



CLEF NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGOLAND LUTHERAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION | **FALL 2023** | WWW.CLEFCHICAGO.ORG

Back to School!



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From the Director

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Dear Friends,

There is joy to be found at our Lutheran schools. Joy from our students. Joy from our teachers and staff. And joy from our principals. Ever wonder why that is? Each person and student will be called on to perform important work over the next school term. They will need to focus and persevere through many unknown and unforeseen events. Yet what is known and what brings joy is their faith and servants' heart imparted through their thoughts, words, and deeds to each student at each of our Lutheran schools.

I am joyful and excited to begin my second decade as Executive Director of CLEF. I am very thankful for CLEF's community of donors that help support and foster our mission and vision. I am honored to work with our talented Board of Directors and witness their passion, and dedication for preserving and advancing the beliefs and benefits of a Lutheran education.

But more importantly I am humbled by the faith, dedication and caring shown by our principals, teachers, and staff. I really can't praise them enough. Their impact is immediate and lasting. Day in and day out they let their light shine and show the way to Learning – Good News – For Life. In today's world there is nothing more important or essential.

Each school year we are blessed with the opportunity to "sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth". Isaiah 42:10 (NIV). I am thankful and blessed to be a part of helping to introduce young minds to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. There is no greater mission.

In His Service,

Janet Klotz
Executive Director



CLEF Community Partners

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation is to empower urban Lutheran schools to deliver innovative, quality education in a Christian environment.



From the CLEF Board President

Michael T. Welch



Over the past 30 years, CLEF's relationship with our Chicago Lutheran schools has always reflected our current Mission statement: "To empower urban Lutheran schools to deliver innovative, quality education in a Christian environment". CLEF is a highly valued and trusted resource to Chicago Lutheran schools as they bring the saving Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and great academic experiences to their students. The dedication of our Lutheran school principals and teachers is inspirational, and CLEF is committed to supporting their ministries.

It has been gratifying to see that through the generous support of our wonderful donors, CLEF has moved beyond simply raising funds to support scholarships and address the capital needs of the schools. CLEF continues to provide this funding, but also provides important programmatic support such as principal and teacher professional development, marketing programs and personnel, teacher and principal salary support, curriculum needs, student and teacher assessment best practices, assistance with outside funding sources, health and human care services, and many other programs.

Our growth and maturation as an organization occurred because CLEF has partnered with and listened to the schools, identified and understood their changing needs, and provided the financial and personnel resources that move our Chicago Lutheran schools toward the achievement of their own missions, visions and strategic plans.

CLEF was one of the sponsors at the recent Lutheran Grantmakers Conference in Chicago, and the keynote address by Dr. Kurt Senske published nearby has given us much to think about as an organization. There are three items which I believe have driven the success of CLEF, particularly over the past 10 years.

The first is the leadership of our Executive Director, Janet Klotz, and her dedication to Lutheran education in Chicago. Her relationship with the CLEF staff and the transparency with

which she engages the Board have driven the organization to explore innovative ways in which we can bring the Gospel to children throughout Chicago. Janet has nurtured trusting relationships with the CLEF Board and our schools that enable her to lead our staff in effectively addressing the very different needs of each of our schools.

Second, CLEF's Board and staff are *passionate* about the value of Lutheran education, and they are completely committed to partnering with our schools in a way that allows them to provide an excellent academic experience for the students they serve.

Third, our Principal 360 program has given Chicago principals, and now Lutheran school principals across country, the leadership and strategic planning skills necessary to be successful educational and operational leaders in their schools.

The CLEF Board, with the help of Davidoff Mission Driven Strategies, is currently in the midst of preparing a new strategic plan. This gives us the opportunity to determine the optimal ways to support our Lutheran schools in Chicago and how we can maximize that impact in the future. These are challenging times in which Chicago families desperately need Lutheran education, and CLEF is committed to making it available to as many families as possible.

