on how to use analytics from a self-assessment instrument to successfully hire school employees. Victor Lipman, in an article written for Forbes Magazine, noted a study conducted in 2010 by Green Partners and Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations which stated, "Leadership searches given short shrift to 'self-awareness,' which should actually be a top criterion. Interestingly, a high self-awareness score was the strongest predictor of overall success. This is not altogether surprising as executives who are aware of their weaknesses are often better able to hire subordinates who perform well in categories in which the leader lacks acumen. These leaders are also more able to entertain the idea that someone on their team may have an idea that is even better than their own" (Lipman, 2013, p. 1). The leader who knows his/her own strengths and weaknesses is a leader who possesses the foundational leadership qualities that can lead to a successful Lutheran school.

Learner

A prominent theme in the experts' responses is the need to be a *Learner*. Being a life-long *Learner* is clearly associated with successful leadership. Successful leaders, "engage in professional learning to be up-to-date with education research, literature, best practices, and trends to strengthen ability to lead" (CTC, 2014, p. 5). All respondents in the survey rounds and several in the concluding focus group commented on the need for successful Lutheran school

leaders to be constant learners. One study participant stated in the concluding focus group that it is important for successful leaders to be successful readers. The respondent suggested that effective leaders are constantly reading books to sharpen their skills and abilities, and they are reading for pleasure as well.

Relational and Social Leadership

Communication

In Maulding, et. al.'s research on emotional intelligence, Maulding notes that it is the "ability to communicate, listen intently, and maintain an empathetic disposition that builds trust and understanding" (Maulding et al., 2012, p. 25). In the focus group sessions, both participant groups noted the importance of communicating with the various constituent groups of a school: teachers, students, parents, the board, congregation, and community. Study participants noted that given the multiple modes of communication that are now available, determining how to communicate and the best form of communicating with each constituent group as well as determining the frequency of communication with each group is overwhelming. Emails, newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, texts, and meetings for direct oral communication are all communication methods that school leaders use. Participants noted that most school leaders are a one-person administrative team, or have few administrators on their team, and the problem exists of not having enough time to provide for effective communication with so many communication tools at the leader's disposal. This study's noted leadership theme of *Building a Theme* could provide the insight to utilize other individuals at the school to successfully communicate with the various school constituent groups. One study participant noted that a successful school administrator recognizes the need to enlist others to help do the work of a school administrator so that the administrator can properly focus on other areas of the position. While an administrator

may not want to enlist teachers, or others, for extremely important communications, study participants suggested that there are certainly ongoing communication items that other school employees, such as teachers could execute this administrative function. In addition, delegating communication tasks could be an opportunity to train others in the administrative function of effective communication, so it could provide an opportunity to recruit and train future administrators.

Relationships

Participant responses that the researcher coded as *Relationships* were not rated as high as other domain responses; however, during the focus group sessions participants noted *Relationships* as an important quality for a successful Lutheran school administrator. All participants noted that *Relationships* with teachers, students, board members, other area administrators, other Lutheran school administrators, and the community where the school is located were important for the Lutheran school administrator to develop positive relationships.

Study participants focused on *Relationships* in their survey responses as well as in their concluding focus group discussions. The researcher noted from the participants that *Relationships* and *Relationship building* are important traits of successful Lutheran school leaders and for sustaining Lutheran schools. Other studies on educational leaders and educational leadership that recognize *relationships* as a key trait for successful leaders support the participants' responses.

“We are born out of and live-in relationships...The educational leader needs to recognize that relationships are a fundamental and intrinsic part of being we cannot separate our existence from our relationships. Hence, leadership activities that focus unduly on the technical and bureaucratic elements of an organization are devoid of meaning. Educational leaders who

acknowledge that human interactions are basic to our lives, to the creation of meaning, and to the development of understanding are more likely to take full account of the why, who, what, where, and when of schooling” (Shields, 2006, p.76). Banke et al. (2005) states in their study on Christian school leadership, “Characteristics of spiritual leadership most frequently described by the participants were having a personal, ongoing relationship with God, developing relationships with constituents, being humble, being accessible, being a mentor, being an encourager, and being a support of all members of the school community” (p. 10). In her 2006 article, Shields suggested, “Relationships are not merely the beginning, but indeed the foundation of the educative endeavor” (p. 76). This study certainly confirms that this is true with successful Lutheran school leaders.

Collaboration

Study participants identified the importance of collaboration and stated that it is important to make sure the leader does not isolate himself/herself, and that a-he/she collaborates to learn from others and to share with others that transpires to leadership growth. Respondents noted that school leadership can be demanding, lonely, and discouraging at times and that surrounding themselves with other school leaders to find opportunities to share, care, and grow within a community of leaders.

Many LCMS districts have regional principal meetings within their districts. These meetings provide for the intentionality of collaboration and the opportunity for leaders to gather so that one does not become isolated. The role of the school principal is frequently referred to as the “loneliest position in K-12 education” (Maxwell, 2015, p. 2). Boerema (2011) stated, “[loneliness] almost seems to be an epidemic to the office of school administrator, especially in small schools” (Boerema, 2011, p. 564). Howard and Mallory (2008) suggest “maintaining a

professional network . . . as a solution [to isolation], even though time demands, and job overload of high school principals often interfere with the potential to network” (p. 9). The School Leadership Network (SLN) (2014) affirmed,

When principals are asked about what they need in order to sustain in the profession and impact their schools, principals overwhelmingly report ongoing support with peers. They prefer learning in context-relevant, collaborative settings, where they have the ability to influence the learning agenda. (p.13)

Participants noted that *Collaboration* is a leadership success trait that could not be stressed enough. In fact, study participants stressed in their survey responses and focus group discussions that collaboration is a key reason to have Lutheran school leadership development programs. Participants, in culminating focus groups also stated that COVID led to greater collaboration among Lutheran school leaders and all school leaders, showing its importance for successful leadership. The Association of Lutheran Secondary Schools, District Education Executives, and various other Lutheran and non-Lutheran organizations held weekly or monthly Zoom meetings during the onset of COVID to provide for collaboration on student/staff safety, alternate modes of learning, government funding that was made available, and other top issues confronting school leaders. Several study participants noted the benefit of this collaboration and stated the continued need and desire to hold such collaborative sessions because there was considerable positive feedback from school leaders.

Mentoring and Coaching

“Investing in high-quality mentoring/coaching is an effective way for districts to secure a ready supply of capable school leaders who know from the start how to implement school reform strategies. Unfortunately, school districts appear to be unconcerned about the quality of

mentoring or its potential impact on the next generation of school leaders” (Gray, et. al., n.d., p. 16). Study participants expressed that it is not only important for *Mentoring and Coaching* to occur to develop school leaders, but the *Coach/Mentor* needs to be the right person, intentionally chosen for having the skills and abilities to *Coach/Mentor*, and that the *Coach/Mentor* understands how to effectively coach and mentor another leader. If the *Mentor* or *Coach* does not have knowledge of the mentoring/coaching process, it is difficult to find success in the developing mentee. Another concern of respondents is that a mentor/coach is selected because he/she has served as a leader in a Lutheran school for several years or he/she is a “nice person” but that there are no criteria for the selection process for determining the quality of the mentor or coach. The most significant concern identified by one respondent is when there is neither a quality selection process, nor knowledge of how to be a mentor or coach. The quality of growth comes from the quality of the mentor or coach and the quality of the mentoring and coaching. “These highly skilled school leaders are not born — nor are they fully forged in the instructional setting of the school classroom. Neither do they emerge fully prepared to lead from traditional graduate programs in school administration. Most likely, effective new principals have been rigorously prepared and deliberately mentored in well-designed programs that immerse them in real-world leadership experiences where they are challenged to excel” (Gray, et. al., 2007, p. 5).

Systems Leadership

Finance

Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs and Lutheran school administrators both identified as extremely important the need for successful Lutheran school administrators to understand finance. Financial characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders were noted by participants with the following responses: *Fiscally responsible*,

understanding, and carrying out effective financial practices, understanding and meeting the financial needs of the school, and having financial acumen. The responses in this study coincide with the three stability markers for a sustainable K-12 nonpublic school as noted by Independent School Management (ISM). ISM identified the three stability markers for the sustainability of K-12 nonpublic schools as: cash reserve/debt/endowment mix, strategic plan/strategic financial plan, and executive leadership (Independent School Management, 2015).

In the focus group discussion, participants noted that finance may be seen as a higher priority for Lutheran secondary school administrators than it may be for Lutheran elementary school administrators. Study participants explained that Lutheran elementary school principals may not feel that Finance should be a strong priority for a successful principal since most Lutheran elementary schools are part of a Lutheran Church/Congregation, and the Church/School budgets are often connected, and the principal may feel they are not part of the financial process. In the same discussion this also came out as a leadership concern as it means that Lutheran elementary school principals may not have as great of understanding of revenue and expense in their school and lack knowledge of finance that leads to successful and sustainable Lutheran schools. Study participants explained a need to identify revenue and expense and the overall school budget. In a successful Lutheran school, the administrator knows the revenue generators of tuition, third-source funding, rental income from facility uses, etc., and the administrator knows expenses such as per seat cost of student enrollment, financial aid, utilities, building maintenance, etc. A principal who does not understand finances, especially the budget, revenue and expenses, shows a lack of leadership and this situation could result in a faltering school, or even a school that closes.

Vision

The participants in this study noted that a successful Lutheran school leader must have a *Vision* for the Lutheran school to be successful. The study's respondents often tied *Vision* back to growth – having vision for the growth in enrollment, academics, the mission, and ministry of the school, and how the school can be the leader in its community. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985) argued that “Leadership is what gives an organization its vision and its ability to translate that vision into reality. Without this translation, a transaction between leaders and followers, there is no organizational heartbeat” (p. 20). “Much of what leadership is about has to do with change. Leadership is about setting a course for the future and enlisting others to work toward that vision” (Maier, p. 10, 2013). Study participants clearly articulated the need for a successful leader to provide and communicate a vision for the school ministry. A successful Lutheran school leader must set a course, describe the destination, and sell the constituents on where the school is headed.

Innovator

An *Innovator* challenges the process, changes management styles, and improves overall innovation by responding to the academic, financial, personnel and other trends of schools and society. Research shows that successful Christian school administrators are innovative and in turn the schools they lead become incubators of innovation – both of which can be extrapolated to the success of Lutheran school leaders and the success of Lutheran schools. The importance of *Innovation* to leadership is highlighted in *Schools at Risk: An Analysis of Factors Endangering the Evangelical Christian School Movement in America* (Nichols 2016), “The findings of the study led to several crucial implications for practice. Not surprisingly, one of those implications

was directly tied to leadership's ability to innovate: Christian schools must be willing to change, innovate, and think entrepreneurially, and then follow through with effective, timely action.”

Lutheran school leaders and Lutheran schools must be innovative to demonstrate a value-added reason for parents to pay to send their child to a Lutheran school. Study participants noted that Lutheran schools should have an advantage over public schools when it comes to innovation and implementing change because Lutheran schools are site-based managed and do not have the levels of bureaucracy of a public-school system that often slows or prohibits innovation. The world is clearly one of innovation when it comes to technology, communication, the ability for collaboration, and other areas. A Lutheran school leader, to be successful, must recognize and embrace innovation and incorporate innovative ideas for a Lutheran school to be successful as well. Participants noted how the concept of innovation, and the ability of Lutheran schools to quickly identify alternative methods of delivering education was crucial in the spring of 2020 and in the 2020-2021 school year during COVID. Lutheran schools also employed several innovative concepts to provide a safe environment for students, teachers, and school employees so that Lutheran schools could have in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year. The respondents to the study noted that often necessity is the mother invention and that Lutheran school leaders joined in collaborative environments such as Zoom meetings to share innovative ideas on school safety and alternative methods of delivering a quality educational experience during COVID. *Innovation* is a foundational characteristic of a successful Lutheran school leader and a successful Lutheran school.

Strategic Plan

Study participants responded in the survey rounds and in the concluding focus group discussion that having vision, setting the direction for the school, knowing the improvement

needs and how to address them, financial forecasting, and simply strategic planning are necessary skills of a successful leader and a successful Lutheran school. The Independent School Management also identifies strategic planning as one of the three stability markers of a sustainable K-12 nonpublic school: Independent School Management (ISM) identified three stability markers for the sustainability of K-12 nonpublic schools as: cash reserve/debt/endowment mix, strategic plan/strategic financial plan, and executive leadership (Independent School Management, 2015). A successful K-12 Christian school leader focuses on fund-raising, budgets, community relations, and strategic planning (Cook, 2012). Developing, implementing, communicating, and revising a strategic plan is an important skill for a successful Lutheran school leader and for a successful Lutheran school. Study participants noted that a strategic plan sets the course (or the road map) for the school for the next several years. Goals for finances, fundraising, enrollment, marketing, etc. are all part of the strategic plan, and it is the responsibility of the leader to oversee the strategic plan.

Surprising Findings

Theme of Resiliency

While not a theme identified by the researcher from responses to research surveys, the concluding focus group sessions noted *Resiliency* as a characteristic of successful leaders. Both the leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs and current Lutheran school administrators expressed that Lutheran school leaders must be *Resilient* because the administrator needs to interact with multiple constituencies, makes and implements decisions that provide for the sustainability of the school, and encounters many difficulties along with the successes he/she encounter. A successful Lutheran school leader cannot feel defeated when something does not go the way he/she intended or when the leader is challenged on an issue.

One participant noted that resiliency of the leader allows the leader to find opportunity amid challenges. “Resilient school leaders, those who are self-confident, conscientious and focused on student achievement, are able to manage conflict and serve as catalysts for change in their schools and succeed as school leaders in a challenging society (Williams, 2004)” (Offutt, 2011, p. 7).

