

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Nathan Domsch
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Concordia Academy
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1821 N 90th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Omaha State NE Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 68114-1314

County Douglas

Telephone (402) 592-8005 Fax (402) 399-1682

Web site/URL http://www.concordiaomaha.org E-mail nathan.domsch@concordiaomaha.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Robert Cooksey E-mail cookseyr@concordiaomaha.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Nebraska District LCMS Tel. (402) 643-2961

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Dr. Donald Klepser
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 0 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	9	12	21
1	7	12	19
2	17	8	25
3	9	7	16
4	8	16	24
5	19	13	32
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	69	68	137

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	139
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Haitian creole

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %

Total number students who qualify: 15

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

12 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	7
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Concordia prepares young people for lives of faith, service, and leadership by providing an excellent, Christ-centered academic program in a caring and safe environment.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

Concordia Academy is a K-5 elementary school operated by Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha, Inc. Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha is operated by sixteen association congregations, but its schools, Concordia Academy and Concordia Jr.-Sr. High School, serve the greater Omaha community. The majority of students at Concordia Academy are Christian, but one third of students attend congregations outside of the association churches. Four percent of Concordia Academy students claim no church home.

Concordia Academy began as two separate elementary schools. Abundant Life opened in the fall of 1998, one year prior to the opening of Bread of Life in the fall of 1999. The two elementary schools were consolidated into a single elementary school, Concordia Academy, in the fall of 2007. The school moved to its current location inside of St. Mark Lutheran Church in the summer of 2010. The neighborhoods surrounding Concordia Academy vary considerably in racial and economic diversity. However, the majority of Concordia's students commute 5 or more miles to get to the campus, and Concordia's students mirror the limited diversity of more distant Omaha suburbs.

The public schools surrounding Concordia vary. The district in which Concordia is located, as well as those to the west and south, are generally well regarded and serve smaller, more suburban populations. Omaha Public Schools is the largest district in the region, and although they are able to offer many opportunities for students, they face the challenges found in any large public urban school district.

The mission of Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha is to prepare young people for lives of faith, service, and leadership as Christian disciples. Concordia Academy actively fulfills that mission by providing a Christ-centered education that includes a caring and safe environment, an excellent academic program, and abundant opportunities in the arts. Our teachers minister to the whole child and integrate the Christian faith into classroom instruction and learning. Concordia's strong programs have led to the development of a positive learning atmosphere of respect, compassion, high standards, and spirituality. This is reflected in students' performance and assessment results.

The faculty and staff of Concordia Academy continue to focus on growth and improvement for the benefit of students. Concordia has recently made several advancements to increase student opportunities in science and technology, including faculty in-service, the implementation of a hands-on approach to instruction, and the development and staffing of a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) lab. Additionally, Concordia was awarded National Lutheran School Accreditation in the summer of 2015 and AdvancEd Accreditation in the fall of 2018. Concordia Academy staff members are also individually dedicated to professional growth. They are all actively involved in personal professional development and set annual goals for themselves and their students. Five of Concordia Academy's eight faculty members have earned masters' degrees.

Concordia Academy's teachers strive to continually meet the educational needs of all learners. The staff implements programs and learning activities that create differentiated learning opportunities and allow for student choice. Outside of the homeroom environments, Concordia maintains an academic support room staffed to provide services beyond what the classroom teacher can offer. Additionally, Concordia Academy maintains a strong relationship with the staff of the Westside School District for evaluating students' special educational needs and providing appropriate services. These services allow Concordia Academy to welcome all applicants regardless of their academic needs, and the success of these intervention programs is reflected in student performance assessments.

Concordia Academy prides itself on maintaining a strong connection between home and school. Concordia Academy parents and grandparents are active participants in the education of Concordia's students. They show their support while volunteering during school-day and after-school activities, through tutoring and fundraising efforts, and by serving on the school board and the parent/teacher organization. These connections are valuable for students as a strong home/school partnership helps ensure their learning needs are met.

The students of Concordia Academy are also encouraged to have a heart for service to our neighbors. Concordia Academy maintains a Blessing Box or outdoor food pantry for the community. The food to support that ministry is provided weekly by students. Students have also recently provided gifts for military veterans, furnished the home of a refugee family forced to relocate due to code violations at their apartment complex, and provided financial support for missionaries and other ministries. The Concordia Academy kindergarten class makes connections with older adults in a nursing home environment two times a month, learning alongside the residents and spreading the love of Jesus. By God's grace, and through a strong partnership between students, teachers and parents, the goal of helping students become faith secure, world ready, kingdom leaders is being realized at Concordia Academy.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Concordia Academy is concerned with meeting the needs of each child enrolled. Teachers differentiate instruction based on individual ability, learning style, attention, and work speed using a variety of instructional strategies including student choice, modified assignments, and small group or individual instruction. All students benefit from specific instruction to develop study skills including organization, note taking, studying, and test taking.

