

*Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church
Omaha, Nebraska
Elementary Lutheran School
Feasibility and Readiness Study*

Prepared for

*Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church
Steering Committee*

***Genesis Feasibility
Report***

May 2017

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Genesis Consultant

Introduction

Missouri Synod Lutherans have long seen a need for integrating all learning with faith in Jesus Christ. They have listened to the mandate of Holy Scriptures in Matthew 28:19-20 . . .

. . . "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. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age" (NIV)

Lutherans understand that their duty as parents and members of the Body of Christ is clearly stated in Proverbs 22:6 . . .

. . . "Train up a child in the right way, and when old they will not stray" (NRSV).

The Lutheran Elementary School Feasibility Study is provided as help for Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church to explore the opportunity to start a Lutheran Elementary School.

The services provided consist of work by a trained and experienced Lutheran School professional. Consultants are trained to help conduct surveys, review demographic data and conduct interviews. Consultants summarize information received and offer recommendations based on the consultant's best judgment as a professional educator.

The role of the consultant is to recommend and advise. Consultants do not make decisions for congregations. The Feasibility Study is intended to serve as a guide for the committees, boards, and the congregation. *The primary goal of this project is to help make a decision.* Therefore, recommendations not to open an elementary school or to delay opening an elementary school are considered as productive and successful as studies that recommend opening a school.

This report is intended to summarize some of the data and various elements that must be considered regarding the feasibility of starting a Lutheran school. After review of the data, recommendations, and discussion with the Steering Committee the congregation will need to determine whether or not it is time and they are ready to move ahead with the more advanced phase of establishing a Lutheran school. You are commended for the decision to undergo this project as a resource for considering the feasibility of a Lutheran school. I trust that the summaries and recommendations will help you as you seek God's will and minister to His children and their families.

The Feasibility Study Process

In the Fall of 2016 a study to test the feasibility and readiness of starting a Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church Omaha, Nebraska was begun with the help of a Genesis Project consultant. This study report has included: the Vision Statement or a Case for a Lutheran school, the Demographic Study Summary, a summary of many interviews conducted by the consultant March 10-12, research of area school programs and recommendations.

The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to

- Assess the interest of congregations and community in starting an elementary school
- Assess the interest and the ability of parents in sending their children to a Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd
- Assess potential congregational and third source funding for a Lutheran elementary school
- Assess the market for potential students
- Assess attitudes toward the potential location of the facility
- Provide data and information from which interested parties can decide the establishment of a new Lutheran school

The Feasibility study included gathering of hard and soft data based upon the following:

- LCEF demographic study
- 34 individuals and 3 group interviews
- surveys received from congregation members of Divine Shepherd
- An analysis of data gathered by researching the following schools:
 1. Lifegate Christian School, 15555 West Dodge Rd. – Sally Frick, Principal
 2. Omaha Christian Academy, 10244 Wiesman Dr., Eric Fiser, Exec. Director
 3. Concordia Academy, 1821 N. 90th – Nathan Domsch, Principal
 4. Cornerstone Christian School 1001 Fort Crook Rd N #200 Bellevue, NE
Mrs. Teri Schrag, Superintendent

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are appropriate and should be extended to members of the Steering Committee who, in addition to the regular business associated with their congregation and personal working responsibilities assumed the challenging task of researching the opening of a Lutheran school.

The information on the following pages includes the findings of the individual interviews. The summaries of attitudes, together with quotations, are intended to assist in clarifying not only the spirit if the respondents but also to help the committee understand the points of view and needs of the people from the interviewees' perspective. All quotes remain anonymous to assure confidentiality. Thanks are also extended to those who took time to be interviewed.

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund of the Missouri Synod provided demographic information.

As with any successful effort of God's Church on earth, many people with varying abilities and spiritual gifts are working together on common goals.

Steering Committee Members

-
- Rev. Dr. Mark Hannemann,
- Rev. Jim Rasmussen
- Gay Lynn Schaffart, chair
- Barb Cook, Lutheran Teacher
- Ken Baldwin, Comm. Member
- John Hill, Elder
- Trisha Reinbold, Teacher
- Suzanne Raabe, Music Ed.
- Rev. Sean Chapman
- Kevin Lammers, Treasurer
- Remkea Ockander, Youth Director
- Tonya Isaac, D.S. Childhood Director

Case – Vision Statement

Mission:

Divine Shepherd [name to be determined] Lutheran School exists to provide excellence in Christ-centered education to meet students' spiritual, academic and social needs, and to equip them for Christ-centered living.

Ownership:

- Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church
- We believe that the one church/one school model is the best for elementary education
- DSLC would need to make a constitutional change to add the school
- A Board of Education would need to be established or combine with existing Preschool Committee into one Board of Education
- Reports to the congregation could be made monthly / bi-monthly by the Principal or Staff
- Students would be visible in church activities
- Church members would be supporting the school in various ways (not only financially, but through volunteering in various roles)

Potential Impact:

- The impact of our school would be the greatest on the students and families we are serving, positively affecting their spiritual, family and faith lives.
- The school would also have a positive impact on our church family. New families would be impacted by a shepherding and worshiping relationship. The belief is that these families would in turn will share their time, talents and treasures with the Church for generations to come since there is not another organized school within several miles.

Students and Families Served—

- The students and families of DSLC
- DLSC's Little Lamb Preschool children (which could be used as a "feeder school")
- Families from other area Lutheran churches (King of Kings, Beautiful Savior, Lord of Life) and churches of other denominations in the southwest Omaha area

- Families who have no church home
- Currently, our Little Lamb Preschool is comprised of about 30% DSLC members, 30% from other area churches, and 30-40% who have no church affiliation.

What Would the Program Look Like?

- In addition to the normal elementary school curriculum, including religion, our school would be:
 - Music
 - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
 - Sports --Drama
 - Resource Room --Tutoring
 - Programs for Gifted Students
 - Lunch program (utilize 3rd party services – i.e. Westside program)
 - Parent group (PTO, PTA, PALS, SOS)
 - Before and after-school care
 - Library
 - Technology Club
 - Phase in these programs over time. Some programs of the school may have shared resources with Concordia Academy.

Enrollment Projections:

School yr.	Kindergarten	First Gr.	Second Gr	Third Gr	Fourth Gr	Fifth Gr	Total
2018/19	15						15
2019/20	15-18	15-18					30-36
2020/21	15-18	15-18	15-18				45-54
2021/22	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-20			60-80
2022/23	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-20		75-100
2023/24	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-20	90-120

Demographic Report

Introduction

This document is the Demographic Report for the study area identified as a 3 and 5-mile radius from – 1505 Q Street Omaha, NE 68137. The report also includes statistically graphed information about Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church is seeking to form ministries that reach out to elementary age children and families in the community. This outreach includes, without limitations, the possibility of starting a new Lutheran elementary school. The following is a report by Genesis Consultant on the demographic information for the Feasibility Study area.

The study was completed with the use of the LCEF demographic study, FullInsite data that reflected information from 2010 and subsequent years while also projecting data based on trends into the year 2026. In some instances, information for 2026 was not available. The data gathered reflected information from a specific area identified as a three and five-mile radius from 1505 Q Street Omaha, NE 68137.

The collective data provided by LCEF gives a total picture of the area being studied not only for an elementary school but also for multiple ministry possibilities. While all the data in different areas of the FullInsite report are important, reviewed and studied, this report will focus on what was determined as “key” information to establishing an elementary school.

OBSERVATIONS

Population and Household Trends:

The population projection for the study area shows a 7.86 percentage increase from 2015 to 2021 and a projected 7.85 percentage increase in population from 2021 to 2026. The population change reflects a steady growth rate through 2026.

The data also reflects the number of household trends in growth. From 2000 to 2010 there is growth of 6,915 households or a 28.3 percent increase from 2000. The years of 2015 reflects a 7.7 percent growth (2,418), 2021 a 7.4 percent growth (2,500), and in 2026 a 7.64 percent growth (2,773).

The Family Household by Size category reflects the “2-person household” as the largest percentage of household types. However, it also reflects a small decrease over a five-year change. The data also indicates the three, four and five-person household type categories on the increase.

Racial Ethnic Trends:

When considering ministry programs diversity in population ethnicity is always an important factor to take into consideration. Programs, practices, staffing and events are all impacted. The Racial Ethnic trends of the study area show the Asian, Black, White and Latino projections remain constant and reflect very little changes in population. The population with the highest percentage is Caucasian.