As we go through this process, the Board recognizes that all that we do is based on the generous support we receive from our wonderful donors. We hope that you can appreciate the true value and impact that CLEF has on the Chicago Lutheran schools – it is real. There is no other organization like CLEF in the country, and your support provides us the opportunity to truly make a difference in the lives of so many children and families.

We want as many students as possible to experience Christ's love and grace through a high-quality education. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and with your support, we can continue to prepare these students for the many challenges they will face in the future. Thank you!

Help Us Support More Students. **Give the Gift of Education!**

With 22 partner schools in our CLEF network, the need is always great.

Here are the different ways you can help CLEF provide scholarships, services, resources and educational programs:



One-Time Donation



Employer
Matching Gifts

thrivent

Thrivent Choice
Dollars



Donor Advised
Funds



Planned Giving



Securities, Stocks
or Mutual Funds



Invest in Kids*

*Individuals and corporations who donate through our designated Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO), Empower Illinois, will receive a credit against their Illinois income tax liability equal to 75 percent of their donation.

DONATE TODAY! WWW.CLEFCHICAGO.ORG



The Art of Lutheran School Governance as a Missional Advantage

Dr. Kurt Senske

I recently had the privilege of being the keynote speaker at the Annual Lutheran Grantmakers Association Conference, held in Oak Brook, Illinois and co-hosted this year by the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation and We Raise Foundation.

One of the topics of conversation that I raised during this conference is that it has become clear that leading a Lutheran school or nonprofit organization has become increasingly difficult in this post-Covid, new normal era. Included in the array of challenges that schools daily deal with are, increased competition, increasing student mental health issues, workforce shortages, culture wars, inflationary pressures, difficulty in recruiting effective board members, less of a willingness for supporters to volunteer their time or make a charitable contribution, the cost of digital transformation, to name just a few.

In navigating this new normal, leaders are rediscovering that having a robust governance model and practice is nonnegotiable if your school or organization is to continue to thrive going forward. While it is tempting to place issues of governance on the back burner, what is forgotten is that your governance model and practices are intertwined with virtually every strategic decision you will make.

The good news is that, if you are intentional, you have the potential to recraft your board governance process to better serve your organizational mission.

In fact, based on research detailed in my recently released book, *The CEO and the Board: The Art of Nonprofit Governance as a Competitive Advantage*, it is clear that effective governance coupled with a healthy board-executive director relationship is a key predictor of your school's success.

The governance model of Lutheran schools is often unique in their design. For example, a school may be owned by several "member" congregations, or the school may be housed under the umbrella of the governance model of its local congregation, or it may be a separate stand-alone legal entity.

No matter what the governance model, every Lutheran school will have its own unique culture, history, and community which demands a governance practice tailored for its unique situation.

No matter what your unique situation, research indicates that several common non-negotiables must be present in your governance practices.

They include:

1. A need for trust, integrity, intentionality, respect, and openness.
2. Your school possesses a very focused mission and reason for existing.
3. Intentional succession planning.
4. A culture that holds us and each other accountable.
5. A diverse group of skill sets, perspectives, and experiences sitting around the table.
6. A perspective that this is a shared partnership, and we are all in this together.
7. An understanding that each board is unique and that its board governance process must be tailored to fit its distinctive environment.

My experience has been that every organization, including a Lutheran school, will over time have an elephant in the room that is not being addressed.

It could be new competition, an outdated governance model, deferred maintenance, changing demographic in your community, the need for new technology, to name a few. The art of governance demands that honesty, transparency, and intentionality exist between the board and the executive director to wrestle with its unique elephant effectively and openly. Failure to do so could prevent your school from achieving its full potential.

The question becomes, how will you, as a leader of a Lutheran school, and your board know if your governance model is a missional advantage or disadvantage? By how you answer the following eight questions:

1. Is there a healthy, trusting relationship between the executive director and the board?
2. Is the executive director comfortable sharing everything with the board or does he or she manage the board?
3. Is the board and the executive director spending at least half of its time together looking strategically forward into the future?
4. Have the elephants in the room been identified and wrestled with in a blame free, trust filled environment?
5. Does the board have the requisite skill sets and is appropriately diverse?
6. Does the board and executive director regularly engage in the topic of succession planning?
7. Can both the board and the leadership team articulate a clearly defined strategy that is being effectively implemented and appropriately measured?