Teaching the Christian faith is at the heart of Concordia Academy's curriculum. Each homeroom class has time dedicated in the daily schedule for religion class, devotion and prayer. Additionally, all other curricular areas, including science, music, literature and current events, are approached from a Biblical perspective. Teachers use a variety of instructional materials, including Bibles, hymnals, videos, and religion curriculum, to integrate and communicate the centrality of our Christian faith on a daily basis, often discussing matters of faith, Biblical teachings, and Christian living in the classroom, on the playground, and in matters of discipline and behavior management.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Concordia Academy's reading/English language arts curriculum balances instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding skills, comprehension, fluency, and writing. The curriculum covers, and in many areas surpasses, Nebraska state standards. All strands of the language arts curriculum in each grade are mapped, and pacing and alignment are ensured through ongoing professional development and curriculum review. A varied and differentiated approach helps teachers reach the majority of learners in the primary classroom environment. Concordia Academy students are provided a literature-rich environment, which encourages the development of a life-long love of reading and writing. Utilizing leveled books and differentiated novels provides a reading atmosphere where instruction is based on each student's needs. Students learn reading strategies, and teachers monitor skill application to ensure student comprehension. The curriculum supports reading and writing development across curricular areas and challenges students to be critical thinkers. Within the reading classroom, technology provides an opportunity for curriculum enhancement as students use technological tools to listen to stories, respond to literature, compose original stories, and publish their work. Teachers identify students in need of additional support through formative classroom assessment and MAP test scores. Identified students are referred for support through Concordia's Academic Success Center, which is operated by an instructor with a MAT in Reading and English instruction.

1c. Mathematics

Mathematics curriculum at Concordia Academy meets or exceeds Nebraska Mathematics Standards and provides students with a spiral approach to develop a solid foundation in problem solving, math computation, and number sense. Teachers scaffold the instruction of each concept and students continue to review information introduced earlier with repeated practice, leading them to mastery. Teachers review spring MAP assessment data from their incoming class and later fall MAP assessment data of their current class to inform them of strengths and weaknesses of the group as well as individual students. They also analyze their current class's data in the spring to find areas of strength and weakness in their own practice and use those details to make informed instructional decisions. Hands-on learning tools are utilized by teachers to provide concrete models for more abstract concepts. Instruction also includes the use of supportive technology, meaningful discussion, hands-on activities, and problem-based learning. Technology is utilized as a tool to support and monitor student math computation skills. Additional, practical applications of mathematics concepts are made in Concordia Academy's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) lab. In order to meet the needs of students at all levels, paraprofessionals and a resource teacher are utilized to reduce student:teacher ratios during math instruction and provide opportunities for small-group practice and cooperative learning. Daily review and practice of concepts

allows teachers to identify areas of struggle and plan for whole group, small group, or individual intervention.

1d. Science

Science instruction at Concordia Academy ensures students in all grades experience hands-on learning, which makes science come alive and provides real world experiences in life science, physical science, and earth science. Concordia Academy's science curriculum is aligned with Nebraska's recently adopted College and Career Ready Standards for Science. New materials were recently adopted after analyzing assessment data to identify areas of need in science instruction. During classroom science instruction, teachers scaffold active learning opportunities for students with focus questions that direct investigation and guide analysis. Students frequently work in collaborative groups, and teachers integrate literacy and digital technologies and help students make connections to their own lives and the world around them. Classroom science instruction at Concordia Academy is supported by a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) lab. Kindergarten through third grade students utilize the lab for 1 hour/week and students in grades four and five are in the lab 1½ hours/week. Students regularly use the STEM lab to participate in open-ended activities that encourage creativity and the application of science concepts to problem solving. For example, kindergarteners design a cast to stabilize a broken arm, first graders must create a playground structure designed to protect students from ultraviolet radiation, second graders find solutions to help a community threatened by a potential landslide, third graders design processes to solve the problem of delivering aid to an area where supplies must be airlifted in and dropped to the ground from an aircraft, fourth graders design, plan, and create a video or podcast to educate children on identifying and preventing concussions, and fifth graders design, model, and test a mobile robot that can remove hazardous materials from a disaster site.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Concordia Academy's Social Studies curriculum emphasizes both history and geography and how the two impact lives today. Lessons include inquiry processes, literacy and art integration, the use of collaboration and communication skills, and technology to enrich student understanding of different time periods, regions and cultures of this world, and to prepare them to actively participate in society as thoughtful, literate citizens. Technology is extensively used when teaching geography and mapping skills. Students are provided rich experiences throughout their K-5 Social Studies education to support their learning. For example, kindergarten students learn about the history of education in 19th century America as they meet and learn in a one-room school house for a day; they also hold class in a local nursing home two mornings per month. Fourth grade students prepare dishes reminiscent of the cuisine of the different regions of the United States in conjunction with their studies about these regions, and they also tour Lincoln, Nebraska, our state capitol. Each fifth grade student conducts in-depth research about a self-selected prominent figure in American History and impersonates that person while presenting important biographical information to parents and other students in a "living wax museum."