Age Trends:

The average Age Trends permits us to view five key times in the life of a community in order to understand the aging trends in a particular study area. Those times are the 2000 census where the average age was 32.5 years, 2010 where the average age was 34, 2016 where the average age was 36.5, 2021 where the projected age is 37.86 years, and 2026 where the projected age is 39 years. The study area has a slowly aging population, which also impacts program populations. The median ages for the study area and the state of Nebraska is estimated to be about the same for the years listed.

Phase of Life – Age Trends:

Reviewing the Phase of Life Trends provides insight into the age distribution of a population. The indication from the data shows the Before Formal Schooling, ages 0-4, and Required Formal Schooling, ages 5 to 17 decreasing as a percentage of the total population. From 2010 to 2026 the actual number of children in the two categories reflected on the charts show an increase in population as an individual group or category but not as a part of the total population. The category of Before Formal Schooling, ages 0-4, reflects the following population numbers:

Population Ages 0-4

2010-----	6,387	7.55%
2016-----	6,761	7.40%
2021-----	6,558	6.65%
2026-----	6,624	6.23%

The data also reflects a growth in the Single and Young Families category, ages 25 to 34, from 12,677 in 2010 to 14,082 in 2026. There are possibilities in this category that would impact a ministry focused on young families.

The category with significant growth and change is the sixty-five plus age comparison with the total population

School Age Population Trends

School Age Trends	2010	2016	2021
Early Elementary Ages 5 to 9	6,999 / 39.83%	6,831 / 37.95%	6,933 / 38.34%
Late Elementary Ages 10 to 14	6,773 / 38.54%	6,734 / 37.42%	6,958 / 38.57%
Total Ages 5-17	17,573	17,998	18,085

Families with Children

The family with children category reflects an increase in the number married couples with children through 2021 as a part of the overall population of families. Also on the increase is the family category of “Female no husband present”.

Household and Family Income Trends

Income trends are important to review. As a committee reviews the cost of education the fees or tuition that will be needed must be set to meet expenses. The data will also be important to review for the potential outside support that may be needed to assist with tuition and fees.

The average household income data projects an eleven percent increase from the 2016, \$88,873 to \$98,653 for 2021. The per capita income trend, which is calculated by dividing the total household income by the number of individuals in the family, shows a projected Per Capita increase of ten percent change during the same years growing from \$32,852 to \$36,313.

There is a decrease for the household income categories of less than \$99,999. In the categories ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$199,999 there reflects an increase. The three-mile radius study area indicates the family income forecast categories of \$100,000 to more than \$200,000 are one and a fourth to one and a half times more than the state of Nebraska’s overall income forecast.

Family Income Trends

The number of families with annual incomes above \$100,000 is projected to grow over the next five years. For the current year, it is estimated that 34.4 percent of all family incomes exceed \$100,000 per year. In five years that number is projected to be 34.4 percent.

The median Household income for the three-mile radius study area for 2016 was \$76,223 and is projected to be \$88,695 for 2021, a five-year change of \$12,472. The Family median income is \$86,907 for 2016 and \$87,218 is projected for 2021.

The Steering Committee will want to flush out financial affordability for families in the surveys that are conducted.

Employed Civilian Population

Data for employment for individuals 16+ years old that are above the state average is Managerial, Office Administration, Professional Specialty, and Sales, with the highest percentages in the Managerial Executive and Professional Specialty category of employment. Ninety-six percent of those employed work outside of the home. Ninety-one percent travel to work in car, truck or van.

Travel time to work with the highest percentages is 15 to 19 minutes, 20 to 24 minutes and 25 to 29 minutes each with 20 percent of those traveling to work.

Religious Practices of the Study Area

Conservative Evangelical Christian	36.50%
Consider Myself a Spiritual Person	43.90%
Enjoy Watching Religious TV Programs	14.40%
Important to Attend Religious Services	19.50%
My Faith is Really Important to Me	13.10%

Additional “Insite” Information

The Survey data regarding Program or Ministry Preferences that are considered important in the study area indicate that Family Support and Intervention Services, specifically Daycare/After School programs, reveals that 27.6 percent say that such programs are modestly important while only 7.7 percent say they are very important. In the same survey in the category of Religious/Spiritual Programs 31.6 percent say that Christian Education for children is modestly important and 21.3 percent say it very important.

Congregational Data

In 2016 Divine Shepherd Baptized members, according to the LCMS annual Statistical Report filed each year numbered 3954 with 2670 Baptized members, leaving a difference between the two of **1,284** “children/non confirmed individuals. The average number of confirmands over the past five years numbered 34. If we consider students of grades 6, 7, and 8 not eligible for a K-5 program we take the average number of confirmands (34) and multiply them by the three years (6, 7, and 8) which tell us how many kids in that junior high/middle school category there are in the congregation which is **102** children in grades 6, 7, and 8 in the congregation.

According to the same statistical report Divine Shepherd averaged 84 baptisms over a five-year period. Why five years? Because children ages 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 are not eligible for a K-5 program. Taking that 84 baptisms per year and multiplying it by 5 years the result is that there are **420** children in the congregation ranging from 0 to 4 years old.

If we combine the **102** “children/non confirmed” with the **420** (ages 0-4) we total **522** children in the congregation not eligible for a K-5 program. When calculating the difference between baptized and communicant membership, **1,284** and deduct the **522** children that are not eligible for the K-5 program we are left with potentially **762** children of elementary school age in Divine Shepherds congregation. There are a number of adults that must be factored into 762 to discount the total number of eligible children of elementary school age.

The following reflects a more realistic numbers for children at Divine Shepherd who potentially may be eligible at the appropriate time to enroll in a Lutheran elementary school. It would appear that yearly baptism numbers give supporting evidence as to an elementary school’s potential.

Statistics for October 2nd Congregational Assembly

Infant Baptisms at DSLC

2013 – 65 Total (50 members/15 non-members)
 2014 – 95 Total (65 members/30 non-members)
 2015 – 93 Total (58 members/35 non-members)
 2016 to date – 39 Total (27 members/12 non-members)

Currently have listed in Shepherd's Staff (can't determine #members/non-members)

78 – 3-year olds
 79 – 4-year olds
 76 – Kindergartners
 81 – 1st Graders
 95 – 2nd Graders
 99 – 3rd Graders
 110 – 4th Graders
 111 – 5th Graders

Little Lamb Preschool Enrollment:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-members</u>
2013-14	110	29	81
2014/15	117	29	88
2015/16	96	27	69
2016/17	93	21	72

Grade Level	2013		2014		2015	
	Member	Non-Mem	Member	Non-Mem	Member	Non-Mem
Pres. 3's	16	40	11	32	15	28
Pres. 4's	13	41	18	56	12	41

Currently registered for Sunday School

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-members</u>
P-3's	9	7	2
P-4's	9	8	1
Kdg.	12	11	1
1 st	7	6	1
2 nd	12	11	1
3 rd	12	11	1
4 th	11	8	3
5 th	<u>14</u>	14	0
Total	86		

Currently registered for Midweek

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-members</u>
P-3's	3	2	1
P-4's	6	5	1
Kdg.	4	3	1
1 st	5	4	1
2 nd	14	11	3
3 rd	12	11	1
4 th	10	6	4
5 th	<u>17</u>	17	0
Total	71		

Christian Education Enrollment (from Congregation Statistics Report filed w/Synod)

Sunday School Enrollment

	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	<u>Mem.</u>	<u>Non-mem.</u>	<u>Mem.</u>	<u>Non-Mem.</u>	<u>Mem.</u>	<u>Non-mem.</u>	<u>Mem</u>	<u>Non-mem.</u>
Age 3	n/a	n/a	4	2	14	0	7	2
Age 4-5	50	20	66	5	61	5	19	2
Grade 1-2	60	10	43	7	64	3	17	2
Grade 3-4	50	5	54	7	66	5	19	4
Grade 5-6	25	5	23	5	25	6	14	0 (5 th Grade only)

Midweek Class Enrollment

	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	<u>Mem.</u>	<u>Non-mem.</u>	<u>Mem.</u>	<u>Non-Mem.</u>	<u>Mem.</u>	<u>Non-mem.</u>	<u>Mem</u>	<u>Non-mem.</u>
Age 3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	1
Age 4-5	29	33	37	51	61	5	19	2
Grade 1-2	55	5	30	6	64	3	17	2
Grade 3-4	60	4	42	10	66	5	19	4
Grade 5	45	3	20	4	41	5	14	0 (5 th Grade only)

VBS Enrollment

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>	<u>Total</u>
2013	175	45	220
2014	182	51	233
2015	49	7	56
2016			

The Little Lamb Preschool enrollment data also reflects an indication of a positive number of children that may potentially “feed” into an elementary school program.

