

NLSA National Accreditation Commission (NAC) Meeting [via ZOOM]

9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Wednesday, 7-29-20

People Present: Rebecca Schmidt, Keith Wilharm, Joel Wahlers, Matt Bergholt, Matthew Schleicher, Kris Freeman, Dennis Gehrke, Katherine McGrew, Kristie Flohra, Sally Hiller, Muriel Stark, Clet Pfeiffer, Mark Grewe, Stu Tietz, Jim Scriven, Trip Rodgers, Kevin Gundell, Vicky Piller, Alan Freeman, Allen Piepenbrink, Bill Cochran, Caren Vogt, Chris Cody, Crissy Peterson, Dave Glienke, DJ Schult, Jackquelyn Veith, Jane Limback, Jeffrey Fick, Jon Peterson, Kevin Brockberg, Kevin Creutz, Kyle Chuhuran, Sean Martens, Merrilee Sump, Paul Cain, Rachel Klitzing, Robert Mayhew, Scott Schumacher, Tami Ulland, Tom Kolb, Travis Grulke, Warren Paul, Mark Brink, Jan Doellinger, Lenora Patterson

1. Introductory Items

- Keith Wilharm (NLSA Chair) welcomed everyone
- Introductions by NLSA Executive Committee members and National staff
- Introductions of attendees (by District)
- 30 of the 35 Districts had representation at this NAC meeting

2. Bill Cochran led the opening devotion (1 Peter 5: The Role of Spiritual Leaders)

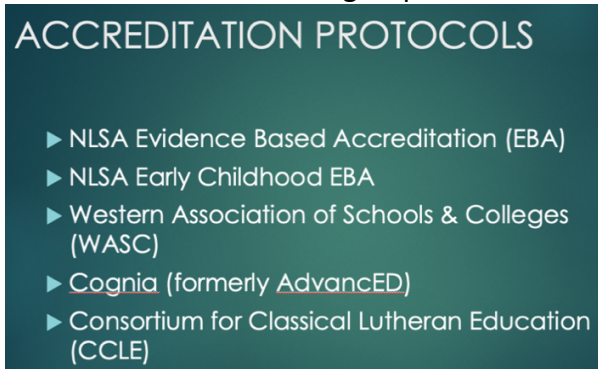
- Be a minister to the people
- Be a mentor to the people
- Be a manager of the people
- Be a model for the people
- Leaders humble themselves to be exalted

3. Meeting Procedures and Technical Considerations (Matt Bergholt)

- Discussed muting, the chat feature, the hand raise functionality, and screen sharing within ZOOM
- Polling will be used for voting (Matt pushed forward a test poll to acclimate folks to this function)

4. Joel Wahlers (NLSA Chair-Elect) brought forth the recommendations and motions from the Membership Committee (no seconds required as these came from a committee)

- Joel reminded the group about the accreditation protocols that we work with:



ACCREDITATION PROTOCOLS

- ▶ NLSA Evidence Based Accreditation (EBA)
- ▶ NLSA Early Childhood EBA
- ▶ Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC)
- ▶ Cognia (formerly AdvancED)
- ▶ Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education (CCLE)

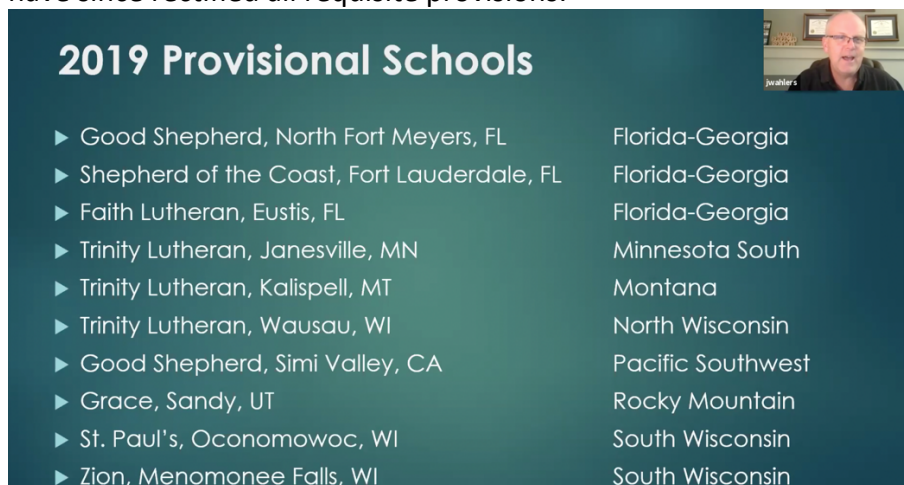
- Joel identified and thanked the people that served on the Membership Committee this year:



Membership Committee Members

- ▶ Bonnie Stottlemeyer (EC)
- ▶ Lee Wagner (EC)
- ▶ Kristie Flohra (EC)
- ▶ Dennis Gehrke (EBA)
- ▶ Kevin Gundell (EBA)
- ▶ Stu Tietz (EBA)
- ▶ Trip Rodgers (EBA)
- ▶ Jim Scriven (EBA)
- ▶ Mark Grewe (EBA)
- ▶ Katherine McGrew (EBA)
- ▶ Muriel Stark (EBA)
- ▶ Clet Pfeiffer (EBA, CCLE)
- ▶ Sally Hiller (Cognia)

- Joel identified the schools that were awarded provisional status at NAC 2019 and have since rectified all requisite provisions:



2019 Provisional Schools

▶ Good Shepherd, North Fort Meyers, FL	Florida-Georgia
▶ Shepherd of the Coast, Fort Lauderdale, FL	Florida-Georgia
▶ Faith Lutheran, Eustis, FL	Florida-Georgia
▶ Trinity Lutheran, Janesville, MN	Minnesota South
▶ Trinity Lutheran, Kalispell, MT	Montana
▶ Trinity Lutheran, Wausau, WI	North Wisconsin
▶ Good Shepherd, Simi Valley, CA	Pacific Southwest
▶ Grace, Sandy, UT	Rocky Mountain
▶ St. Paul's, Oconomowoc, WI	South Wisconsin
▶ Zion, Menomonee Falls, WI	South Wisconsin

- Joel voiced the recommendation from the Membership Committee that NAC approve moving these ten schools to Accreditation in Good Standing for the remainder of their accreditation term

- 30 votes in favor of the recommendation (0 opposed) CARRIED
- Joel made some reminders about provisional accreditation criteria and he also defined major deficiency:

PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION STATUS

- ▶ Provisional Accreditation Criteria
- ▶ Failure to comply with any single **Required Indicator of Success**
- ▶ Failure to provide any single piece of **Required Evidence**
- ▶ Any General Indicator rating of "1"
- ▶ A **Major Deficiency**

MAJOR DEFICIENCY


Any condition that is based on an NLSA standard which has a severe negative effect on the quality of education, the ministry of the school, and/or endangers the health or safety of the school population. The deficiency must be remedied by the school within the time parameters (no longer than 2 years) prescribed by the visiting team and approved by the NAC.

- There were 38 candidate schools for some level of accreditation this year (35 of them were recommended for Accreditation in Good Standing, and 3 recommended for provisional status)
- Joel briefly discussed the first school being recommended for provisional status:

2020 PROVISIONAL STATUS RECOMMENDATIONS

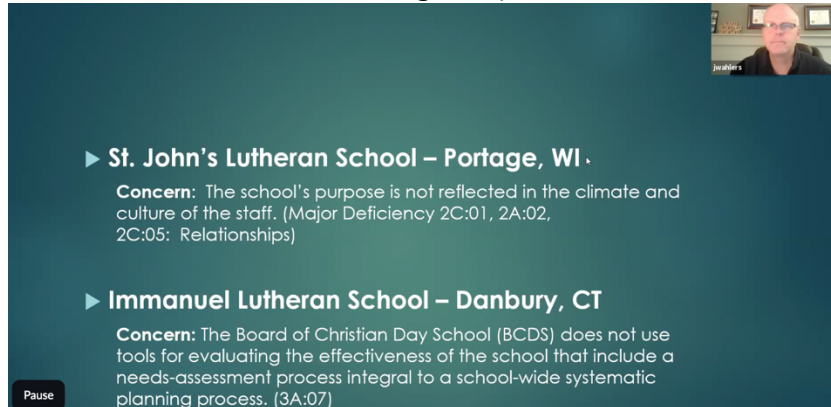
▶ **St. John's Lutheran School – Winston-Salem, NC**

Concern: In the various areas of Standard 3: Leadership, the Validation Team found a significant lack of documentation and a considerable discrepancy between how the school viewed itself and what the evidence indicates. These specifically include the lack of a Governing Policy Manual, no orientation process for new School Board members, no long-range plan for school improvement, and no procedure for conducting an annual internal audit. (Major Deficiency 3A:04, 3A:06, 3A:07, 3A:08: Leadership).



- Following no discussion, the vote was taken, and there were 30 votes in favor of the recommendation (0 opposed) CARRIED

- Joel identified the next school being recommended for provisional status (St. John's Lutheran School in Portage, WI):



- Following no discussion, the vote was taken, and there were 30 votes in favor of the recommendation (0 opposed) CARRIED
- Joel identified the final school being recommended for accreditation with provisional status: Immanuel Lutheran School in Danbury, CT
- Following no discussion, the vote was taken, and there were 29 votes in favor of the recommendation (0 opposed) CARRIED
- Joel brought forth the Membership Committee's recommendation to approve the remaining 35 schools on the Candidate List for NLSA Accreditation in Good Standing
- Following no discussion, the vote was taken, and there were 28 votes in favor of the recommendation (0 opposed) CARRIED
- We sang the Doxology
- Matt B. stated that the listing of the schools that were just awarded accreditation would appear on the NLSA's Facebook and Twitter accounts that evening with a reading of the names as well

5. NLSA Business

- **Approval of the NAC 2019 meeting minutes (these were in two parts)**
 - Crissy Peterson was in attendance both days at NAC 2019 but was left off of the minutes
 - Page 4 of part 1, Trinity, Janesville, WI was listed as one of the nine schools being recommended for provisional status, but this school is actually Trinity in Janesville, MN
 - Just below that, there is another state correction: Trinity, Wausau is in Wisconsin (not Florida)
- A vote was taken to accept both parts 1 and 2 of the NAC 2019 meeting minutes (with the three modifications outlined immediately above); There were 29 votes in favor of accepting these modified minutes (0 opposed); CARRIED
- **Questions about the Director's Report (it was also in a video format);** No questions raised

- **Executive Committee Report;** No questions raised

- **NLSA Annual Fee “Freeze” Proposal**



**NLSA Annual Fee “Freeze” Proposal
NAC 2020 Recommendation**

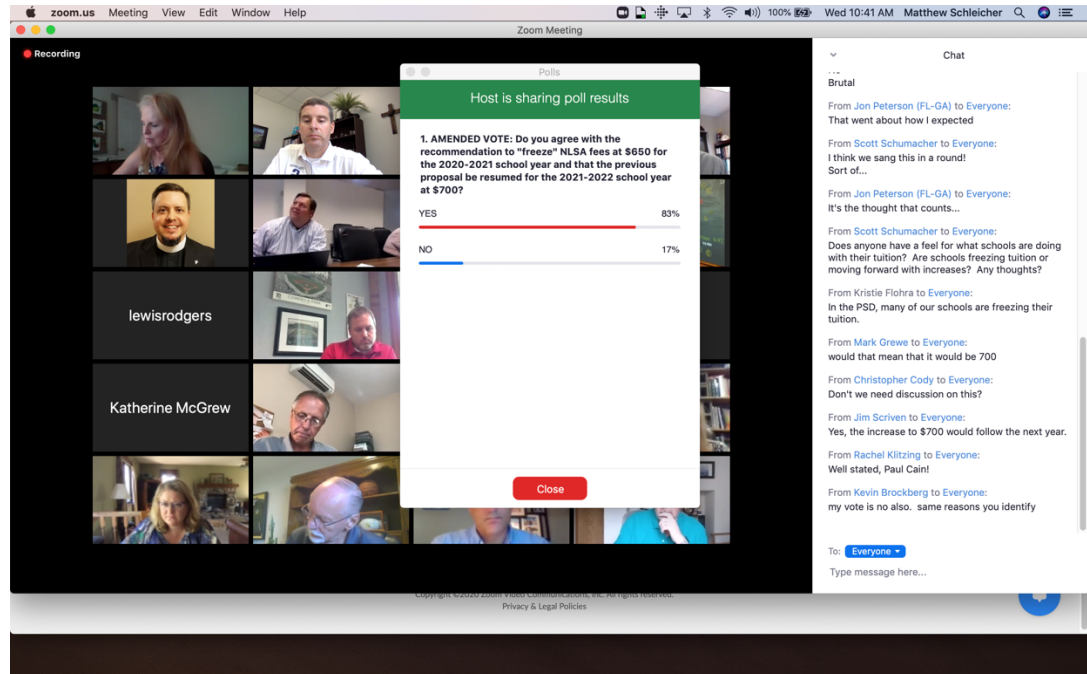
The national office of the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) program is recommending an adjustment to the annual fee increase proposal adopted by the 2019 National Accreditation Commission (NAC). The previously adopted proposal included an annual \$50 increase to fees on the following schedule:

2019-2020: \$650
2020-2021: \$700
2021-2022: \$750

However, considering the current financial challenges facing Lutheran schools, and after a careful review of the current NLSA budget projections, the national office and the NLSA Executive Committee are proposing a temporary “freeze” in the previously adopted proposal. Thus, the NLSA annual fee would stay at \$650 for the 2020-2021 school year and the previous proposal would be reevaluated again for consideration at the 2021 NAC meeting.

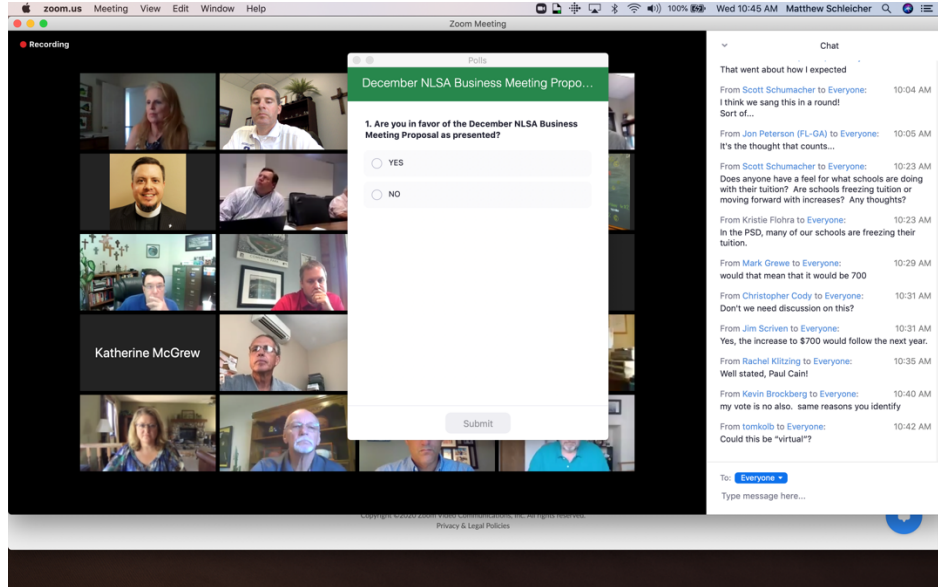
- Chris Cody expressed concern with deviating from the previously adopted fee increase timetable
- Matt B. shared that the freeze at \$650 was factored into the NLSA budget numbers at their most recent time of budgeting due to the Associate Director of Schools not being in place yet, Armature costs numbers coming in lower than originally projected, and cost savings as a result of not hosting an in-person NAC 2020
- Becky S. added that COVID-anxiety is real in many Lutheran schools, and the potential freeze at \$650 would likely be a welcomed change
- Joel W. cautioned us to continue looking at the optics of this and to be mindful about what we are messaging to our schools
- Kevin B. stated that incremental increases (\$50 each year) would be easier for schools to handle than skipping a year and then raising the fee \$100 to make up for the skipped year
- Jim S. was concerned with the lack of definitive direction on picking the fee increase schedule back up following a freeze (only that it will be reevaluated again for consideration at the 2021 NAC meeting)
- Dennis G. asked for clarification on the Synod budget and fiscal year breakdowns

- Matt B. clarified the fiscal year budget runs July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Therefore, the cost savings by having a virtual NAC 2020 is in the fiscal year of the 2020-2021 school year.
- Chris C. reiterated that he feels we are providing enough value to warrant the \$50 increase and therefore we should stay on track with our fee increase now
- Trip R. is a proponent of laying out any fee increase schedules several years at a time so that our schools know what is coming and don't have to wait until the end of July/first of August to know what NAC decided the cost would be for that year
- Jon P. made an amendment to the final sentence of the motion (Jim S. second): "Thus, the NLSA annual fee would "freeze" at \$650 for the 2020-2021 school year and the previous proposal be resumed for the 2021-2022 school year."
[No additional discussion on this amendment]
- Hand raise vote (via ZOOM's hand raise function) for the amendment immediately above; Matt B. stated that this amended motion received a majority of the votes and therefore CARRIED
- The amended motion went before the group for a vote, but Chris C. reminded the group that we skipped the discussion step regarding the amended motion. The poll/vote that Matt B. sent out prior to this skipped discussion was rendered null and void (although no announcement was made about the results of that poll, only that 27 Districts had responded)
- Mark G. clarified that the fees will be \$650 for the 2020-2021 school year, \$700 for the 2021-2022 school year, and \$750 for the 2022-2023 school year
- Paul C. shared that even the current rate is a burden to his school; Paul encouraged NLSA to continue talking about alternative fee structure(s) to better accommodate small Lutheran schools
- Alan F. supported the examination of a different fee structure, possibly one that is based on enrollment in the school
- Travis G. stated that over \$400,000 comes in annually based on our current fee structure, so he is pushing for this information to be elevated within the Synod ranks to stress the need for the Associate Director of Schools position to be filled ASAP (and therefore take overseeing accreditation off of Becky's already full professional plate)
- Keith W. stated that he was tasked by the Executive Committee to keep things moving within this virtual one-day meeting, so he encouraged people to continue to keep comments and questions brief
- Paul C. asked that we budget time in a future meeting to fully discuss funding model(s) that will serve all schools as well as possible
- There was no additional discussion; Keith W. called for the vote and Matt B. restated the amended motion and then pushed the vote/poll out with the following result:



There were 30 responses with 25 in favor and 5 opposed; Amended motion CARRIED

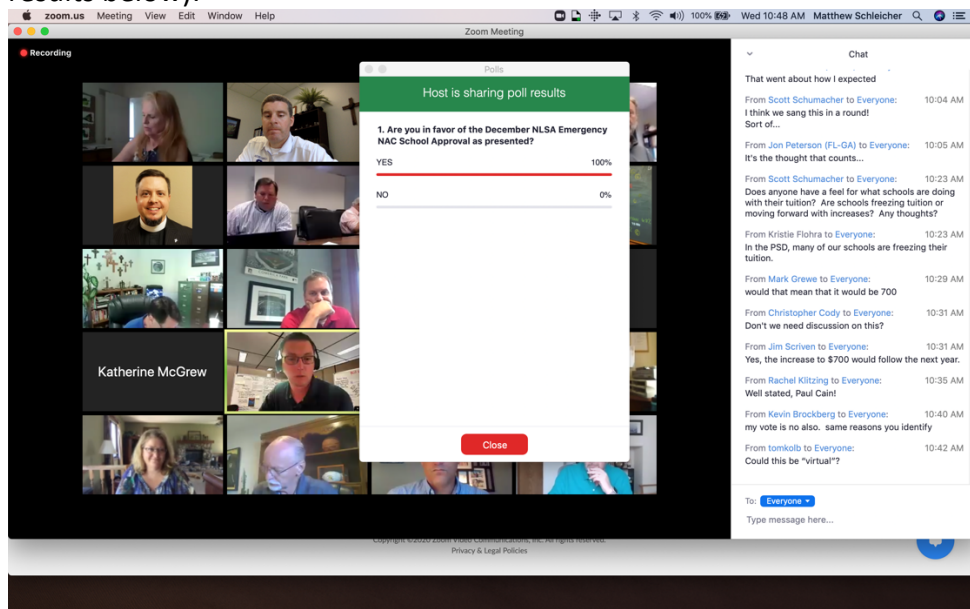
- **December NLSA Business Meeting Proposal**
- Dennis asked if this December, 2020 meeting would be conducted virtually, and Keith confirmed that we intend this to be a virtual meeting
- Scott S. is a proponent of reconvening mid-year, especially this year with all that is going on in our schools as a result of COVID-19
- Jon P. thought that this meeting was just for the Executive Committee members, but Keith clarified that this is for the entire NAC
- Jim S. asked if we need to formally amend this recommendation/motion to state that it will be a virtual meeting; Keith W. stated that the language is vague enough to certainly accommodate the intent for a virtual meeting without actually having to amend the language presented
- No additional discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see below):



There were 30 responses with 30 in favor and 0 opposed; CARRIED

December NLSA Emergency NAC School Approval

- Chris C. asked if we were limiting the number of schools to just those presented on the informational document released to NAC on Monday, 7-27-20; Keith W. stated that we were not limiting this emergency action to just those schools listed, only that these schools were the only ones the National Office was aware of at the time of NAC 2020
- Chris C. and DJ S. stated that it is looks like the Wisconsin schools on the informational document will no longer need to be included in the December, 2020 consideration
- No additional discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see results below):



There were 29 responses with 29 in favor and 0 opposed; CARRIED

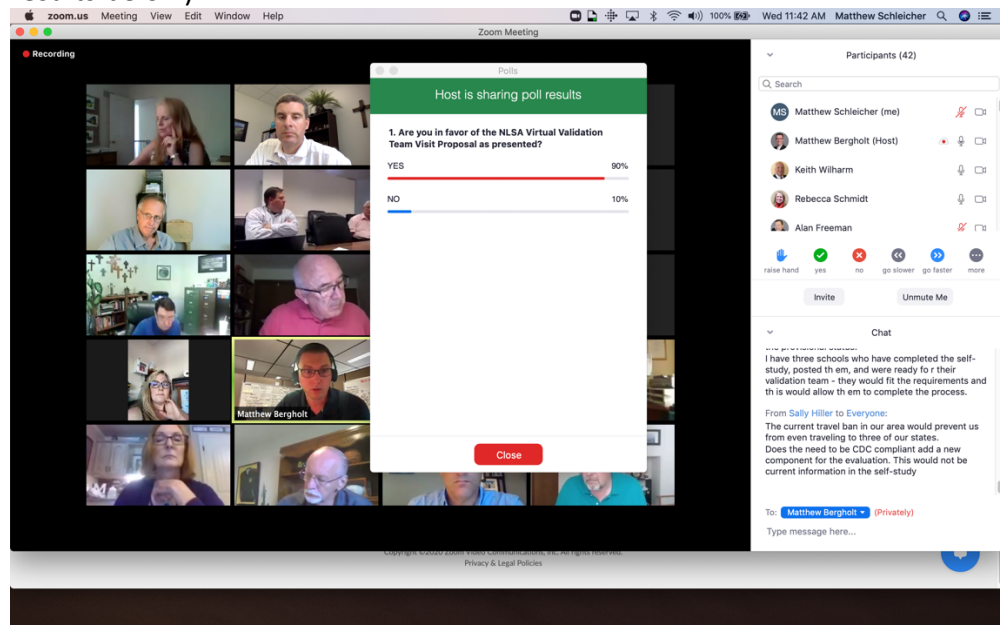
[Short Break]

