



The mission of Gethsemane Lutheran School is to partner with families to provide a Christian education where academic excellence and faith formation walk hand in hand. We celebrate all students as children of God, nurturing their development in mind, body and spirit to equip them as servants of Christ in the world.

## **Annual Report— June 2016**

### **Significant Changes**

#### **1. Overview**

Gethsemane School has seemed to find a new sense of direction throughout our accreditation process. The 2015-2016 school year was a year of self-study. We learned a lot about our strengths and challenges and have made many improvements. The staff has worked many hours above the normal teaching day. The accreditation process will continue to point us toward constant improvement.

A new parent emailed me with the following, “my daughter has never been so excited to go to school, as she has been while going to Gethsemane. She actually wants to go to school now. She loves her teachers and all the students. Everyone has been so nice to her and I greatly appreciate your welcoming nature.” We are continuing to build a calming sense of family and community that is unlike any other. The administration takes pride in connecting with all families and is available to discuss any issue. The assistant principal and principal made it a priority in the fall of the year to greet students and parents outside as they arrived at school. This year we had teachers join in our morning greeting activity.

This year we added our mission statement to our entry way and frames to display pictures that explain who we are as a school. We also added a copy of our mission statement to every classroom and the top of each agenda for meetings. We are making a conscious effort to have our mission statement drive who we are becoming.

During the 2015-2016 school year k-8 enrollment was at 119 students which held steady from 120 students the previous year. Gethsemane’s Early Learning Center enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year was just over 90 students which is up about 10 students from the previous year. Both of these numbers were a blessing from our Lord.

The staff continued with the accreditation process through MNSAA (Minnesota Nonpublic Accreditation Association.) We are continuing to work our way through our self-study with the onsite visitation team schedule to come in April of 2017.

Gethsemane was not able to add another teaching position again this pass year, so the middle school had to do some creative planning. Due to our small 8<sup>th</sup> grade class, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes were combined. Our middle school math teacher, Mr. Waedekin,

was able to combine math by continuing the use of i-Pads for 8<sup>th</sup> grade algebra and geometry. He also was able to combine history and added a personal finance class. The other teachers were able to change or modify the curriculum to meet the standards for the grades.

The school year went very smoothly, with many parents and students involved in many community events. One highlight was our PTO and its work with our school's fourth annual Gala event. We had almost 200 people in attendance and the event raised over \$20,000. In the fall of 2015 we had another great event in our non-public school marathon. We raised \$15,000 and had 90+ students participate.

Our student council was quite involved this year. Students planned nine community lunches as well as several community events. Our student council continued to fund a program for recycling milk cartons from our lunch program. They also worked on creating videos for advertising. Our student council also headed up a fundraiser for God's Global Barnyard through the ELCA. Students took their roles very seriously and met often to be an effective voice of the middle school.

The school was advised by an excellent school board, which shared many ideas and had great enthusiasm. The board adopted new policy due to the accreditation process. The school board had two members step down from their role as they were hired by the church. On a monthly basis the school board has started to look at strategies to grow the school.

Our annual Gethsemane School Sunday program was a success. Over 650 people attended the musical "The Life of the Party," during our two worship services. This was held on Sunday, April 24, 2016.

Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade class had another successful trip to Chicago this past June. In June we celebrated the graduation of these nine students from Gethsemane. As we think about our graduates, we look back on all the blessings our God has bestowed upon our school. We thank Him for making Gethsemane a place where each child is loved and has the opportunity to learn about Him daily.

## II. Staff

At the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year we had three long-time teachers retire and our gym teacher decided to take another position. This made the summer full of postings, resumes and interviews. We hired Kirsten Head, a veteran teacher, as our new kindergarten teacher. Angie Meisner transitioned from our preschool to our second grade classroom. We hired a new graduate, Ali Sandberg for our fourth grade and Jim Harnett for our physical education classes. Jim Harnett also teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and computers for grades k-5.

We made a very conscious effort to better connect our preschool and kindergarten students. They had joint station days once a month and had many parents volunteer to help with this process. This is one factor that has led to a larger kindergarten class for the upcoming school year. We are very excited about this connection.