With a significant number of nonmember families attending the Little Lamb Preschool and continuing that relationship in an elementary program, family ministry opportunities will present themselves in such a way as to be a blessing for the growth of God's Kingdom.

The implication of this projected data is that Divine Shepherd congregation has potentially a base number of elementary age children to seriously consider starting an elementary program.

Congregational Data

Report Year	Baptized	Comuncnt	Child Bapt	Avg Ch Atd	Gift Per Confirmed Member	Gift Per Weekly Average Attendance
2007	2740	1838	81	848	543.8139282	1178.691038
2008	2746	1863	73	933	563.8915727	1125.969989
2009	2746	1863	73	933	563.8915727	1125.969989
2010	3198	2175	65	1028	581.5673563	1230.456226
2011	3388	2284	85	1057	637.1703152	1376.818354
2012	3513	2356	80	1057	619.2627334	1380.305582
2013	3635	2410	95	1082	861.360166	1918.556377
2014	3813	2515	95	1084	570.6497018	1323.97048
2015	3955	2585	93	1039	561.2058027	1396.262753
2016	3954	2670	57	1183	556.0910112	1255.08284

For a more detailed statistical report of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church visit lcms.org and click on "Find a church" and complete the information.

Summary

The information provided by the LCEF demographic study area for Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church gives the Feasibility Study needed information, which helps develop reasonable goals and ideas but may also provide challenges for which we need to seek answers or solutions.

The data reflects an aging population, a growth in three, four and five-person household structures, an increase in populated higher income categories and a stable population of children ages 5-9 that would be the target group for an elementary program in the study area.

Finances and support are another area that the feasibility study and Steering Committee will need to flush out. There is significant data showing an increase in numbers in the income categories from \$99,999 to more than \$150,000. It will be important to consider the cost of not only startup of a program for elementary children but the affordability for families while meeting expenses. Salaries usually comprise 80-85 percent of budgets when compared to similar program.

Location is a primary consideration for the location of a Lutheran school. While convenience of location for families is important the study area data indicates that drive time to work is anywhere between 15-24 minutes. It will be important to take into consideration the convenience or ease of use for families to “drop off and/or pickup” their children. Once a program has developed a quality reputation which is Christ centered, student focused, educationally successful with caring teachers and embraces family involvement, parents will travel out of their way to have their children attend a Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd where children are successful, and loved.

Finally, the Steering Committee and Congregation will need to be committed to WHY? WHY start an elementary school program? The clarity of understanding the answer to that beginning question by Steering Committee, Congregational members and eventually administrators, teachers and staff will serve to direct the ministry of such a program. WHY must be the starting point that will ensure lasting and sustainable support. Families won't come and stay with you because of WHAT you do or HOW you do it but they will come and stay with you because of WHY you are doing it! You will win hearts before you win minds with the clarity and practice of WHY?.

Researching Area Schools

Researching community area schools help a Steering Committee to benefit from information about the elements, trends and experiences of schools already in operation for the purpose of planning and decision making. The Steering Committee spent time gathering information and data from four Omaha area nonpublic schools.

Omaha Christian Academy

10244 Wiesman Dr Omaha
11 miles from D.S.
Preschool -12
Enrollment – 178
Five year growth –steady to increase
Registration - \$300
K-5 Tuition - \$4600

Concordia Academy

1821 N. 90th Street Omaha
10 miles from D.S.
K - 5
Enrollment - 136
Five year growth - steady to increase
Registration - \$350
K-5 Tuition - \$5600

Lifegate Christian

15555 West Dodge Road
Omaha, NE
5.1 miles from D.S.
K-8
Enrollment K-5 – 240
Five year growth – increase
Registration \$300
K-5 Tuition - \$5800

Cornerstone Christian

1001 Fort Crook Rd N #200
Bellevue NE 6800
15.6 miles from D.S.
PreK-12
Enrollment K-5 – 180
Five year growth – increase
Registration \$300 new families
K-5 Tuition - \$4600

The Steering Committee will want to review in detail the curriculum sources, programs, activities, before or after school care offerings, funding sources and budget comments that each of the schools may have shared. The school data in its entirety is found in **Addendum E** of this report.

Surveys

Surveys help planners to develop a basic understanding of issues by asking for the opinions of individuals that may have influence on a decision or how a plan or program may be implemented. Questions are asked for the purpose of soliciting specific responses needed for thorough planning. Surveys also help to communicate potential school programs and events. A wise planner always seeks the counsel, wisdom, and

advice of others to insure planning accuracy and soundness. . “An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” Proverbs 18:15.

The Steering Committee of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church conducted a congregational survey relating to the potential startup of a Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd. Two hundred forty-six survey responses were received, almost ten percent of the communicant membership. One hundred sixty (67.23%) females responded and seventy-eight (32.77%) males responded.

When asked if anyone in their family had ever attended a Lutheran elementary school the responses were nearly split fifty-fifty with attending and not attending. Those respondents indicating attendance marked that they had attended, spouse, parents, children or others in their family.

When asked if they believe Lutheran schools are effective in helping to build and strengthen the faith of children, ninety-seven percent (97.15%) marked “yes”.

Members of the congregation were asked on the survey if they would be in favor of starting a Lutheran elementary school at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church. Sixty-five percent (65.45%) marked “yes” with twenty-three percent (23.17%) “unsure” and eleven percent (11.38%) marked “no”.

Financial support to the elementary school from the congregation was mixed with forty percent (40.24%) marking that they were not sure and twenty-seven percent (27.64%) marked that the congregation should give “some support”.

The survey asked “ Would you as an individual, be willing to financially support an elementary school at Divine Shepherd? (i.e. tuition assistance/scholarship program, facility costs, etc.)” The respondents were split almost equally between yes and no with ninety-five responses marked “unsure”.

One hundred four respondents marked that they would be willing to support an elementary school at Divine Shepherd by volunteering their time, seventy-seven marked “no” and sixty-five were “unsure.”

One hundred ninety-four (78.9%) of the two hundred forty-six survey responses marked that they would encourage others to enroll their children, and forty-two were “unsure.”

Of the sixty-nine respondents who had children under ten years old thirty-four (49.3%) indicated that they would consider enrolling their child at a Lutheran elementary school at Divine Shepherd, sixteen (23.2%) would not consider enrolling six were “unsure” and thirteen (18.8%) responded with “other” and explained.

The survey asked individuals with children under ten years old: If Divine Shepherd initially started an elementary school in the 2018/19 school year with Kindergarten only or Kindergarten / 1st grade, would you send your child(ren) knowing additional grades would be added in the following years (up to 5th grade)?

Yes	31.3%	21
No	49.3%	33
Unsure	19.4%	13
Comments		24

The survey from individuals with children under ten years old asked “What additional needs would you have?” Thirty-four percent (34.1%) marked “after school care” while forty-three percent (43.2%) specified “other” needs on the comment section of the survey.

When the same set of individuals were asked what level of annual tuition they felt they could pay twenty, (30.3%) marked \$3500, ten individuals (15.15%) marked \$5000, nine individuals (13.64%) marked \$4000. Twenty-four individuals (36.36%) indicated they were unsure.

When considering the top three important factors to consider when sending your child(ren) to a Christian elementary school the individuals responded with, “Quality of program,” (83.67%), “Tuition” (59.18%), “Strong Christian Emphasis” (53.06%), “Location” (44.9%), and “Faculty” (32.65%.

It should be noted that there were 233 surveys from Divine Shepherd members, 12 from Grace Hill and 1 “other.”

DIVINE SHEPHERE PRESCHOOL PARENT SURVEYS

The Divine Shepherd Steering Committee also surveyed parents of Divine Shepherd preschool and received forty-seven responses.

In general, would you like to see a new Christian elementary school established in southwest Omaha?

Yes	57.46%	27
No	8.52	4
Unsure	34.04%	16

When asked to indicate what would be the top level of annual tuition per student that you feel you could pay if the school were open today.

\$3500	27.66%	13
\$4000	12.7%	6
\$5000	6.38%	3
\$5500	4.26%	2

\$6500	2.13%	1
Not sure	46.81%	22

When considering the top three important factors to consider when sending your child(ren) to a Christian elementary school the individuals responded with:

Quality of Program	72.34%	34
Tuition	63.83%	30
Location	48.94%	23
Strong Christian Emphasis	48.94%	23
Faculty	36.17%	17
Enrollment size	19.15%	9
Quality of Facilities	19.15%	9

When asked if Divine Shepherd started an elementary school, would you send your children?

Yes	19.15%	9
No	25.53%	12
Unsure	55.32%	26

Thirty-four percent of preschool parent responders indicated that there would be need for an after school care

Sixty-one percent of the preschool parent responders were not members of Divine Shepherd, while twenty-one percent were members of Divine Shepherd and seventeen percent indicated no church membership.