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Concordia Academy is concerned with developing the whole child. As a result, Concordia not only places an emphasis on the core subjects but also offers a wide range of other curricular opportunities which provide additional ways for students to discover and develop their God given gifts and talents. Visual arts instruction at Concordia Academy is provided weekly by homeroom teachers. Students study major elements of art including color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value. They use that knowledge in the study of works produced by noted artists and in the creation of their own works. Students utilize multiple art mediums including pencils, crayons, pastels, colored pencils, markers, watercolors, tempera, printmaking ink, papier-

mâché, and clay in their art projects. The instruction encourages personal creativity and self-assessment.

Performing art at Concordia Academy includes both a general music curriculum and an annual musical production for all students. Weekly music instruction is provided to all students by a specialist utilizing the Kodály method. Students in grades K-5 all have the opportunity to participate in voluntary vocal choirs; this school year there are 35 students in the K-2nd grade Mini Mustang Singers and 29 students in the 3rd-5th grade Mustang Singers. Beginning in third grade, students may participate in a strings program, in which 13 play this school year. In the fourth and fifth grades, students have the opportunity to join the handbell choir, which has 16 members this year, and in fifth grade, students may choose an instrument and participate in the school's band, which has 10 members this year. The vocal and handbells choirs are led by Concordia Academy's general music teacher; separate, part-time specialists provide band and strings instruction.

Physical education is provided to each student for one hour per week by a specialist. The curriculum is built around Nebraska state standards and National PE standards. Health education is integrated into the PE, science, and religion curricula.

Concordia Academy transitioned away from offering a "Computer" curriculum in 2016 and focused on teacher professional development to increase the use of technology as a tool for students to access information and publish their learning across the curriculum. Concordia Academy has two class sets of 26 iPads that are available for use, one on a shared cart and one in the STEM Lab. In addition to the cart, all Concordia Academy classrooms have between 4 and 6 iPads for student use, SmartBoards, document cameras, and projectors. A cart of 26 Chromebooks is also shared between Concordia's classrooms and Concordia maintains a multi-use Learning Lab with an additional 12 Chromebooks, which is also accessible to all of Concordia's classrooms and groups. Online educational tools include educational game websites, online simulations, math apps, note taking apps, language arts apps, yearbook software, email access, and Google Docs. Students are provided age-appropriate digital citizenship instruction each year before utilizing technology.

Each classroom has a well-stocked collection of grade-appropriate fiction and nonfiction books. Concordia Academy also maintains a school library where a librarian works with students once each week. Annually, the parent-led PALS group hosts a Scholastic Book Fair, and funds raised are used to build classroom and school libraries. Parents also support the school library through a "Birthday Book Club" allowing professionally bound books, identified as being needed by school staff, to be purchased by parents in recognition of events in their child's life, such as birthdays.

Biblically-based religion classes are taught daily in all Concordia Academy classrooms. Concordia classrooms also have Character Counts resources available for discussing positive character traits with students. All classroom management plans are based on the Law and Gospel truths of the Bible, and discipline situations are approached with a Biblical perspective. Service is also taught as an important outpouring of our Christian faith. Students are encouraged to support the community and world with their gifts. All students are invited to take part in Operation Christmas Child, local and international ministries, and specific Faith in Action activities. Students also participate in and lead prayer, singing, and Bible-based messages in daily classroom devotions and weekly all-school chapel services throughout the year.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Concordia Academy serves an academically diverse student population and seeks to provide the best learning environment possible for each student enrolled. Teachers differentiate instruction based on individual ability, learning style, attention, and work speed using a variety of instructional strategies, including student choice, modified assignments, and small group or individual instruction. Small group instruction for students is most common in reading and math classes. The same curriculum is followed with all student groupings, but the instructional approach is varied depending on the needs of the learners in the group. Additionally, students are not tracked according to ability; groupings are fluid so that student placement is always appropriate for the learners.