Theme of Listener

Listening includes receiving information from various stimuli—both verbal and nonverbal, which includes perception, attention, and processing (Imhof, pp. 97-109). Effective leaders understand that listening and leading are inseparable (Steil & Bommelje, 2004). To not including listening in the discussion of communication and leadership means “at least 40 to 45 percent of the process of communication” (Barrett, 2011, p. 239) is left out. Listening is a core component in successful leadership (Hunt & Cussella, 1983, p. 394; Johnson & Bechler, 1997, p. 58). Both participant groups noted the need of a leader to listen to the various school constituent groups and that a wise leader is consistently gathering data through listening to formal and informal feedback. One participant noted that, “a leader always has their ear to the ground.”

Theme of Business-Mindedness

Leaders of Lutheran school development programs and administrators of Lutheran schools, especially those serving in Lutheran high schools, noted *Business-Mindedness* as a necessary leadership quality. Building and understanding budgets, per-student cost to educate, personnel expense, and financial planning were identified as leading needs for successful school leaders to understand and implement. As one participant stated, “People often do not consider that a leader of a Lutheran school is overseeing a multi-million-dollar business. A business

owner understands costs of doing business, revenue generation, and at a minimum a basic business knowledge.”

Summary

The researcher used a Delphi Method of consensus development comprising of three survey rounds. In Round One, the researcher asked participants to provide open-ended responses to the survey questions. The study participants’ responses then comprised the survey for Round Two. In Survey Round Two, the researcher asked participants to contribute further ideas in relation to the responses provided in Survey Round One, and participants had the opportunity to revise their responses and/or provide comments. The responses to Survey Round Two provided the survey questions for Survey Round Three. In Rounds Two and Three the researcher gathered and tabulated participants’ responses and determined consensus.

In Chapter Four the researcher presented data collection and analysis from the three-round Delphi Study and examined how leadership impacts the success and sustainability of Lutheran schools. The panel of experts included leaders of Lutheran school leadership programs and current Lutheran school administrators. The Lutheran school leadership program experts represented five different Lutheran leadership development programs. The Lutheran school administrators represented Lutheran schools in six different states. All administrators had either attended one or more of the Lutheran leadership development programs and included two administrators who, at the time of the study, served as mentors and presenters in a Lutheran leadership development program.

Chapter Four provides the comprehensive data collected from this Delphi Study. Chapter Five contains a discussion of the major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, and

implications for action. Additionally, Chapter Five includes recommendations for further research and concluding remarks and reflections of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter Five provides a summary of the purpose statement, research questions and methods, population, and research sample. Chapter Five describes surprising findings from the study, conclusions drawn by the researcher, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.

Brief Summary

Leadership is essential to the success of all schools; however, its importance to Lutheran schools is vital to their sustainability as continuing ministries. The skills and abilities of Lutheran school leaders must be developed and fostered; however, if the characteristics, skills, and abilities necessary for Lutheran school leaders' success are not determined, then much time may be spent on developing areas of little importance that do not lead to successful leaders. Even though most Lutheran schools are closely associated with a Lutheran Congregation(s) and its pastor, the school must have an excellent school administrator that has the necessary leadership skills, traits, characteristics, and abilities for the school to be successful and sustainable. If not, Lutheran schools will continue to close at alarming rates, or enrollment will decline and the ability for the Lutheran school to carry out its Mission of Ministry will be greatly diminished. This study provides data that highlights input from educational leadership experts: seven leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs and five administrators of Lutheran schools. The data includes the experts' beliefs and perceptions on the leadership traits, practices, and characteristics that successful Lutheran school administrators must possess and how those traits, practices, and characteristics provide for school sustainability and success in their roles as school leaders.

Conclusions

Fullan (2014) asserted, “Principals’ responsibilities have increased enormously over the past two decades. They are expected to run a smooth school; manage health, safety, and the building; innovate without upsetting anyone; connect with students and teachers; be responsive to parents and the community; to their districts; and above all deliver results” (p. 6). Leadership is the first and most important trait of an effective principal (Sybout & Wendel, 1994; Wallace Foundation, 2013). In their research on leadership skills for a changing world, Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman (2000) asserted that effective leadership is connected to skills, knowledge, and abilities. Marzano et. Al. (2005). Principals of high performing schools communicate to all stakeholders and emphasize the fact that the school’s most important mission is student achievement.

“Outdated leadership skills are contributing to a leadership gap and needless turnover in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations” (NAIS Trendbook, p. 91). The lack of necessary leadership skills and more traditional management skills of many leaders is indeed creating a leadership gap. In addition, the training available to future leaders also lacks the necessary elements to provide for leaders that will possess the necessary skills and abilities to fill the growing number of available leadership positions. “The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) studied 2,239 leaders from 24 organizations in three countries and found that ‘organizations today are experiencing a current leadership deficit and can expect a leadership gap in the future’ (NAIS Trendbook, p. 95).

McMillan (2007) argued that "often Christian schools hire great managers but fail to hire great leaders" (McMillan, 2007 p. 3). As one study participant stated, “Being a Lutheran School Leader is a big job! This is obvious to anyone who has served in that role, but to see the

numerous categories that are essential to leading a Lutheran School spelled out in one place really highlights the challenge and importance of the work.”

It is clear from both groups of participants that the key element of a successful Lutheran school is *Ministry and Mission*. The leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs were more concise in their responses and narrowed their description to five descriptors. The researcher categorized four of the five descriptors as *Mission and Ministry* and the fifth descriptor as *Relationships*.

Lutheran school administrators had more descriptors for what makes for a successful Lutheran school. However, there is alignment with both groups that *Mission and Ministry* and *Relationships* are two leading and important categories. Out of 23 descriptors provided by Lutheran school administrators, eight were categorized as *Mission and Ministry*. Three responses were categorized as *Relationships* and three as *Finance, Communication, Collaboration, Visionary, Humility, and Detail Oriented* also made the list of top descriptors for successful Lutheran schools. All Lutheran school administrators responded that *Excellence in providing a high-quality Christian education* is a sign of successful Lutheran schools. It is clear from the participants that educational excellence that is faith-based must be a priority measure for Lutheran schools.

There is clear agreement among participants in both groups that *Mission and Ministry* and *Relationships* are two significant traits that Lutheran school leaders must possess.

Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs rated *Integrity* as essential as a key trait, quality, and characteristic of a Lutheran school administrator. *Integrity* was the only response to all of the questions posed to leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs that received a rating of five. Lutheran school administrators also responded with

Integrity as the top key attribute, quality, and characteristic of a Lutheran school leader, scored *Integrity* a five with complete consensus. *Integrity* was one of only two responses from Lutheran school administrators with a rating of five signifying complete agreement on an essential quality; the only other response to the characteristic of a successful Lutheran school was a *high-quality Christian education*.

Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs were more succinct in their responses, and the researcher coded in four domains: *Integrity, Relationships, Learner, and Servant Leadership*. All of the responses received a level of consensus. The domains identified by the Leaders of the Lutheran school Leadership Development Programs are also ranked highly by the Lutheran school administrators.

Lutheran school administrators identified: *Integrity, Visionary, Leadership, Learner, Communication, Adaptability, Growth, Relationships, Strategic Planning, Mission-Ministry, Decision making, Innovative, and Listener* as the top domains for Lutheran school leaders. *Integrity, Learner, Relationships, and Leadership* are identified by both participant groups. Lutheran school administrators rank *Integrity, Visionary, knowledge of administrative procedures: budgeting hiring, etc., being open to learning, strong communication skills, and being an effective communicator*, as necessary traits, attributes, qualities, and characteristics for Lutheran school administrators.

Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs identified *Relationships, people skills, and staffing* as the most important behaviors and practices of Lutheran school administrators. Also highly rated are *Keeping the joy in ministry; time and money management; developing a positive culture and climate; the Spiritual and Mental Health of the Leader; team building; focusing on the sustainability of the school; and Scripture, worship and prayer*. The

researcher once again identified clear domain themes of *Relationships, Personnel, Mission and Ministry, Finance, Culture, Leadership, and Worker Health*. The study participants also indicated that leadership behaviors should focus on building a culture of professional growth and development.

Lutheran school administrators provided responses that focused on *Leadership, Strategic Planning, Relationships, Accountability, Communication, Mission and Ministry, Innovation, Personnel, Excellence, Finance, Enrollment, and Adaptability*. Responses yielding a score of 4.4 included: the leader having the ability to effectively run a team; having a vision that provides optimism; team building; instituting an environment of accountability for self and others that effectively addresses issues; effective communication; spending time in Word, Sacrament, and Prayer; and focusing on innovation with constant evaluation of what is happening in the various areas of the school.

“Principals themselves acknowledge that they are not prepared for their jobs. In a 2003 survey by Public Agenda, two-thirds of the principals polled report that ‘leadership programs in graduate schools of education are out of touch’ with what principals need to know” (Cheney & Davis, 2011, p. 14). “The good news is there is a growing research base that clearly defines the dispositions, skills, and knowledge needed for effective school leadership today. The disheartening news is that few educators are being measured against these criteria prior to becoming principals” (Cheney & Davis, 2011, p. 1). These highly skilled school leaders are not born — nor are they fully forged in the instructional setting of the school classroom. Neither do they emerge fully prepared to lead from traditional graduate programs in school administration. Most likely, effective new principals have been rigorously prepared and deliberately mentored in

well-designed programs that immerse them in real-world leadership experiences where they are challenged to excel (Gray, et. al., n.d., p. 5).

During the concluding Delphi Study focus group discussion, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs identified the themes of *Finance, Resiliency, Communication, Governance, Enrollment, Learner, Prioritizing, Self-Inventory*, and *Culture* as the factors that Lutheran school leaders face to be successful. In their survey responses, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs identified *Finance, Communication, and Governance* as the most important challenges that leaders face as well as top qualities that Lutheran school leaders must possess to face the challenges. According to the participants' responses that were gathered, Lutheran school administrators need to understand and address *finances, maximize resources* (capital and human), *possess strong communication skills*, and *communicate effectively to the various constituent groups*, and be *resilient* as individuals. Participants also identified as important: *the need for Lutheran school administrators to address enrollment challenges, be a learner, possess the ability to prioritize*, and to *be aware of one's abilities and limitations as a leader*.

Lutheran school administrators cite *Personnel, Excellence, Enthusiasm, Mission and Ministry, Strategic Planning, Self-Inventory, Finance, and Communication* as top themes in their responses to challenges that Lutheran school administrators face in having a successful and sustainable Lutheran school. The highest rated consensus response, receiving a Likert scale score of 4.8, on a Likert scale of 1-5, is *Hiring and retaining quality faculty members*. In fact, *the need for quality faculty members* was a separate response that also received a high rating of 4.6. *Advancing Christian Education with passion and excellence, the ability to prioritize, having an awareness of one's abilities*, and *financial challenges* all received high scores of 4.6.

Both participant groups noted *financial challenges* as a top challenge for leaders of Lutheran schools and for the sustainability of Lutheran schools. In addition, both participant groups noted the need for the leader to be aware of one's abilities; however, this received a higher score among the Lutheran school administrators (4.6) than the leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs (3.86). *Communication* and *Governance* were both top themes from both participant groups. It is important to note that neither participant group identified *Mission and Ministry* as a challenge faced by Lutheran schools or Lutheran school leaders.

Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs identify *Relationships* (Relationship Building 4.86 rating) as the most important practice of Lutheran school administrators in sustaining and growing Lutheran schools. Their responses also note the importance of leaders focusing on *Mission and Ministry*, as four of their final seven responses were identified as being in this domain. In addition, leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs identified responses that were categorized in the following domains: *Leadership, focusing on an Enrollment plan, finance, and communication*. Responses included a *Passion for the Gospel and Lutheran schools* (4.57 rating) and *the need for an effective leader* (4.43 rating).

Lutheran school administrators were unanimous in their top responses, as they rated *providing high quality Christian Education* (identified as the *Excellence* Theme) as essential (5.0 rating) to the sustainability and growth of a Lutheran school. Other responses receiving a consensus above 90% include *Preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (4.8 rating and identified as in the *Mission and Ministry* Theme), *Fiscally Responsible* (4.6 rating and identified as in the *Finance* Theme), and *Daily sharing of God's love with students* (4.6 rating and identified as in the *Mission and Ministry* Theme). Once again, the Lutheran school administrators provided

many more responses receiving consensus scores significant enough to carry over to the next round. Top Domain Categories include *Excellence, Mission and Ministry, Finance, Growth, Communication, Relationships, Humility (of the leader), Vision, Collaboration, Detail Oriented, Culture and Leadership.*

The old job of principal as administrative building manager is no longer sufficient to dramatically improve student achievement. The job has evolved into a highly complex and demanding position that requires strong instructional and leadership skills (Cheney & Davis, 2011, p. 1). The participants in this study noted that there is a need for instructional skills; however, as noted by Cheney and Davis, they also stated that the position of principal, in this case Lutheran school principal, has grown and developed over the years. The job of a Lutheran school principal is complex, demanding, and dynamic. As one study participant stated, “Being a Lutheran School Leader is a big job! This is obvious to anyone who has served in that role, but to see the numerous categories that are essential to leading a Lutheran School spelled out in one place (in this study) really highlights the challenge and importance of the work.” Knowing that the position of Lutheran school principal is such a “big job”, it is important to note the skills necessary for leaders, and then the most important and essential skills for Lutheran school leaders. “Taken together, the four attributes – intelligence, drive, mental health, and integrity, or some slight variation on these themes – seem to define some minimum requirements for leadership in big jobs. Having more of each does not necessarily help; above a certain level, twice the intelligence or mental health does not seem to produce better leadership. But if any of the four are missing to some minimum degree, effective leadership may be undermined (Kotter, 1990, p. 107). Drive, mental health, and integrity were all qualities noted as being important by participants in this study. It is clear that these qualities provide a necessary foundation, and

leaders can improve other skills and qualities necessary to be an excellent Lutheran school leader.

Participants' Responses to the study questions indicated that it is important that developing Lutheran school administrators be mentored and coached. Successful Lutheran school administrators collaborate with other Lutheran school administrators and leaders and develop a peer network for mutual collaboration. Building a network provides a support system as well as providing a forum for innovation, learning, growth, and decision making.