While most preschool parent responders were female, eighty-two percent, and male responders were eighteen percent their ages ranged from twenty-six to forty with almost fifty percent in the 31-35 and thirty percent in the 36-40 age range.

Summary of Surveys

Surveys from the Little Lamb preschool parents reflect an uncertainty regarding enrollment in an elementary school at Divine Shepherd. Comments indicate a number of concerns for parents particularly if there is an older child in another elementary school. Also of concern expressed in their comments is the affordability given their present circumstances and situations that they find their family life currently experiencing, i.e. job loss, one parent income, children in two different schools, etc. After school care, child care during school breaks and similarity with “other” school schedules and with the Concordia schools were expressed by parents.

The Steering Committee received two hundred forty-six (246) responses from surveys. Ninety-seven percent (97%), two hundred thirty-nine respondents, believe that Lutheran schools are effective in helping to build and strengthen the faith of children. **One hundred sixty-one respondents marked that they were in favor of starting a Lutheran elementary school at Divine Shepherd, twenty-eight said “no” and fifty-seven were unsure.** While statistically the data reflects positively on the start of a Lutheran elementary school there also is some reservations about that possibility at Divine Shepherd. Those reservations are; the level of congregational support for the school, the amount of tuition and lack of a definite commitment for enrollment. Of those responding one hundred ninety-four indicated they would encourage others to enroll their children in the elementary school at Divine Shepherd, forty-two were unsure and ten marked “no”. Of the sixty-nine respondents that had children under the age of ten, thirty-four, 49%, marked that they would consider enrolling their child(ren). However, the following question asked individuals with children under ten years of age about enrolling in a Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd for kindergarten / first grade in the 2018-2019 school year knowing additional grades would be added up to fifth grade, twenty-one marked yes, thirty-three responded with a “no” and thirteen were unsure. The annual tuition rate per student individuals thought they could pay ranged from \$3500, 30%, to \$5000, 10%, twenty-four, 36%, of the respondents were unsure what they could pay for annual tuition per student.

Additional comments made on the survey questions and not contained in this report are noteworthy for consideration and study as they give some reflection of needs, concerns and uncertainties about starting an elementary Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd.

Summary of Interviews

Thirty-four confidential individual interviews were conducted along with three focus groups. The focus group interviews and confidential individual interviewees were receptive to the interview process and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share their feelings and ideas about the proposed school. The following summary of the interviews represents the major themes expressed by those interviewed. While quotations are taken from individual interviewees, they are cited as representative of those interviewed in general.

When asked to describe the quality of schools available in the community there was clear indication that the public schools in the area were “good” or “very good.” The programs that the schools provided and services for children with special needs were also “very good.” Several interviewees felt that one of the reasons for the population growth in the area was “because of the quality of education available in the local schools.”

Reaction to the Case/Vision Statement

There was an openness by all interviewees to discuss Christian education and the possibility of a Lutheran school. Initially the interviews centered on the reaction to the CASE the Steering Committee had presented for consideration while also casting a vision. The comments reflected a genuine interest, and identified concerns for consideration. It was clearly expressed that if a Lutheran school were to begin it would be conducting a program in a school district that was educationally “very sound” and “very good.” General concerns arose around the adequate facilities and the availability of an outside play area for the elementary grades. Suggestions were given to “contact the Catholic schools to “see what they were doing and how they discounted tuition for students.” Additional suggestions made were; “consider discounting tuition for the second and third child,” “clarify the relationship with Concordia and St. Marks,” and “sharing overhead costs, i.e. staff and curriculum materials,” Additional comments tended toward affordability, financial support, and realistic enrollment numbers. Seventeen of the thirty-four individual interviews indicated that the Case and vision it cast was “good,” or a “good start.”

Important Qualities of a Lutheran School

Seventy percent of the interviewees reaction to the Case when asked about the type and quality of program the school focused on the need for flexibility, special services for children, a strong faith based education, before and after school care programs, great teachers, becoming a magnet school, adequate class size, the school’s mission should be the same as Divine Shepherd church, “ it should be the same mission as the

church, mission focused,” have a close working relationship with Concordia, strong family relational connections, technology trained teachers, foreign language, Christ centered, accommodate differentiation and creative thinking, all comprise the list of important qualities that a Lutheran School at Divine Shepherd should have.

Funding of the Proposed School

There were references made to the budgetary challenges that Divine Shepherd is addressing. With the purchase of land, the mission start of a congregation, the addition of staff, and “in house” expenses, were questions about whether or not the congregation could add another “item” to Divine Shepherds budget. The interviewees agreed that the school should be funded with student tuition. There was uncertainty about how much the congregation would want to financially support the school. Others commented that providing the facility, and paying for the utilities would be important in addition to some direct financial amount that was seen as a “responsible” part of the church’s mission. Scholarships, adopt-a-student, and multiple child discounts for families in need were funding issues that were also discussed. Individuals commented on their willingness to support the school and financially help families with demonstrated need and a desire to educate their children in a Christ centered school. “We would want this school to be affordable for families desiring Christian education for their children.”

Major Obstacles

When asked about major obstacles to establishing a Lutheran school ninety percent made reference to finances, budgeting and start-up costs. Individuals also referred to Divine Shepherds ministry expansions that also need financial support. Others commented on the need for having accurate data and information on the number of students, plus what it would cost for updating the facility, insurance and playground. Interviewees also questioned whether or not there was adequate space once the school started growing. Other possible major obstacles interviewees stated were: teacher shortage, quality teachers, declining enrollment in the preschool, schools take big dollars, what to do with Sunday School classrooms, security of the building, congregation not on board, too few students, limited space, Concordia system, fear of not succeeding, good public schools, history of Lutheran education in Omaha, community sees a church facility not a school, location, not enough communication, just getting past the first year of operation.

Additional Counsel for the Steering Committee

When asked to give additional advice and counsel to the Steering Committee as they continue their work the following comments were made:

“Let’s not have a make do mindset, let’s do it right.”

“Get official congregational support before proceeding any further.”

“Communicate what is happening and what is taking place making sure everyone knows.”

“How different will this school be than the others that are in the area?”

“Consider tuition payments directly to pay pal.”

“Make sure building is up to code and what it will cost to bring it up to code.”

“Connect with families in the congregation with the school families to support one another.”

“The school needs to be a part of the mission of the church. The presence of the congregation should be felt in the school program.”

“Get good data to support decisions, must make the effort to get evidence to make the necessary decision. If data is too low for numbers to start, then we work to get the data needed.”

“Must have strong pastoral support.”

“Ministry must be one and the same.”

“Consider part time/half day Kindergarten and full day Kindergarten.”

“When planning consider similar school calendars to other schools as well as school day start and ending.”

“Would they consider home schoolers for part of the school day?”

“Have kids/ parents who have attended Lutheran schools give testimonies on how their lives were impacted by the teacher, experience, etc.”

“Pray, look at magnet schools, create the magnet that is different and become the magnet +.”

“Try and do more than one class to start possibly K-2 / multiple grades?”

“Communicate the vision, stay strong in the faith for our children’s sake.”

“Study and consider the Concordia Omaha system.”

Summary of Interviews

In general, people were genuinely open to the discussion of a Lutheran elementary school. The greatest concerns arose around the issues of finances, quality academic program, adequate number of available committed students/families and adequate support and long-term commitment to make it work without “dragging down the congregation into more debt.” While a school can be an opportunity for ministry outreach to young families in the community there is genuine hesitation on the part of finances related to the timing of expanding ministries. Adequate long range facilities created a positive concern for an education program that would grow especially in this area of Omaha. Additional concerns were discussed concerning the relationship with Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha. A clarification of relationships will need to be defined.

Professional Opinion

The Steering Committee, comprised of congregational members from Divine Shepherd Lutheran church, undertook this feasibility study using the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Genesis process to assist in deciding the start of a Lutheran elementary school in the south Omaha area. Many who participated in the confidential interviews and surveys stated their appreciation for the opportunity to express their personal opinions regarding the establishment of an elementary school. The feasibility study process provides opportunity for members to assess the potential school's programs offered to families in their congregation and community.

Counsel appreciates the efforts made in the gathering of statistics from the survey. More detailed information may be needed from the congregation to determine their level of support and commitment to move ahead with the start-up of a Lutheran school. Divine Shepherd congregation will need to review its annual statistical report that reflects on the ministry events, activities and finances of the congregation. Statistics gathered over time may assist the congregations as a whole in determining its ministry needs, congregational plans and level of support for a Lutheran school. The level of support and commitment from congregation must be shared with the Steering Committee in order to help them determine direction, actions and timing.

