

Part I – Curriculum and Instruction

1. Curriculum

Curriculum and instruction contribute to Bethlehem Lutheran School's high level of student achievement. The students are given a knowledge base that will prepare them for high school and employment within the community. The curriculum is paralleled with the Nevada state standards, National standards, and *Core Knowledge* standards while promoting educational excellence to meet the spiritual, educational, physical, emotional, and social needs of the students. The school undergoes a four year review to maintain licensure through the Nevada Department of Education. All teaching staff likewise upholds their own licensure. Professional development courses include researched-based strategies for increasing student achievement.

The curriculum of the school is reviewed by the administrator and a team of teachers on a six year subject cycle. This cycle provides students with the most current methods and information for the given subject area to help reach future achievement.

Language Arts – Bethlehem Lutheran School holds to the philosophy that reading is the basis to all content learning. With this being said, print and phonological awareness, phonetics, decoding, vocabulary, comprehension of fiction and non-fiction literature, reading fluency, grammar, written expression, and elements of literature are the foundation of language arts. The Pre-K program uses the Saxon Early Learning program to foster the love of literature. In grades K – 5, the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program is used to continue the learning of reading and development of word attack skills and fostering understanding of the English language. In grade 6, a novel based curriculum is used to discover the various genres and authors. Grades 7 and 8 use Holt Elements of Literature which meets the Nevada English Language content standards. Shurley English is used from K through 8th grade and incorporates the use of rhythm, repetition, and student/teacher interaction. In grades K – 8, Spelling Connections: A Spelling Vocabulary Program (Zaner-Bloser) is utilized to retain, internalize, and transfer spelling and vocabulary knowledge for improved results in all areas of literature. A schoolwide Spelling Bee is held for grades 1 – 8. With grades 1 – 2, 3 – 5, and 6 – 8 competing internally. The top speller in each grade, grades 6 – 8, then compete at a city bee held at our site. The top grade level spellers then continue to the state Spelling Bee. A handwriting program (Zaner-Bloser) is used in grades K – 8 for the understanding and application of manuscript and cursive handwriting. Sadler's Vocabulary Workshop is implemented into the curriculum in the middle school grades 6 – 8 Literature class.

Math – The entire school uses the Saxon Math program that allows for the leveling of ability starting at grade 5. This spiraled curriculum helps to reinforce math concepts and skills through repetitive practice. The Saxon Math K – 4 program is a hands-on success-oriented series that emphasizes manipulatives and mental math. The series uses a multisensory approach to teaching and is designed for heterogeneously grouped children. Its use enables all children to develop a

solid foundation in the language and basic concepts of mathematics. At the end of the 4th grade year, the students are given a placement test that assess whether they are performing at a level to skip ahead. This placement test is administered at the end of every academic year. Also, all incoming students at the upper level (grade 4 and higher) are given the test for appropriate placement upon entry. A High School level Algebra 1 class gives 8th grade students an opportunity for advanced placement in high school. The unique structure of Saxon's mathematical instruction promotes the student success through the educational practices of incremental development and continual review.

Science – Pearson science is used by grades K – 8. This is an inquiry based program that gives opportunity to learn through the use of demonstration, experimentation, and projects. Students in grades 6 and 8 complete an Inventor Showcase project that is placed on display at the school's Open House in late January. The grade 7 Life Science class has medical professionals that come into the classroom and share their occupation with the students and how science is used in their profession. The PreK program uses Saxon Early Learning Science.

Social Sciences – The Pearson Learning/Core Knowledge program is used from K – 8 to learn of world and United States history. The 4th grade also studies Nevada history according to state standards. Grades 6 – 8 also uses People, Places and Change (Holt) to further enhance world studies. The grade 7 History class does a report and display on a person of historical significance and display the projects at the school's Open House in late January. Classes also go on various field trips in our community since we live in the state capital of Nevada. The State Museum, Capitol building, Legislative building, and the Nevada State Supreme Court are some of the many resources used to further knowledge reinforced in the classroom. Academics hold a high place in extra-curricular activities at Bethlehem and this is exemplified through our Knowledge Bowl team and the annual Geography Bee. The history classes in grades 6 – 8 also demonstrate this by entering the American Citizen Essay Contest sponsored by the Carson City School Board..

Preschool Program

Bethlehem Lutheran Preschool shares a common purpose with Bethlehem Lutheran School grades K – 8. The program is licensed through the state of Nevada Department of Child and Family Services and undergoes a review biannually. The academic standards are aligned with the Early Childhood academic standards by the state of Nevada.

Ages and Stages along with Saxon Early Learning assessments help guide the staff in providing individualized plans of instruction to help each child reach their full potential. Students are assessed at the end of the year with Gesell Testing to ensure their school readiness and success in the primary grades.

The Pre-Kindergarten program promotes a strong family unit, optimal teacher –child ratio, and social-emotional growth. Through small group and individual activities, a warm and positive environment is accomplished in a child focused setting.