The preschool administrator, Chris Jorissen, did an excellent job with the preschool. As mentioned earlier, preschool enrollment was up. Eighteen of the preschoolers are enrolled for the 2016-2017 school year. The school passed its MN State License renewal in the fall. The preschool staff did a wonderful job of welcoming our new kindergarten teacher and working with her. Our preschool had a fundraiser to raise money for new playground equipment and took in over \$4000. Chris continued to work with district 622 providing services to children with special needs. The district purchases ten of our spots for these children. The preschool teachers are always planning and implementing new themes and curriculum. They had a very successful VIP day, Christmas program, Noah's Zoo and graduation programs. All programs were written and planned by the preschool teachers! Our families thoroughly enjoy the preschool program and all they have to offer.

Midyear our administrative assistant transitioned into a new role the church which left us with a vacancy. We hired one employee who did not work out. The last month of the school year we had two employees do a job share. We have decided to hire one of those people for the 2016-2017 school year.

There were classroom visits this year by the assistant principal and principal. The classroom observations were completed by the assistant principal and evaluations were completed by the principal. The staff met Mondays for staff meetings. Teachers felt a sense of support and eagerness with the new administration.

2015-2016 school staff:

Kindergarten – Kirsten Head

First Grade – Jan Hansen

Second Grade – Angie Meisner

Third Grade – Kari Popko

Fourth Grade – Ali Sandberg

Middle School Science and Minnesota History – Cheri Stockinger

Middle School Language Arts and Elementary Fine Arts – Miriam Shuros

Middle School Math, American History and Assistant Principal – Bob Waedekin

K-8 Physical Education, k-5 Computers, 5 Math – Jim Harnett

K-8 Choir and Music Theory – Megan Crosby

Band – Bruce Felt

Preschool Director – Chris Jorissen

Preschool Teacher – Becky Manteuffel

Preschool Teacher – Michelle Bassett

Preschool Teacher – Sherrie Babou

Preschool Teacher – Tammy Root

Preschool Teacher – Susan Boll

Preschool Teacher – Danielle Krahn

Preschool Teacher and Kitchen Staff Patti Hagerman

Kitchen Supervisor – Jen Linck

Kitchen Staff - Merry Wittman

Kitchen Staff – Jennifer Nunn

Duane Schmitz - Technology Director

Head Custodian - Randy Travers

Administrative Assistant – Stacey Hegrenes and job share with Tina Marchio and Molly Templin  
Principal – Scott Revoir  
Interim Senior Pastor – Pastor David Wrightsman

### III. Curriculum

During the 2015-2016 school year we had a trial year with Social Studies Weekly for our k-5 social studies curriculum. We decided to switch to another company, Pearson for the 2016-2017 school year.

We purchased a new social development and anti-bullying curriculum through Second Step. Teachers incorporated this into their school day with their students.

Science curriculum will be evaluated during the summer of 2016 and a new curriculum will be put into place for the 2016-2017 school year.

Before and after school Spanish (Futura) and Art (Young Rembrandts) classes were available again for students.

We created “Students will be able to…” whiteboards for teachers to start focusing on teaching to the standards. These were used in the classrooms to display the education standards that are currently being taught. This has been a great step for our teachers to focus more intently on meeting the standards.