Qualities of the Proposed Elementary Lutheran School

Throughout the country there is an increasing demand for faith based schools that form partnerships with parents in helping children develop wholesome values and skills, while helping children and Lutheran school families to also grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. A program of Christian education where Jesus is seen as the central part of a Lutheran school's curriculum, activities and relationships is critical. This school must be different from others in this respect. The intent for such focus is not to make children "little Lutherans," but to grow the kingdom of God. For that to happen God fearing, loving and caring Christian teachers and administrators proclaiming Jesus Christ in words, relationships, actions and activities are vital to a school's and church's mission. A quality elementary education program must meet if not exceed state and national requirements. The school will want seek National Lutheran School Accreditation which is a self-study process that helps a school

measure itself against a set of national standards in the areas of Purpose, Relationships, Administration, Professional Personnel, Teaching and Learning, Student Services and Facilities.

The elementary school programs available to children and families in the south and west Omaha areas are seen as very good. A Lutheran elementary school in this part of Omaha will also need to have children and parents experience an educational program with excellence in addition to a relational Christ caring environment. There is a need to provide quality caring programs that help families with children.

In the church it also means that such quality program is a part of the ministry of the church. The focus becomes that of life eternal with Jesus. It is nurturing a faith life that is eternal, planting the seeds of faith as the Holy Spirit does the work.

Funding the School

Funding was one of the primary concern among interviewees. Considering the importance of adequate funding and the need for a strong base of financial support through tuition and fees, third source funding will be necessary as well as start up support from Divine Shepherd congregation and its members. In order for an elementary program to have a solid start an initial funding base will need to be established that can be used to help meet expenses as it begins. An adequate number of children will need to enroll in order for the school fees to eventually help sustain the program. The Steering Committee and congregation will need to identify the type of support the congregation is willing give as part of its ministry. A scholarship fund may will be needed if there are families needing assistance. If the focus remains on the purpose for the school ministry, helping others to come to know and be in a relationship with Jesus Christ is priceless. Never-the-less God asks us to be wise Stewards of the gifts He has blessed us with.

Interviewees gave clear indication that they were uncertain about whether or not their congregation would support a part of the school's total budget at this time. The elementary schools researched by the Steering Committee gave clear indication that educational program and families needed some sort financial support and assistance. Additional study will need to be done before setting tuition and fees.

Support for a Lutheran Elementary School

The LCEF demographic report indicates that there is a projected 6624 children ages 0-4 years old in the three-mile radius study area from Divine Shepherd by 2026. While the Steering Committee may have a starting goal by 2018 the reality is students may be drawn from a greater radius then three miles evidenced from the fact that today families are driving farther then three miles to attend Concordia Academy. What the

demographics do reflect is that working parents and families continue to move into the area resulting in population growth. As growth continues for the area the need to help families will also increase, and the opportunity for mission outreach will present the church ministry with the need to focus outward. Community support will come with time if a quality program is offered that meets the needs of parents and helps children to learn and grow and is staffed by quality caring ministry focused individuals.

Based on survey and interview responses there is verbal support for the start of a Lutheran elementary school. Responses from surveys appeared positive along with the interviews, however, no “real” sign on the dotted line commitment was made. It was also uncertain whether or not the congregation was willing to add this opportunity to do ministry, in a special and unique way, to their budget. This congregational support area will need to be thoroughly flushed out and will take time before a Lutheran school begins.

There appears to be some genuine interest in starting a Lutheran elementary school. It is with some hope and anticipation that the families with children that enroll in Divine Shepherds preschool program will want to continue on into the elementary program as well and may also become members. LCMS School statistics indicate that most Lutheran school programs are attended by nonmembers of the sponsoring congregation and that there is a percentage of those nonmembers that actually join the church. Lutheran education programs sponsored by a congregation do experience Baptisms of enrolled children even though the parents are not members. These experiences present wonderful opportunities for the church and its ministry. Experience has shown consultants that when schools start the student population is generally less than anticipated or previously shown on attendance surveys that may be taken.

Summary

Today Synodical Lutheran School data shows that there is a growing percentage of non- congregational member students in their schools. In other words, fewer Lutherans and more nonmember or no church home at all for children, but the ministry continues.

“The importance of building a strong spiritual foundation at an early age. . . in other words, by the age of 13 your spiritual identity is largely set in place.” George Barna, [Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions](#).

Lutheran schools are the church in action, not something separate from it. The Lutheran school is the body of Christ in their specific location carrying out its work of mutual service and up-building. The Lutheran school brings together a family of individuals by working with children in the presence of the Holy Spirit more than six hours a day, five days a week. Personal relationships are developed with students, teachers and parents. The Lutheran school gives a child a chance to learn in the

presence of and with the guidance of a Christian teacher. Such a person may be present in a secular school of course. But a Lutheran school is blessed with Christian teachers who are free to interpret subjects and situations from a thoroughly Christian, Christ centered view point. It isn't just what is taught in a Lutheran school that makes education different. It is how! The Lutheran school uses the Gospel to share with individuals a life that is serving in love and a life that is eternal.

As Divine Shepherd considers starting a Lutheran elementary school as a means of ministry it will need to consider challenges and difficulties. A school calls for sacrifice on the part of both the congregation members and parents. A school may have difficulty in meeting special needs without the aid in some cases of working with local school district support. Lutheran schools must also guard against the danger of becoming self-centered. It is part of the body of Christ, not the totality of it. It exists to serve others within and without the body.

Not all members of Divine Shepherd will fully support a Lutheran school. There are honest objections that will be raised which need to be considered. The following are some of the main objections:

1. Church members pay twice – once for public education and again for our own school.
2. Lutheran schools compete with public education and therefore weaken it.
3. Education in Lutheran schools is limited especially in the upper grades when expensive equipment is desirable.
4. Lutheran schools are separatistic and an escape from society.
5. Some use the Lutheran school to avoid racial integration.
6. Only the rich can afford to send their children to a Lutheran school.
7. The school draws too much of the congregation's budget. (What is too much?)
8. A Lutheran school may not adequately serve Divine Shepherd.
9. Children who attend a Lutheran are deprived of the public school experience.
10. A Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd will greatly impact our facility.

A Steering Committee was started to more intentionally and formally determine whether it is viable to have the congregation at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church start an elementary school. The consideration for starting a school was given support from the congregation on October 3, 2016 authorizing the Board of Directors to enter into an agreement with the area Genesis Consultant to complete a Genesis Project for the purpose of assessing Divine Shepherds readiness in establishing an elementary school on their campus.

There is Biblical motivation bound for such a desire. The LORD desires little children to come into his kingdom through the nurture and guidance of their parents.

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:13-14)

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Matt. 28: 19-20

The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to assess the following:

- Interest of the congregation and community in starting a school
- Interest and ability of parents in sending their children to a Lutheran school
- Potential congregational funding for a Lutheran school

In the areas listed above Counsel finds supporting evidence for starting a Lutheran school. However, additional startup plans and actions must first be formulated and acted upon. Congregational support will need to be more definitive and more thoroughly developed. Funding of a school will also need to be given a priority with a cooperative Lutheran congregation conducting a marketing, mission, and capital campaign to move this vision forward in faith with God.

Few ministries or building projects tied to ministries, in the life and history of the church have begun with 100 percent support. However, at the right time in the life of a church, expanded ministry by way of a Lutheran school will prove to be a blessing as God's people come together to support mission work, evangelism outreach, faith nurturing, Gospel proclamation, discipling and grace experiences through a Lutheran school. Giving "birth" to a new ministry will take commitment, patience, understanding, prayer and God pleasing support from people who see a Lutheran school as one effective way to touch the lives of children and families by sharing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

If the decision is made to begin an elementary Lutheran school at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church it will take time, dedication and commitment to see a school start. It will be important to develop a quality Christ centered academic education program with a relational emphasis that the community will subsequently recognize and affect school enrollment.

Recommendations

The Feasibility Study was undertaken by the Steering Committee of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church for the south and west Omaha area to assess readiness to open a new Lutheran elementary school at Divine Shepherd. Counsel is aware of additional projects that will impact ministry start-up and a funding time line. Divine Shepherd congregation will need to prayerfully consider program and project sustainability. Can multiple ministry projects be accomplished simultaneously at Divine Shepherd? Generally, when a congregation is moving in its ministry with new programs or projects there is uncertainties and excitement about how God will work to accomplish the task through His people. That movement within a congregation will not be without its challenges and will take time. However, trust and faith in knowing God's will guides a congregation in accomplishing the tasks of ministry. Pray, seek His guidance!