Collaboration among leaders allows for the sharing of experiences and observations to provide for the exchange of ideas and clarity of decisions that must be made to provide for a successful Lutheran school. When Lutheran school leaders have developed a network for collaboration, they are also able to share each other's challenges, joys, and prayers as well as establishing a group that provides for learning opportunities. Both leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs and Lutheran school administrators noted the need for a culture of professional growth and development. Leaders of Lutheran school leadership development programs scored this response a 4.71, and Lutheran school administrators scored this response a 4.8. Both groups also identified the need for worker wellness and for the self-care of the Lutheran school administrator. Highly successful Lutheran school leaders develop positive relationships, are effective communicators, are aware of their abilities and limitations as they utilize self-inventories, are innovative, and enthusiastic. They provide a vision, are financially astute, are strategic planners, are effective in personnel decisions, are decisive decision makers, and develop a positive school culture and climate.

Participants in the focus group session suggested that the list of skills, abilities, and characteristics put forth by Lutheran school administrators in the study is quite lengthy. The

focus group suggested examining the skills, abilities, and characteristics that received a score of 90% or higher in an effort to pull out the most essential items. The focus group concurred that the domain list is appropriate, and that the researcher did a good job of identifying the categories for the responses while providing categories to focus on the important elements of a successful Lutheran school administrator. Participants especially noted the themes of *Communication*, *Collaboration*, *Networking*, *Mentoring*, and *Finance* as top categories for successful Lutheran school principals. It is interesting to note that the discussion stated that there is an emphasis on the *Mission/Ministry* category and that, as expected, many responses fell into this category with those responses receiving a high rating on the Likert scale. However, the focus group noted that this should be an expectation of successful Lutheran schools and Lutheran school administrators and that there should be a greater emphasis on the skills that can be taught and acquired, such as successful communication; the need to collaborate; building a network of support; and having a mentor and developing financial understanding. In fact, to pinpoint the top themes of the characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders, the focus group noted that they thought the order of responses with the top ratings was upside down. The participants thought that *discernment in decision-making* should be toward the top of the list, followed closely by *communication*, *collaboration*, and *finance*. Participants stated that these are all teachable concepts, and that future leaders and current leaders can all be taught how to be successful in these areas. Participants noted that while *Integrity* and *Mission and Ministry* are traits that a person cannot necessarily be taught, they are minimum expectations all Lutheran school administrators possess and/or innately have as qualities.

Historically, Lutheran school administrators served as teachers at Lutheran schools for several years and many received either their bachelor's degree, master's degree or both from a

Concordia University. However, this is a trend that could be changing as more Lutheran school administrators are retiring. It is becoming more difficult to find individuals willing to assume the role of Lutheran school administrator, and there are a growing number of individuals who are becoming Lutheran school administrators who have not attended a Concordia University for either their bachelors or master's degree. The Lutheran school system has a program called Colloquy, where eight Religion courses are taught online by the Concordia University System and following the eight courses the individual has an in-person interview to test their Biblical, and specifically Lutheran Biblical, knowledge. If the individual successfully completes the Colloquy program, they are then deemed to have the appropriate Lutheran training to serve as a Lutheran qualified educator and/or administrator.

Another item of note coming from the focus group discussion is the inadequacy of graduate programs in education administration in preparing school administrators, especially Lutheran school administrators. One study participant commented how the graduate program in education administration at one Concordia University covered how to deal with labor unions; he noted that this is not something with which Lutheran school administrators ever must deal. The same participant also noted that as he develops leaders, he advises that individuals who desire to become Lutheran school administrators get an MBA rather than a master's in education administration. Another focus group participant noted the same lacking elements in graduate level education administration programs and noted that he is currently working on a graduate program on innovation in schools. Both participants noted the need to focus on communication, collaboration, innovation, and finance, and how a Lutheran school administrator needs to operate at a high-level in all of these areas. Both noted that a study such as this will help drive what is important, how the role of a Lutheran school administrator has changed, and how the training

should change to focus on the areas that provide success and sustainability of the administrator and the school.

An interesting response in the survey round and followed-up in the culminating focus group with Lutheran school administrators was the skill of *Running a team*. One participant noted that he felt Lutheran school leaders lack the ability to effectively run a team and that the skill needs to be taught in Lutheran school leadership development programs and learned by Lutheran school leaders. The discussion proceeded to focus on how finding the strengths of people in the school provides a leader with the ability to enlist others for leadership assignments. Enlisting others and putting them in leadership opportunities provides leadership training for others and also, as several participants agreed, provides the ability for the Lutheran school leader to free his/her time to focus greater time on projects that are a priority and perhaps more in line for their strengths. Participants noted that a complaint of Lutheran school administrators is that there is not enough time to accomplish the tasks that need to be completed. The discussion then focused on the need to find time and that a great way to find time is to find talent among your workers and unleash their talents by assigning a project that coincides with that worker's strengths. This, of course, also means that a leader must know the strengths of his/her workers which enlists two other important concepts, finding time and unleashing work talents, in the research, relationships, and collaboration.

Church Worker Wellness, especially the wellness of the school leader, was a clear theme in the participants' responses. The importance of work and school balance, spending time in the Word to provide for spiritual renewal and energy, and having activities or hobbies that provide for leaders to energize themselves were all deemed important qualities. Study participants cited the concept of mental, physical, and spiritual renewal as important in both the survey results and

in focus group conversations. Participants noted that it is very difficult to be a successful leader unless the leader himself/herself is healthy – a healthy leader provides a focus on the priority of healthy workers. It was noted that spiritual, physical, and mental health of the leader provides for a positive climate and culture and better discernment in decision making. “The large and ever-increasing body of evidence that it continues to uncover has led to the mainstream recognition not only of the adverse effects of psychological stress on health, recovery, and ageing, but also of the beneficial effects of positive emotions such as happiness, motivation, and a sense of purpose” (Burton, 2012, p. 1). The themes of successful leadership identified by participants in this study fit well with the research on successful leadership characteristics identified in the research. The thirteen themes identified in this study correspond favorably to those put forth by the Center for Creative Leadership. According to the Learning Leadership Staff writing for the Center for Creative Leadership, “Based on our research, we’ve found that the best leaders consistently possess these 10 essential leadership qualities:

- Integrity
- Ability to delegate
- Communication
- Self-awareness
- Gratitude
- Learning agility
- Influence
- Empathy
- Courage

- Respect”

(Leading Effectively Staff, 2021, p. 1).

Suggestions for Future Studies

The LCMS schools have various school models: grades PK-12, K-8, K-5, 7-12, and 6-12. The researcher suggests that a future study examines leadership characteristics, qualities, and traits among Lutheran early childhood directors, Lutheran elementary school leaders and Lutheran secondary school leaders. The Researcher could separate the responses based on the school categories and examine similarities and differences based on the leader of each Lutheran school model. During the focus group discussion, participants suggested that Lutheran secondary school leaders may answer the study questions differently than those who lead a Lutheran elementary school. Lutheran secondary school leaders seem to have a greater responsibility for finance, fundraising, and public relations than a Lutheran elementary school leader. In researching the above, one may find this to be true or perhaps untrue.

Future researchers should examine separating Lutheran school leaders in different contexts as leaders may rate the importance of the characteristics of successful schools and leaders differently than those who participated in this study. Would a high school administrator rate the characteristics differently? In some schools the leader has little to do with managing the budget, but in other contexts it is an essential part of the responsibilities. How would that affect responses?

The researcher also recommends that research focus on the size and location of the school. Study participants located in Lutheran schools on the east or west coast, in the south, Midwest, or southeast, etc. may have different responses to the questions posed. The Texas District, Indiana District, Michigan District, Missouri District and Pacific Southwest District

have more Lutheran schools than other LCMS districts located in the U.S. Providing a greater focus on the geography of the participants may provide important data.

One participant noted, “many of the essentials I marked flow from 3 essential-essentials: *grounded in scripture, spiritual-social-emotional care, and a trained leader*. For example, theology is essential; it flows from scripture. The depth of care for kid’s development will be known in a community, fully trained (a better descriptor than strong) leader will be mature and attend to financials and cultivate an environment of love, and so on. Might I suggest a rank order for your next round?” From the recommendation of this study participant, the researcher recommends that a future study asks participants to provide a rank order for the responses to better discern the essential elements of a Lutheran school leader.

Most studies examining the qualities, traits, and characteristics of successful school leaders, including this study, are qualitative studies and rely on the perceptions of school leaders, and the perception of those that train school leaders. The study can be expanded to include more Lutheran school leaders as well as more leaders involved in Lutheran school leadership development programs. The researcher could utilize the leadership section of the National Lutheran School Accreditation document, or the Leadership standards found in the Cognia Accreditation document to gather some quantitative data on the qualities, traits, and characteristics of successful Lutheran school leaders. Including leaders from schools throughout the country would provide not only a larger but also a more diverse population regarding school size, community being served, and leader demographics. Participants in this study have many similarities in their training and background. A study that seeks a greater population would perhaps provide for a more diverse population in terms of participant age, number of years of experience, and educational degrees and would provide more accurate or perhaps even different

results. This researcher also recommends accounting for and/or examining, how successful leaders utilize their time and on what tasks. It would add to the research to examine how they use their successful qualities, traits, and characteristics throughout the day.

Summary

“Outdated leadership skills are contributing to a leadership gap and needless turnover in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations” (NAIS Trendbook, 2020, p. 91). The lack of necessary leadership skills and more traditional management skills of many leaders is creating a leadership gap. In addition, the training of future leaders also lacks the necessary elements to provide for leaders that will possess the necessary skills and abilities to fill the growing number of available leadership positions. “The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) studied 2,239 leaders from 24 organizations in three countries and found that ‘organizations today are experiencing a current leadership deficit and can expect a leadership gap in the future’” (NAIS Trendbook, 2020, p. 95).

McMillan (2007) argued that "often Christian schools hire great managers but fail to hire great leaders" (McMillan, 2007 p. 3). “These highly skilled school leaders are not born — nor are they fully forged in the instructional setting of the school classroom. Neither do they emerge fully prepared to lead from traditional graduate programs in school administration. Most likely, effective new principals have been rigorously prepared and deliberately mentored in well-designed programs that immerse them in real-world leadership experiences where they are challenged to excel” (Gray, et. al., n.d., p. 5). “The research evidence is overwhelming: Quality principals result in quality schools that produce higher student performance. The opposite is also true: Poorly prepared principals lead schools nowhere — and once certified, they remain in the system for many years, obstructing school improvement”. (Gray, et. al., n.d., p. 10).

This study completes a circle as in preparation for the completion of this dissertation the researcher had a conference with the members of the initial Pilot Study, Education Executives from the 7UP regional gathering of LCMS Education Executives. During this conference the researcher discussed the findings of this study and sought any last thoughts from the group. The group concurred with the findings of the study and that the study will be valuable for the training and development of Lutheran school leaders. However, one item of note was put forth by the group that certainly is a great way to end the study and provides optimism for the future of Lutheran school leaders and Lutheran schools. In their work, *The Leadership Challenge*, James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2007) told the story of U.S. Army Major General John H. Stanford and his response to their question to him, *What is the secret of success?* In *The Leadership Challenge* Stanford is quoted as saying the following:

The secret to success [in life] is to stay in love. Staying in love gives you the fire to ignite other people, to see inside other people, to have greater desire to get things done than other people. A person who is not in love doesn't really feel the kind of excitement that helps them to get ahead and to lead others and to achieve. I don't know any other fire, any other thing in life that is more exhilarating and is more positive a feeling than love is. (p. 354)

Love is at the basis of Lutheran school leaders and is the foundation of Lutheran schools. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19, New International Version, 2011). During the conference discussion with the Pilot Study group, it was noted that Lutheran school leaders must have love, they must know they are loved and saved by Jesus Christ, and from this love comes their passion and enthusiasm for ministry, for leadership. While the study identified 15 Themes for a successful Lutheran school administrator, these themes will only provide for success if they are built on the foundation of love. That is the love that General Stanford discusses that spurs a

fire of desire, but also a greater love – the knowledge that we are so loved that God gave His only Son to die for us so that we may have eternal life. Out of this love God has commanded us to, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Luke 10:27, New International Version, 2011). Lutheran school leaders are Called not to mediocrity but to excellence and this excellence is found through the foundation of love which provides passion, enthusiasm, and a desire to serve Him by striving for excellence as Lutheran school leaders.

