

2002-2003 No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Mr. Jonathan Guelzow (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. Stephens Lutheran School (As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2304 Springs Road (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Hickory NC 28601-3066 City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (828) 256-2166 Fax (828) 256-7994

Website/URL ststephens.lcms.org Email principaljon@charter.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date

Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Name of Superintendent (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Tel. ()

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date

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

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: _____ Elementary schools
 _____ Middle schools
 _____ Junior high schools
 _____ High schools
 _____ TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: _____
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: _____

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural

4. 10 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 _____ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K	15	9	24	7	12	14	26
1	11	14	25	8	12	13	25
2	15	11	26	9			
3	12	13	25	10			
4	15	11	26	11			
5	13	9	22	12			
6	16	9	25	Other			
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							224

6. Racial/ethnic composition of 97 % White
 the students in the school: _____ % Black or African American
 _____ % Hispanic or Latino
3 % Asian/Pacific Islander
 _____ % American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 1%

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	224
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.008
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	.9

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: .4%

$$\frac{1}{224} \text{ Total Number Limited English Proficient}$$

Number of languages represented: 1
 Specify languages: Russian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2%

$$\frac{4}{224} \text{ Total Number Students Who Qualify}$$

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If this method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

PART III - SUMMARY

Provide a brief, coherent narrative snapshot of the school in one page (approximately 475 words). Include at least a summary of the school's mission or vision in the statement and begin the first sentence with the school's name, city, and state.

St. Stephens Lutheran School, Hickory, North Carolina, is a private church related academic organization associated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Its educational program supports instruction for kindergarten through eighth grade, along with a "Five Star" rated preschool program serving three and four year olds. The school supports a student body of 278 children and is jointly accredited by the National Lutheran Schools Accreditation Association and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, as well as being licensed by the state of North Carolina.

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Driven by its philosophy, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22.6), the school is diligent in providing a learning community responsive to a child's individuality. In meeting this challenge, the school's curriculum is purposely designed to meet North Carolina state standards for all subject areas with exception to its added religious instruction. Students are assessed yearly in the areas of reading and math through the use of the Stanford 9 testing instrument. In blending the standards provided by both church and state, St. Stephens is mindful not to forget that all education is Christ-centered with a strong commitment to the Lord and possesses a value system grounded in Christian principles as defined by Lutheran doctrine.

St. Stephens acknowledges the importance of children understanding the components necessary in building upon the quality of life, including faith, integrity, truth, trust and self-reliance. As such, the school defines as its academic goals as:

1. The spiritual development of the child includes growth in knowledge and faith of the Triune God. Children will be exposed to and taught the history and heritage of the Christian church and the Lutheran faith.
2. The intellectual development of the child includes growth in academic areas including the advancement of critical thinking skills, effective communication and interpersonal skills.
3. The social development of the child includes growth in one's ability to live in society as a responsible citizen, interacting positively with others, identifying and accepting responsibility, understanding peer pressure, and growing in the areas of discernment, leadership and citizenship.
4. The physical development of a child includes the understanding of the human body, appropriate nutrition, physical activity, and maintenance of good health.
5. The emotional development of a child includes understanding feelings and emotions and developing self-control.
6. The aesthetic development of a child includes growth in the appreciation and application of the beauty in nature in the areas of art, music, and drama.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

For Public and Private Schools

1. Report the school's
2. St. Stephens Lutheran School chooses to utilize a diversity of methodologies in assessing student learning. Teachers may elect to incorporate into their assessment process strategies that range from a simple daily lesson to a comprehensive quarterly project. Both formal and informal assessment instruments are used by the teaching staff in determining student progress within the various content areas. This process allows the teacher, as well as the administrative staff, to not just evaluate student progress, but also curriculum effectiveness. Resource materials provided through the Saxon Math and Reading series have allowed teachers to assess students more frequently, through daily and weekly lessons. An additional emphasis has been placed on the use of oral and graphic presentations for assessment in the upper grades through the use of extemporaneous speeches and computer generated presentations. Students exhibiting low achievement are, in many classes, given the opportunity to make up work or given special help followed by additional assessment.

The results of the Stanford 9 tests in the areas of reading and math are studied by teachers and administrators and have been helpful in determining areas of strength and weakness within individual students, classes and the curriculum as a whole. When a learning problem or deficiency is determined, the school utilizes services provided by several local school systems for additional testing and evaluation. In some instances private psychologists are consulted. The school also has access to local resources in supplementing professional development for teachers facing defined student learning issues.

