



The mission of the Department of School Ministry of the Board for District and Congregational Services is to assist, equip, and uplift Lutheran school educators, district staff, especially education executives, and congregation leaders so that through them children may be equipped as disciples of Jesus Christ.

For more information, contact your District Office or the LCMS School Ministry Office at (314) 996-1294.

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Serving Lutheran elementary schools and their operating congregations. Sponsored by the LCMS Board for District and Congregational Services-School Ministry.

What is SSAC intended to do?

The purpose of the Strengthening Schools And Congregations Project is to strengthen and re-vitalize Lutheran elementary schools that are experiencing problems, so that the mission of sharing the caring Christ can be more effectively accomplished in that place.

Which schools—and operating congregations—will be served by this project?

Schools to receive services from SSAC will be selected by the SSAC Director on the basis of a recommendation by the District Executive and the quality of the school's application. Thus, schools will be selected only if they:

- Can be helped through consultative services.
- Desire consulting assistance.
- Will accept recommendations of consultants.
- Will work toward improvement based on the recommendation of the consultants.
- Have sufficient resources to accomplish needed change.

The number of schools served will be limited to the funding available.

It's assumed that as schools are strengthened in their ministry, the congregations and their ministry will also be strengthened. The focus of the SSAC project is on the school and its ministry.

Symptoms of schools which need strengthening would include such items as:

- Declining enrollment.
- Conflict among the staff.
- Parental dissatisfaction.
- Teaching that is perceived to be incompetent.
- Costs exceeding the ability of the congregation to provide.

Since each situation is unique, many other symptoms may be present.

This project is designed to strengthen struggling Lutheran elementary schools with the hope that they can remain viable agencies of their congregations. Effective educational agencies provide service and outreach to the community.

What will SSAC provide?

The services of SSAC are divided into two specific dimensions:

1. The Diagnostic Visit

A team of three trained consultants will visit the school and its congregation for three days, usually Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. During this time, the team of three consultants will attempt to determine the causes of difficulty in that place, write a report which will identify the school's problems, and make recommendations for school and congregation improvement.

2. Ongoing Consultant Visits

An ongoing consultant visit will be made by one of the Team members within a two-month period of the Diagnostic Visit. The congregation also has the option to have two additional ongoing consultant visits. All visits must be completed within 18 months of the Diagnostic Visit. During these visits the consultant will help the school and its congregation in accomplishing the recommendations of the Diagnostic Team, and work toward improvement. These one-day visits will include discussions with the various boards, committees, and leaders of the congregation, and will result in a brief report.

Applications for additional visits are available from the SSAC office. These two services will be provided to the school and congregation at no cost.

However, all costs related to school or congregation change or improvement must be borne by the school and its operating congregation.

Who are the consultants?

The consultants are experienced and capable Lutheran school leaders, district education executives, and pastors of congregations with schools. Each brings a specific skill and experiential base, along with consulting skills, and a consultant personality. These consultants have been trained specifically to serve schools and congregations interested in improving, but have had difficulty finding direction for such improvement.

Without salary, they are serving to provide this ministry to schools and their congregations.

How can we receive SSAC services?

Schools served by SSAC must want SSAC services. Thus, they must apply. Applications are available through each LCMS District Office. The District individual with responsibilities for services to Lutheran schools will be asked to sign the application and to support it.

As a part of the application process, the school must submit:

- Its final budget and expenditures for the past three years.
- The enrollment by grade for the last five years.
- A two-page description of why SSAC services are requested and what the school hopes to receive from those services.
- What the applicant sees as the primary difficulties, problems, or frustrations in that place.
- Other information helpful to the Diagnostic Team.

The application must be signed by the pastor, school administrator, board of education chairperson, and the congregation chairperson.

Applications will be screened by the District, and then selected by the national SSAC Director. Consultants who are best equipped to serve in that specific place will be assigned.