- **Pandemic Extension “2.0” Proposal**

- Travis G. asked for clarification about possible cycle length changes as a result of the various pandemic extensions which may cause the bundling of MANY validations visits needed in 2026 with very few needed in 2025; Becky S. responded that nothing has decided to date about adjusting cycle length to either 4 or 6 years to help address the concern that Travis raised
- Scott S. asked if there was anything in any of the NLSA protocols that would prevent a school from completing their cycle a year earlier in order to help keep the number of schools in a District needing validation visits more consistent from year to year; Becky S. stated that she was not aware of anything preventing a school from having a validation visit a year earlier than originally anticipated
- Becky summarized that there were really two items on the discussion table right now: (1) offering a Pandemic Extension “2.0” for those schools that won’t be ready to host a validation visit in the 2020-2021 school year; and (2) considering the various impacts of adjusting the current accreditation cycle; Becky focused the group back on the former as that is what this proposal is designed to help with
- Trip R. shared that there is nothing that would prevent a school from completing a validation visit every year if they wanted to
- Chris C. asked if schools were to complete their validation visit this Fall (2020), could they be eligible to be awarded accreditation in December, 2020 by NAC? Becky answered that timing is what will dictate the number of schools that NAC will be able to consider in December. Each such school would need to have their District review the validation visit documentation AND each school would also need to be reviewed by Membership Committee folks all in advance of the December, 2020 meeting
- Mark G. stated that we may be able to avoid the abundance of schools needing validations visits due to pandemic extensions by utilizing virtual validation visits (to be discussed later in the meeting)
- Alan F. stated that he would like the Pandemic Extension “2.0” to work through the District level prior to it arriving at the National level (as is the case with traditional extension requests)
- Matt B. and Alan F. clarified that the order of extension paperwork receipt revolves around language in numbers 4 and 5 in the proposal document
- Kevin C. suggested that this “2.0” extension have an associated fee with it, lest schools start equating no fees with NLSA extensions (traditional or otherwise)
- Jon P. doesn’t see how we can charge for “2.0” as he already has three schools in his District that do not feel they will be able to complete their self-study work this Fall (and they were extended with the initial Pandemic Extension)

- Trip R. suggested that maybe there is a way that the applications for these “2.0” extensions would be in the District offices, thereby facilitating the first conversation for these schools with their District folks at the time of requesting the paperwork
- Jane L. asked why November 1st was the date selected for when applications for “2.0” can be filed, rather than earlier in the Fall; Becky stated that we want to see some progress from the school as they make a good faith effort to complete the necessary steps to be ready for a validation visit—a date later in the Fall (like 11/1) helps ensure that schools are working toward improvement and also staying on track with intentional accreditation prep work
- Dave G. challenged NAC to think about being really grace-filled for this school year, and “2.0” helps to give schools more time to deal with the uncertainties of the here and now without having to worry about their additional accreditation expectations/commitments
- Scott S. stated that it may be difficult to put together Fall visit validation teams given the current COVID situation; Scott also appreciated how simple the application process was for the original pandemic extensions (online); Scott asked about how much a school would need to update their self-study if they apply for a second pandemic extension; Keith W. stated that the school would simply need to update things as best as possible if there is a major change, and not start over from scratch
- Jim S. is in favor of “2.0” applications going through the District prior to Nationals, and he is opposed to charging a fee for pandemic extensions
- Joel W. is in support of the application needing to go through the District leaders first before going on to Nationals
- Dennis G. made a motion to amend the current language in numbers 4 & 5 of the proposal to require all Pandemic Extension “2.0” applications to go through the District Offices prior to being sent to the National Office (Trip R. second)
- Kevin B. made the motion to table this discussion/work so that the NLSA Executive Committee can rework numbers 4 & 5 over the lunch break and come back after lunch with an amended proposal
- Matt B. called for a hand raise vote (through ZOOM’s hand raise functionality) regarding the motion to table until after lunch; Matt B. stated that there was a majority, so the motion to table CARRIED
- **Virtual Validation Team Visit Proposal**
- Trip R. asked if there will be a certain length of time that this can happen? Becky stated that we have looked at five (5) other accrediting agencies to see how they are handling virtual visits, and we are just taking the preparatory steps here at NAC in the event that a virtual validation visit is deemed to be the most appropriate for a school

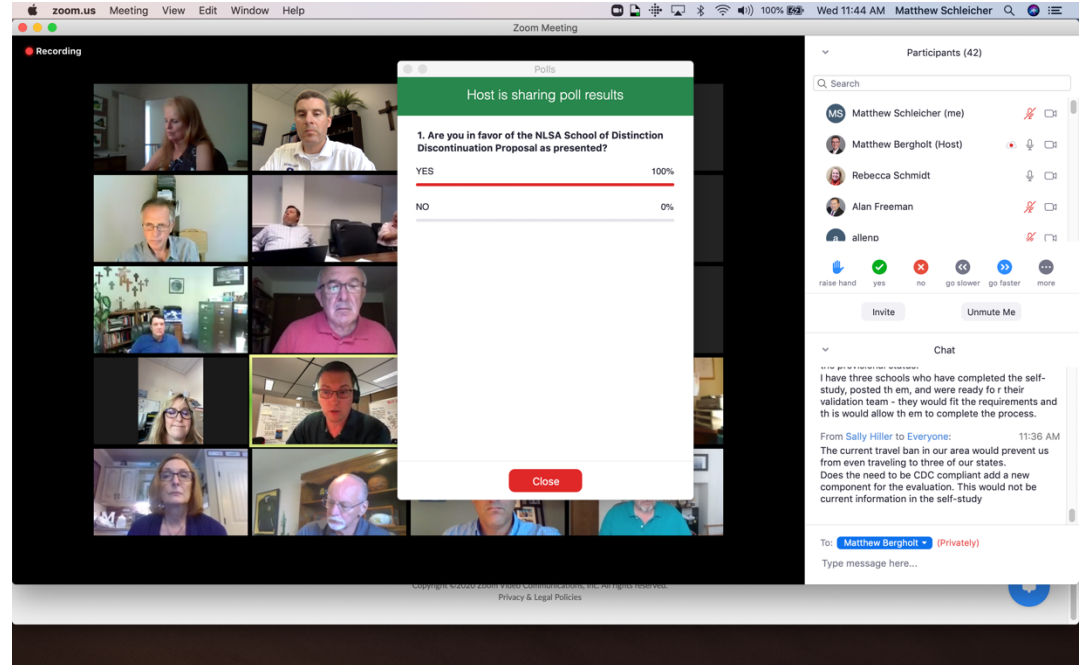
- Keith W. also shared that some of the criteria that have to be met (per the proposal) may preclude some schools from electing to go with a virtual validation visit because they think it would just be easier
- Scott S. asked if the Executive Committee entertained a hybrid approach when creating the virtual validation team proposal; Keith W. stated that the only on-campus piece would be the two-person follow up visit within a year of the virtual visit, but nothing beyond that was discussed in terms of hybrid
- Alan F. was concerned that some states may not recognize virtual validation team visits as being legitimate; Becky said that we will take these case by case, and it will be up to our District folks to continue to learn state-specific requirements regarding legitimacy of validation visits (and keep Nationals apprised of what we are learning as we go through these uncharted times)
- Joel W. stated that this proposal does not preclude that some parts of the validation visit may be actually done on site (i.e. a hybrid approach)
- Mark G. stated that virtual validation visits would put the minds of some of the folks on his various teams at ease because of their age/health status
- Stu T. read this proposal to mean that if there is difficulty finding team members, the virtual option would allow people to serve on teams from even out of state
- Trip R. asked more about the application process and timing for such virtual validation team visits; Matt B. stated that the application document itself has yet to be developed (a document in name only) because NAC needs to approve the concept first; Additionally, Matt B. clarified that the school would need to have had a consultant assigned much earlier than just 30 days prior to the start of a virtual visit because they would have had to comply with standard application timetables within the National Office
- No additional discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see results below):



There were 29 responses with 26 in favor and 3 opposed; **CARRIED**

NLSA School of Distinction Process Discontinuation Proposal

- No discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see results below):



There were 28 responses with 28 in favor and 0 opposed; **CARRIED**

2020 Powerful Practice Recommendations and Process Update

**2020 Powerful Practice Recommendations and Process Update
NAC 2020 Recommendation**

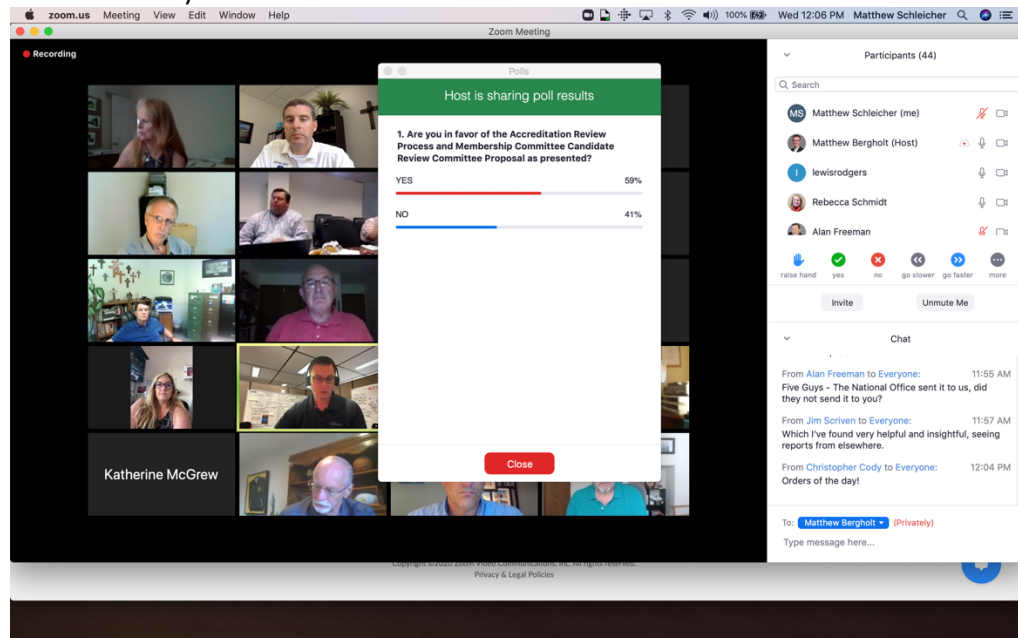
The following schools are being recommended to share their Powerful Practice during the 2020-2021 school year:

- Our Shepherd Lutheran School (Avon, IN)**
 - Powerful Practice: Project Approach and Multi-Age Classrooms
 - St. John Christian Preschool (Dublin, OH)**
 - Powerful Practice: Serving an International Community
 - St. John School (Ellisville, MO)**
 - Powerful Practice: Personalized Learning Program
 - St. Paul Lutheran School (Fort Worth, TX)**
 - Powerful Practice: Student Counseling Program
 - St. Stephens Lutheran School (Hickory, NC)**
 - Powerful Practice: English and Language Arts Learning Communities
- Motion: The Executive Committee moves to approve the powerful practices of the five schools listed immediately above to be shared during the 2020-2021 school year.
 - No discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote
 - There were 28 responses with 28 in favor and 0 opposed; **CARRIED**