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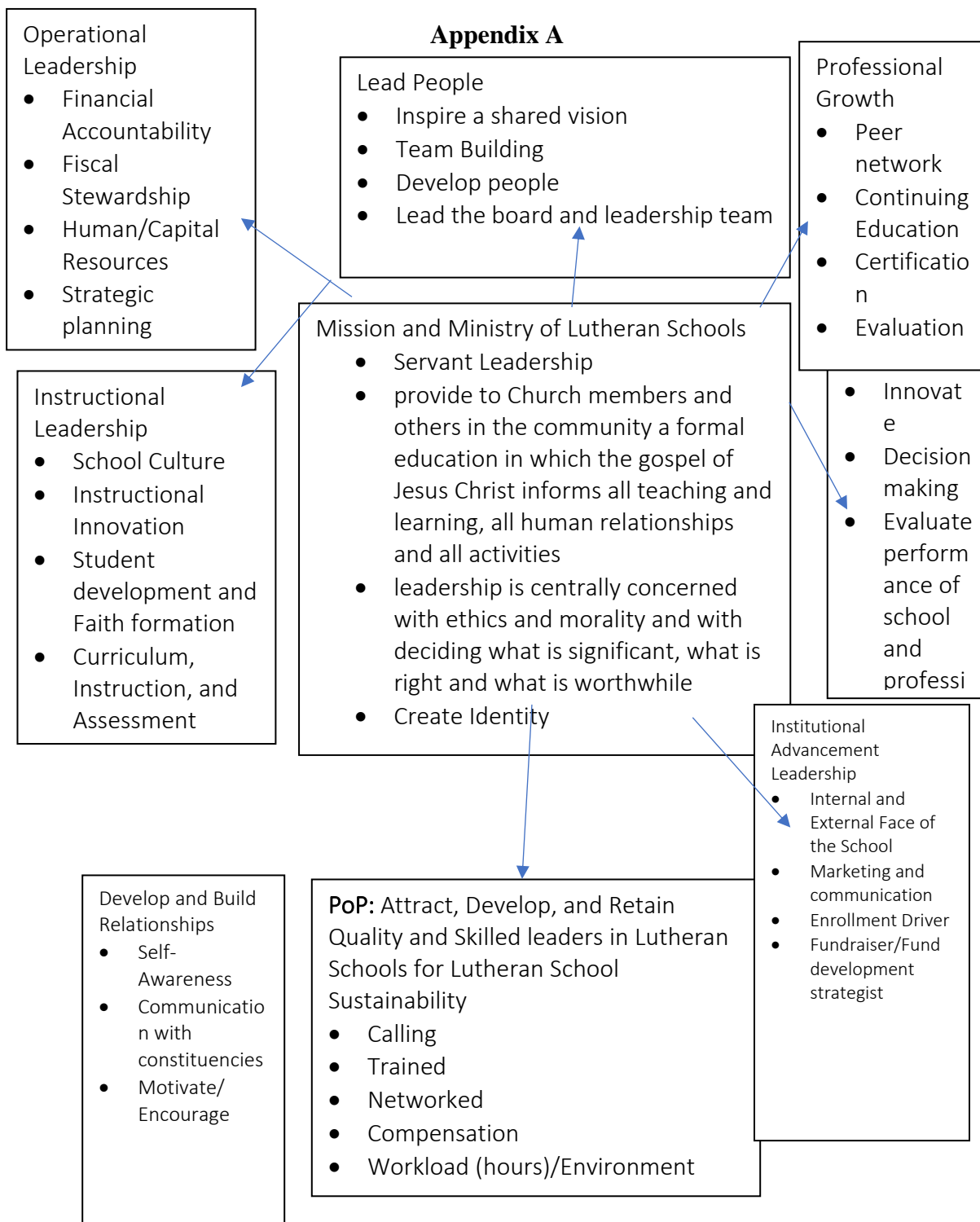
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Appendices

Appendix A



Appendix B

Round One Survey

Leadership in Lutheran Schools

Participant Background Information:

Age, ethnicity, gender, educational background, current position, number of years in current position, work experience, years as a principal in a Lutheran school, years training principals

Preparation for the Principal position: Education, Certifications:

1. How did you become a leader of a Lutheran school administrator development program?
2. What is a successful Lutheran school?
3. What attributes, qualities or characteristics do you feel are essential for principals who lead successful Lutheran Schools?
4. Please identify specific knowledge, skills and/or experiences that you feel are important for a successful Lutheran school leader.
5. How are the necessary knowledge and skills developed in Leadership training programs?
6. What are the leadership challenges that Lutheran school leaders face and what characteristics, traits, qualities and knowledge must a successful Lutheran school leader possess to successfully address these challenges?
7. What strategies did you employ to train Lutheran school leaders?
8. What specific leadership skills do you feel are essential for leading a successful Lutheran school and how are these addressed in their training?
9. How do effective Lutheran school leaders provide for the sustainability of their Lutheran school?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences?

Compile and Code the Round 1 feedback

Round 2

Presentation of Round 1 findings to the participants

Round 3

Presentation of Round 2 findings and areas/percentages of agreement from round 2

Round 4 finalize findings

Appendix C
University of Arkansas - Fayetteville
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Leadership Candidate

Title of study: : Identifying the Essential Leadership Characteristics, Traits, and Skills of Lutheran School Leaders

Name of researcher: Alan L. Freeman

Qualifications of researcher: The researcher is Director of Schools for the Missouri District – LCMS based in St. Louis, MO. The researcher is currently enrolled full time as a doctoral candidate at the University of Arkansas -Fayetteville’s Education Department’s Doctorate in Education Leadership program.

Contact Information: Researcher, Alan L. Freeman: XXX-XXX-XXXX (cell) or XXX-XXX-XXXX (office) or alfreema@uark.edu. Doctoral Advisor, Dr. John Pijanowski.

Purpose of study: The purpose of the study is to identify the leadership characteristics, traits, and practices of successful Lutheran school leaders in the Missouri District - LCMS that promote school sustainability.

Approval of study:

Data collection method: A four round Delphi Method will be utilized.

Using the Delphi Method, this research will be a hybrid method that contains both quantitative and qualitative results providing data collection and analysis on the opinions of experts. The defining characteristics of the Delphi technique are as follows:

1. Participants are experts in their field.
2. The technique uses a series of rounds or iterations where information is given back to the participants for review.
3. Participants work anonymously. They do not know who the other participants might be.
4. Future focused

5. The Delphi technique is a “consensus” research method. In most cases, the goal is to approach a consensus among the expert panel as to future “best” solutions.

<p><u>Delphi Method Round 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem identified • Expert panel complete s open-ended survey • Data collected and analyzed 	<p><u>Round 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey created from Round 1 Results • New survey with 5-point Likert-scale for each question given to the Expert Panel • Results collected and analyzed 	<p><u>Round 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey created from Round 2 Results • New survey with 5-point Likert-scale for each question given to the Expert Panel • Data collected and analyzed 	<p><u>Round 4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus Achieved • Present Results
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Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

Risks

- There are minimal to no risks in this study.

Benefits

- The benefits of the study are the opportunity to engage in a professional reflection through the dialogue of the interview questions.
- The results of the study will contribute to scholarship and professional practice in Lutheran school leadership and school sustainability.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:

All questionnaires/surveys will be saved on my work computer that is password protected. All interview transcripts and results will be kept in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after three years. Zoom video conferencing may be used and any Zoom recordings will be stored on my work computer that is password protected.

Your rights:

As a research participant, you have the right to:

- Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate
- Withdraw from participation at any time
- Refuse to answer a particular question
- Be informed of the results of the study.

If the participant has any concerns regarding human subject participation in this study they can contact the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (IRB) directly at irb@uark.edu.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)	Signature	Date
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Print name (Investigator)	Signature	Date
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Appendix D



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: ...ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE

Love and truth form a good leader; sound leadership is founded on loving integrity (Proverbs 20:28 MSG).
If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault,
and it will be given to him (James 1:5 NIV).

Lutheran school excellence does not occur without exceptional leadership performance. Exceptional leadership requires administrators that are dedicated to visionary leadership and empowering management. Lutheran school excellence occurs when the school community continually strives to accomplish the mission of the school to students and families. The administrator leads the team in successful meeting or exceeding the organization's expected outcomes.

Becoming an exceptional administrator is an ongoing process of learning and growing, beginning with basic administrative competency and developing towards leadership that is both visionary and empowering. Excellent school management demands an understanding of the position, task expectations, and the outcomes established by the organization. An effective school leader must possess exceptional abilities in data analysis, staff motivation, and public communication. An effective school leader must assure that marketing and public relations are effectively being accomplished. Above all else, a clear commitment to sharing the Gospel message and maintaining a proper respect of the Calling is paramount.

Leadership: While administrators may have a variety of God-given talents, to attain a level of exceptional performance requires developing through three stages: position, influence, and visionary.

Position: The basic core competency required to serve as an administrator demands an understanding of the leadership position. Before influencing others and the culture the leader must first manage him or herself well. This includes spiritual growth, good self health, physical and emotional wellness, and openness to growth as a leader. The leader must continue to grow in the areas of data analysis, staff motivation, and public communication.

The administrator is growing spiritually.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands grace and practices Law and Gospel Regular in worship and has a pattern of Bible study and prayer Understands health and wellness concepts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in an accountability group Regular prayer partner(s) Exhibits healthy wellness life-style 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional relationship building for the purpose of witness Can identify two individuals with whom he/she are sharing Balances work, home, God, and self-wellness 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually involved in an extended mission, service or spiritual renewal event Has a list of people who need to hear about Jesus Engages school community in healthy life-styles 	

The administrator implements a professional growth self-improvement plan.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has and is accountable for an annual self-improvement plan Member of professional organizations (LEA recommended) and reads the literature Has proper professional credentials 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan includes stated measurable goals Reads professionally at least 30 minutes per day Annually attends several classes, workshops, seminars, and conferences 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan provides for measurable feedback and planned adjustment Introduces others to books and literature A student of leadership theory and practice 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognized expert mentor provides feedback Leads seminars or discussions on insights gained and implemented Passion to be the leader 	

The administrator actively participates in local community activities and initiatives.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member and participant in one local community group or activity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in more than one local community group or activity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes a leadership role in the community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognized by the community as a leader and champion of the community 	

Influence: A significant part of leadership is the ability to promote positive relationships. A skilled leader builds upon relationships to move toward leadership by influence through the use of cooperative decision-making and collaboration, exemplary servant leadership style and skills, and a maturing spiritual development. In addition, courage, integrity, and being open to a continuing process of learning and growth are required. Effective school

leaders utilize the strength of others to effectively complement their own strengths.

The authorized hierarchy empowers the administrator to lead the organization.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realizes that it's acceptable to be in charge Staff understands the organization's hierarchy and their role 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direction needed by staff Staff given resources to teach effectively 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifies the roles of individuals in relation to the mission Staff coached, corrected, and encouraged 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines what needs to be done to achieve the mission and measures what was accomplished Success rewarded 	

The administrator promotes a purpose of unity with the senior pastor/leaders.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets regularly with senior pastor/leaders including prayer 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily prays for pastor /leaders 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and pastor/leaders have shared vision and at least weekly pray together 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes unity with Sr. pastor/leaders – united front 	

The administrator defines reality and removes obstacles.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and leads strategically Culture exists for planning Exhibits courage to lead 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages stakeholders as cooperative partners Invites input from a variety of venues Integrity drives doing the right things 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Owns" the issues directly influencing school success Shared direction is realistic Courageous in times of adversity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plan fulfilled Participation is catalyst for resources to advance Respected for courage, tenacity, and integrity 	

Nurtured relationships foster a connected community.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of prayer is evident at the school • Effective communication connects school and families 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social opportunities connect and unite faculty and staff • Events at school have components intentionally designed to connect people 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs, human resources, and policies provide meaningful care of personnel • Home visits or similar practice foster connections with families 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and church , faculty and staff regularly serve, play, and pray together • Constituents aligned and connected to school 	

Visionary: Visionary leadership begins with the realization that an exceptional leader promotes a shared vision, encourages the heart of his/her people, creates and communicates hope, builds a culture of success and significance, and constantly provides the motivation for on-going improvement, progress, and the achievement of expectations (results).

The administrator clearly articulates a vision for the school.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a shared vision and clearly communicates the vision • Vision is clearly written and understood 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually seeks data points to assess that school is moving towards the vision • 30-second, 1-minute, 5-minute, and 15-minute versions of vision 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionately owns the vision • Constantly casting vision in various ways in multiple settings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relentlessly drives vision to reality • Relentlessly recasting the vision for a preferred future 	

Management: While administrators may have a variety of God-given talents to attain a level of exceptional performance, the following management competencies requires developing through three stages: maintenance, delegation, and empowerment.

Maintenance: The basic core competency required to serve as an administrator demands the ability to effectively and efficiently run the day to day operations of the school by consistently meeting the task expectations of the organization. This core competency requires the ability to identify the responsibilities of all staff members and to provide appropriate supervision. In a school setting, it requires the following: effective management of financial resources—including future planning and development, monitoring student achievement, effective staff recruitment and retention, and effective student recruitment and retention.

The administrator has the right people in place to ensure success.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully hires a staff of excellence Staffing numbers aligned to budget and needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers empowered, supported, and coached to succeed Constant re-assessment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-performing workers moved to other employment Reduction-in-force or realignment policy in place 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has reputation as a "choice" place to teach Tough decisions aligned to what is best for school 	

The administrator assures that position descriptions are in place for all workers							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written position descriptions for workers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers empowered, supported, and coached to succeed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability and intervention expected and implemented 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular formal performance evaluations and growth plans 	

The administrator assures that effective recruitment and retention plans are in place.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various demographic data applied to planning Intentional about knowing each student Intentional assimilation plan for new students 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention and transition rates charted for past 5 years Can identify new students by name Plan for current parents to welcome new parents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing aligned to identified community desires, while maintaining sharing of the Gospel Knows and can greet all students and families by name Prospective students and families connected to current families 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net growth (if space is available) over the last 4-year period Closely monitors all transition issues Assimilation process reviewed and enhanced regularly 	

The administrator assures effective day-to-day operations.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routines and procedures exist Admission process assures a good fit for new students 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations/procedures clearly communicated (handbooks and other communications) Proactive/preventive dealings with behavioral issues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routinely mandates and communicates procedures and practices as changes impact the norm Positive and corrective behavioral communication with families 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System in place for immediate parent notification and communication Provides leadership development opportunities for students to positively impact the culture 	

Delegating: To move beyond maintenance mode requires the ability to appropriately assign tasks to others, monitor their progress, and evaluate their performance, while maintaining a proper level of accountability. Effective leaders grow in their ability to delegate and yet monitor the progress of the overall organization in the following areas: pursuit of academic excellence, developing a positive culture, finances, spiritual development, and instruction.

The administrator cultivates leadership among others.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies leadership capabilities within staff Identifies leaders with potential for administration 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies areas for leadership opportunities Leadership candidates connected to leadership development training 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invites staff to participate in leadership opportunities Leadership development plan created 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors and provides direction and feedback Candidates launched and mentored into leadership 	

The administrator moves the board to examine its governance policy and practice.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration/leadership examine governance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance options and practices studied and reviewed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As necessary, consultant engaged to facilitate transition of changes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board self-governance, renewal, and growth 	

Empowering: Exceptional administrators have the ability to recognize the strengths and abilities of their teams and to release authority and power appropriately to accomplish mutually agreed upon tasks. This empowerment allows individuals to contribute effectively to the creation of a culture of success and significance.