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are presented for your consideration:

Recommendation 1: Plan to Proceed

If Divine Shepherd congregation seeks to further its mission and ministry and employ Christ's directive to baptize and teach, children, parents and families, all nations, through a Lutheran school, Counsel recommends that Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church of Omaha, Nebraska continue planning to initiate the opening of a Lutheran elementary school.

The Demographics for the 3-5-mile radius study area provided by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund gives evidence that there is a projected growing number of children that would be available for a quality elementary school to begin. Families with children continue to populate the area in part because of a very good public school system in the area. Many families, however, are seeking an alternative school that is faith based with Christian values, is relational and offers more than an education.

Counsel also recommends that the Steering Committee continue to use individuals knowledgeable and experienced in facility and playground development that will be used for an elementary school program in addition to addressing health and safety issues which are critical factors of concern when working with children. Any renovation to the proposed current educational facility use will need to be factored into the general start-up costs and shared with the congregation. The Steering Committee will want to reference the data and information acquired while researching the area schools (see Addendum) for planning and developing of an elementary school program.

The process of starting an elementary will take time. How diligent you are about the work of starting a school and how united Divine Shepherd congregation embraces the

school start up process and its ministry will determine the timing of the actual start date. Seek hard information. Contact the Nebraska Education departments for elementary program requirements. Enlist the counsel of Mr. Robert Ziegler, LCMS Nebraska District Education Executive.

Recommendation 2: Communicate

Counsel recommends that the Steering Committee develop and implement a timely comprehensive communications process for the members of Divine Shepherd and the greater Divine Shepherd community. A date or timeline establishing communicating progress milestones should be established in order for communication to be intentional, and frequent. Develop a strategy for an effective process. Bring no surprises.

Recommendation 3: Appoint a Task Force

Counsel recommends that the Steering Committee appoint an Elementary School Design Task force with broad representation. The purpose of this group is to set up the organizational development phase of the proposed program. Various committees will need to be appointed. A business plan or ministry plan that will include these key issues should be developed:

- Administrative structure
- Financial planning----three to five-year projection
- Curriculum development
- Recruitment and enrollment planning
- Human resource planning
- Marketing

This plan should be presented to the congregation for approval. (See Addendum for help with this phase.)

Recommendation 4: Appoint a Coordinator

The Genesis Feasibility Study began with the work of a Steering Committee. While the information, discussion and ideas of the Steering Committee will need to continue

Counsel recommends that a coordinator be appointed, for the School Design Task Force, whose responsibility it will be to administrate the work of the Design Task Force, as well as guide the progress of the various subcommittees. Those responsibilities and tasks of the coordinator will be to coordinate the work subcommittees, advise, communicate, and require greater time commitment so that adequate progress can continue to be made.

Recommendation 5: Capital Campaign

Counsel recommends that the Design Task Force/SC and congregation determine the initial start-up funds to be received and conduct efforts to continue to meet the initial and sustainable elementary school support.

Recommendation 6: Search for an Administrator

Counsel recommends, at the appropriate time, that the Steering Committee in harmony with Divine Shepherd congregation conduct a national search for a Lutheran School Administrator who would be in place far in advance of the school's opening. The administrator's task in part is to help develop the program, to assist with recruitment and be involved with staff selection as needed. Networking with the Nebraska District and the LCMS National office will serve as excellent resources for qualified candidates.

Recommendation 7: Clarify Relationship with Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha

Do Lutheran elementary schools need to be part of the Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha? Should they be? How would an elementary school benefit from such a relationship? Can there be a relationship of support without being part of the Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha? Can a Lutheran congregation choose to start a Lutheran elementary school and still support Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha? Counsel recommends a clarification of relationship with Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha that is agreeable to Divine Shepherd congregation and in some way still supportive of Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha.

Recommendation 8: National Lutheran School Accreditation(NLSA)

Counsel recommends that the Steering Committee or school Task Force secure the National Lutheran School Accreditation document for elementary Lutheran schools from the NLSA office in St. Louis or download it from the internet at www.luthed.org. This document should serve as a guide for developing a quality Lutheran school.

Addendum - A

Clarification of Recommendation 3

Appoint an elementary school Design Task Force

In all areas of development, the Nebraska District LCMS office may prove most helpful in proceeding with counsel and advice.

The responsibility of this task force is to set up various subcommittees with specific goals in mind. The following critical goals should be considered as a part of each subcommittee's agenda before starting the school:

Administrative Planning

- Prepare guidelines of operation, communication, and finances.
- Prepare facility use guidelines and reporting responsibilities.
- Secure recognition by government agencies.
- Prepare a school board policy manual.
- Recommend the head administrator – develop a job description.
- Work with the Nebraska District Education Executive to identify and meet District and LCMS processes that are needed.

Financial Planning

- Determine an initial policy for funding the new school.
- Prepare a budget to cover the organizational phase.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to cover capital needs, exploration costs and one- to three-year operational costs.
- Project a tuition rate.
- Propose a specific congregational support system.
- Investigate potential resources from the community----special gifts and endowments.

Facility Planning

- Conduct a needs assessment.
- Review ordinances and codes with the City zoning commission, safety, fire, health, etc. for schools.
- Project renovation costs.
- Prepare a long-range plan and cost estimates for the site and facility needs.
- Determine facility use limitations, if any, with the school in operation and the need for use by congregational functions and develop guidelines.

Curriculum Development

- Develop a set of guidelines and principles for curriculum design and selection.
- Provide a preliminary cost estimate of needed instructional equipment and supplies.
- Develop a recommended outline of curriculum for the first year of operation, including course suggestions, activities, worship and ministry/service involvement, and extracurricular events.

Recruitment and Enrollment Planning

- Develop an enrollment policy.
- Develop a recruitment/enrollment activities calendar.
- Develop a transportation strategy and policy if needed.
- Determine the number of students who may realistically attend during the first two years.

Human Resources Planning

- Develop staffing policies, procedures and criterion for staff selection.
- Develop a two-year staffing plan.
- Provide a preliminary cost estimate for needed staff.
- Secure a list of available candidates for teaching positions.

Marketing

- Develop strategies to communicate the school's mission to its public.
- Develop and use the eight "P's" of effective marketing
 - Prayer
 - Purpose
 - Product
 - People
 - Price
 - Place
 - Performance
 - Promotion

Addendum – B Individual Interview questions

Genesis Feasibility Study

DIVINE SHEPHERD GENESIS PROJECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What, if any, relationships have you or your family had with Lutheran school?
2. Have you ever attended a parochial school? If so, how do you feel about your experience?
3. Are there any particular aspects of the vision on the proposed Lutheran School described in the Case to which you would like to react at this time?
4. Would you be in favor of Divine Shepherd starting a Lutheran school for grades K-5?
 - a. Why or Why not?
5. Would you prayerfully support the school?
6. Would you send your children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren to this school?
 - a. Why or Why not?
7. How would you describe the quality of education available to the young people and their families of this community?
8. What attributes, qualities, programs or service, in your opinion, will this Lutheran School need to provide if it is to attract families from the community/area?
9. In your opinion, would the Lutheran and Christian leadership of this community provide support for the proposed Lutheran School? Can you suggest names of people in the community or congregation that need to be involved to assure success of this Lutheran school?
10. What would you see as the major obstacles to the establishment of this proposed Lutheran School?
11. Typically, support for a Lutheran School comes from three sources: 1) Fees 2) Congregations 3) Fundraising – Would you please comment on how you personally feel the proposed Lutheran School in this community will need to be funded considering these three sources?
12. To what extent would you be willing to support the school financially?
13. What is your feeling about differentiating between members and nonmembers' fees for tuition?
14. Would you be willing to support a scholarship program for low-income families?
15. Do you have a desire to become involved in the school in any sort of capacity? (Volunteering, working in the library, serving lunch, tutoring children, making copies for teachers, maintenance, etc)?
16. Is there any additional advice and counsel you would like to give the Steering Committee as they continue their work?