Special assessments are given to the eighth graders in Algebra I and Computer Literacy in an endeavor to evaluate their needs before entering high school.

3. Describe in one-half page how the school communicates student performance, including assessment data, to parents, students, and the community.

Student achievement results are provided to parents and students through communication from teachers, as well as through individual parent-teacher conferences. Each semester, several parent-teacher conference dates are set aside for parents to have more time in discussing their child's progress. Weekly work folders are sent home, via the students, containing materials that students had worked on for the week. In the lower grades, work folders are sent home on a daily basis, distinguishing work to be completed for homework for the evening.

Mid-term grade reports are sent to parents each quarter to provide parents with an update as to their child's progress to date. These reports are signed and returned to the teacher to ascertain that they were viewed by a parent. Quarterly final grade reports are sent home, also to be signed and returned to the teacher. Because of the small size of the school, parents are encouraged to meet with teachers to discuss concerns they may have prior or after any grading period. At the end of each grading quarter, students are acknowledged at a Wednesday Chapel for achieving Honor or Merit Roll (determined by GPA), then Beta Club designation. These acknowledgements are also published in the school's weekly newsletter which is sent to each family with enrolled students, as well as to members of the Board of Directors.

Adequate reporting to the community regarding the school's results is developing as the school determines the most appropriate process in providing such information. Acknowledgement of the school's high ranking within the Stanford 9 scoring is utilized in advertisement for the school throughout the community.

4. Describe in one-half page how the school will share its successes with other schools.

St. Stephens Lutheran School strives to support community initiatives, particularly those of associated Christian schools. SSLS seeks to share with the educational community examples of its successes. Our energetic math teacher has led many workshops for the Saxon Publishing Company for schools interested in adopting their program. Faculty members have served on accreditation teams for the National Lutheran School Accreditation Association. The school has adopted a local public school, with diverse ethnic and socio-economic levels, providing them with learning materials and other resources to support their academic program.

The school, in meeting its strategic plan for the next five years, will be seeking to continue these initiatives as well as building alliances with both public and private agencies.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Describe in one page the school's curriculum, including foreign languages (foreign language instruction is an eligibility requirement for middle, junior high, and high schools), and show how all students are engaged with significant content, based on high standards.

St. Stephens Lutheran School adheres to the standards set forth by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, diverting only in relation to its religious instruction component. Its curriculum is supported by defined goals and objectives and learner achievement is measured by a variety of methods including objective and subjective testing, written and oral reports, along with formal and informal assignments utilized both in class and through homework. Additionally, instructional materials, such as textbooks, are selected to assure cultural diversity.

Concepts are taught and constantly reviewed throughout the year. Different types of learning experiences are presented to enable a child to be successful in life. Students are taught to accept responsibility through accountability, expectations, and understanding of God's gifts to the individual.

Textbooks and other learning materials are evaluated according to the school's philosophy, curriculum, and state recommended learner outcomes. They are chosen to challenge the students in preparing them with the necessary information and incentive to achieve. Basic textbooks are supplemented with workbooks, black line masters, and other materials.

The school follows a schedule for curriculum review which parallels the schedule followed by the State's system. Teachers and administrators attend workshops to enable them to conduct an in depth study of different textbooks and materials. Textbook replacement is on a five-year replacement schedule.

Students in grades seven and eight are involved in the study of Spanish. Through the use of various textbooks, tapes and supplementary materials, the students are taught vocabulary, verb usage, grammar and cultures. The school, as a part of its strategic plan, will provide Spanish instruction in all grades.

Students at St. Stephens Lutheran School are tested in accordance with the State's standards. All nonpublic schools are required to administer a nationally standardized test for students in grades three, five, and eight. In order to meet the needs of the students, St. Stephens has chosen to exceed this mandate and begin testing with grade one. Students in grades one through eight are tested in the spring using the Stanford 9 Achievement Test. In addition, eighth grade students take the state mandated Computer Literacy Test. Eighth grade students, wishing to be exempt from Algebra 1 in high school, are given the State's End of Course Exam.

2. (**Elementary Schools**) Describe in one-half page the school's reading curriculum, including a description of why the school chose this particular approach to reading. The reading program is a combination of Macmillan-McGraw Hill basal reader (1-5), Saxon Phonics (PK-3) and the Accelerated Reader Program in all grades. A literature anthology from Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston Publishers is used beginning in grade 6 with teachers using novels as a supplemental resource.