The administrator develops and monitors an annual goal-setting process for teachers and staff.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual measurable goals and plan to achieve developed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability groups monitor members' progress 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review with administrator, including corrective or next step goals 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process includes staff member's alignment to goals, mission, and vision of organization 	

The administrator assures a leadership succession plan is in place.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a succession plan is policy Identification of leadership gifts in others 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan accounts for emergencies and normal vacancies (call, retirement, resignation, release) Provisions for leadership training 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan is kept current Provides for opportunities for experience 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of potential candidates generated and periodically reviewed Mentors and transitions others to leadership 	

The school has a culture of success and significance.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals encouraged and empowered to contribute toward success of school 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and abilities of staff leveraged to "raise the bar" 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture encourages risk – "no pain, no gain" 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successes recognized, celebrated, and rewarded 	

Conclusion: Exceptional administrative performance is achieved when wise decisions are made, time is used efficiently, faculty and staff are empowered, and a highly organized and effective structural framework has been developed. Administrative performance is identified through the use of an abundance of resources, future leaders are being developed, and the organizational goals are met or exceeded consistently. The administrator functions as a dynamic visionary, is ethically mature, and is a highly organized professional with a passion for Jesus Christ, which is modeled in work and relationships.



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: **CULTURE**

All the believers were together and had everything in common
(Acts 2:24-9 NIV).

Excellent schools and their leaders take a holistic view of their organization. In addition to examining curriculum, analyzing test scores, surveying parent satisfaction, inventorying equipment and materials, and observing and evaluating teachers, they take an even deeper and broader view by determining and understanding the school's culture. Moreover, just as they work to influence a school's practices and processes, they strive to mold and form a school's culture.

While it is generally understood and accepted that all schools have a culture, defining a school's culture is another issue. One can find mission statements, statements of philosophy, value statements, and belief statements but not culture statements. This may be because there is not a clear understanding of how to define the culture of a school. If asked to define the culture of your school would you point to your written documents – curriculum, mission statements or the like – or would you begin describing the environment of the school? In any case, once you begin describing how things happen in a school such as rituals and traditions, what is rewarded and what is punished or what is celebrated and what is ignored, you are beginning to describe its culture. Simply put, a school's culture is the "way things are done around here."

Consequently, many school cultures are made up of historical patterns informally developed over time, which may not be connected with the school's written statements of mission, beliefs, and philosophy. Excellent schools recognize this phenomenon, and its leaders work to align culture with the school's mission and purpose.

Core Values: All schools have fundamental or core values. How a school responds to various situations will uncover these core values from which all subsequent values, decisions, and actions flow. Values apply to the attitudes, behaviors, and results of the entire school community – and their importance must be emphasized by all.

An Example: All schools believe that all children can learn challenging academic material. However, when it becomes evident that not all of the students are learning, how a school responds to that phenomenon will uncover a school's fundamental core value.

Good schools – those primarily organized around the value of what is best for teachers – respond by saying, "It is our responsibility to teach with excellence, but it is the student's job to learn. If they don't want to learn, that's their problem." That is a value statement.

Excellent schools – those organized around what is best for students – have a different response when students don't learn. They say, "We will do whatever it takes to ensure that all students learn." That is also a value statement.

Identify: School leadership identifies the values that already exist in the school community. Observing behavior often does this best. Additionally, the school's leadership endeavors to identify and articulate the core values embodied by the school.

The school has identified and published its core values.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core values are committed to written form. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core values are published and shared in a variety of ways and venues. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School policy is aligned to core values. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions are measured for alignment to core values. 	

The school's core values are focused on results, not activities.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values establish clear expectations. Everyone is expected to contribute. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values define excellence. Flexibility is permitted in decision-making. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values provide opportunity to contribute to school improvement. Positive results are expected. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values embrace risk taking without fear. All staff members take responsibility for each child. 	

Accept: The school community agrees with and takes responsibility for the school's core values and accepts these values as being key to the school's achieving the results of its mission.

The school's policies and practices are aligned to its core values, mission, and vision.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A culture of excellence is evident. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School appropriately encourages "raising the bar." 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School actively responds to challenges. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in policy and practice reflect innovative advancement. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 			

The success of the school is rooted and measured in the context of its relationships.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship development is intentional. Parents are engaged as partners. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff is trained in developing an nurturing relationships. Parents actively participate in their child's education. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an identified web of support for each student. Parent participation is evident in school programs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data supports depth of relationships. Parent involvement is tracked and data shared correlating involvement with student achievement. 	

Commit: The school's core values become an ingrained and essential characteristic of the school community, a standard for operations and relationships.

Aligned in the core values, the school and its communities work together to achieve the school's mission and vision.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People see the goal. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituents share the school's core values. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituents feel good (proud) about organization. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituents commit their capacity and potential. 	

The school and its communities work together to systematically anticipate and appropriately respond to change.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued alignment for success is evident. School has an improvement action planning team. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization constantly challenges <i>status quo</i>. Data is used to identify opportunities for improvement. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness to change is a core value. Action plans reflect assessment of conditions. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institution is regarded as proactive rather than reactive. Results are reported and implemented. 	

The school has a reputation for innovation.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's environment supports and invigorates, making things happen. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence of energy, persistence, and conviction. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders are willing to take a calculated risk. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administration demonstrates leadership ability. 	

The ministry of the school touches the hearts of its constituents.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desired outcomes are defined, articulated, and measurable 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry is intentional, planned, and supported. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular assessment measures the impact of the school's programs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituents are ambassadors for school-embraced values. 	

Relationships: Relationships refer to the interpersonal and working relationships among the school and its constituent communities. Relationships form the basis of a network of trust throughout the organization which fosters critical thinking, high expectations, and a focus on improvement. Schools of excellence provide an environment that causes healthy relationships to thrive.

The ability to develop successful relationships cannot be quantified; rather, people know and feel when a good working relationship exists. Having trusting, sustainable, and engaging relationships among and between all school communities is crucial. In excellent schools, it is systemic from the classroom to the board room.

Understand: The school's identified values belong to and apply to the attitudes and behaviors of the entire school community. Their importance is understood and emphasized by the congregation(s), board, administration, staff, students, and parents.

The school's core values are the framework upon which relationships are established.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values are clear, easily identifiable, and understood. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values are embedded in the school's climate. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders encourage wholesome relationships. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values are reflected in day-to-day relations. 	

The school's polices, programs, and practices are aligned to its core values, mission, and vision.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements on both sides are usually aligned. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements on both sides are considered high priority. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements on both sides are aligned most of the time 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements on both sides are seamlessly aligned. 	

Visitors or outsiders can actually observe the culture of the school.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors use words like friendly, professional, ethical, etc. to describe observed behavior. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priorities reflect values. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors perceive customer focus, strong alliances, and responsiveness. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors perceive common focus, connectedness, mission/vision, and emphasis on students. 	

Practice: The school community agrees with and takes responsibility for making decisions that are aligned and congruent to the school’s core values.

The fundamental values and beliefs of the school are reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of the entire school community (congregation, board members, administration, staff, parents, and students).							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All constituents understand that Jesus is the reason for the school. The decision-making process is clearly defined and understood. There is an opportunity to talk openly without repercussion. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People see Jesus in what the school is, does, and says. Student, parents, and staff have meaningful roles as appropriate for participating in decisions. Relationships are viewed as partnerships. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff openly share their faith stories. Decisions are made at an appropriate level, while valuing and considering a variety of input. Everyone is a contributor. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students hear and live Jesus’ story all day every day There is an atmosphere of shared responsibility and ownership. Values and beliefs are aligned with observable behavior. 	

The school administration, faculty, and staff constantly and consistently communicate and model the school's values and beliefs to all constituents of the school community.							
1	2	3	4				
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for behavior are clearly defined and communicated. Success is the expected standard. Mission/Vision are consistently implemented. Mission, vision, and environment are easily perceived or understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law and Gospel are properly divided as discipline is administered in the school. Success is acknowledged and rewarded. Resources support vision. There is no deception, deceit, or immunity to criticism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior criteria intentionally encourage growth, self-control, and proper choices. Success is displayed and shared. People are informed and engaged as participants. All participants show a willingness to share. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior reflects the desired learning environment. Success is celebrated in various ways. Differences and opinions are respected and leveraged. Open-door practices are evident. 				

The school reaches out to form alliances on behalf of students.							
1	2	3	4				
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are engaged as educational partners. The school gives back to the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school fosters productive business partnerships. Students understand service as a response to God's love for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school connects with community youth organizations. The school provides service opportunities for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is in alignment with the next level of education. Students serve voluntarily in the community. 				

The legal rights of parents, legal caregivers, teachers, and students are protected.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school unabashedly teaches virtues such as: honesty, dependability, integrity, trust, tolerance, and respect. Rights are recognized. Diversity is recognized in accord with core values. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students learn the meaning of life in a democratic society. Rights are valued. Curriculum exposes students to a rich array of viewpoints, perspectives, and experiences. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character building permeates every aspect of school life. Rights are protected. Staff members represent a wide array of talents, cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituents accept and practice responsibility in supporting the values the school imparts. Rights are nurtured. The school offers substantive, ongoing professional development in dealing with issues of diversity. 	

Embody: The school's core values become an ingrained and essential characteristic of the school community; they become a way of life.

The school's values are intentionally engrained within constituents through processes of training, practice, and reward.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written implementation plan is in place. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various processes exist for different constituent groups. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evaluation and measurement of "engraining." 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school capitalizes on every opportunity to communicate its core values. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School lives its values 24/7/365. 							

The school provides a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive environment, which results in a sense of pride and ownership.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school connects to what is important to the community. A comprehensive school security plan is in place. The school is clean. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is the "school of choice" in the community. Security is intentional, with training provided. The school is attractive. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive school spirit is evident. Security procedures are practiced. The school is secure. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constituents are proud of their school. Parents and students feel secure. The school is well-equipped. 	

School staff is committed, first and foremost, to the spiritual development, well-being, and learning of its students.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus' presence is evident in the school. A personal adult advocate is available for every student. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students know Jesus. Advocates confer regularly with students. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can articulate their faith. Advocate facilitates student's dealing with others. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have opportunity to share their faith. Training and support are provided for student advocates. 	

Conclusion: School culture may be best understood as a "chicken and egg" or "cart and horse" relationship. Is the school culture a result of relationships, or are relationships a result of the culture? YES! What is most evident is that they are related and built on a foundation of core values embodied by the organization.



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: **FINANCE**

The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do. So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more (Exodus 36:5 – 7 ESV).

The issue of financing a Lutheran school of excellence is a far-reaching and expensive proposition. Historically, the chief source of financing a Lutheran school has been the sponsoring congregation. As the cost of education has risen, tuition and fees have become the chief source of operating revenue. With limits on these two sources of funding, a third source has become an essential means to sustaining a Lutheran school. Third source funding, often called *development*, may include annual fund drives, endowments, parent-teacher organizations, booster clubs, and solicited gifts.

The financing of Lutheran schools today is widely varied; however, issues such as adequate physical facilities, updated equipment and curriculum resources, financial aid for students, teacher salaries, and benefit packages are a challenge to address and overcome. Developing a professional business plan, removal of obstacles to financial excellence, and maintenance of a positive cash flow will lead the excellent Lutheran school to sustaining its ministry for the future.

Provision: Provision is the determination of needs that are matched by resources necessary for excellence.

Vision: Compensation for teachers is beyond the local standards, operational cost is tied to student learning goals, and investments are measured and inspired by a vision of the school's preferred future based on the school's mission.

The annual operating budget's income exceeds operational expenses.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School depends upon third source income and special events for more than 15% of the budget. 75% of staffed seats are full. Capital funding needs don't negatively impact operational needs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget reflects income generated in the past from various sources 80% of staffed seats are full. Capital resources outpace immediate needs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget is not dependent on third source or other income. 85% of staffed seats are full. Funds are used as dedicated. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 3% surplus budget is not dependent on third source and special events income. 90% of staffed seats are full. The school funds depreciation. 	

School's mission and vision are reflected in the school's annual operating budget.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation meets District salary guidelines. School provides assistance for professional development, including advanced degrees. Appropriate hardware software and training facilitate learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation is aligned with an intentional percentage of local public district scale. School requires and compensates for Masters and local state certification. High speed Internet with sufficient bandwidth is available. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation meets or exceeds 85% of local public district scale. Teacher performance expectations are in place with required and intentional target intervention. Technology operates in a seamless environment. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation meets or exceeds local public school scale. Merit compensation is provided based on data criteria. Video conferencing is available. 	

An endowment strategy is in place.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endowment funds are segregated. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endowment guidelines are in place. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A program is in place to solicit endowment dollars. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A percent of operational income is designated for endowment. 	

Adequacy: The school ensures adequate and appropriate resources. The school is affordable, attainable, and accessible. It uses data to inform decisions and knows its market and financial situation. It exercises discipline to live within its means.

The school is vigilant regarding its position in the marketplace relative to the demographics of its community.			
1	2	3	4
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition assistance is unfunded. School is affordable to its target audience. School markets itself to the general community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some funded financial assistance is available. School enrollment reflects its geographic community. School has high identity and excellent reputation in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most financial assistance funded, but some is unfunded. Demographic data is an integral component in school decisions. School has "waiting pools" in certain classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial assistance is completely funded from income sources. Seamless interface exists with the school's market community. School is considered the school of choice in the community.

Prosperity: The school has ample and generous resources for fulfilling its ministry. It receives contributions from multiple sources, with greater ownership for the work of the school.

The school continually investigates strategies to increase affordability and accessibility among wider populations, including subjects long considered taboo, such as increased class size.			
1	2	3	4
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alumni participate in preserving the heritage. School plans continuously and creatively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups interface with the school and its programs. Ongoing strategic planning drives decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The business community supports school. School uses outside resources to create efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School population reflects ethnic make-up of the community. School systematically reviews its business plan to maximize efficiency.

The school is developing services to appeal to families who work hard to cope with an increasingly demanding world.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School is aware of clientele's needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School's programs and services are designed to address needs of clientele. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School services are offered when most convenient for parents. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent and varied clientele assessment provides data for meeting needs and providing meaningful services. 	