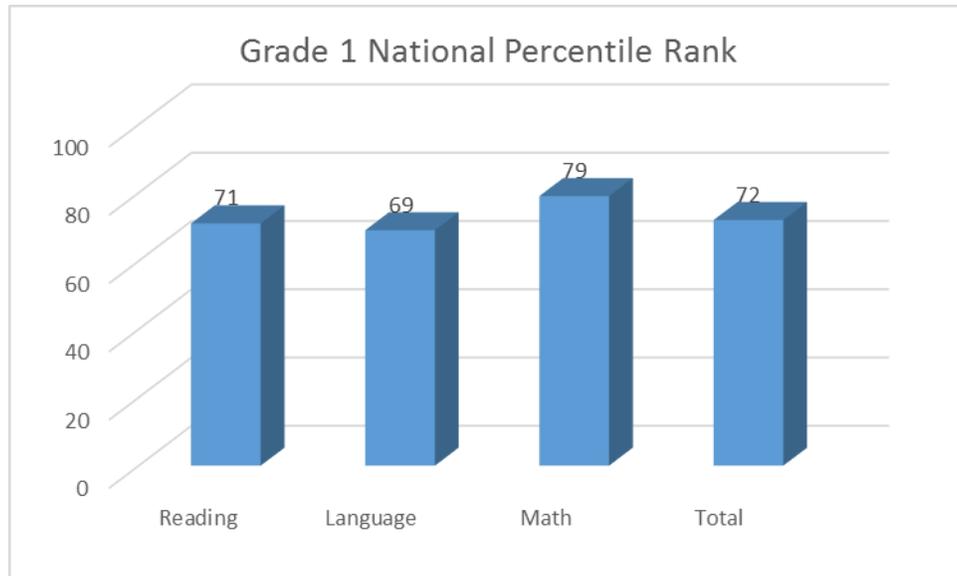
### IV. IOWA test of basic skills results

The scores for the Iowa Tests for the 2015-16 school year are listed below. We have graphed the overall results. The graphs show the national school percentile and the average grade equivalent for each subject area. The percentile compares each grade to all other schools of the same grade in the United States. For example, 77 percentile in English Language Arts (ELA), tells us that our second grade scored better than 77 percent of second graders who took the test. With these scores you can compare achievement in our school to that of other schools. The composite gives an overall comparison. The 3.6 grade equivalent in English Language Arts (ELA) is an average grade equivalent for the whole second grade. This means that our second grade class on the average is working at a third grade, sixth month level in English Language Arts.

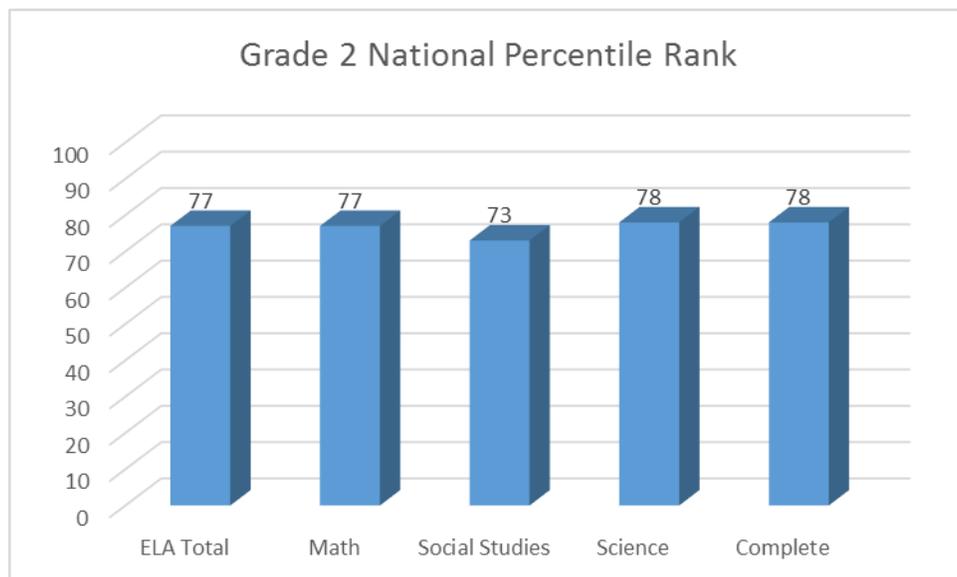
#### Common Misunderstandings

Unfortunately, there are many misunderstandings about test scores. Misinterpretation leads to misunderstandings. While the test score indicates how well the pupil performed in the testing situation, it does not reveal why he/she performed as he/she did. There are a number of factors or variables which affect testing. Standardized tests often reflect vocabulary or content associated to the geographical area of the publisher. Standardized tests may test material not covered in the curriculum until after testing or into the next grade level. Test anxiety sets in with some children, finding it next to impossible to perform in a positive manner within a set timeframe. Some students fill in any answer. Tired or ill students may also display less effort. Students miss the test within the common test setting due to illness, appointments or vacations even with school reminders that testing is coming up, and the student then makes up the test. The effectiveness of an