The Saxon Phonics Program was adopted six years ago for grades K-2 because of its strong phonetic emphasis. Depending on the grade level, skills taught include the alphabet, phonetic sounds, syllabication, accenting, alphabetizing, sentence structure, sight words, and dictionary skills. A coding system is taught that enables students to phonetically decipher a word for correct pronunciation. Pre-Kindergarten and grade 3 began using the program in 2002 as it became available.

The Accelerated Reader Program is used to encourage children in reading and checks comprehension through the use of the computer. This is incorporated at grade levels one through eight.

Macmillan-McGraw Hill was chosen as the basal reading program because it combined good literature with the phonetic skills that were in the Saxon Phonics Program. The program is enhanced with leveled reading books which are supported by the Accelerated Reading Program.

3. Describe in one-half page one other curriculum area of the school's choice and show how it relates to essential skills and knowledge based on the school's mission.

Due to concerns for scores in the math computation sections on the CAT V Achievement Test, faculty began searching for an alternate curriculum to supplement classroom instruction. A number of different materials were investigated. In 1997, the Saxon Math curriculum was adopted for the school's program. Since the introduction of this series, student's measurable math achievement has risen steadily on standardized tests. Our average student now scores in the 91st percentile of the Stanford 9 Achievement Test.

Students in Pre-K through grade eight use the Saxon program. It is based on the instructional practices of constant review and assessment. Concepts are divided into steps. These skills are taught in increments and reviewed constantly throughout the year.

Basic math facts are constantly drilled until each student has a mastery of the skill. Manipulatives are used often as the concepts are taught so students gain understanding of the concepts in addition to rote memorizations.

4. Describe in one-half page the different instructional methods the school uses to improve student learning.

St. Stephens Lutheran School uses a variety of instructional methods to improve student learning. Teachers use one-on-one instruction, small group discussion, cooperative learning, experimentation, and student-led presentations. Teachers also utilize older students to assist younger ones with reading and other projects. The use of guest speakers as well as field trips is used to study materials more in depth. Guest speakers include missionaries, string quartets, doctors, symphony orchestras, authors, and many others from the community. Field trips are both local and out of state including such sites as museums, plays, concerts, and other places of interest. Older students take educational trips to Williamsburg, New Orleans, Huntsville, Washington D.C., and the Outer Banks.

Televisions and VCRS have been installed in every classroom allowing the use of *Cable in the Classroom* and educational videos to enhance learning. The televisions are linked to each classroom computer allowing teachers to use the computer as well as the Internet in their presentations. Teachers make use of the twenty-six computers in the computer lab, allowing students to use the internet to research and learn more about a topic as well as educational games to reinforce skills.

St. Stephens has a large library with over 5,000 books for teacher and student use. In addition, teachers and students have access to the Hickory City Patrick Beaver Library and Catawba County Library System for books and resources. The school utilizes the Hickory Science and Art Center to improve student learning. Whether it is through their hands on exhibits at the center or their presentations at the school, this organization has served to enhance both the school's humanities and science curriculums.

5. Describe in one-half page the school's professional development program and its impact on improving student achievement.

St. Stephens Lutheran School's professional development program offers numerous opportunities for its faculty including workshops, classes, and conferences. Members of the faculty attend workshops on technology, educational and child development theories, current educational materials, and

communication. These workshops are offered by professional educators, Catawba Valley Community College, the Catawba County Board of Education, the Hickory Science Center, professional educational consultant firms, as well as fellow faculty members. A majority of the faculty attend the annual Southeastern District Lutheran Educators Conference where a variety of workshops are offered. Faculty members are encouraged to pursue advanced degrees, as well as become members of professional organizations. Staff members are members of the Lutheran Education Association, North Carolina Teachers of Mathematics, ASCD and the American Library Association.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

The purpose of this addendum is to obtain additional information from private schools as noted below. Attach the completed addendum to the end of the application, before the assessment data.

Private school association(s): **Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod**

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

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Part II - Demographics

1. What are the 2001-2002 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

\$_* _____ \$_* _____ \$_* _____ \$_* _____ \$_* _____ \$_* _____
K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

\$_* _____ \$_* _____ \$_* _____ \$_* _____
6th 7th 8th Other

* Tuition is the same for all grades, Kindergarten through grade eight. Members of St. Stephens Lutheran Church pay \$1275 per year. Non-members of St. Stephens Lutheran Church pay \$2975 per year. The Church subsidizes each member child to make up the difference. The church pays all capital expenses.