Growth of endowment resources outpaces budget needs.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endowment growth is part of financial operations plan. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School actively and intentionally seeks endowment dollars. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A portion of ALL income from various sources is designated for endowment. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endowment funds increase proportionately with operations. 	

Sustainability: The school's financial viability is prolonged without interruption for an extended period. There is a cash reserve and assets are protected.

Long-term Business Plan: The plan determines the role of each area of funding, including tuition and fees, congregational support, development (third-source funding), teacher support, financial assistance, market trends, enrollment, and facility needs.

A plan is in place for the school to operate within its financial resources.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<p>Comprehensive business plan development process in place.</p> <p>There is appropriate input from a variety of sources.</p> <p>Capital funding is part of the business plan.</p>		<p>Business plan extrapolates out several years.</p> <p>The plan is future oriented with staff input and direction.</p> <p>The annual capital funding expense does not exceed 10% of the business plan.</p>		<p>The business plan integrates with that of others throughout the organization.</p> <p>Business planning considers and integrates with other ministry plans.</p> <p>Capital funding comes from other than operational resources.</p>		<p>School consistently operates in the "black," unless it is an intentional part of an overall comprehensive strategy in collaboration with all ministry partners.</p>	

Gift development is a vibrant component of acquiring financial resources.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual gifting program is in place. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donors are linked to the mission and vision of the school. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A planned gifting program, including estate planning, is incorporated. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school employs a certified development executive. 	

Remove Obstacles: The school creatively develops alternative resources and innovative ways to create funding.

The annual operating budget has a contingency (cushion) line item to absorb or cover any shortfall in operating income.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth or program enhancement dollars are dependent upon sufficient operating income. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants, bequests, restricted gifts, etc. secure growth and program enhancement costs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pre-determined percentage of budget is restricted for contingencies. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various contingencies throughout the business plan have potential to cover in excess of 5% of budget. 	

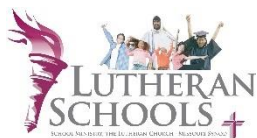
Income from "special events" or other "off budget income" is not included as income in the annual operating budget.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some budget items are contingent upon event dollars before implementation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan provides for weaning event dollars from the budget. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event dollars are used as a contingency. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event dollars provide for non-budgeted items such as: school programs, equipment, and facility improvement. 	

Positive Cash Flow: Every program or venture has income that exceeds expenses. The annual plan has a balanced or surplus budget.

Every event, venture, program, opportunity is designed to produce a positive cash flow.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate past records provide a foundation for future planning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has event planning resources to facilitate planning successful events. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school trains and mentors individual to coordinate successful events. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school carries forward resources from surplus operations for future contingencies and operations. 	

Resources (net cash assets) are in place and available to leverage opportunities that present themselves.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business plan provides for resources designated for innovation and creativity. • Emergency resources are in place – line of credit, cash reserves, investments, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business plan provides accumulated contingency resources for staff initiatives. • Funded depreciation is available for improvements, renovation, and replacement. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business plan provides sufficient funding to explore programs designed to meet ever changing and emerging needs. • Plans and resources are provided for business interruption. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffed seats are full as the school meaningfully responds to assessed needs of clientele, providing a surplus of funds. • The business plan provides for three (3) months operating reserve. 	

Conclusion: Financing an excellent Lutheran school requires a vision for the future, a sense of realism, and a strategic plan. The issue of finance must move outside the realm of first and second source funding and into third source funding—with the wisdom of planning, the confidence of Christ’s blessing, and the boldness to carry out His commands of teaching all nations, one child at a time.



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: **INSTRUCTION**

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them (Deuteronomy 4:9 NIV).

Instruction itself has the largest influence on achievement and learning. Despite the best of intentions, instruction is not always as effective as it should be and can improve significantly and swiftly through collaborative and intentional intervention by teachers and administrators. Instruction reaches its ultimate goal when students are productively engaged in their own learning.

There is a growing consensus among education stakeholders that effectively preparing students for success will require collaborative effort and shared vision. Enhancements beyond the traditional curriculum must be incorporated into the core matrix—not just an “add on.” Excellent schools are accountable for **results that matter**. Student assessment is designed to measure students’ knowledge, skills, abilities, and beliefs. Assessment indicators validate mastery of rigorous, meaningful, and relevant core and enriched content, skills, and beliefs.

Rigor: *Rigor* is the powerful means of infusing skills, taught explicitly within core subjects, that equip students for the modern workplace.

Core: Core subjects include the traditional matrix of curriculum including but not limited to reading or language arts, English, mathematics, second language, civics, government, economics, arts, history, geography, and Bible.

Program offerings meet or exceed state expectations.			
1	2	3	4
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has established essential leanings and committed them to writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis is on depth over breadth of content coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality curriculum engages students in critical thinking and problem solving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content connects and has application to real-life situations.

Technology is integral to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, which helps teachers to individualize, enhance and improve instruction.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a strategic technology plan. School adequately equipped with latest hardware and software. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology competency is a condition of hire. Hardware and software are upgraded as updates become available. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology is used to deliver student services. Infrastructure is seamless. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The designated technology resource person provides assistance in finding resources. Electronic, enhanced learning is the standard. 	

Enhanced: Incorporated into the core “matrix” are global awareness, entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health and wellness awareness, and **Information Communication Technology** literacy. These are additionally supplemented by leadership development, ethics, accountability, adaptability, productivity, responsibility, and social skills.

Enrichment, or choice offerings, are designed to meet student needs.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have personalized academic plans. Academic plans provide flexibility to align with student ability and interest and needs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The co-curricular program extends and supports academic learning. Evidence documents the existence of a connection with co-curricular learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutorials and advancement are normal part of instructional program design. Intentionality to provide humanities, character development, visual and performing arts is evident. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrichment is fused into content of core subjects. Content relates to student’s lives. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are exposed to experiences that build the bridge from school to career. 							

School programs and curriculum integrate global awareness, entrepreneurial and civil literacy, health and wellness, and informational communication.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and teachers collaborate with others. Students have financial acumen in making appropriate personal and economic choices. Students understand health risks. Students informed to participate effectively in government. Teachers and students embody technological proficiency. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and teachers communicate globally across boundaries. Students understand various business processes. Students are equipped with tools to make and sustain healthy life-styles. Students exercise rights and obligations of citizenship. Through technology, the world is brought into the classroom and student lives. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student experiences provide understanding of ethnic, cultural, religious, and personal differences. Students understand various economic forces. Students practice healthy life-styles. Students can articulate implications of local and global civic decisions. Visual and graphic representation through technology enhance learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can deal with complexities of differing points of view and ideologies. Students have an entrepreneurial spirit. Students demonstrate holistic health. Students apply skills to make intelligent civic choices. Technology is a platform for collaboration and communication. 	

Interdisciplinary teams share responsibility for student learning.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school involves teachers in intentional planning and responsibility. Interdisciplinary teams are established. The school provides professional development and training. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time is regularly scheduled for planning. Everyone has a voice. The school has higher expectations for all. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers create collaborative projects, assignments, and activities. Team members are willing to give up to gain. The school provides opportunities for research. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of results drives changes. Teams and planning demonstrate sustainability. Students and teachers are empowered. 	

Advanced: Beyond traditional metrics, schools incorporate high standards and a coherent and comprehensive effort to support and guide students for success in essential, relevant, and crucial knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Reduced student loads for teachers provide for more personalization.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching teams are established. A plan is in place to address realistic teaching loads. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School provides schedule flexibility. The school reduces/realigns "supervisory" time to enhance preparation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common planning time is provided. Teachers have accountability groups to monitor purpose and use of planning time. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning communities are developed. Resources are aligned with goals. 	

The academic program extends beyond the classroom, taking advantage of community-based learning opportunities aligned with essential learnings.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reflects the community. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reaches out to the community. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is a vibrant part of the community. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community embraces school partnership. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school and community agencies partner in experiential learning for students. 							

Service learning is a key component of the school's required program.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service experiences are required. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students willingly engage in non-required service opportunities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning/reflection is a component of the service experience. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students initiate, plan, engage others, and implement service opportunities and experiences. 	

Mastery: "Results that matter" is the engine that drives the entire instructional process. Students are learning at higher levels.

Methodology: (*Engagement*): Student learning reflects superior instruction in the classroom. Creative teaching ideas are manifested in engaged learning. Technology is incorporated into the teaching/learning process.

Teaching strategies and methodologies are aligned with required learning.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is delivered. The school provides an induction program for new teachers. The school provides on-going instructional skill enhancement and development for teachers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction is active, leading to student performance. Teachers have professional learning plans. Teachers are required to have instructional portfolios. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are motivated to take responsibility for their own learning. Performance is subject to monitoring. Observation includes supervisor/mentor observations of teacher and teacher-to-teacher observations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning is facilitated, coached, and mentored. Teachers participate in professional development seminars and workshops. Student appraisals are conducted. 	

Technology skills are honed and advanced through integration into the learning process.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications and skills are taught. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills and understanding are acquired across the curriculum 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills are applied in learning across the curriculum. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are employable because of relevant skills. 	

Teachers use a variety of strategies and settings that identify and accommodate individual learning styles and engage students.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional strategies account for ability and interest. Instructional strategies account for learning styles. Teachers controls and facilitates learning. Teachers design instruction to engage students. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiated instruction is the norm. Each student's learning styles has been identified. Teachers facilitate learning. Lessons are innovative. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students experience and enjoy success. Instruction is tailored to individual student's learning styles. Students are in control of learning. Instruction is hands-on and experiential. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are confident learners. Student understanding is documented. Students demonstrate critical thinking and application. Students are stretched and challenged. 	

Assessment: To be effective, sustainable, and affordable, assessments use modern technology to increase efficiency and timeliness. A balance of assessment, including high-quality standardized testing along with effective classroom assessment, offers students a powerful way to master the content and skills central to success.

Multiple forms of student assessment drive instructional strategies.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre, formative, and summative assessments are used. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment reflects application of learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction is tailored to assess needs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurably higher levels of performance are attained. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects, problem-solving, and real life applications with rubrics for evaluation are developed and used (authentic assessment). 							

Student learning is tracked from the time they enroll until the time they leave.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardized test results are reviewed and tracked. Students examine options and choose their own path. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of learning progress drives staffing, curriculum, and materials decisions. Students take risks and assess effects. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative records are reviewed in designing personalized learning plans for students. Students use imagination. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration and faculty act on results. Students demonstrate mastery. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school can track an increased quantity and quality of student/teacher interactions. 							

The school measures what a student should know, be able to do, and believe.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurement is aligned to essential student leanings. Standardized test results affirm student learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments challenge top learners. Students achieve above norm level on standardized tests. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students demonstrate mastery through various assessments. Students demonstrate success in high-stakes testing (ACT, SAT, etc.) . 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students demonstrate practical application of knowledge and skills. Students are prepared for success at next level of life-long learning. 	

Synthesis: Students are prepared to be leaders as they meet the challenges faced in continuing their education, careers, and community.

School community builds and maintains a vision, direction, and focus for student learning.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership provides for vision, direction, and focus on student learning. Instructional strategies reflect current research. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school practices a comprehensive approach to student learning. Students engaged in learning goals, process, and activities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessments provide focus. Assessments effectively measure student learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional collaboration occurs. The school commits resources to fund excellence in student learning. 	

Understanding that learning is a continuum, the school holds up higher levels of education to better serve articulation of student learning and ensure success at each stage of the continuum.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured formal, lateral, and vertical communication takes place. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school provides for cooperative collaboration. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching and learning focus on best practices. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy transition to the next learning level is documented. 	

The school has in place a comprehensive program that tracks student success at the next level compared to their current course of study.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school conducts intentional follow-up and accountability. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school obtains measurable feedback. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students successfully complete the next level. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment is the catalyst for program revision. 	

Conclusion: Expectations are profoundly different today than even a decade ago. Schools must be hotbeds of creativity, imagination, and innovation. Key to success is the investment of time, thought, energy, and resources toward desired educational outcomes.



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: **MISSION**

Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I will be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20 MSG).

A school's mission statement simply states why the school exists. The statement focuses on the distinctive purpose, outcomes, and results rather than methods that are the ultimate results of the school's work. In creating strategies to accomplish its mission, a school develops a vision that paints a picture of what "mission accomplished" success looks like.

Vision without action is diligent idleness (head in the clouds). Action without vision is stagnant busyness (noses to the grindstone). The long list of school and congregation failures includes two types of organizations. One type possesses plenty of energy, hard work and activity, but fails because it has no clear and inspiring vision of the future. The second type has a fantastic vision for a creative and dynamic future, but fails to implement a successful day-in, day-out plan of action. A school and congregation with a healthy sense of mission are committed to both vision and action.

By aligning the vision dynamic and the action dynamic, a school is assured of implementing and living its mission. The stages of vision dynamic include experience, values, and insight. The stages of action dynamic are preparation, implementation, and adjustment. When they are aligned the distinctive purpose and efforts of the organization are realized.

Vision: To choose direction, leaders develop a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the school. Vision is an image of the future in the hearts and minds of leaders that simply will not fade away. Visions do not just happen. They need to be cultivated and nurtured. The vision dynamic moves through several stages.

Experience: The leaders of the school bring with them varied past experiences. The school itself may also have a rich history of experience. It is the recalling of experience and the blending of all the peoples, stories that contribute to a rich understanding of who and what the school is. The expectations and desires of individual contributors, drawn from their experience as well as the experiences of the organization, drive the first stage of developing a vision.

Leaders of the school have formulated a clear vision for the school.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leaders have called on God's guidance through prayer and Bible study in the development of the vision for the school. The vision is realistic and credible. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leaders of the school have shared the vision with others for input and suggestions in the development of the vision. The vision is well articulated and easily understood. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leaders of the school have a vision that is clearly and regularly communicated in all school publications and at school events. The vision is ambitious and responsive to change. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers, students, and parents can clearly articulate the vision of the school. The vision answers the question What will success look like? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision paints a picture of where the school is going – the desired outcome – not the means to get there 							

Values: Values also are fundamental to vision development. A vision must be aligned with the true core values of the leader or it will not be actualized. Values determine the unique character of the school. Leaders who adhere to a set of values are perceived to be credible and inspirational. Values provide the criteria used to identify preferred behaviors or outcomes. The ability to articulate the core values of the school is vital to the formation of vision.