- **NLSA Accreditation Review Process and Membership Committee Proposal**

- Trip R. asked if a list would be published so that the committee members would know who their partner is so they can communicate with one another. Keith stated that there would certainly be such a list created to facilitate the collaborative effort and consensus-seeking of both readers.
- Jon P. asked if there is going to be training for the readers so there is consistency when it comes to examining the reports in the same manner (especially because some readers will be brand new to this process having never served on the Membership Committee in the past). Joel W. stated that Becky S. and Matt B. did a really nice job of training the Membership Committee folks this year (even virtually), and there will be training available for all readers
- Dennis G. asked for clarification on “all NAC members”; Keith stated that this is accurately understood as all commissioners; Matt B. stated that in some Districts, the “commissioner” role may be fulfilled by the Ed. Exec. or even the District President
- Alan F. suggested that there be minimum qualifications that a reader has to meet before serving in this capacity (i.e. having captained x number of validations visits, etc.)
- Mark G. asked why we would like to add the extra step of having two readers rather than just having the Membership Committee like in years past; Joel W. stated that it is the goal to involve all of the commissioners in the review process, there have been situations when a second set of eyes on reports would have been very helpful, and to prepare for anticipated greater numbers of reports due to bundling as a result of COVID-19 pandemic extensions
- Dennis G. did the math and stated that if we have 240 schools that we are considering next year, that is 480 reads that then are divided equally among the commissioners (16 reports/commissioner). He stated that 16 seems like a lot for one person to read. Keith stated that there may also be some additional people beyond the 35 commissioners that Becky will help identify that would be brought in to be the second reader (thereby helping to shoulder the overall load)
- Trip R. said there is value in commissioners seeing the reports from other Districts to learn how things are presented in certain Districts, but he was concerned about the timing and connection logistics in order to accomplish a two-reader system; Keith stated that only the lead reader would be responsible for contacting people in the summer (if needed); Keith clarified that the two people partnered would together read x number of reports and come to a consensus
- Jon P. asked if the commissioners would be reviewing reports from their own District; Keith stated that there has been and will continue to be intentionality to not have a commissioner review any reports from their own District
- Joel W. gave perspective that WASC generally has 4-person reading groups that may be responsible for 50 reports (they divide up lead and secondary reader responsibilities among the various members of the reading groups)

- Kristie F. offered to help set up the structure to accomplish such a two-reader system, if needed
- Katherine M. was feeling stressed listening to this discussion, knowing that this year is one of HUGE change for school administrators; She is not sure this is the year to implement something new like this
- Jane L. and Trip R. remembered a process similar to this that was used years ago when there were postcards and even Skype sessions to facilitate the collaborative effort of multiple readers; Trip R. remembered that there were some people that would not submit their postcards, so some schools ended up only having one reader
- Stu T. asked about who resolves the issue if the two readers cannot come to a consensus; Keith stated that the issue would then be brought to the Membership Committee and be resolved at that level
- Mark G. feels that there would have to be extra time built in to this process with more people involved and the reports still needing to be evaluated at the District level followed by the Synod (National) level, so this year may not be the best one to introduce something novel like this
- No additional discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see results below):



There were 29 responses with 17 in favor and 12 opposed; CARRIED

[Break until 2 PM Central Time]

6. Accreditation Agency Reports (Q & A)

- **Lenora Patterson (Cognia)**—No written report because Lenora was just getting over COVID-19
- In April, Cognia began partnering with LINCspring (professional development solutions for teachers)
- Cognia made the decision to do all external reviews virtually between now and the start of 2021 (they did some pilots both overseas and domestically before making this decision)
- Fall, 2020 reviews will not have ELEOT observations and data
- Lead evaluators have been given the opportunity to extend the reviews from 2 days to 3 days
- Cognia is not charging participant fees or travel fees in these COVID times
- They are offering additional training for their lead evaluators in order to be prepared for virtual reviews
- Tom K. asked if the co-accreditation relationship between NLSA and Cognia will continue on, allowing schools to use the NLSA protocol and pay the Cognia fee; Lenora confirmed that still to be the case
- Jon P. asked for clarification about schools that started their self-study using the Cognia process, and he was wondering if these schools now MUST conduct a virtual visit; Lenora stated that the requirement for virtual visits only applies to reviews that use a Cognia lead evaluator
- Keith W. told Lenora that we approved the proposal for conducting virtual NLSA validation visits earlier in this NAC meeting; He asked if Cognia would continue to offer dual accreditation for schools using an NLSA protocol but conducting the validation visit virtually; Lenora stated that as long as the virtual visit still requires the school to demonstrate compliance with all of the standards/indicators, this is still in line with the MOU and therefore this would be permissible
- No additional questions for Lenora

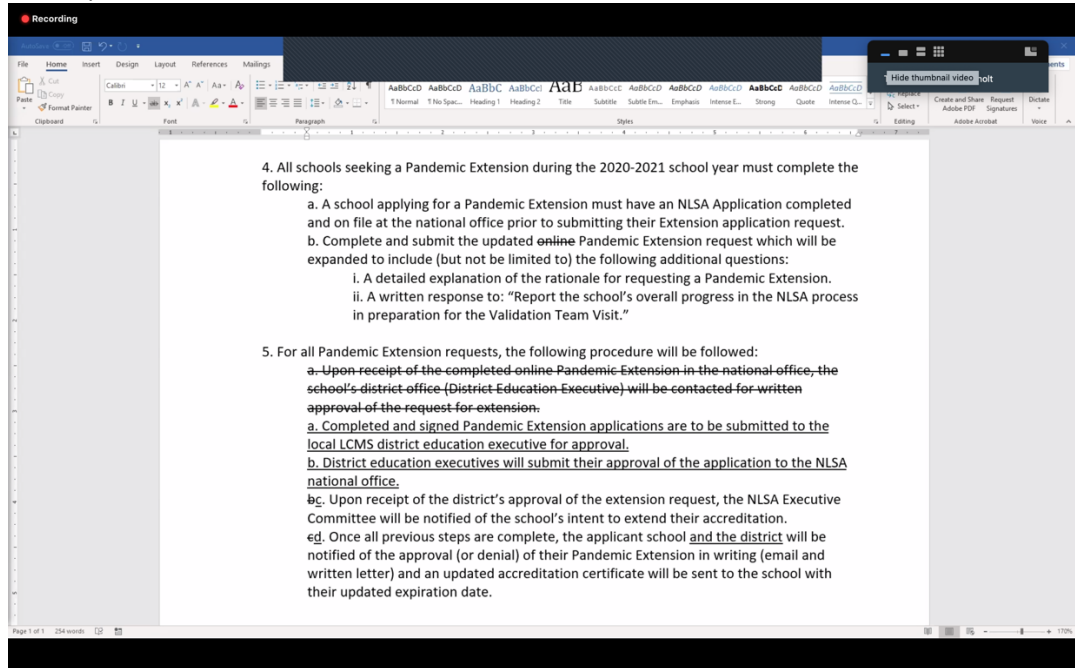
- **Kristie Flohra (WASC)**
- They had between 30-50 schools that were accredited during their April and June virtual meetings, whereas they normally have about 150 schools accredited at this same time of year in non-COVID years
- Joel W., Becky S., and Kristie will be meeting to discuss the MOU
- WASC has decided to go virtual for all of their visits for the rest of 2020
- No questions for Kristie

- **Dr. Jackie Veith (CCLE)**
- She had submitted a written report that was made available on 7-27-20

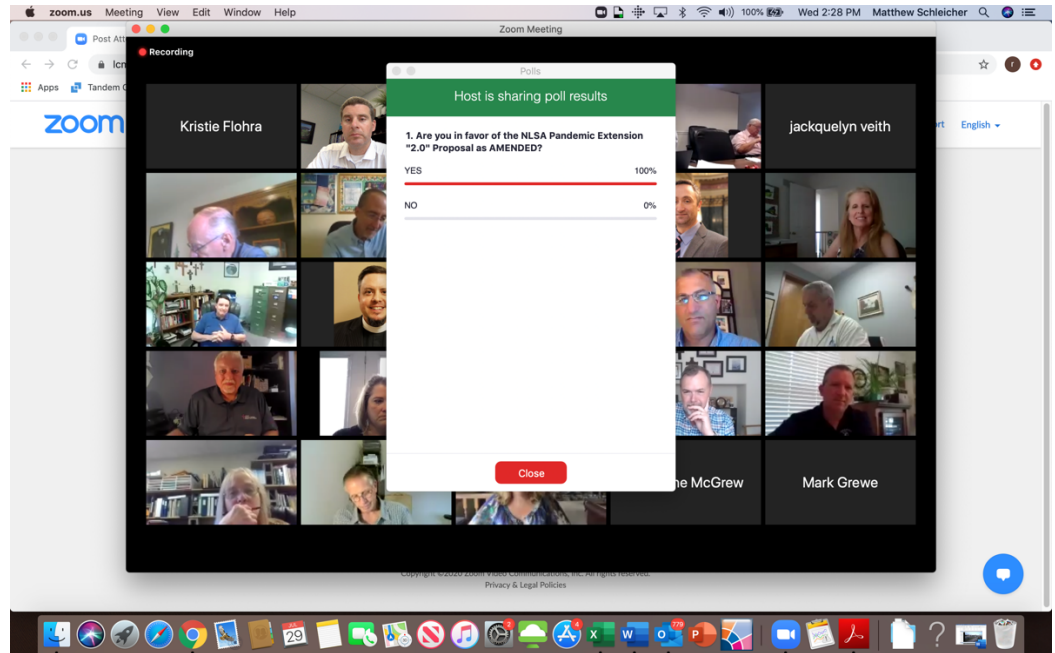
- No questions for Jackie

7. Continuation of NLSA Business (from Section #5 in these minutes)

- **Revisiting of Pandemic Extension “2.0” that was tabled prior to lunch**
- The Executive Committee worked during the lunch break to rework numbers 4 and 5 of the original proposal (document mark-ups present in the amendment below):

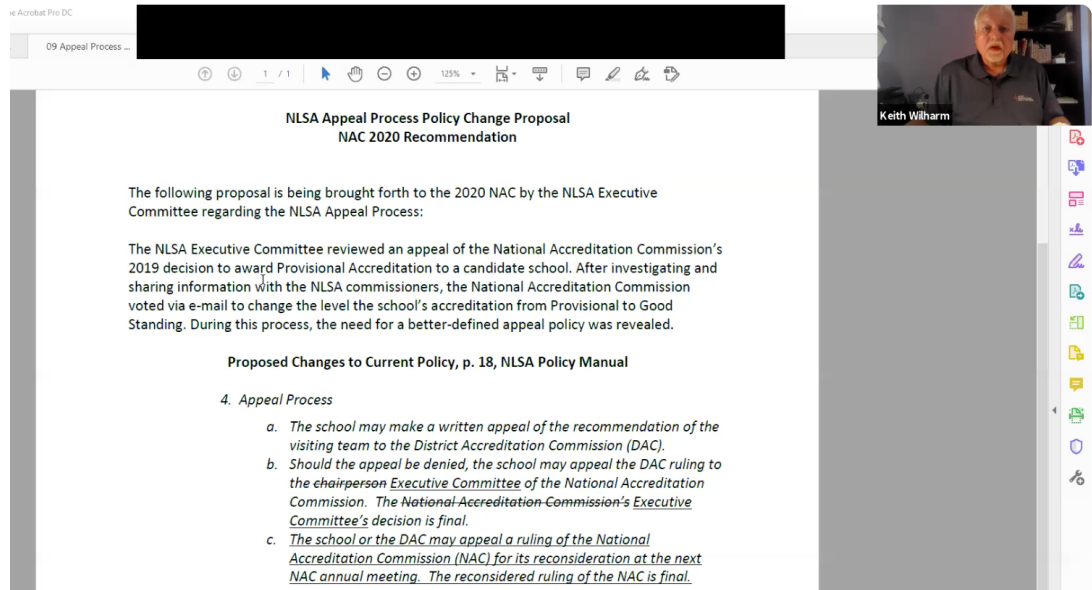


- Dennis G. made the motion to amend, and he stated that he agreed with the reworked language presented above
- Jon P. asked if the application/paperwork for “2.0” would be able to be completed online or if it would be a paper process; Matt B. stated that there would be additional hurdles (that would cost money to resolve) to make “2.0” workable online, so a paper process is how this will go
- No additional discussion on the amendment; Matt B. called for a hand raise vote (through ZOOM’s hand raise functionality) regarding agreement with the amendment; Matt B. stated that there was a majority, so the amendment CARRIED
- Discussion was opened back up regarding the amended motion
- No additional discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see results below):