The use of data from classroom assessments, MAP testing, and individualized diagnostic assessments assist faculty and staff in identifying which students would most benefit from accommodations, modifications, or individual/small-group instruction in order to be successful. Communication of this data between home and school is maintained for the benefit of student learning. Concordia students who are identified as needing additional intervention can benefit from access to the Academic Success Center and classroom teacher aides, who provide extra support for students with diverse academic needs.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Concordia Academy provides additional opportunities to extended learning through enrichment activities for students who would benefit. Daily opportunities are provided through the use of centers, projects that give students agency, and inquiry based activities. In this way, students who already have mastery of a concept can choose more challenging opportunities to apply their knowledge. Technology is also used in every classroom to support teachers in meeting the needs of diverse learners. Individualized math and language arts programs, differentiated spelling lists, and individually paced typing practice all assist teachers in meeting students' needs. Additionally, instruction has been enhanced by the addition of an interactive curriculum in a variety of subject areas.

3c. Special education

When students need individual attention, they are referred to the Academic Success Center for additional assistance. The homeroom teacher and Academic Success Center instructor work together in communication with the student and parents, collaborating to identify student need and to develop an action plan specific to the student. Accommodations are identified, and preferred instructional methods are implemented, providing the student maximum opportunity to achieve his or her potential.

Concordia Academy also receives strong cooperation and on-site help from local public schools. Title I services are provided by Omaha Public Schools. Westside Public School District provides speech, resource, and testing services for students that the principal and homeroom teacher identify as needing intervention beyond the accommodations and modifications made by the homeroom teacher and in the Academic Success Center. The referral in such an instance leads to the development of an Educational Service Plan and access to additional resource instruction for the student.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Concordia provides ELL support to students in the homeroom classroom with individualized support. If a student resides in an attendance area that gives them access to Title III funding, Concordia helps to connect them to additional resources, like Imagine Learning, utilizing those funds.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Building on the example of Christ, the Concordia Academy community strives to build a close relationship with God and healthy relationships with one another. Faculty and staff help students excel academically for God's glory in a safe, caring, and accepting environment. Teachers nurture students' spiritual growth through religion classes and weekly chapel and develop students academically through a carefully designed curriculum and an Academic Success Center. We support students emotionally through caring relationships. As a result, students achieve their highest level of academic performance and develop responsible Christian relationships, particularly in demonstrating care and respect for others, so they are faith secure, world ready, kingdom leaders.

Teachers are the facilitators of learning but realize the importance of parental input as we work together to help each child reach their fullest potential in all areas of the student's life (spiritual, emotional, intellectual, creative, and physical). Teachers see and encourage students as individuals, knowing that individualized learning is essential to students becoming responsible Christian leaders. A relationship of mutual love and respect is essential to a positive learning environment. There is also a strong spiritual dimension added to the student-teacher connection, as prayer is a vital part of each school day. Students understand that teachers are there to help them as needed so they can be successful both inside and outside of the classroom. In general, there is a familial atmosphere that permeates the school.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Strong partnerships with parents and the community allow Concordia Academy to provide a rich educational experience for students. Parents are a vital part of any student's education and teachers intentionally build and maintain positive relationships with parents in a number of ways. Parents are involved in their student's education via Class Dojo, on which student portfolios and staff/parent communication can take place, the Sycamore student information system, which hosts student grades and other records, weekly classroom and school newsletters, and bi-annual parent-teacher conferences. Direct communication between parents and teachers via phone, email, or face-to-face meetings is also of high value; Concordia maintains a policy that all parent communication will be reciprocated within 24 hours. Several parents are involved in coaching extracurricular activities, chaperoning field trips, and serving lunch daily. Parents are also invited to engage in the education of their children through the Concordia Academy parent organization, which supports teachers, students, and classes in various ways, including teacher appreciation, community-building social events, and funding for field trips, special classroom projects, and the purchase of technology. Mothers have the opportunity to join the Moms-in-Touch group which meets weekly to pray for students and teachers.