The vision of the school is aligned with the core values.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leader has set values that are credible and inspirational. The school has defined basic beliefs or core values that all share. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision is clearly aligned with the leader's core values. Core values are committed to writing and published. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's core values are clearly articulated throughout the school's vision. Core values guide the decisions of board, administration, and staff. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The students, faculty, and parents own and follow the core values. The school endeavors to practice and live by its core values. 	

Insight: If there is a quintessential leadership function, it is the ability to assemble, out of myriad images, forecasts, and alternatives, a transcendent vision of the future. This ability requires insight. The insightful leader is able to articulate the vision with clarity. A vision is effective when it is at once simple, easily understood, desirable, and energizing for others. Insight is cultivated by the experience and values of the school.

The leaders and school community are passionate about the vision for the school.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school leaders regularly communicate the school's vision with passion and enthusiasm to all constituents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school community can communicate the school's vision with passion and enthusiasm. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leaders believe that the vision is designed for the success of the students. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school leaders can cast a vision that moves the school in to a future ministry built on excellence. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision captures the imagination of the school's community. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision captures the commitment of the community. 			

Action: The pursuit of the school's mission also requires a well-defined, well-organized plan of action. But to achieve alignment, the school cannot pursue just any activity; it must be the right activity. The stages of action development are preparation, implementation, and adjustment.

Preparation: The preparation stage involves gathering information and establishing the strategic focus. Surveys and other research are combined with knowledge or experience to identify best practices. The resulting strategic plans will be as complex as the school itself, and they must all align with the experience, values, and insights of the leadership. Although intent may be clear, the plan is not actualized until it is implemented.

Leaders have sought appropriate levels of input from all stakeholders in formulating the school's vision.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision was formulated through collaborative efforts among the leaders and all appropriate stakeholders. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision is constantly evaluated and updated based on the needs of the students. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision is constantly being compared to other educational endeavors to insure that student needs are met. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision enables all students to be master learners. 	

Implementation: Implementation requires operational planning. "Objectives" are defined and assigned to individuals who are given a period of time for achieving them. The strategic focus defines *what* is to be accomplished. The operational units determine *how* to do it.

Faculty and staff clearly understand the necessary steps to help move the school toward the realization of its vision.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff plan yearly as to how the school's vision relates to the current reality. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff clearly understand how their daily activities are aligned with the school's vision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff are constantly evaluating their daily activities as they relate to the school's vision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff clearly understand how their daily activities enable students to be master learners. 	

The school's vision is congruent with the strategic plan for daily operation.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision is the template upon which daily decisions are implemented. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic plan is adjusted as the vision is changed to align with success for students. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic plan is the avenue for successfully accomplishing the school's vision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision enables students to be master learners. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic plan is written and communicated. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic plan is continually revised and updated. 			

The vision for the school is compelling, which galvanizes faculty/staff to strive towards excellence.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vision for the school is compelling and provides energy and direction to faculty and staff. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff are constantly evaluating their activities as they relate to the school's vision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty and staff meet regularly to monitor student success and accomplishment. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty and staff enable all students to be master learners. 	

Adjustment: Action requires monitoring and evaluation. There must be a willingness to adjust the plan to better achieve the desired outcomes. Evaluation informs the adjustment process.

Leaders regularly monitor and assess how the school is progressing in relationship to its vision.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders regularly seek data from constituents about how the school is progressing towards realization of the vision and make necessary adjustments 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders regularly evaluate student learning and activities relative to how they accomplish the vision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders align activities to meet the vision. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vision enables all students to be master learners. 	

Leaders of the school use the vision as a template by which all decisions are made in regard to the expenditure of resources.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's leaders consistently expend financial resources in congruence to the school's vision. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All school fundraising efforts meet the vision for the school. 			

Conclusion: A school achieves a sense of mission when the natural tension between the dynamics of dream-like vision and treadmill-like action are appropriately aligned. Now the mission is more than a statement of belief. It is connected to the deep energy that comes not merely from hard work but from work that contributes significantly to a preferred future. When a school is intentional about aligning vision and action, it confers a higher status to the workers because they see how they are part of a significant enterprise. They gain a sense of importance. They are not like robots blindly following instructions. They realize they are creative human beings who are solving problems and striving to realize a great vision. The result is mission accomplished.



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: ...**MASTER TEACHER**

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me
wisdom in the secret heart (Psalms 51:6 ESV).

Lutheran school excellence does not occur without exceptional classroom instruction. Exceptional classroom instruction requires teachers who are dedicated to the instructional process and are equally dedicated to personal professional development.

Developing master teachers requires an understanding of a teacher's relationship to the students and the instructional process as well as an understanding of the development of an individual as he or she grows professionally. It also requires an understanding of the Call to teach and the joy Lutheran educators have as they proclaim the Gospel message.

Professionalism: While teachers have a variety of God given talents, to grow to a master teacher requires three stages: knowledge, collaboration, and wisdom.

Knowledge: Knowledge is the basic core competence required to enter the teaching profession. This stage requires content area competence. College coursework and state certification examinations help assure that all enter the teaching profession with a basic set of competencies. Teachers continue their education through graduate classes, conferences, seminars, and CEUs (continuing education units).

The master teacher possesses core knowledge and competencies.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possesses a master's degree from an accredited institution Holds a valid teaching certificate from the state of residence Has a working knowledge of the Lutheran faith and a clear understanding of law and gospel 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes 30 graduate hours in field Enrolled in the Colloquy program if not LCMS trained Demonstrates expertise in all areas of teaching assignment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earns 40+ CEUs per year Holds a valid Lutheran Teacher Certificate from a synodical institution Holds a teaching endorsement for all areas of teaching assignment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possesses masters degree + 30 hours Meets state standards for continuing education and for continued teacher certification Attends workshops and seminars in teaching and integrating faith and Scripture 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifelong learner 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board support for professional growth (recommend 5% of staffing budget for continuing education) 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff committed to continuing, Christian professional growth and improvement 							

The master teacher applies knowledge to instruction.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies knowledge to the teaching process and lesson preparation • Brings world to the classroom • Reads to stay current 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks resources to enhance the transformation of core knowledge to students • Takes students into the world • Constantly thinking 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes the use of technology to expand the base of knowledge • Provides authentic learning experiences • Transitions from instructor to facilitator 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages students in the process of core knowledge development • Connects school to career • Life-long learner 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses technology and virtual learning experiences 							
The master teacher assesses appropriately.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt and accurate in the assessment of student work • Uses built-in assessment • Uses digital scoring 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses formative and summative assessment when evaluating student learning • Measures and rewards desired learning • Obtains diagnostic information 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses the assessment process to enhance student learning • Uses project-based assessments • Uses assessment results to make instructional decisions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages the student in the assessment and evaluation process • Measures application of content • Uses assessment to strengthen the educational process 	

Collaboration: Once the basic knowledge has been gained and the professional begins teaching there are countless opportunities to interact with other professionals in a collaborative way. Sharing content, resources, instructional techniques, and management skills become automatic. The professional seeks opportunities to interact with colleagues seeking ways to improve.

The master teacher builds relationships with fellow staff members.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in professional dialog with colleagues Engages in collective planning with colleagues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in content area and instructional method discussions with colleagues Participates in team teaching 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads in-service programs for local staff sharing content area and instructional method expertise Participates in interdisciplinary teaching 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages staff in content and instructional methods development Participates in innovative collaboration 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams effectively Engage in interdisciplinary instruction 							

The master teacher develops relationships with the professional community.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks out consultations with experts in the field Conducts self-appraisal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in electronic and other discussion forums with colleagues Values intellectual development 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages colleagues in problem solving discussion to address professional issues Takes advantage of opportunity to study, reflect, and apply learning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosts or attends meetings with colleagues to assess other schools of thought on professional issues Acquires knowledge and skills related to student learning 	

The master teacher is a member of professional organizations.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds active membership in at least two professional organizations (Lutheran school teachers are encouraged to be members of LEA) Reads independently 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reads professional journals and resources Attends workshops 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends professional conferences and workshops leading to additional professional expertise Attends seminars 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to professional journals Leads workshop for the professional community 	

Wisdom: It is difficult to identify the exact point when content knowledge, life experience, collaboration, and professional development blend into wisdom. Master teachers are sought out as others recognize their ability to apply theory with experience and to lead students in the process of learning. Clearly, the master teacher is one that displays wisdom.

The master teacher demonstrates wisdom when interacting with colleagues.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognized by colleagues as being an exceptional teacher Serves as a mentor for new staff members 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought for wisdom by administrators and teaching colleagues Looks for ways to develop new members of the professional community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified as a self starter, a motivator Seeks to counsel others as needed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps individuals identify their strengths Recognized as "guru" in education 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the true source of wisdom 							

The master teacher demonstrates wisdom when interacting with parents and students.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognized by parents and students for his/her teaching abilities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists learners in developing their skills and abilities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves parents in the learning process 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranges and takes advantage of community partnerships 	

Impact Students: While teachers have a variety of God-given talents, to impact students as a master teacher requires three levels of competency: teach, empower, and inspire.

Teach: Methods courses, student teaching experiences, and countless hours preparing lessons form the core of a teacher's ability to teach. From the first day of classes the teacher calls upon all of the experiences in teacher preparation to interact with students. Clearly, teachers have not taught until their students have learned. The ability to teach is the first stage of growth leading to master teacher skills affecting students.

The master teacher integrates faith.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly communicates personal faith and knowledge of Holy Scripture Demonstrates an understanding of a professional student-teacher relationship 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guides student learning of Holy Scripture and the teachings of the church Models a positive student-teacher relationship to his/her colleagues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrates the faith into the instruction of all academic areas. Confronts colleagues when the appearances of unprofessional relationships exist 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops a place of grace where God's Word is the center of the school Promotes the importance of positive teacher-student relationships to colleagues 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops and writes a personal mission statement 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates a life of service to our Lord and His people 			

The master teacher is an expert at the process of instruction.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands and demonstrates research-based instructional methods Evaluates student learning Uses a variety of teaching methods 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes learning relevant and enjoyable for students Uses research-supported evaluation skills Integrates the use of technology into the instructional process 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges students to learn beyond perceived limits Assists students in the process of self assessment Guides student to explore resources available to enhance and support classroom instruction 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents learning so it leads to student exploration Guides students to use peer assessment as a learning tool Encourages student-led lessons to enhance the instructional process 	

The master teacher manages the classroom effectively.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages classroom routines and structure • Establishes clear behavioral expectations • Establishes a learning environment that is positive for students and teacher alike • Develops a culture of mutual respect 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages students in a variety of classroom management tasks • Develops behavioral expectations that are both age appropriate and helpful to the learning environment • Reviews the classroom environment on a regular basis and provides for student comfort and structure • Addresses disrespectful behavior appropriately 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a collaborative relationship with students toward student ownership of the learning environment • Manages student infractions with respect and authority • Assures an orderly environment that is free from clutter and unnecessary equipment and supplies • Creates an environment that promotes peer intervention when student disrespect occurs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates an environment of respect that self-monitors and controls inappropriate behaviors • Develops student relationships that foster positive classroom behavior • Establishes an environment that allows students to focus on the tasks at hand with a minimum of distractions • Classroom management guided by God’s commands and respect for one another 	

Empower: Through the process of instruction, the master teachers leads students to new understandings of the learning process. The master teacher leads students to actively engage in the activities at hand and to lead the quest for additional skills, information, and insights.

The master teacher develops student faith talk.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates personal faith and speaks freely and often of personal relationship with Jesus Christ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents activities and situations where students are encouraged to talk of their faith 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides activities for students to talk of their faith with students in other classes and grade levels 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides activities for students to engage in faith discussions with adults at school and in other settings 	

The master teacher recognizes student gifts and talents.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionally identifies student gifts and talents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists students in identifying these gifts and talents as God-given 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their talents for the benefit of others 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides students with ways to expand their talent through contact with others with similar interests 	

The master teacher strives for student excellence.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a love for learning Present instructional lessons in a relevant manner 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges students to grow beyond their perceived limits Leads students understand the reason for learning presented materials 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students in activities they did not see as possible Students see the potential for additional learning experiences 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate student success Students assist in setting the agenda for instruction based on their desire to learn 	

Inspire: To be invited to see what a student has learned is a great gift. The master teacher has the ability to inspire students to develop their own interest, their own goals, and their own instructional strategies and to share with enthusiasm their success and their trials.

The master teacher inspires student learning and success.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners with student in the learning process Challenges student thinking Recognizes potential teachers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes and encourages student success Helps students see potential in additional exploration Provides opportunities for students to teach 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates excitement over student learning Develops problem-solving skills in students Provides encouragement for potential teachers including preparation of letters of recommendation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrates student reports of new achievements Engages students in the teaching process Track students and provide on-going encouragement 	

Conclusion: A master teacher is one that can be described as wise, one that has developed instructional skill, proven competency, and grown professionally. The master teacher teaches students, guides their instruction, and inspires them to use their God-given talents to the best of their ability, finding joy in the process of learning and challenge in that which has not yet been explored.



Lutheran Schools of Excellence: ...*Spiritual Development*

Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children (Deuteronomy 4:9 ESV).

Nothing is more important in defining excellence in a Lutheran school than evidence of students growing in their relationship with their Savior, Jesus Christ. Immersed in an environment that daily models the love of Christ, children can witness what it means to be a follower of Jesus. As they learn more of Him, they will begin to respond in words and actions to the great love He has for them. This response will reveal a genuine concern and care for other people and an attitude of service-mindedness.

Spiritual development in excellent Lutheran schools aligns the dynamic of **commitment** with the dynamic of **response**.

