

## **Genesis Project Feasibility and Readiness Study Report Summary**

### **I. Introduction and process (pp. 3-4)**

- Missouri Synod Lutherans have long seen a need for integrating all learning with faith in Jesus Christ, listening to the mandate of the Holy Scriptures.
- The primary goal of the feasibility study is to aid Bethel Lutheran Ministries in deciding whether to start a Lutheran high school.
- The study is based on the following: 1) demographic information; 2) local school research; 3) surveys; and 4) individual/small group interviews (see Part III).

### **II. Professional opinion and recommendations (pp. 50-54)**

- Based on survey and interview responses, there is statistical support for the start of a Lutheran high school.
- There are concerns related to an aggressive timeline, funding, and the curriculum.
- Throughout the country and in the Morton area there is an increasing interest in and in some cases a strong need for Christian, faith-based schools. The schools in the Morton area are viewed with mixed opinions. The proposed school projects a very unique approach for high school education with an online instruction component.
- Consultant found positive responses to support the starting of a Lutheran high school at Bethel Lutheran Church.

### **III. Data considered (pp. 8-49)**

#### **1) Demographic study (pp. 8-13)**

- Three study areas: 1) geographic border encompassing Morton, Deer Creek, Washington, Peoria, and other surrounding communities, 2) radius of 2.5 miles around Bethel Lutheran School, and 3) zip code 61550
- Observations (pp. 11-13)
  - Average age in study areas ranges from 38 to 42, which is significant as it usually indicates family raising years with children aged 0-17.
  - The data reflects a population growth around the school, an 80% household family structure of married couples with children, and a slight decline in population in the 5-17 age range.

#### **2) Local school research (pp.14-17)**

- High schools: 1) Illinois Central Christian, 2) Peoria Christian, 3) Peoria Notre Dame, and 4) Morton High School
- Study lists the following for each: tuition/fees; enrollment; profile of students served; program of studies; unique program attractions; facilities; area served; major changes anticipated next 5 years; funding; curriculum; and enrollment trends
- Report includes no analysis of the included local school data.

### 3) Surveys (pp. 18-46)

- 386 surveys: 69 community members; 160 Bethel members; 153 parents; 4 Lutheran school principals
- Review of the 386 surveys reflects a very positive agreement in starting a Lutheran high school. (p.45)
- The majority of those surveyed felt there is a need for a Christian/Lutheran high school in our area:
  - Community members: 53.6% yes; 29% no; 17.4% maybe (p.18)
  - Bethel members: 63.7% yes; 21.3% no; 15% maybe (p. 23)
  - Parents: 77.8% yes; 4.6% no; 17.6% maybe (p. 35)
  - Aggregate: 67% yes; 22% no; 15.5% maybe (p. 46)
- The majority of Bethel members would support the idea of a new Lutheran high school at the church: 65% yes; 22.5% no; 12.5% maybe (p. 26)
- The majority of Bethel school parents with children in 5th-8th grades would consider sending their children to a Lutheran high school: 62.5% yes; 3.3% no; 12.4% maybe (p.39)
- While community members would not financially support the school, the majority of Bethel members and parents indicated they would or might:
  - Community members: 14.5% yes; 47.8% no; 37.7% maybe (p. 22)
  - Bethel members: 41.9% yes; 25.6% no; 32.5% maybe (p. 32)
  - Parents: 46.4% yes; 13.7% no; 39.9% maybe (p. 42)
- Report includes all survey questions and answers as well as explanations from those participants that provided explanations. Concerns related to financial sustainability, adequate number students, and curriculum.

### 4) Interviews/focus groups (pp. 47-49)

- 18 interviews with over 80 participants: 65+ Bethel members; 15+ community and school members
- The representation from so many groups and individual participants who spoke openly about the possibility of a high school gives clear indication that the opinions of participants were valued.
- Morton public schools were discussed as “very good,” but there was also concern expressed about the future of public education. Multiple interview groups mentioned mandates by those in charge of public education in Illinois that conflict with what Lutherans believe, teach, and confess.
- Concerns about a Lutheran high school related to cost, adequate number of students, quality of academic program, and extracurricular activities.
- In general, people were genuinely open to the discussion of a Lutheran high school.

**For full Consultant Report please click on the following link:**

[https://www.bethellutheranschool.org/uploads/4/4/1/9/44192469/bethel\\_high\\_school\\_feasibility\\_study\\_1.pdf](https://www.bethellutheranschool.org/uploads/4/4/1/9/44192469/bethel_high_school_feasibility_study_1.pdf)