2. Other curriculum areas

Physical Education – The school promotes healthy living by teaching games, exercise, and nutrition. Activities are age appropriate. Extra-curricular activities such as cross-country, volleyball, basketball, and track and field are offered for grades 5 – 8. In the spring, students in grades 3 – 5 are offered a developmental basketball and volleyball skills clinic.

Technology – computers are taught to all age levels beginning in kindergarten. Keyboarding skills, word processing, and other skills are presented to the students to be prepared for the 21st century and beyond! Smartboards are present in all classrooms. A wireless campus requires a “bring your own device” in grades 6 – 8. In grades 6 – 8, students are taught the programs of Powerpoint, ExCel, and Word. In 8th grade, iPhoto, and iMovie are introduced and culminates in an end of the year project that showcases their 8th grade class trip. Yearbook elective (grades 6 – 8) is a web based program through the Jostens yearbook design site. The book is fully designed, edited, and compiled by students through use of our Macbook lab. Photos are taken throughout the academic year to be included in the yearbook.

Music – Music is taught at all levels with two performances and two church services a year for each choir. A Christmas program involving both the choirs and drama class is presented for the public in December. A Spring program entitled “A Night of Music” is performed at the beginning of May. An elective for Worship Band and Handbells is offered for students in grades 6 – 8. Worship band accompanies weekly chapel services and performs at the “Night of Music” concert. Private music lessons are available during the school day for anyone interested. Fifth grade students are taught beginning instrumental music skills through the use of the recorder. A brief study of composers and compositions is included in the fifth grade music program. The fifth grade recorder class is included in the Christmas and Spring Music programs.

Performing Arts - The performing arts are covered through a Speech/Drama elective in grades 6 – 8. “A Night of Drama” is presented in the middle of May to showcase the thespian skills learned throughout the year. Public speaking skills are learned through writing and delivering of persuasive, demonstrative, informative, and applying real life creativity through infomercials and mock gubernatorial campaign speeches.

Art - Art is incorporated in the classroom for grades PreK – 5. An Advanced Art elective is offered for grades 6 – 8 which blends the seven elements of art, the use of different media, and the study of famous artists. The art students provide backdrop sets and props for the drama performances. Through the Nevada Museum of Art, students have the opportunity to enter works of art in the Scholastic Art and Writing competition.

Religion – The One in Christ by Concordia Publishing House is taught from PreK – 8th grade. By teaching the stories of the biblical times, the students can apply them to their daily life. In addition, each grade is responsible for presenting a chapel message often through the use of a skit. Memory work, such as bible verses, books of the bible, and selected parts of Luther’s Small Catechism is required every week in grades K – 8. Memory work is used to increase memory skills and application in their daily life. The last full week of January we celebrate Lutheran Schools Week with daily devotions performed by our drama students, engage in music, and hold a Penny Wars fundraiser to benefit those in need or a charitable organization, such as the Ronald McDonald House of Reno, Nevada, and Make-A-Wish Northeastern California and Northern Nevada. In order to foster Christian values and brotherly love, Bethlehem Lutheran School participates in the local food bank canned food drive, Toys-4-Tots, and chapel offering for mission projects both local and international organizations.

Foreign Language – Grades 6 – 8 are given the opportunity to study a foreign language of their choice through Duolingo. The class is an online elective monitored weekly by a teacher to ensure progress.

3. Instructional Methods and Intervention

Bethlehem Lutheran School is always striving to use best practices and research based strategies to increase student achievement. The teachers attend conferences, do studies to discover the methodologies of best achievement, and implement these practices into their classrooms. The staff attends the annual Lutheran Educators Conference in Palm Springs, California every November. They have engaged in a study of the book “Classroom Instruction that Works” (Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, Stone) to learn and reaffirm the best teaching practices used within the classroom. The Master Teacher pamphlet is handed out biweekly by the administration to further our knowledge of instructional and disciplinary procedures.

Faculty, students, administrators, and parents partner in the curriculum and understand that instruction drives the needs of the students. Bethlehem Lutheran School believes that every child can learn. Many types of teaching methods are used at Bethlehem i.e., cooperative learning groups, differentiated instruction, inquiry based learning, technology based support, whole group and small group activities, project based learning, and more. Instruction is based on what is most conducive to how the student learns best. The achievement of the students is reaffirmed by the methodologies that have been implemented.

In the 1st and 4th grades, the teachers use the Scholastic Reading Counts program to further the students reading skills. This computer based program has the students take a quiz on a book or anthology that they have recently read. The program allows the teacher to track the comprehension and provide the parents with printed reports at the end of each grading term.

Bethlehem provides different forms of intervention for the students to achieve academic success. Speech therapy services are available for qualifying students. Speech therapists and

psychological evaluations and services are provided through the Carson City School District. Tutoring is available for those who may be experiencing difficulties in a subject area. Teachers are available for remedial or tutorial purpose after the school day ends.

In grades 6 – 8, the students pass between rooms for instruction in the areas of literature, social science, and science. This is for the students to begin acclimation to a high school schedule of departmentalization and to highlight a teacher's academic focus. Parents and students have expressed a positive attitude toward this philosophy of methodology.