educational program should not be judged solely on the basis of standardized test results. Measured performance is affected by the cumulative effect of instruction as well as by a number of out-of-school factors. Among such factors are pupil attendance and stability, mobility, motivation for learning, family socioeconomic level, parental interest in academic achievement, and level of verbal communication in the home.

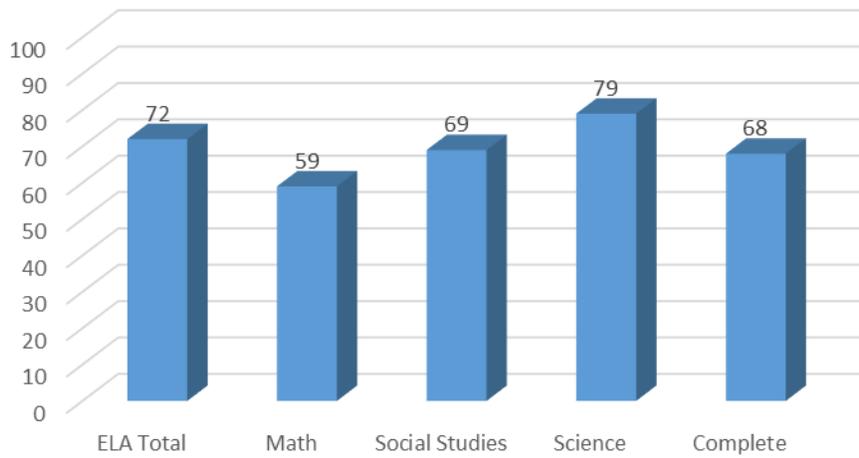


Grade 1 Grade Equivalent	2.3	2.1	2.3	2.3
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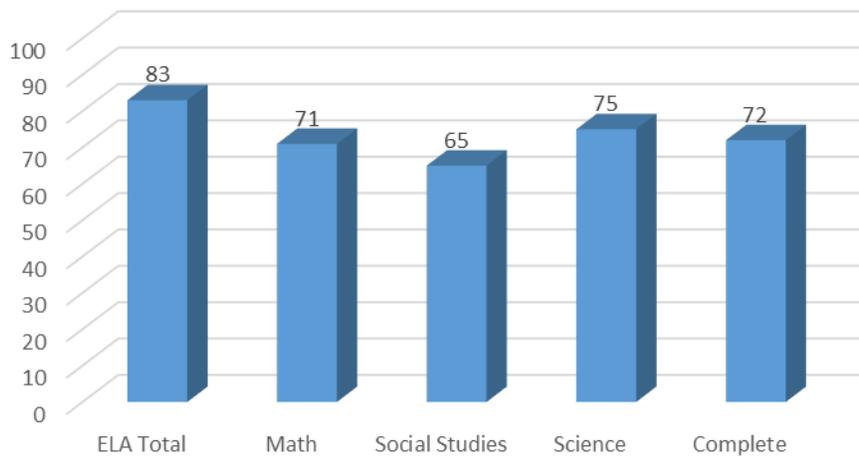
Grade 2 Grade Equivalent	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.6
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### Grade 3 National Percentile Rank