Concordia Academy faculty and staff also take advantage of opportunities to provide intentional relationship building. Together, teachers and parents attend and enjoy extracurricular activities such as sporting events, concerts, and the annual musical production. Additionally, teachers are members of local congregations alongside students and their families where they consistently attend worship and are involved in church activities. This creates an environment of positivity in which all understand that everyone has the same goal in mind: for students to experience the love of Jesus and to learn about the people and world He has given to them.

One primary method Concordia Academy uses to engage the community is through our association congregations. Pastors and DCEs from association churches are invited to lead chapel services and participate in classroom activities. Important events for public outreach are communicated through church bulletins. Members of those churches are invited to be a part of our community events.

Concordia also reaches out to the community at large through a social media presence, print and radio advertisements, and direct mail campaigns. Community members are invited into the facility for educational programs, family game nights, music concerts, and an annual open house. Concordia Academy serves our

community in a wide variety of ways including collecting money for local charities through chapel offering, collecting food for the Blessing Box outdoor food pantry located on 90th and Blondo, and kindergarten semi-monthly visits to Montclair Nursing Home. Concordia faculty and staff are involved in community events such as church worship services, refugee family sponsorship, and the annual Concordia Gala.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The teachers at Concordia Academy know they are valued and supported by both parents and administrators. This is evidenced by a very stable staff and by recognition received by staff members, including Elementary Teacher of the Year from the Nebraska District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 2018, both the Lutheran Education Association Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Teacher and Distinguished Lutheran Early Childhood Teacher in 2017, and the Lutheran Education Association Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Teacher in 2019. Parents demonstrate their support of teachers by providing classroom assistance, purchasing teacher wish list items, and gifting teachers items from lists of teachers' favorite things. Recently, many families volunteered to provide meals for a Concordia Academy teacher who is battling cancer. Teachers are supported by the school administration; they are provided a variety of resources to excel in the classroom, and the teacher to student ratio is appropriate for all grade levels. Teachers are continually encouraged to strive for excellence through administrative feedback, evaluation meetings, access to a variety of professional conferences, and other development opportunities. Professional growth is both intentional and consistent for all staff. New teachers are assigned a mentor teacher and provided with a resource handbook to orientate them with the day-to-day activities of the school and their position. The mentor provides support, including weekly meetings, training sessions on school equipment and facilities, and impromptu question and answer sessions with their mentee. Interpersonal relationships also help teachers know they are valued and supported; staff members intentionally spend time outside of school together that they may grow in their relationships. Specific examples of this effort include daily devotions created and shared by staff members, group prayers, bi-monthly meetings, and staff social events such as monthly birthday celebrations and moral boosters. All of these create an environment of camaraderie among the faculty and staff that in turn creates a positive learning environment for the students.

Each teacher at Concordia participates in a professional development program that is focused on continued growth and improvement. In this professionally driven journey, teachers are tasked with identifying a need in their own practice and outlining a path toward improvement. Teachers are required to use data including evaluations (walk-through evaluations, full-lesson evaluations, end-of-year self-evaluations, and end-of-year summative evaluations) and student assessments (classroom data and MAP scores) when identifying the area for growth. Goals are shared with the entirety of the faculty and must be focused on making a positive impact on learner outcomes, not on a pre-identified tool or strategy.

The process of responding to these areas of need is prioritized during monthly early dismissal/staff development days throughout the school year. After identifying their weakness, teachers research potential strategies to incorporate into their classroom practice and help strengthen their teaching. As they implement strategies, teachers collect data to measure the effectiveness of their solutions. Once they have improved their practice, teachers share their success with the rest of the faculty and staff and are also encouraged to share it with other educators and friends through social media or at conferences.

Additionally, the principal identifies faculty-wide goals for all the teachers each year based on several different resources. These include the curriculum review process, the school action plan developed in the accreditation process, evaluation data, student test scores, and feedback from the Head of Schools, students, parents, and staff. Recent topics have included a faculty review of Teach Like a Pirate, a series of on-site TechEdge (technology integration) workshops provided by professors from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and a study of individual habitual patterns of behavior, thought, emotion, and communication and their impact on staff dynamics. Concordia faculty participate as a group in a variety of workshops as both participants and presenters, including the Nebraska Educators Technology Association (NETA) and Nebraska District Educators Conference, and teachers routinely attend subject-specific conferences. Professional learning from conferences is shared at staff meetings and application of learning is reported on teachers' self-evaluations.