There were 28 responses with 28 in favor and 0 opposed; CARRIED

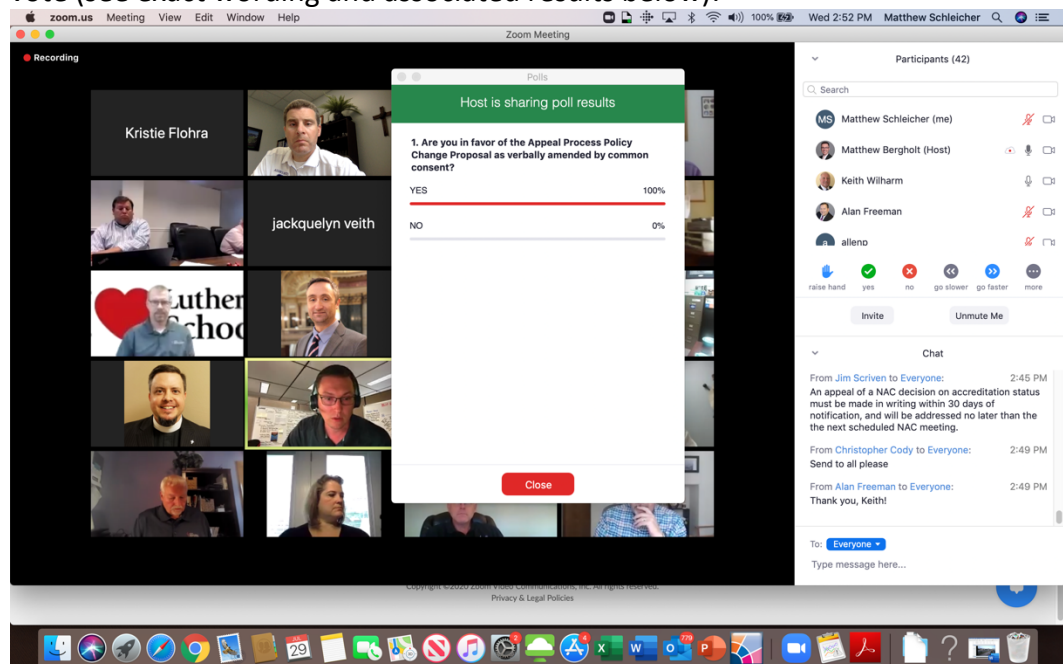
- NLSA Appeal Process Policy Change Proposal



- Trip R. asked if a provisional-status school that formally appealed the NAC ruling would have their accreditation revoked if they waited until the next NAC annual meeting and their appeal was denied (they would not have rectified their provisions during that year of waiting to hear about their appeal); Keith W. was thinking aloud and suggested that a school in this scenario would be placed "on hold" with their accreditation but not suffer revocation even if their appeal was denied by NAC because they had completed the formal appeal process

- Clet P. asked for clarification on the “final say” language in the proposal; Keith W. clarified that the NLSA Executive Committee’s decision on a DAC ruling would be considered final whereas the decision of NAC would be considered final on an appeal of a previous NAC ruling
- Joel W. stated that the intent of this proposal was to ensure that there is due process when dealing with appeals of both DAC and NAC rulings
- Jim S. suggested that with the December business meeting of NAC, one way to handle the scenario that Trip R. asked about would be to handle all NAC appeals in the December meeting, thereby giving a school whose appeal is denied another six months to rectify the provisions so they don’t lose accreditation; Additionally, Jim suggested that it might help to phrase things differently because we are really talking about two different types of appeals
- Dennis G. also feels that the December business meeting is a good option for making decisions on appeals
- Trip R. thinks it would be helpful to separate out the two different types of appeals to make it easier to understand; Trip also suggested that the “recommendation” language be more clear by reading “recommendation for accreditation”
- Keith W. asked if there was anyone opposed to having common consensus about replacing “recommendation” with the words “recommendation for accreditation” (no one opposed this change); Keith asked if by common consent we could strike the word “annual” from the last line of c. (no one opposed this change)
- As for timing of when appeals need to be made, Jim S. made a suggestion in the chat feed that read “An appeal of the NAC decision on accreditation status must be made within 30 days of notification, and will be addressed at the next NAC business meeting.”
- Trip R. thought that it would be helpful to state “written notification” to avoid someone coming back later saying that communication was via phone call or text
- Trip R. asked if the language needed to specify “business meeting,” or if it could just say “it will be addressed by NAC in a timely manner”
- Joel W. asked if Jim S. was making an amendment to the motion; Keith W. stated that he felt we could arrive at agreement by common consent and then vote
- Alan F. said that he did not have access to the NLSA Policy Manual and has never seen it (therefore he does not have context for what comes before #4 Appeal Process nor for anything that may come after this section in the manual); He would like to receive a copy of the Policy Manual
- Keith W. stated that the Policy Manual is not accessible right now as it has some outdated information and language in it; Keith offered to share his screen to show #1-3 in this area of the Policy Manual to provide context, but Keith stated that those three numbered sections have nothing to do with appeals (they deal with various aspects of the Visiting Team Report)

- While Keith W. loaded the Policy Manual to be shared, Jim S. stated that he put this proposed language in the chat: “An appeal of a NAC decision on accreditation status must be made in writing within 30 days of notification, and will be addressed no later than the next scheduled NAC meeting.”
- Keith shared his screen so that everyone could see that #1 deals with the content of the visiting team report, #2 deals with the report format, and #3 deals with the distribution of the visiting team report
- Alan F. and others asked that the Policy Manual be emailed to them even though it is outdated at this time (Matt B. stated that he has already added this request to his “to do” list)
- There was no additional discussion; Matt B. pushed out the poll to take the vote (see exact wording and associated results below):



There were 27 responses with 27 in favor and 0 opposed; CARRIED

- **Armature and Online Process Update (questions addressed by Matt B.)**
- Jon P. asked if there were any visuals that could be shared with commissions and/or captains at this point in time; Matt B. stated that the back-end database is not all that pretty right now and therefore the answer is “no”; Full process flow will be completed in approximately the next two months
- No additional questions/discussion
- **Validation Team Member Training Materials Update (questions addressed by Matt B.)**
- No questions/discussion

8. Other NLSA Discussion Items

- Allen P. asked about the possibility of exploring a hybrid model (i.e. spending one day on campus yet doing the majority of the work via ZOOM); Joel W. and Keith W. stated that they feel the virtual visit language that we approved in this meeting is loose enough to possibly allow for employing a hybrid-type approach; Clet P. asked that if a school requests a virtual visit, who is responsible for providing the “vehicle” for getting this accomplished; Matt B. shared that it will be up to the school in collaboration with the validation team to determine all of these steps (it will not fall on the shoulders of the National Office); Becky S. stressed that the success of a virtual visit hinges on making all of the documentation and evidence available to the validation team (and the validation team members faithfully doing the preparatory reading)
- Chris C. stated that it is probably prudent for NLSA to start looking at adding indicators of success/standards revolving around virtual delivery of content and assessing of students
- Jon P. shared that he has heard from 3 or 4 Early Childhood schools/centers that the new protocol and associated documentation is very daunting
- Keith W. stated that we will be addressing the District recommendations more fully within the December business meeting
- Alan F. asked if there is a timeline in place for developing an NLSA high-school specific protocol; Keith W. stated that although there is not an exact timeline, forming a task force and working through the necessary steps are a very high priority of the Executive Committee

9. Motion to Adjourn (Joel W.)

- Seconded by Matthew S.
- End of meeting

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Schleicher (Secretary)

NLSA National Accreditation Commission (NAC) Meeting [via ZOOM]
9:00 AM-4:00 PM
Thursday, 12-10-20

People Present: Rebecca Schmidt, Keith Wilharm, Joel Wahlers, Matt Bergholt, Matthew Schleicher, Kris Freeman, Dennis Gehrke, Katherine McGrew, Kristie Flohra, Muriel Stark, Clet Pfeiffer, Mark Grewe, Stu Tietz, Jim Scriven, Trip Rodgers, Kevin Gundell, Alan Freeman, Allen Piepenbrink, Bill Cochran, Chris Cody, Crissy Peterson, Dave Glienke, DJ Schult, Jane Limback, Jeffrey Fick, Jon Peterson, Kevin Brockberg, Kevin Creutz, Kyle Chuhuran, Sean Martens, Merrilee Sump, Paul Cain, Robert Mayhew, Scott Schumacher, Travis Grulke, Warren Paul, Emily Anderson, Kim Violette, Aaron Nielsen, Gail Holzer, Betty Hoyer, Robert Ziegler

1. Introductory Items

- Keith Wilharm (NLSA Chair) welcomed everyone
- Dr. Becky Schmidt thanked everyone for attending the meeting
 - Clet Pfeiffer will be retiring from NLSA service in January, 2021 (Emily Anderson will be representing MN South moving forward)
 - Schmidt welcomed Kim Violette and Aaron Nielsen
- Matt Bergholt discussed muting, the chat feature, the hand raise functionality, and screen sharing within ZOOM; Polling will be used for voting (one vote/District)

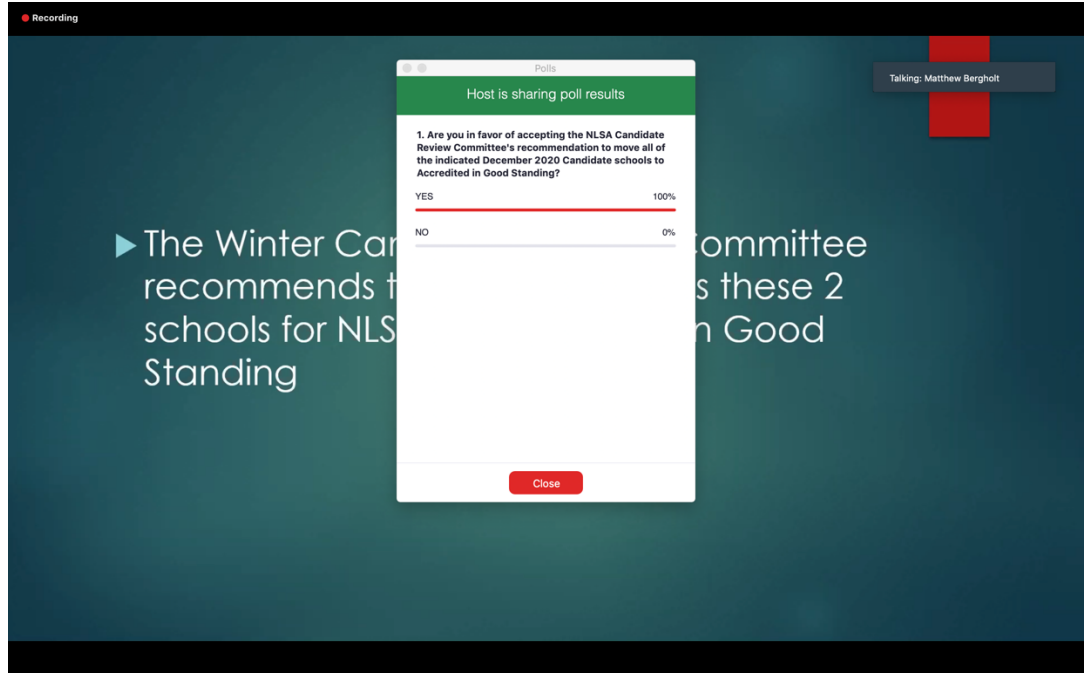
2. Joel Wahlers (NLSA Chair-Elect) led the opening devotion (Darkness and Light)

- Matthew 5:14-16 were the theme verses
- Additionally, John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- Become the light of Christ even amidst the darkness around you