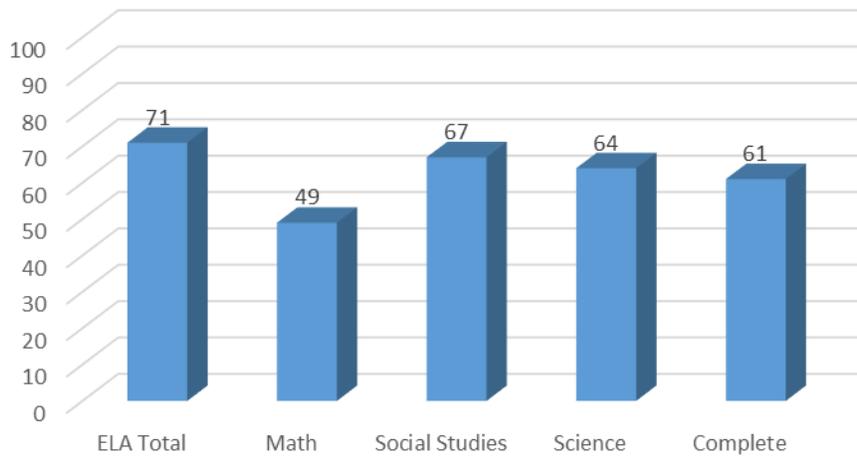
Grade 3 Grade Equivalent	4.7	4.1	4.6	5.2	4.5
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### Grade 4 National Percentile Rank



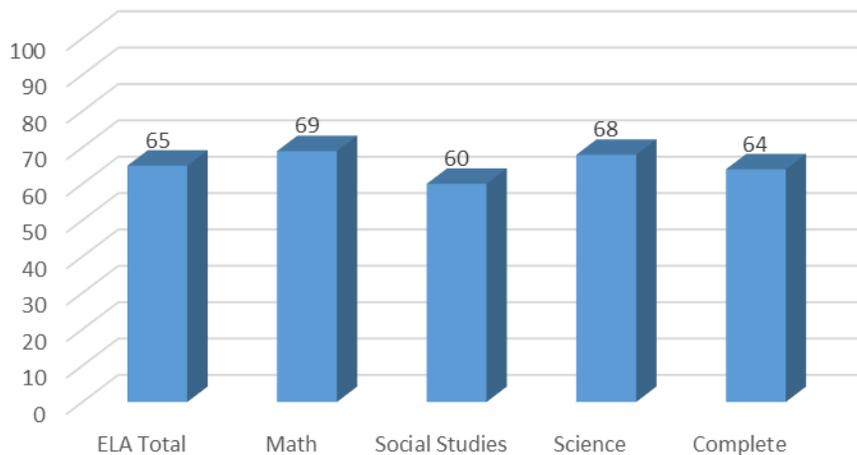
Grade 4 Grade Equivalent	6.7	5.7	5.6	6.4	6.2
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### Grade 5 National Percentile Rank