Addendum – C Interviewees

Andi McDonalds
Vern Nemitz
Amanda Reiser
Board of Directors
Justin Rediger
Erv Minderman
Doug Peetzke
Andy Holdt
Lori Slump
Lisa Mar
Richard & Pat Hahn (phone)
Matt Mueller
Pastor Justin
Keith Rohwer
Duane Sanne
Toni Sanne
David Anderson
Kevin Meier
John Stahl
Jeff Beckman
Pastor Sean Chapman
Ryan Hahn
Bill Seim (phone)
Greg Beals
Graham Rupe
Josh Eiden
Aaron Engelman
Alicia Hoffman

Kristin Ehlers
Matt Reiser
Pastor Hannemann
Elders
Allison Rediger
Linda Minderman
Janet Peetzke
Jamie Holdt
Ken Mar
Bill Rysdtrom
Marcy Carter
Kate Mueller
Johanna Bell
Nancy Rohwer
Bridget Sanne
Sally Viola
Melissa Anderson
Barb Meier
Anne Stahl
Sara Maxon
Jeannine Glessman
Sommer Hahn
Cathy Greenwald
Maria Beals
Katie Rupe
Whitney Eiden
Hannah Engelman

Addendum- D Why A Lutheran School?

What Makes Divine Shepherd Lutheran school a Good School?

*The Steering Committee of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church at its initial Genesis Consultant meeting was asked two questions. The following is their response to **“Why a Lutheran School?”***

-A school in our area opens doors to parents who could not get their children to a similar school many miles away.

-I believe that we need to reach out to the community that we serve and satisfy the needs of our community for a Christ centered education. Families may want to go to a Lutheran school but cannot attend a school far away from their neighborhood.

-Because we need more Lutheran Schools in Omaha. The nearest Lutheran elementary school is at 90th & Parker. Many families are not willing to make that drive twice a day.

-One school cannot serve the whole city. There is a growing population in west /sw/ nw Omaha. Lutheran schools are a great way to reach the lost for Christ. Educating for eternity.

-Can you ever have enough Christian schools? This school can serve an area of our community that is a challenge by location.

-There is always a need for more students to go to a Lutheran school; there are always more students. Lutheran schools exist, but more are needed in areas where current schools aren't located.

_There are so many kids in this area who could benefit from a Lutheran education and learn more about the love of Jesus.

-To give even more students the chance to learn and grow in a Christ-filled environment, maybe a location closer to their neighborhood community that already exists.

-We need to expand to offer this opportunity to more children, and continue to reach people that don't have a relationship with Jesus.

-Lutheran schools provide an opportunity to serve and support families. The present Lutheran schools are doing an excellent job of that, but geographically we have so many more families we could serve if we were located in the SW part of Omaha.

*The Steering Committee of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church at its initial Genesis Consultant meeting was also asked to respond to the following scenario in which a Lutheran elementary school had been operating at Divine Shepherd and now were asked **“What makes the elementary school at Divine Shepherd a good school?”***

-We are teaching kids about the Gospel as well as providing quality education. Through children we are bringing more people to Christ and His salvation for us.

-Learning about Jesus every day, caring teachers and staff, family atmosphere.

-Our school gives students the opportunity to learn about Jesus every day, to study His word and to grow in His love. This is what our school offers that sets it apart. We have great Christian teachers and excellent academics.

-A church (DSLCC) that cares about the students and the fact it is Christ centered, caring, loving and faithful. The staff, the other parents and the students themselves.

-High academic standards, a strong Biblical curriculum, caring, dedicated teachers (they're paid less but they're passionate), supportive parents, good communication with home, school and church; my child is a sinner and not perfect but he/she is taught about God's love and forgiveness, relationships – eternal and earthly.

-Every day, every activity, every bit of growing is framed in the knowledge that our child is part of God's kingdom and our child is secure in that knowledge, and knows he/she is a forgiven sinner and can share the love of God.

-High standards for students that can be attributed to the Lutheran faith that is taught to the students.

-It is a loving Christian environment where my child is growing in their faith and being challenged academically so that they can go into the world spiritually and academically prepared.

-Christ centered, loving dedicated teachers, quality instruction, partnership with parents, staying current, forgiveness and grace modeled.

Addendum- E Researching Area Schools

Omaha Christian Academy

Cornerstone Christian

Concordia Academy

Lifegate Christian

**GENESIS PROJECT
SCHOOL SURVEY**

Date of Contact: Friday, March 31 1 p.m.	
Name of School: Omaha Christian Academy	
Address: 10244 Wiesman Dr, Omaha, NE 68134	Phone: 402-399-9565
Contact Person: Amy Nylin & Eric Fiser	Position: Principal & Executive Director

Distance from the proposed school site (in miles): 11 miles north
List the communities served by the school: Students come from Omaha and many surrounding area "suburbs" including Blair, Plattsmouth, Missouri Valley, ect. Students attending represent 84 different churches from those communities.
Number of full-time faculty: 23 teachers with 55 total staff on payroll
Briefly described the curriculum used: Bob Jones Everyday Math Purposeful Design (Curriculum from ACSI accrediting) Beka Writing Reading A to Z
Briefly describe special program attractions: Adding a gym has been a very positive Preschool through 12 th grade all at one location Full time childcare for preschool age children (one class has 14 students out of 16 go to childcare Supervised before and after school for preschool through high school

Enrollment Trends

Over the last five years, has enrollment:	Declined? _____
	Remained Steady? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mostly
	Increased? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some years
<p>Why?</p> <p>Parents want to “get out of public schools,” many because of the lack of learning due to disruptions and discipline issues in the classroom, others because of the social aspect</p>	
Over the next five years, is enrollment expected to:	Decline? _____
	Remained Steady? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Increase? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Why?</p> <p>Not much growth possible in this location because they want to keep the focus on a Family Feel, keeping it RELATIONAL! Would love to duplicate what they have across the city with multiple campuses. Recently discussed with staff their “goals” which are in this order: Character, Skills, Academics</p>	

Enrollment by Grade

Describe the students served by this school (economic, religious, ethic, etc.):	
Class	Enrollment—Maximum numbers possible
Ages 3-4	14-16
Prekindergarten	18
Preschool Total	Did not get this
Kindergarten	22 with full time aide
Grade One:	22
Grade Two:	22
Grade Three:	26
Grade Four:	26
Grade Five:	26
Total	Did not get this either
Comments: Satellite school in Blair with 5-7 students per combo classroom for elementary grades	
What major changes are anticipated in the next five years?	

Again, not much room for growth where they are currently located but hope to expand to have multiple campuses.

Annual Tuition: \$5,000 for Kindergarten
Ranging up to \$8,100 for Junior & Senior year

Annual Fees: None, Registration starts at \$150 by May 1 increases to \$300

Comments: This tuition rate does NOT cover all expenses; fundraising is needed to cover over 15% of budget, which is done by Executive Director, not Principal or Teachers. Fundraising also needed for the scholarships given to families which this year was about \$150,000 but could have been more and next year will need to be more. Shared that average cost of NE education for one child is approximately \$10,000 (this average is covering elementary through high school)

Child Care Needs (Check those that apply):

Before School Care

After School Care

Care during the summer—9 week summer program

Care during other school vacations—will take major holidays, plus one day before and one day after, otherwise child care is available

Full-time child care—for preschool age children who are in their program and potty trained

Comments/Things to consider:

It is key to have a plan for the lines of communication between church and school, liason, board member, someone in the school happenings.

Thoughts for playground space, covering and transitioning from playground to classrooms. Traffic flow/drop off times/pick up times—how it works with MSHS next door and morning traffic on Q street.

Is church prepared to constantly cover the wear and tear on the building including the increase of electricity and heating.

*Have we considered bussing to Concordia Academy/Jr/Sr High to support their ministry that's already in place?

*What would it look like to be a second campus for Concordia Academy—tap into their resources of curriculum, resource teachers, pay scale? Why reinvent the wheel?

*I did share these two questions had been asked/considered.

GENESIS PROJECT
SCHOOL SURVEY

Date of Contact: March 17, 2017	
Name of School: Cornerstone Christian School (Pre-K through 12 th grade) http://Cornerstonechristianschool.org	
Address: (Elementary/Middle School) 1001 Fort Crook Rd N #200 Bellevue NE 68005	Phone: 402-292-1030 (Elem/MS) 402-291-2260 (HS)
(High School) 16405 Clay St Bellevue NE 68123	
Contact Person: Mrs. Teri Schrag	Position: Superintendent

Distance from the proposed school site (in miles): 15.6 mi.
List the communities served by the school: Communities include Bellevue, all parts of Omaha, Papillion, Plattsmouth, Ashland, Glenwood IA, and Missouri Valley, IA. The website lists the churches attended by the families of the school: http://cornerstonechristianschool.org/about-us/churches/
Number of full-time faculty: On the web site, I counted 34 faculty members Pre-K through 12. Of elementary staff, I counted 18 from K through 5 th grade including Music, Art, P.E., Technology and Resource. Mrs. Schrag stated that there are 31 full-time faculty.
Briefly describe the curriculum used: <u>Spelling & Science</u> : Purposeful Design (but Grade 1 uses Dolch words) <u>Bible</u> : Positive Action for Christ <u>Math</u> : A Beka; 5 th grade & up uses Saxon <u>History</u> : A Beka <u>Penmanship</u> : Zaner-Bloser <u>Reading & Phonics</u> : K/1 uses A Beka; 2 nd grade on up is novel-based literature (employing scope & sequence, thematic, etc. approaches)

Briefly describe special program attractions:

Mrs. Schrag stated that first and foremost, the school's trademark is that it is a discipleship and mission school and that permeates throughout the curriculum and the school's programs. They present themselves as having a challenging academic environment, but they also have a resource teacher for students with IEP and 504 programs. They also provide opportunities for home-schooled students of middle school and high school age.