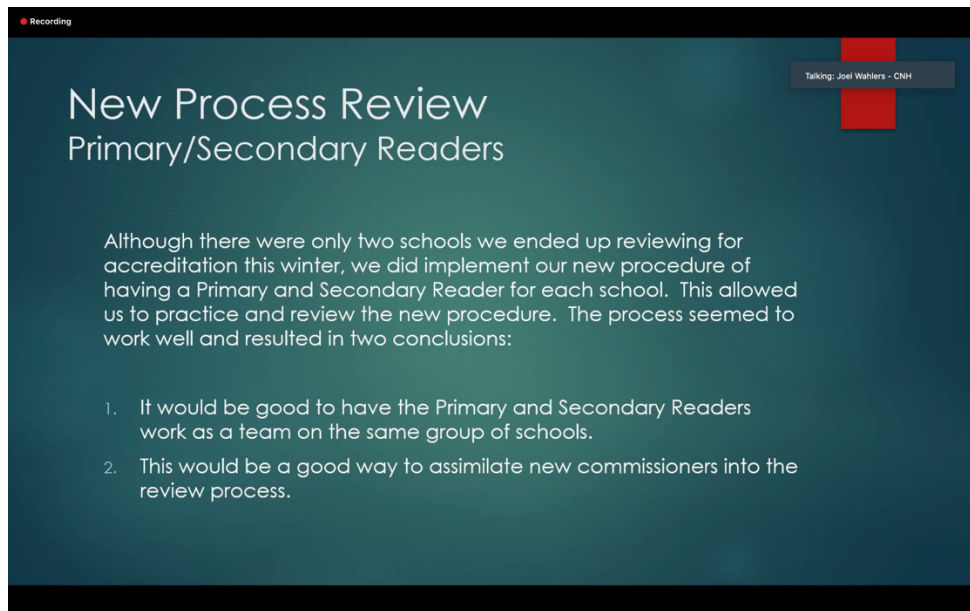
3. Joel Wahlers brought forth the recommendations/motions from the Candidate Review Committee (no seconds required as these came from a committee)

- Joel identified and thanked the people that served on the Candidate Review Committee leading into this meeting:
 - Dennis Gehrke
 - Trip Rodgers
 - Jim Scriven
- 2020 Winter list of Candidate Schools:
 - Lutheran High School Northeast—Norfolk, NE
 - Faith Lutheran High School of Central TX—Giddings/Warda, TX

- Joel shared the motion from the committee: The Winter Candidate Review Committee recommends that NAC approves these two schools for NLSA Accreditation in Good Standing
- Voting followed; The results of the voting are below:



- 23 votes in favor of the motion (0 opposed) CARRIED
- Joel shared the following slide to summarize that the primary/secondary reader model was used for these two schools as well as insights gained from the process



4. NLSA Business

There were several documents/reports that were released prior to the meeting for the attendees to review; Time was taken to address questions on the following items:

- Executive Committee Activity Report (No Questions)
- Dr. Schmidt’s Director’s Report (No Questions)
- Executive Committee and National Staff Responses to the 2020 District Annual Report Recommendations
 - Paul Cain referred to page 4 (bottom box):

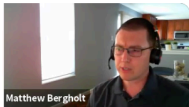
TOPIC: PUBLIC RELATIONS
Submitting District: Wyoming
Subject: Preparing materials and strategies to promote the value of NLSA to nonaccredited Lutheran schools.
Response: This task will be taken up by the NLSA National Staff.


Cain sees this topic as more than just public relations; He stated that a way to raise revenue for NLSA is to increase the number of schools paying in; He is willing to assist with this important marketing work

- NLSA Annual Fee Presentation and Discussion
 - Matt Bergholt shared a PowerPoint presentation, including addressing the fact that some Districts in the last few years have asked about the feasibility of lowering the annual NLSA fee or using a different funding model entirely (see summary slide below):

Fee Suggestions from Districts

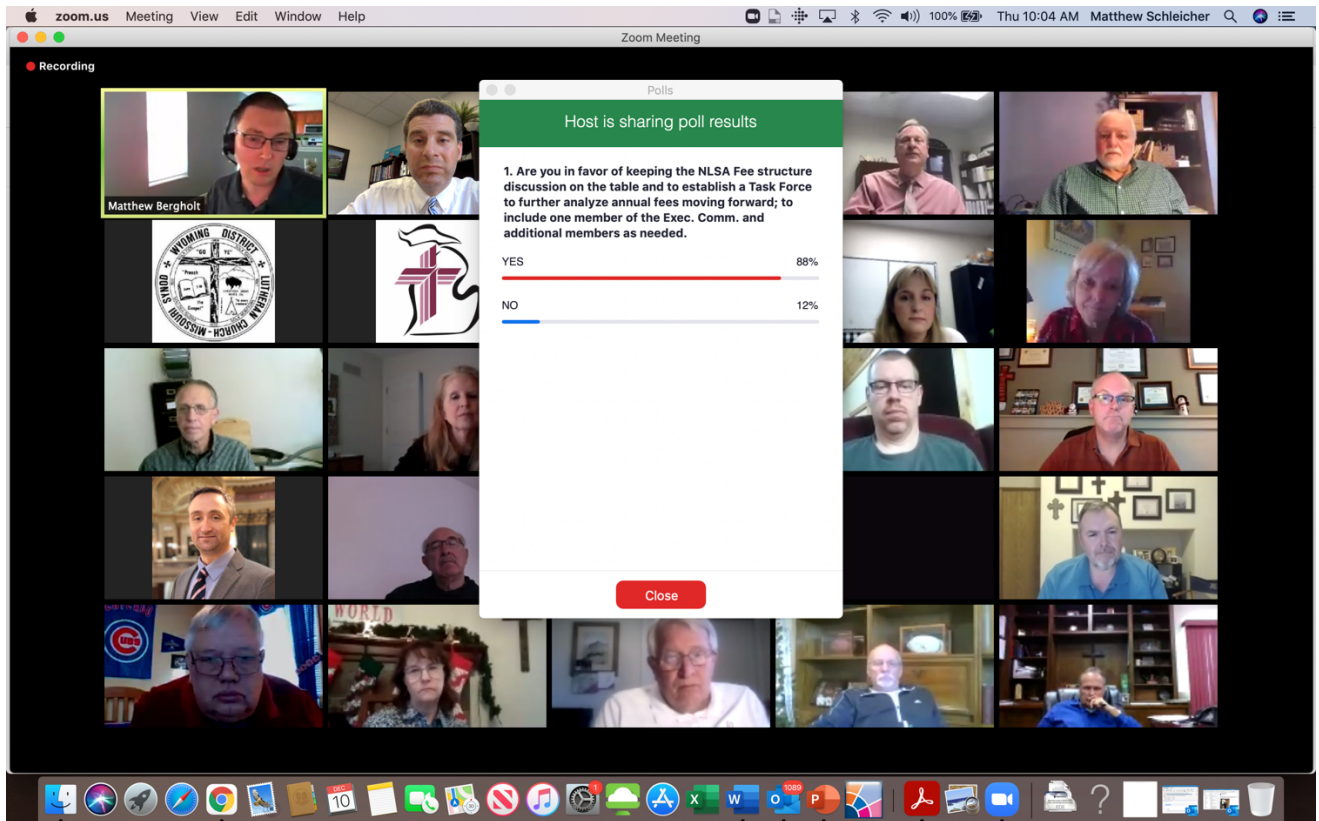
- Suggestions and Ideas:
 - Reduction of Flat Fee to Schools
 - Implement a “Per Pupil” Fee
 - Create a Sliding Scale Based on Enrollment Size





- Bergholt stated that the Executive Committee and National Staff recommendation is to remain with the current flat fee structure

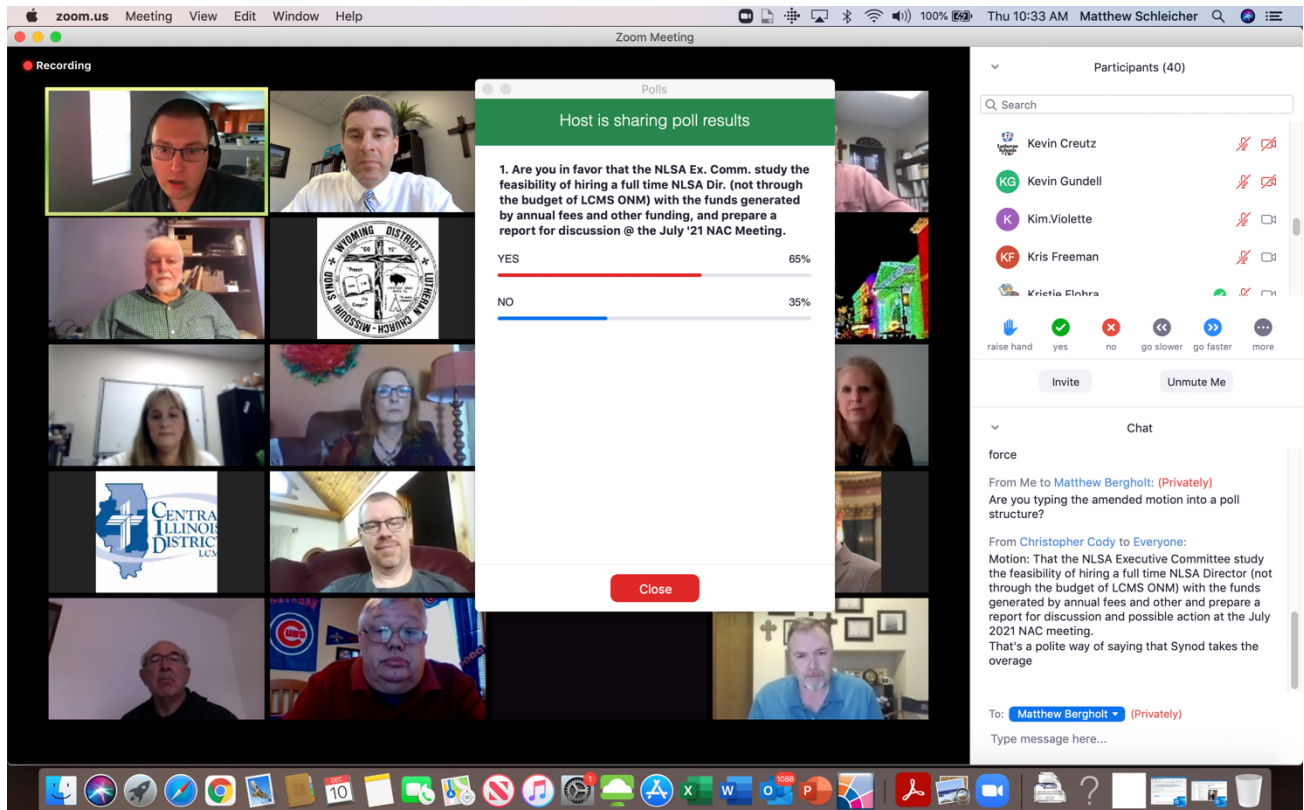
- Travis Grulke stated that it is being shared with Districts that the Associate Director position will not be filled; Becky Schmidt stated that it will not be filled during this current fiscal year
- Joel Wahlers reminded the group that no matter the size of the school, the services they receive from NLSA are the same for small schools and large schools
- Chris Cody stated that he does not feel the Associate Director position will be filled this fiscal year or even the next fiscal year
- Alan Freeman suggested that there could be a flat fee that is the “floor” for all schools and then staircase additional fees based on the reported enrollment numbers from the schools; There could also be a capped out/upper limit fee number in place
- Alan also made a motion to keep this fee structure discussion on the table and form a task force outside of the Executive Committee to look into this further [Kristie Flohra seconded]; Becky Schmidt suggested that a member of the Executive Committee be present on this task force and also include others outside of the Executive Committee; Alan amended his motion to reflect agreement with Becky’s suggestion, and Kristie was ok with this amendment [the entire group supported the amendment via consensus by giving thumbs up]; The specific wording of the amended motion is in the screenshot from the voting/poll below:



22 Districts in favor, 3 Districts opposed CARRIED

- Chris Cody made a motion that the Executive Committee study the feasibility of hiring a full-time NLSA Director not through the budget of the LC-MS Office of National Mission (ONM) but with the funds generated by annual fees and other income and prepare a report for discussion and possible action at the July, 2021 NAC meeting (Alan Freeman seconded)
- Trip R. had his hand raised prior to Cody sharing his motion, so he was allowed to ask about where the money goes that was allocated for the Associate Director position but is not being used for that because of the vacancy in that position? He wondered if those unused funds could be used to pay down the Armature total cost more quickly; Becky and Matt B. shared that those funds are used by NLSA for other current ministry work and that they will ask Armature about paying down our existing bills more quickly
- Back to Cody's motion, Becky shared that it is certainly possible to do the research regarding what it would take to separate NLSA funds from the LC-MS ONM, but she shared that the research may reveal that it may not be possible unless there would be another agency that would be willing to host NLSA
- Cody clarified that it may not be possible to achieve his motion without NLSA having its own RSO status
- Joel Wahlers commented that there is likely intertwining of various staff positions within the NLSA budget and the greater ONM budget (Matt B. confirmed that to be true)
- DJ said that if we really think that the Associate Director position will never be filled, then it is time to get creative about how to best support NLSA
- Katherine M. asked whether or not other agencies within the LC-MS have broken away from their host organization for part of their funding; Keith was not aware of any examples
- Becky cautioned the group about moving in this direction as it may possibly fracture working relationships; She also said that NLSA is much more than just the National Staff and the Executive Committee—it is made up of everyone on the ZOOM call today and others that were unable to join the ZOOM as well; She suggested that hiring a consultant may prove to be helpful in analyzing all that could play into this decision
- Chris Cody reiterated that his motion is an exploratory/research motion and not a motion to separate
- Stu shared the historical perspective that there had been discussion years ago about possibly moving out of the LC-MS headquarters, but there were tremendous complexities that were discovered and that did not happen
- Joel Wahlers stated that he is in support of the motion to facilitate increased communication between the Executive Committee and other leaders in Synod

- Jim S. spoke against the motion as he felt that separation would likely squash the discussion about hiring an Associate Director and therefore getting more help within the School Ministry realm of Synod
- Travis Grulke shared that he wrote a letter to some Synodical leaders in which he outlined the amount of money coming in from annual fees and the disconnect with not being able to fund/fill the Associate Director position
- 28 Districts voted with the following results:



17 Districts in favor (9 opposed) CARRIED

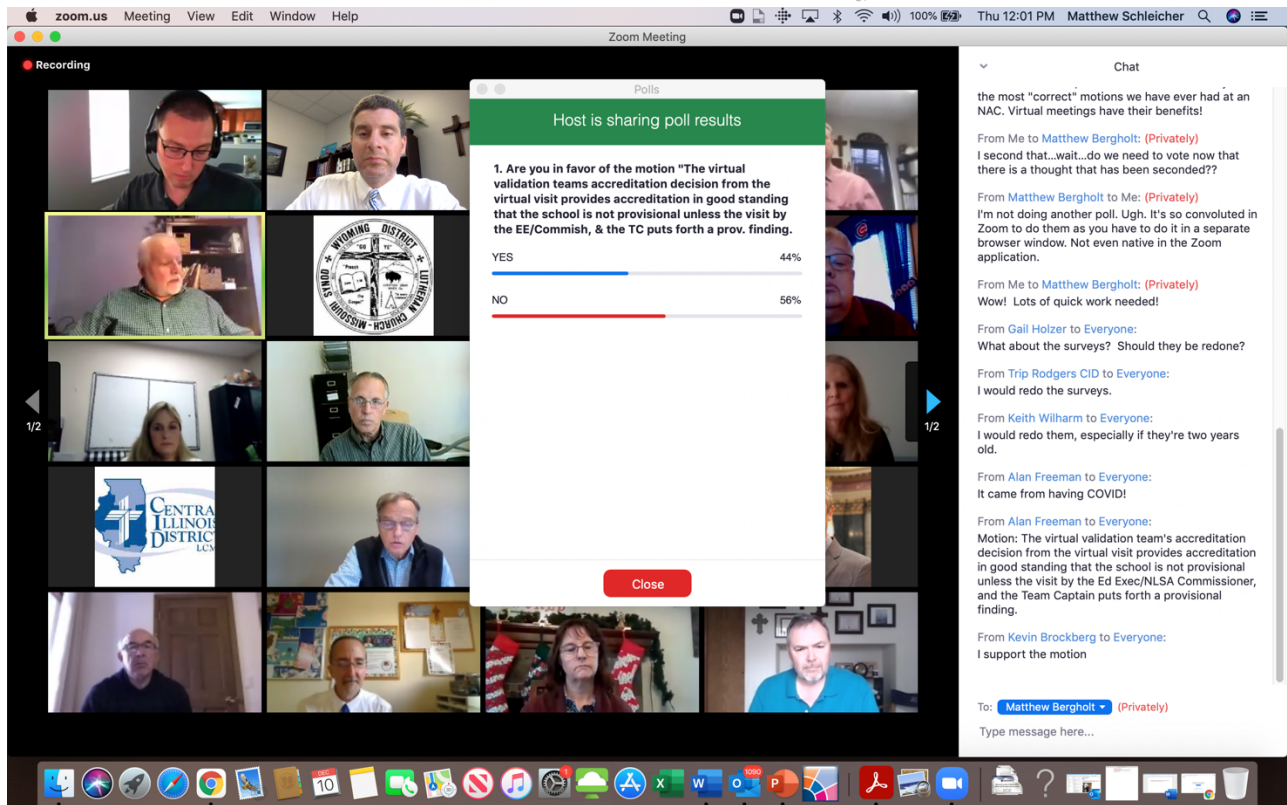
- Stu asked if the discussion of NLSA fee structure has come up amongst District Education Executives; Becky confirmed that those discussions are happening and that there are generally only a handful of schools that have not paid after dues are collected each year
- Paul Cain shared that CCLE uses a different funding model (which includes a per pupil cost), and he encouraged NLSA to look at their model while researching; Cain also offered to help track down enrollment data if such a per pupil funding model was adopted for NLSA; He also stated that CCLE is an example of an outside agency that is an RSO of the Synod that does things independently including offering school accreditation and educator/administrator certification

[5 minute break]

- Virtual Validation Team Visit/Process/Training
 - We approved this concept at the 2020 NAC meeting in July
 - The National Office staff has done a nice job of creating and refining the Virtual Validation Visit Process Manual (Matt B. took the group through an orientation of the manual)
 - Becky clarified that this virtual validation process will not use a hybrid approach in terms of visit team members (there will not be some team members on ground at the school while others are working away from the school virtually)
 - Becky shared that at the conclusion of the virtual validation visit, the school will be recommended for provisional accreditation status; Once the school completes their follow-up on site visit with the team captain/member of the validation team and the Education Executive (to verify what was written in the report and facilities/safety measures), then the school will be recommended to be moved to Accredited in Good Standing at the next NAC meeting
 - Jon P. stated that in terms of a tentative schedule, it might be better to list the items that need to take place during the virtual visit and then require that those items must be completed within a 2-day to 5-day window of time
 - Jon also suggested that there be minimum numbers of parents/students/staff members/etc. that are able to be interviewed to truly be representative of the experiences of those groups (Matt B. stated that the normal NLSA Consultant and Captain Manuals are still the primary documents that will be used, and this virtual process manual will be supplementary to those)
 - Kim Violette stated that some of her schools require that both the elementary and preschools have their visits at the same time if they are under the same congregational umbrella; She asked if the District Education Executive could grant permission for such a virtual visit if one of the groups (i.e. the elementary school) fulfills the minimum number of previous on site visits but the other group (i.e. the preschool) does not fulfill the minimum; Becky stated that it is important to understand which protocol the school is using (she reminded the group that the 2018 NLSA Preschool protocol is so new that preschools have not been able to fulfill the minimum previous on site requirement using that protocol)
 - Alan Freeman asked which items on a school's self-study would need to be updated if they were unable to have their visit last Spring (2020) and received a pandemic extension (Becky stated that staffing information, enrollment trends, and/or delivery of education items would need updating); Alan asked if the school should include an addendum to especially address pandemic-influenced changes, and Keith W. stated that the school should at least include notes drawing attention to new and/or modified items; Lastly, Alan suggested that a school which successfully completed a virtual visit be accredited in good standing

unless the folks that come in for the on site verification within 365 days of the visit deem it necessary to move the school to provisional status

- Allen P. stated that he has heard from a virtual validation team in his District that the virtual approach is proving to be much harder than they anticipated; Some other schools in his District, therefore, are choosing to wait a few months to see if they might actually be able to complete an on ground validation visit
- Mark Grewe asked for clarification on how long the school which completed a virtual validation visit would need to be on provisional status; Matt B. stated that if the on site verification visit can take place prior to the next regularly scheduled NAC, then the provisionality could be changed to accreditation in good standing at that next regularly scheduled NAC without having to wait until the following July
- Mark G. also asked about cycle determination for a school that received a pandemic extension and then was able to have their validation visit (Keith W. stated that the school would then have 5 years following their visit before their next visit would roll around)
- Trip R. wondered about using language such as “Accrediated Pending” for schools that have successfully completed a virtual validation visit; Becky shared that it would not be wise to use the word “pending” as that could be interpreted as the school not being accredited—she said we should just use the process that we approved at the July, 2020 NAC and educate our school leaders that provisional status is not a black mark and that they are still accredited
- Alan F. made a motion to immediately grant accreditation in good standing to a school that has successfully completed a virtual validation visit, and the people completeing the follow-up on site visit would be the ones that could suggest provisionality, if needed [Trip R. seconded]; Exact wording of the motion is in the poll screenshot at the bottom of this section
- Matt B. expressed concern with tracking completion of the follow-up on site visits if the schools were immediately listed as being accredited in good standing
- Jim S. reminded everyone that a core value of NLSA is in-person validation, so he sees value in keeping the process that was passed in July, 2020 in place (accredited provisionally until the follow-up on site visit has taken place)
- Becky stated that another option would be to list the school as virtual provisional
- Kevin B. stated that he envisions only “Accredited in Good Standing” or “Provisionally Accredited” being what schools in Indiana would like to see (not other options beyond these two)
- We voted, with the motion wording listed immediately below:



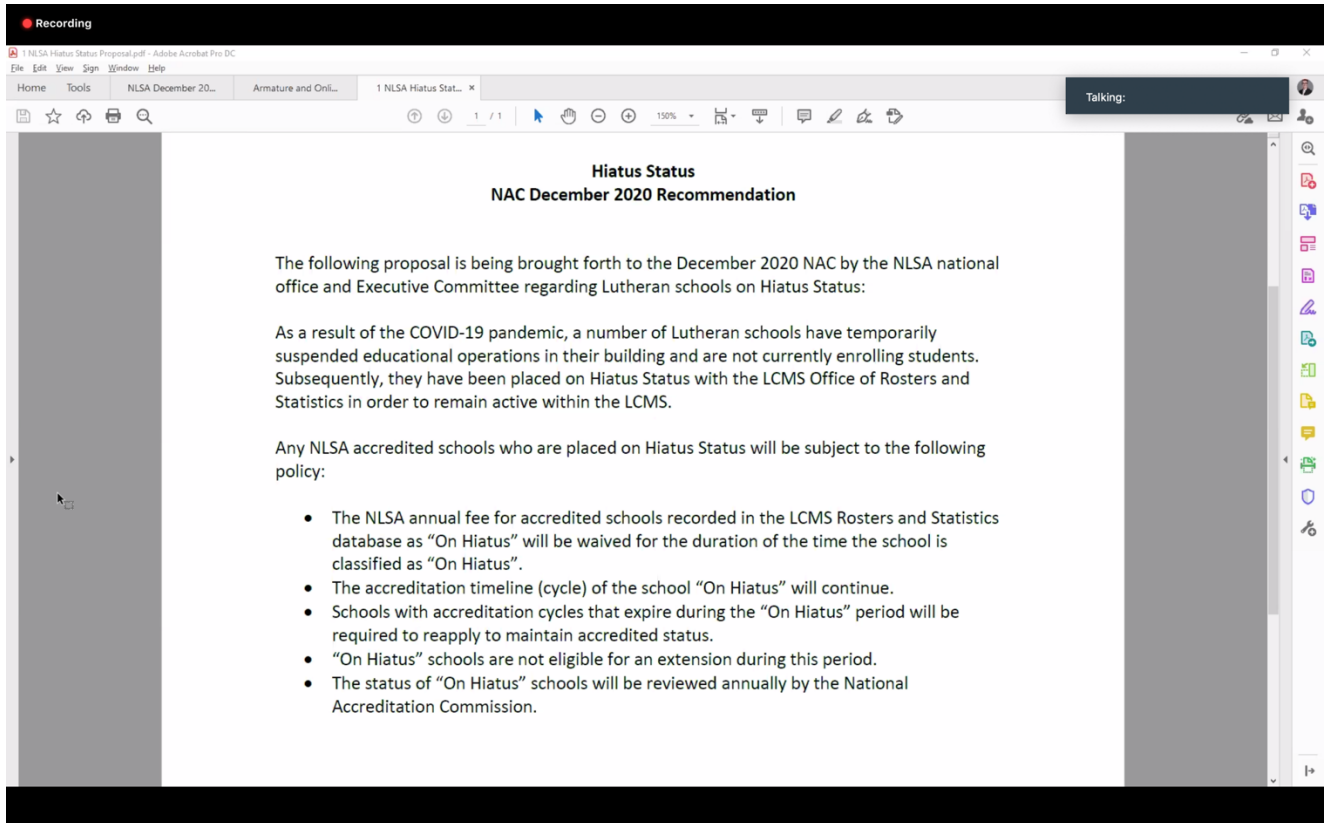
15 Districts in favor of "No" with 12 Districts in favor of "Yes"

MOTION FAILED

[Break until 2 PM Central Time]

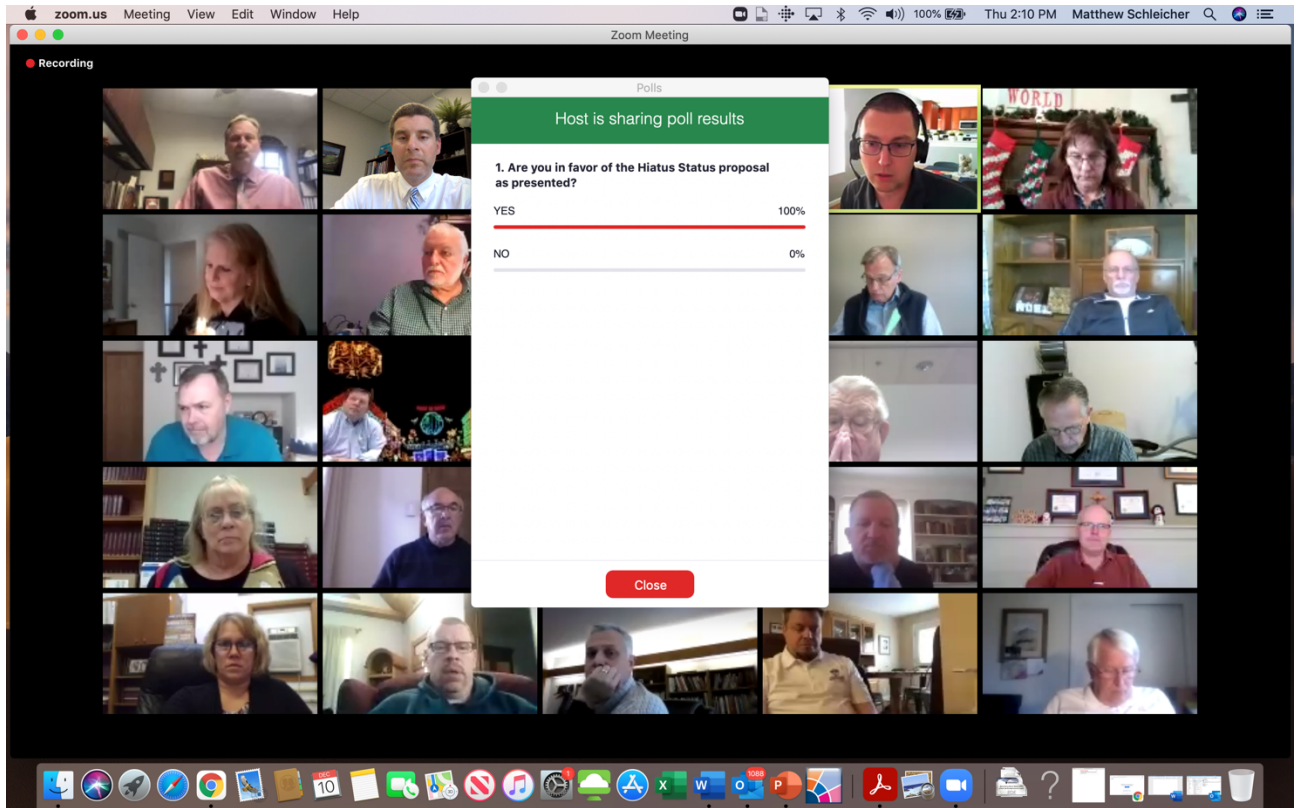
- Armature Progress Report
 - Matt B. discussed some high points from the written report that was made available to the attendees prior to this NAC meeting
 - Kim V. asked about the accessibility to Districts once Armature goes into beta testing next school year; Matt B. confirmed that visibility will be present at the District level, and even greater visibility will be made available to the members of the Candidate Review Committee leading up to NAC in July 2022 so they can do their analysis of the reports and paperwork
- Powerful Practice Progress
 - Matt B. shared that the schools identified as having Powerful Practices will be given three (3) options for how they would like to share:
 - Writing an article
 - Producing their own recorded walkthrough and descriptions (like a webinar or a presentation)
 - Completing both an article AND a recorded webinar/presentation

- Matt B. shared that all of these submissions from the schools will be compiled into one and shared at the same time (not one or two schools/month as in previous years)
- Hiatus Status Proposal



- Trip R. asked if we anticipate some schools choosing to be “On Hiatus” for multiple years in a row based on the fact that such schools will be reviewed annually by the National Accreditation Commission; Matt B. stated that this is potentially true, and he said that a section addressing this will be added to the District Annual Report

The poll to vote was sent, and the results are below:



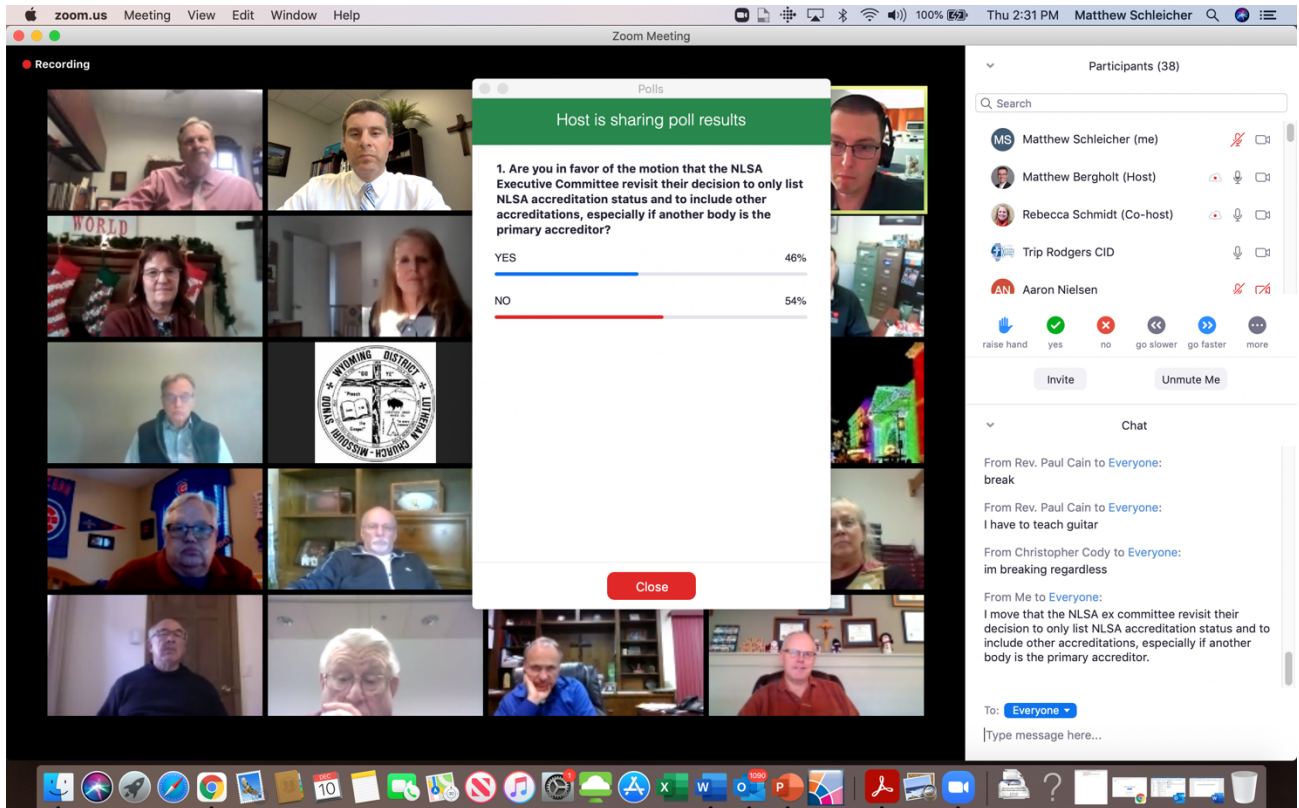
25 Districts voted “Yes” with no Districts opposed

CARRIED

5. Other Business

- Paul Cain followed up on a question from Dr. Jackie Veith (CCLE), specifically revisiting a decision from the Executive Committee; The decision was to affirm the long standing practice of only listing NLSA status in the official LC-MS records; Cain identified that Blue Ribbon designation is also listed currently
- Keith W. mentioned that the Blue Ribbon Program is not one of our partners in accreditation
- Becky piggy-backed on Keith’s statement and explained that the reciprocal/partner relationships with other accrediting agencies is more complex (identifying which protocol is being used, varying cycle lengths when dealing with various accrediting bodies, record-keeping logistics, etc.)
- Cain moved that the NLSA Executive Committee revisit their decision to only include NLSA accreditation status and to include other accreditations especially if another body is the primary accreditor (Alan Freeman seconded)
- Trip R. asked Cain if he is most concerned with the information in the Lutheran Annual or the Locator online, and Cain confirmed that he is most concerned with the Locator.

- Trip asked if the decision of what to list in the Locator is determined by Rosters and Statistics or if it is determined by NLSA (Becky shared that this decision was based on conversations with Rev. Dr. Sias in Rosters and Statistics, the National School Ministry Office, and the Executive Committee of NLSA)
- Alan F. asked Becky what her belief was regarding where the Locator publishing authority lies; Becky said that she feels it is up to Rosters and Statistics
- We voted on the motion with the following results:



11 Districts in favor with 13 Districts opposed

MOTION FAILED

- Matthew Schleicher stated that these December, 2020 NAC minutes will be added to the July, 2020 NAC minutes for voting and approval in the July, 2021 NAC meeting.
- Trip suggested that the Executive Committee discuss nomenclature regarding July vs. December NAC meetings
- Keith W. adjourned the meeting and said a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Schleicher (Secretary)