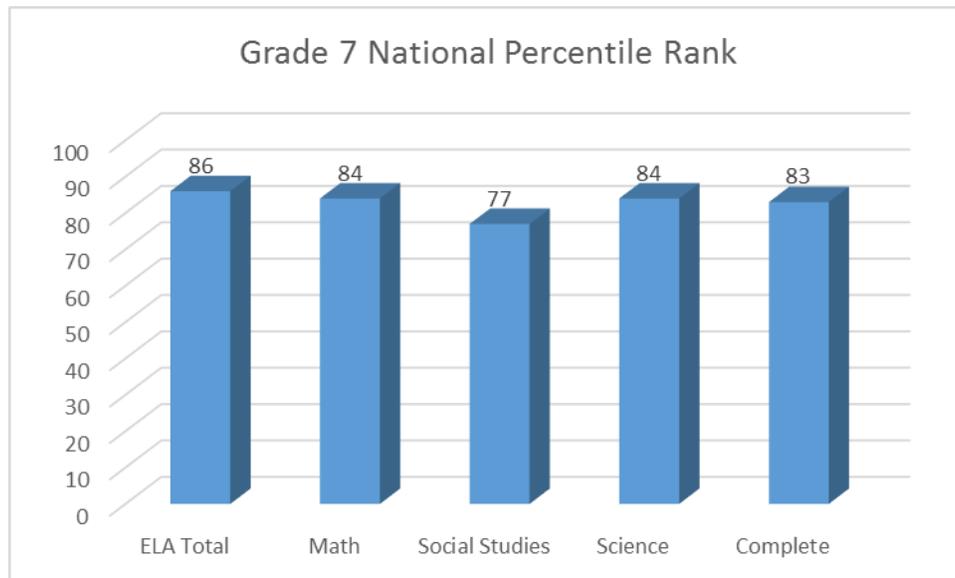


Grade 5 Grade Equivalent	7.1	5.8	7.1	6.9	6.6
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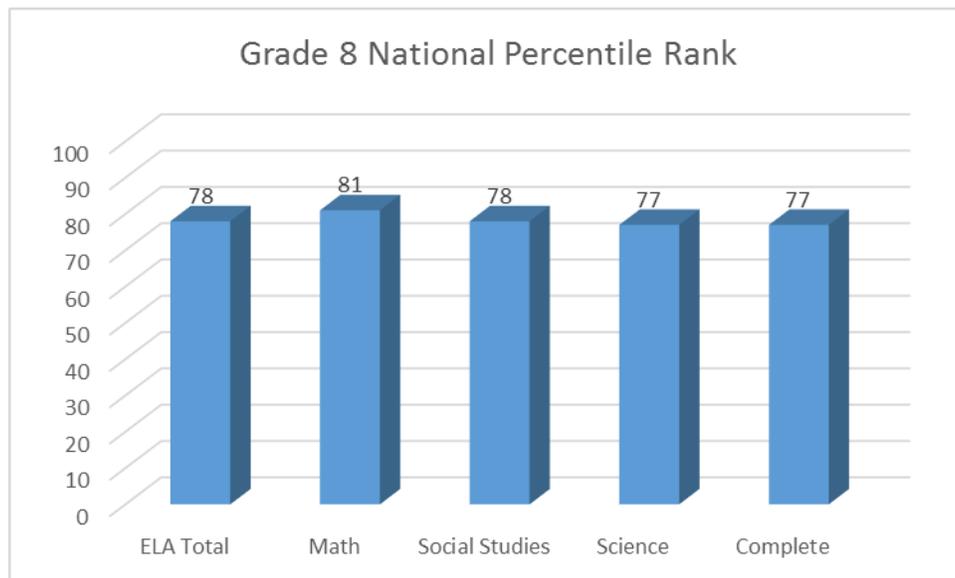
### Grade 6 National Percentile Rank



Grade 6 Grade Equivalent	7.8	8.2	7.7	8.5	8.0
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Grade 7 Grade Equivalent	12.1	11.7	11.6	13+	12.3
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Grade 8 Grade Equivalent	12.6	13+	13+	13+	13+
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## V. Governance

Our school board worked diligently with the administration. Both administrators attended the meetings. Mr. Revoir met with the OMT (Operating Management Team), on a monthly basis as well.

School board voted to have a slight increase in tuition for the 2016-2017 school year. Before January 1<sup>st</sup> the school board will make decisions about tuition for the following year.

We started with our new uniform policy during the 2015-2016 school year. The transition to our new uniforms went very smoothly

Our school board and PTO hosted our second annual spaghetti dinner raised just over \$2000. We used the funds that were raised to purchase items for classroom improvements. New whiteboards, kidney tables, I-pad covers, math manipulatives, library books, kitchen set for preschool, toys for younger grades and much much more.

The board had a small turnover of people whose terms were up. We currently have eight parents that attend the meetings. This group is a mix of parents who are members of our church as well of members of other churches. We also have two teacher representatives, our Senior Pastor, principal and assistant principal who complete the board at large. The Board is confident the school will continue its growth in enrollment. It is our hope that God will bless Gethsemane as we continue to challenge and celebrate students academically, spiritually and physically.

Our Parent Teacher Organization is outstanding as well. They planned many exciting events such as our Non-public school marathon, skate night, and our 4<sup>th</sup> annual gala. Our PTO is very instrumental in school building improvements, teacher appreciation, social gatherings and supplemental support of all programs in the building. They again tithed from the PTO budget to the overall budget of the faith community. Bob Waedekin (our assistant principal) and Jan Hansen (our first grade teacher) serve as our representatives on this committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Revoir  
Principal