- 2. What is the educational cost per student? **\$2905**
(School budget divided by enrollment)
- 3. What is the average financial aid per student? **\$ 27**
- 4. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? **1 %**
- 5. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? **7 %**

Report of School's Assessment Results

St. Stephens Lutheran School, Hickory, North Carolina, annually tests all students in grades one through eight during the month of April. The Stanford 9 Achievement Test has been administered to the students since 2000. Prior to that date, the California Achievement Test V was administered in grades one through seven. We used the Stanford 9 in grade eight since 1998 due to changes in requirements for our students to enter Hickory High School.

The results of the reading section of the achievements tests indicate a steady increase from 82.8 to 86.25 over a period of four years. This past year the score fell a bit to the 2000 level. A closer analysis of the sub-tests shows a steady increase in the past five years, from 80% in 1997 to high of 94.5% in 2001 in the area of Word Study Skills. This increase may be linked to the adoption of the Saxon Phonics Curriculum for our students in Kindergarten through grade three. The reading comprehension has increased in the same period from a low of 78% in 1997 to 84% in 2002. Greater emphasis has been placed on reading comprehension using the Accelerated Reader Program, additional teacher direction, and the extra-curricular, Battle of the Books competition in grades three through eight.

In the area of math, there was a school-wide score of 75% in 1997 and a score of 91% in 2002. The textbook in use in 1997 was changed to the Saxon Math Series in Kindergarten through grade eight with Algebra I offered for high school credit in the eighth grade. Our teachers have attended math workshops and have dedicated themselves to improvement in the area of mathematics.

We do not have a large number of a specific minority to disaggregate the data. The only student excluded from the 2002, Stanford 9 Test was a young fifth grade student who arrived from an orphanage in Russia during the course of the school year, and did not speak English. He will be included in the 2003 test. One student missed the reading section of the CAT V in 1999 due to illness.

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Grade: 1st grade

Test: 1998-1999 California Achievement Test V
2000-2002 Stanford 9

Edition/Publication Year: CATV/1992
Stanford 9/1995

Publisher: CTB MacMillan/McGraw-Hill
Harcourt Educational Measurement

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed?

No groups were excluded, all students tested

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs ___ Scaled Scores ___ Percentiles X

READING

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES	85	86	84	83	83
Total Score	86	95	91	88	84
Number of Students Tested	26	25	26	26	26
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Word Study Skills	89	97	95	n/a	n/a
2. Word Reading	78	91	85	n/a	n/a
3. Reading Comprehension	88	94	88	89	81
4. Vocabulary	n/a	n/a	n/a	81	79

MATH

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES	91	91	88	86	85
Total Score	92	94	93	86	85
Number of Students Tested	26	25	26	26	26
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Problem Solving	92	93	93	n/a	n/a
2. Procedures	86	92	91	n/a	n/a
3. Computation	n/a	n/a	n/a	61	86
4. Concepts and Application	n/a	n/a	n/a	91	84

ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Grade: 2nd Grade

Test: 1998-1999 California Achievement Test V
2000-2002 Stanford 9

Edition/Publication Year: CAT V/1992
Stanford 9 /1995

Publisher: CTB MacMillan/McGraw-Hill
Harcourt Educational Measurement

What groups were excluded from testing? Why, and how were they assessed?
No groups or individuals were excluded from testing.

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs ____ Scaled Scores ____ Percentiles X

READING

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES	85	86	84	83	83
Total Score	86	89	87	80	86
Number of Students Tested	26	26	26	26	26
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Word Study Skills	88	92	88	n/a	n/a
2. Reading Comprehension	87	87	87	83	85
3. Vocabulary	76	77	79	80	85

MATH

	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999	1997-1998
Testing Month	April	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES	91	91	88	86	86
Total Score	88	90	85	88	86
Number of Students Tested	26	26	26	26	26
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students excluded	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Problem Solving	90	87	85	n/a	n/a
2. Procedures	81	89	82	n/a	n/a
3. Computation	n/a	n/a	n/a	76	83
4. Concepts and Applications	n/a	n/a	n/a	91	88