Commitment: Commitment is the transformational process that leads people to dedicate their lives to God. This occurs by the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word in three ways: recognition, connectedness, and vocation.

Recognition: At the core of faith development, young people understand that they are children of God. The Apostle Paul in Romans 8:14 (NIV) assures us of this “because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” This basic but powerful understanding sets the foundation for the relationship with God.

Students and faculty recognize themselves and others as God’s children.			
1	2	3	4
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students, faculty, and staff are taught they are children of God. All know that God wants all His children to be baptized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students, faculty, and staff understand they are children of God. All understand what it means to be children of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students, faculty, and staff believe they are children of God. All want to be baptized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students, faculty, and staff profess their faith as children of God. All are baptized.
	•	•	•

School staff understand and demonstrate Law and Gospel.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God's law is evidenced in the school's behavior guidelines and consequences. God's gospel of grace is evidenced in the administration of guidelines. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law and Gospel are evidenced daily by students. Law and Gospel are evidenced daily by students. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral issues are handled with accountability, fairness, and forgiveness. Those who seek forgiveness are forgiven. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are minimal behavioral issues. A culture of grace and gospel permeates the school. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, students, and faculty participate in creating a Christ-centered, loving, grace-filled school. 							

The Lutheran school is recognizable by specific signs.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are visible signs of the school's Christian orientation (artwork, crosses, logo, etc). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extracurricular groups are engaged in regular prayer and/or Bible study. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by God's grace, students and faculty endeavor to live a sanctified life on and off campus. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within five seconds of entering a Lutheran school visitors know and feel that it is a Christian school. 	

Connectedness: As children of God, we begin to understand that as believers we are part of something bigger than ourselves. This realization connects the child of God to a community of other believers, which make up the body of Christ. This body has been set apart to witness to one another, the community, and the world. Matthew 28:19-20a (NIV): "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Students and faculty view themselves as the body of Christ.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and faculty are encouraged to view one another as the body of Christ in the school. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and faculty are encouraged to view one another as the body of Christ in the community. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students of all religious backgrounds are welcome at the school. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies are in place to encourage students and faculty to treat all people as members of the body of Christ. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school admonishes those who do not treat others as members of the body of Christ. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school celebrates students who treat others as fellow members of the body of Christ. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school actively seeks to attract non-Christians. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The entire school family knows and professes Christ as their Savior. 	

Vocation: As students grow in their relationship with Christ, a realization develops that each member of the body of Christ has a calling to serve others. Each calling is unique and is designed to fulfill what God wants to accomplish in the world. As synodically trained professionals, the faculty serves as mentors, role models, and advisors to the students.

The school's faculty members are synodically trained professionals.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% of the faculty and administration are synodically trained. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of the faculty and administration are synodically trained. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of the faculty and administration are synodically trained. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90+% of the faculty and administration are synodically trained. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administration and board are committed to hiring the best Christian teachers and administrators. Hiring policies emphasize the importance of securing highly qualified Lutheran teachers/administrators. Non-synodically trained faculty/administrators are encouraged to pursue Colloquy. 							
Students learn to live as Christians in various vocations.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are prepared for service to God in various careers. Students are prepared for service to God in various careers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students understand various church-work careers. Students understand that they can live their Christian faith in any career. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career days/weeks are held during which students are intentionally exposed to various church work vocations. Career days/weeks are held during which students are intentionally exposed to Christians working in various secular careers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and administrators intentionally identify and recruit future church workers from the student body. Graduates are recognized as Christians in their chosen vocation. 	

Response: It is not enough simply to be filled with knowledge of the Savior. Faith must be evident in daily living. John 5:15 states, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." The process of studying, practicing, and then serving is similar to many experiences that young people have when they learn a skill, practice it, and finally implement it in a real setting. The difference in excellent Lutheran schools is the motivation for the response. We love because God first loved us.

Study: A fundamental cornerstone of every Lutheran school is the opportunity for students to learn of God's work in the world through the study of His Word. This instruction,

along with the testimony of others as to how God is working in the lives of His people, provide a foundation of learning that is essential to spiritual development.

Students are in the Word.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and students regularly pray in all classes. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memory work is a part of the weekly religion curriculum. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intentional study of God's Word happens outside of chapel and daily religion classes; some are student led or initiated. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students participate in personal or group Bible studies outside of school. 	

Faculty are in the Word.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty devotions are regularly scheduled. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty participate in personal or group Bible studies. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches/sponsors/advisors lead/facilitate prayer and/or Bible study with their student groups. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty lead Bible studies in their churches and/or homes. 	

Practice: Excellent Lutheran schools provide students with opportunities to put their faith and knowledge into practice. This occurs when the community gathers to participate in the traditions of the church. Students also experience this when they are given opportunities to serve others within and beyond their school community. This initial foray creates more of a risk-free opportunity to practice their faith.

Students and faculty put their faith and knowledge into practice.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school documents ways that students practice their faith. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school provides opportunities for students to practice their faith. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are led to put faith into action. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students put their faith into action in all of life. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mission statement of the school is lived out daily at the school. All students are treated with respect. 							

Apologetics are part of the Lutheran school curriculum.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students articulate Christian faith and doctrine. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students champion Christian faith and doctrine. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students prove doctrine and belief through Scripture. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students defend faith and doctrine through Scripture. 	

Worship is an integral part of school life.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful chapel, in which students and faculty are actively engaged, is regularly scheduled. • Un-churched students are intentionally invited by faculty or fellow students to attend church with them. 							

Serve: As the understanding of how to assist others in the community and the world grows, the excellent Lutheran school provides experiences to connect young people with situations that may be out of their initial comfort zone. These experiences help students become Jesus' hands and feet to a world that needs to experience His love.

Service learning is an integral part of the school's program.							
1		2		3		4	
<i>Check the grey box in the column when ALL success indicators can be documented</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty and students are encouraged to serve others. • Faculty and students serve others. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty and students routinely serve within the school. • Faculty and students attend short term mission trips together. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of faculty and students serve outside the school in the community. • Students and faculty go on multi-day, school-initiated mission trips. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school recognizes and celebrates those who serve. • Students participate in mission projects outside of school. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and faculty financially support mission projects. 							

Conclusion: By aligning the commitment to grow in relationship with Christ and the corresponding response to His love, young people in excellent Lutheran schools develop spiritually. In all that they learn, nothing is of greater value for eternal salvation and Christian response than this...

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people" (Titus 3:4-8 ESV).

Appendix E



To: Alan Lynn Freeman
From: Douglas J Adams, Chair
IRB Expedited Review
Date: 11/17/2020
Action: Exemption Granted
Action Date: 11/17/2020
Protocol #: 2010291454
Study Title: Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders that promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools

The above-referenced protocol has been determined to be exempt.

If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol that may affect the level of risk to your participants, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have any questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact the IRB Coordinator at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

cc: John C Pijanowski, Investigator

Appendix F

Survey Invitation Letter and Consent
Alan L. Freeman
Doctoral Candidate
University of Arkansas – Fayetteville
XXX-XXX-XXXX work
XXX-XXX-XXXX
alan.freeman@mo.lcms.org

Dear Lutheran School Leader:

I am a doctoral student in the Ed.D. program at the University of Arkansas. I am in the process of writing my dissertation, and I am planning my research study for the Spring of 2021.

I am reaching out to you as a Lutheran school leader (Head of School/Principal) as my study is on the leadership characteristics and practices of Lutheran leaders.

My dissertation, entitled : *Identifying the Essential Leadership Characteristics, Traits, and Skills of Lutheran School Leaders*, is dependent on the participation of practicing Lutheran school leaders. My desire is to use the Delphi Method and have 5-8 Lutheran school leaders in the Missouri District – LCMS and identify the leadership traits and practices that lead to Lutheran school sustainability and success. With your assistance it is my goal to make a contribution to scholarship and practice and to help guide Lutheran schools to sustainability and success.

I am asking you to participate in four rounds of surveys that you will complete online.

Participants' personal identity will be kept confidential throughout the study process and at its conclusion. Your name and the name of your school/workplace will not be revealed. All of the gathered data will be analyzed for themes and trends.

If you are willing to participate, please email me at alan.freeman@mo.lcms.org or phone/text me at 636-486-5200. Once you contact me I will phone you to schedule an appointment. In addition, please sign the attached consent form and return it to me as an email attachment.

Sincerely,

Alan L. Freeman

Dear Lutheran School Leadership Development Program Leader:

I am a doctoral student in the Ed.D. program at the University of Arkansas and in the process of writing my dissertation.

My study is on the leadership characteristics and practices of Lutheran school leaders, and so I am reaching out to you, a leader of a Lutheran School Leadership Development Program, to ask for your participation in my research study.

My dissertation, entitled *Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders that promote the sustainability of Lutheran schools*, is dependent on the participation of practicing Lutheran school leaders. The study will utilize the Delphi Method with participants including five to eight leaders of Lutheran School Leadership Development Programs in the Missouri District – LCMS. Through three rounds of online surveys, participants will identify the leadership traits and practices that lead to Lutheran school sustainability and success. If you are willing to participate in this study, please go to the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J92QBDP>

Please read and sign the Consent to Participate form and complete the survey by **XXX**. There will be three surveys in total with the third survey providing consensus on the focus of the study. While the questions for the first survey are open-ended, the second and third surveys will consist of questions that will be rated using the Likert-scale. After participants have completed the first survey the results will be tabulated, and participants will then receive an email with a survey link to the second and third surveys. The survey links will be emailed to you approximately two weeks apart to allow for the results to be tabulated and for the new survey to be created.

At the conclusion of the survey rounds, participants will receive the survey results and be asked to participate in a concluding focus group via Zoom. The participants in the focus group session will discuss the survey results as I seek further insight on the questions posed in the study. If you agree to participate in the focus group session a separate Consent to Participate form will be emailed to you.

Participants' personal identities will be kept confidential throughout the study process and at its conclusion. Your name and the name of your school/workplace will not be disclosed. All gathered data will be analyzed for themes and trends.

It is my goal to contribute to scholarship and practice and to help guide Lutheran schools to sustainability and success with your assistance. If you have any questions about the study, please email me at alfreema@uark.edu or phone/text me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Alan L. Freeman

Delphi Study Survey Round 2: Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders who promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders who promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools

Name of Principal Researcher: Alan Freeman

Name of Faculty Advisor: John Pijanowski, Ph.D.

Thank you for your participation in the first survey for the Delphi Study on the Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders that promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools. A tremendous amount of information has been gathered from your responses, and I have utilized this information to create the survey for Delphi Study Survey Round 2. Your responses will again be collected, and the overall results will be used to create Delphi Study Survey Round 3.

The second survey is now open and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RS3ZPZD>. Please complete the survey prior to 11:59 p.m. on XXX.

Participants' personal identities will be kept confidential throughout the study process and at its conclusion. Your name and the name of your school/workplace will not be disclosed. All gathered data will be analyzed for themes and trends.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and if you decide not to participate in the study, or withdraw from the study at any time, including exiting from the electronic survey, you will not be penalized. You have the right to not answer any questions which make you uncomfortable or to end your participation in the survey altogether, at any time, by exiting the survey. No one from your school district or the University of Arkansas will be notified.

In this research study, it is my goal to contribute to scholarship and practice and to help guide Lutheran schools to sustainability and success with your assistance. If you have any questions about the study, please email me at alfreema@uark.edu or phone/text me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Alan L. Freeman

Ed.D. Candidate, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Delphi Study Survey Round 3: Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders who promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders who promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools

Name of Principal Researcher: Alan Freeman

Name of Faculty Advisor: John Pijanowski, Ph.D.

Thank you for your participation in the second survey for the Delphi Study on the Leadership qualities, traits, characteristics, and practices of effective Lutheran school leaders that promote the sustainability of Lutheran Schools. A tremendous amount of information has been gathered from your responses, and I have utilized this information to create the survey for Delphi Study Survey Round 3. Your responses will again be collected in Survey Round 3, and the overall results will be used to finalize consensus for the study questions.

The third and final survey is now open and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LHWDP87>

Please complete the survey prior to 11:59 p.m. on XXX.

Participants' personal identities will be kept confidential throughout the study process and at its conclusion. Your name and the name of your school/workplace will not be disclosed. All gathered data will be analyzed for themes and trends.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and if you decide not to participate in the study, or withdraw from the study at any time, including exiting from the electronic survey, you will not be penalized. You have the right to not answer any questions which make you uncomfortable or to end your participation in the survey altogether, at any time, by exiting the survey. No one from your school district or the University of Arkansas will be notified.

In this research study, it is my goal to contribute to scholarship and practice and to help guide Lutheran schools to sustainability and success with your assistance. If you have any questions about the study, please email me at alfreema@uark.edu or phone/text me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Alan L. Freeman

Ed.D. Candidate, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Invitation to Focus Group

Blessings to you as you hopefully prepare for a fruitful summer and get time to rest and vacation!

I am writing to request your involvement in one last activity as part of my Doctoral study. Attached are the responses from your past surveys, and following your responses are the responses from a group of current Lutheran school administrators, with each response given a domain, an m that represents the mean score from participant ratings (1-5 on the Likert scale), and the overall percentage score based on the Likert score and number of participants' responses. The higher the mean (m) and the higher the %, the greater importance each participant placed on that response. For example, in the question Describe a successful Lutheran school the response Ministers to Students and families on a daily basis received an m score of 4.86 and a rating of 97.14%.

I ask that if you are willing to participate in a Zoom session with me and your fellow participants to discuss the results of the surveys, please join me for approximately 45 minutes on Monday, XXX, at 10:00 a.m. Central Time. To attend the meeting please click on the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/98830513577>

If you are unable to attend or choose not to attend the Zoom meeting, if you are willing to provide written feedback on your analysis and thoughts of the survey results (this can be a short reflection of a few bullet points or a paragraph), I would appreciate that as well. Please send your written response to alfreema@uark.edu or alan.freeman@mo.lcms.org.

Thank you for being a participant in my Doctoral study!

Continued Blessings on your ministry!

Al