Enrollment Trends

Over the last five years, has enrollment:	Declined? _____
	Remained Steady? _____
	Increased? <u> X </u>
<p>Some stats: Enrollment has increased by 380% in 11 years (the number of years Mrs. Schrag has been there). The five-year trend works out to a 60-70% increase. They have not had a year in the past nine years that enrollment has not increased by 10 to 11 percent.</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Mrs. Schrag cites parents looking for a Bible-based education with a Christian world view and high academic standards.</p>	
Over the next five years, is enrollment expected to:	Decline? _____
	Remained Steady? _____
	Increase? _____
<p>Mrs. Schrag stated that students are at Cornerstone Christian because of God's calling them. She did not state expectations, per se.</p> <p>Why?</p>	

Enrollment by Grade

Describe the students served by this school (economic, religious, ethic, etc.):

Again, Mrs. Schrag stated that Cornerstone Christian is a religious and discipleship Christian school, Biblically based. She stated that they do ask that at least one parent in the family has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. While they have a heart for those of other religions, she does refer families from other religions to other places.

24 percent of their families have some form of tuition assistance, either through external or in-house sources.

Around 7 percent African-American, 7 percent Asian, 7 percent Hispanic and about 10 percent a “blend.”

Class	Enrollment
Ages 3-4	
Prekindergarten (must be 4 yrs. old by 7/31)	
Preschool Total	10
Kindergarten	31
Grade One:	30
Grade Two:	24
Grade Three:	36
Grade Four:	30
Grade Five:	29
Total	190

Comments:

I asked Mrs. Schrag about class sizes. She said she defines (to the school board) her ideal class size as 16 to 18 students. Kindergarten and P-K each use a full-time para ad grades 1, 2 and 3 employ part-time paras.

What major changes are anticipated in the next five years?

The high school will move to join the Pre-K through 8 students within the next five years.

This year is the third graduating class in the school’s history. First graduating class was 2015.

Annual Tuition: \$2,000.00 (Preschool)

Annual Fees: \$75.00 (Preschool registration)

Next year: K-5 = \$4,600

Middle school = \$4,800

High school = \$5,200

\$200.00 registration fee for existing families

\$300.00 registration fee for new families

Comments:

February-March = enrollment open to current families

March-April = open enrollment to public

Child Care Needs (Check those that apply):

Before School Care

After School Care

Care during the summer (nothing to date; this is the first summer they will have their own campus)

Care during other school vacations

Full-time child care

Comments:

They don't charge a fee for morning care (opens 1 hour before school) but they do employ a person for morning care. They do not serve breakfast.

After school care has a fee attached; they serve a pre-prepared snack. Mrs. Schrag reminded me about the need for after-school care to be licensed.

Post script:

- Mrs. Schrag stated we are welcome to visit the campus at any time and talk with her about the “nuts and bolts” of building a school.
- Mrs. Schrag was extremely encouraging about the idea of starting a new school, stating that there is a huge need and market for it in this area.
- Mrs. Schrag pulled out Zechariah 4:10 from her study Bible: “Who dares despise the **day of small things**, since the seven eyes **of** the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand **of** Zerubbabel?” and sent the encouragement that if this is God’s vision, it will also be His provision; we should not fear starting off small – our purpose is to bring glory and honor to God and He will provide: “Water will gush forth **in the wilderness** and **streams in the desert**” –Isaiah 35:6.
- Finally Mrs. Schrag prayed to God on our behalf, asking God to guide us to His will and to bless our team and our congregation as we seek His direction.

GENESIS PROJECT
SCHOOL SURVEY

Date of Contact: March 23, 2017	
Name of School: Concordia Academy	
Address: 1821 N. 90 th Street Omaha, NE 68114	Phone: (402) 592-8005
Contact Person: Jennifer Rohde	Position: Administrative Assistant

Distance from the proposed school site (in miles): 10 miles
List the communities served by the school: Concordia Academy is part of Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha – most of the students come from the 16 association churches which support Concordia
Number of full-time faculty: 7 teachers, 1 principal, 1 Administrative Assistant
Briefly described the curriculum used: Reading – Kdg: Super Kids (Zaner-Bloser); Macmillan McGraw Hill Math – Saxon Math Religion – One in Christ from CPH Social Studies – Pearson Science – Discovery Works from CPH Spelling – Pearson Handwriting – Zaner-Bloser
Briefly describe special program attractions: State-certified before and after-school care Westside Lunch program PALS League Sports program Concordia High School band teacher gives lessons and directs band Private piano lessons held during school Handbell choir National Lutheran Schools Association accredited

Enrollment Trends

Over the last five years, has enrollment:	Declined? _____
	Remained Steady? _____
	Increased? _____ +
Why? Having Dawn Cooksey working hard in Admissions, word of mouth, great program	
Over the next five years, is enrollment expected to:	Decline? _____
	Remained Steady? _____ +
	Increase? _____
Why? Because of location and no room to expand	

Enrollment by Grade

Describe the students served by this school (economic, religious, ethic, etc.):

74% from Lutheran congregation; 26% from other or no congregation

88% Caucasian; 5% Asian; 3% African America; 4% multi-ethnic

Class	Enrollment
St. Mark Preschool - Ages 3-4	(I can still get these numbers -
St. Mark Preschool - Prekindergarten	I simply overlooked these blanks.)
Preschool Total	St. Mark Preschool: 47
Kindergarten	15
Grade One:	22
Grade Two:	26
Grade Three:	19
Grade Four:	23

Grade Five:	31
Total	Concordia Academy: 136
Comments: The 5 th grade is divided in the morning – 15 kids in one room and 16 in another	

What major changes are anticipated in the next five years?

Still have lease at St. Mark for 4 more years. Will make decisions when the time gets closer. Nothing definite as of now.

Annual Tuition: \$ <u>5,600</u>	Annual Fees: \$ <u>350</u>
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Comments:

Earlybird enrollment fee of \$250 is offered from January to mid-February

Child Care Needs (Check those that apply):

+ Before School Care

+ After School Care

Care during the summer

Care during other school vacations

Full-time child care

Comments:

Genesis Project School Survey

Interview conducted by Pastor Jim Rasmussen

Date of Contact: 3-28-17

Name of School: Lifegate Christian School

Address: 15555 West Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68154

Phone: 402.333.5153

Contact Person: Sally Frick, Principal

Distance from the proposed school site: 5.1 miles

Communities served by the school: Greater Omaha area. About 35 percent of the families are members of Lifegate Church, on site. Families come from all over the metro area.

Briefly describe the curriculum used: A variety of curricula are used, depending on the subject. Bob Jones is used for History and Science. Shirley is used for English. Chrome books are used for each student 5th grade to 8th grade. Some laptops are used in 3rd and 4th grade and Children's tablets are used for lower grades, but just a few, not one for each student.

Briefly describe special program attractions: Band 5th-8th, Art teacher, vocal music, sports

Over the last five years, has enrollment declined, remained steady or increased: It's starting to increase again. (I happen to know that it declined for a while after the administration decreed that all teachers had to be members of the church and several teachers left).

Why? Hard to say. More focused marketing, strong interest in private education and dissatisfaction with public schools among some parents. Relatively small class size (20/classroom), parental involvement and the Christian aspect of the school are reasons people choose Lifegate.

Over the next five years, is enrollment expected to decline, remain steady or increase? The hope is that it will increase.

Why? We feel like we have the right model.

Enrollment by grade: She did not have each grade at her fingertips but said enrollment averages 40 per grade K-8.

What major changes are anticipated in the next five years: A building remodel which started with the gym and church sanctuary is going to move into classroom remodeling.

Annual tuition: \$5800.

Annual fees: Registration fee of \$300. \$85/year for band. \$60-80 per sport.

Child Care: The church offers before and after school childcare. There is also a preschool on site with about 100 students, operated by the church

Comments: Mrs. Frick did not seem bothered at all that another Christian school might be starting in the area. She said she would pray for us. I promised to do the same for them!