The Principal sets a goal and participates in a professionally driven journey alongside the rest of the faculty while also attending leadership conferences in order to aid in his professional development. Teachers at Concordia Academy are asked to participate in the evaluation of the school principal; this data, along with feedback from Concordia's Head of Schools, guides the development of strategic goals for the principal. Those goals and progress toward them are reported to the Head of Schools for monitoring.

4. School Leadership:

Concordia Academy's leaders promote student performance and school effectiveness. Collaboration and shared leadership are evident throughout the school system, as school leaders focus on creating a positive, Christ-centered school culture and equipping faculty with the tools to ensure student success. The Academy Principal is accountable to Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha's Head of Schools, who is ultimately responsible for student outcomes and institutional improvement. The Head of Schools reports to the School Board, which sets policy and holds the Head of Schools accountable for the execution of that policy. The School Board is elected by delegates from Concordia's Member Congregations and also is responsible to the parents who entrust their children to the instructional care of the school.

As the building leader, the Concordia Academy Principal routinely visits classrooms and maintains a positive working relationship with Academy staff members. The staff work with the Principal to make key decisions about school programming and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs. Student achievement is the motivating force behind the curriculum review process. Through that process Concordia Academy students' performance data on standardized (MAP) and classroom assessments is analyzed, and the Principal leads teachers through a study of trends and issues in the content area being reviewed, the identification of best practices for supporting student learning, and the solicitation of feedback from parents on Concordia Academy's current curriculum. The review supports modifications to the curriculum that strengthen student outcomes. The modifications to Concordia's science curriculum, including the addition of a STEM lab, and the move to a more unified approach to English Language Arts were recently developed as a result of this review process.

The Concordia Academy Principal contributes to a positive, familial school culture as he greets students daily, works and plays alongside students during special classroom activities and at recess, works closely with the PALS (Academy parent organization) executive committee, attends as many Academy parent events as possible, and meets with prospective families visiting Concordia Academy. The Principal communicates with parents through a weekly newsletter article, publishes his contact information, and maintains an open-door policy. Parents receive additional invitations to give feedback to the Principal at Back to School Night, a Parent Coffee event, parent organization meetings, and through CARE (Concerns Are Resolved Easily) forms and periodic surveys. These conversations have led to increased family programming, such as game night and science night, modifications to the school calendar, and the addition of a natural playground. The Concordia Academy Principal was just named the 2020 Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Administrator by the Lutheran Education Association.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Several factors have contributed to the success of Concordia Academy's students, but the rich and valuable learning opportunities for students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) have been among the most transformative. Changes have been made to both the mathematics and science curricula in the classroom, and technology has been integrated across multiple content areas. Teachers have utilized Saxon math resources since the fall of 2015 to provide the framework for a spiraled approach to math instruction. This allows students repeated opportunities to practice math concepts learned in past lessons as they work toward mastery. All of Concordia's classroom teachers have also dedicated a great deal of time towards learning about effective and authentic integration of technology resources into the classroom. They continue to increase integration annually since that was prioritized as a curricular change in the 2016-2017 school year. Finally, in the fall of 2017, teachers modified their approach to classroom science instruction and are now providing content through direct, hands-on investigation and problem solving opportunities utilizing Concordia's newly adopted FOSS Next Generation science resources.

In addition to recent changes in classroom math and science instruction, Concordia also developed a lab space for STEM instruction, which opened in the fall of 2016, and invested significant resources into training a dedicated STEM lab teacher. The STEM lab provides a space for students to conduct experiments and simulations in a controlled environment. Here the learning process is prioritized over product; creativity, collaboration, experiential learning, and higher level thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) are encouraged and supported. Rather than focusing simply on content area knowledge, the STEM lab environment encourages critical thinking, problem solving, and lifelong learning. All students in grades K-5 utilize the STEM lab weekly. Kindergarten through third grade students utilize the lab for 1 hour/week and students in grades four and five are in the lab for 1½ hours/week.

Student outcomes resulting from these changes have been very positive, including increased classroom engagement and excitement as well as significant opportunities for student collaboration. Formative assessments demonstrate high levels of comprehension. NWEA MAP Growth Science mean RIT scores and corresponding school status percentiles quickly increased and have remained a strong indicator of successful outcomes since these curricular changes were implemented:

	Spring 17-18		Spring 18-19	
	Mean RIT	%tile	Mean RIT	%tile
Grade 3	205.7	97	206.3	97
Grade 4	216.1	99	211.4	97
Grade 5	216.8	98	219.7	99

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Lutheran

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$10232
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1270

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 15%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 69%