2023 Lutheran Grant Makers and Donors Conference

8. Does the executive director believe that she or he is being supported by the board and does the board feel supported by the executive director?

Serving as a leader or board member of a Lutheran school is not for the timid. It will require your full attention and personal sacrifice coupled with a dose of humility and a willingness to, on occasion, forgive as imperfect children of God.

The good news is that as leaders of Lutheran schools you each possess a unique advantage in that your mission is faith inspired and you can openly bring your deep faith to the table. Your sole purpose is to be of service to others. You are also surrounded by a host of supporters, including the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation, who also believe deeply in your mission.

Your calling is indeed a worthy calling as you continue to serve as the hands and feet of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is an honor to be your partner in ministry.

*Dr. Kurt Senske is the author of **The CEO and the Board: The Art of Nonprofit Governance as a Competitive Advantage.** (CPH: 2023). It is available at Amazon.com, CPH.org, and KurtSenske.com. Dr. Senske is the founder/principal of CEO-Board Services, a consulting firm that specializes in working with mission-oriented organizational leaders and boards. Dr. Senske also currently serves as chair of the boards of Thrivent Charitable and Lutheran Hour Ministries. You can reach Dr. Senske at kurtsenske@gmail.com*

The 2023 gathering of the Lutheran Grant Makers and Donors Conference is in the books! Many thanks to Paul Miles at We Raise Foundation and Janet Klotz at Chicagoland Lutheran Education Foundation and their teams for co-hosting this 21st annual event. Twenty-one participants assembled on September 6-8 at the lovely Le Meridien Hotel in suburban Chicago.

Highlights of the event included:

- **Outstanding presentations and group facilitation by Dr. Kurt Senske, author of the newly released book *The CEO and the Board*.** Kurt's thoughtful insights into the importance of board effectiveness and a strong partnership between boards and their CEO generated much about the governance of our grant making organizations and the governing practices of the organizations we serve.
- **Panel discussions featuring several leaders from Chicago-area organizations served by We Raise Foundation and experienced board members from the area.**
- **Daily devotion and prayer time, including a morning devotion led by Rev. Wayne Miller, former Bishop of the ELCA Chicago Metro Synod.**
- **A wonderful and informative early evening architectural board tour on the Chicago River followed by dinner at the very popular downtown restaurant Eatery.**

Planning for next year's event is underway. Look for dates and location in the weeks ahead. Whether you were among this year's participants or were unable to attend, I hope we'll see you at the 2024 gathering!

Rick Herman – President Emeritus, We Raise Foundation



CLEF Medallion Badge Highlights!

Governance & School Evaluation Badge:

The Medallion School of Distinction program is designed to provide Lutheran schools in Chicagoland with a clear vision of what outstanding Lutheran education looks like, so that they can strive towards increasing levels of excellence. The Medallion program provides a set of standards against which a school can be measured and which, if achieved, credibly demonstrate that a school is truly a school of excellence.

The program identifies criteria and levels of excellence in four categories critical to parochial school success. Each category is then divided into two "Badges of Distinction". A school earns a Badge of Distinction ("badge") after demonstrating excellence in that area through a rigorous assessment program. After a

school earns all eight badges, it has achieved the right to be designated a CLEF Medallion School of Distinction.

The ultimate purpose of the Medallion Program is to encourage Lutheran schools in Chicago to demonstrate that they have met rigorous standards of excellence in academic rigor combined with a solid foundation of Christian values. CLEF envisions a future in which all Lutheran schools in Chicago are model hubs of high-performance, innovation, and student success, shaping the city's youth into conscientious, Christ-centered, and responsible citizens. CLEF intends to provide resources and support to the schools throughout the Medallion program as they move through the process of achieving badges and ultimately Medallion status.

A school's success and longevity depend on strong leadership, governance structures and financial planning to ensure its long-term viability and integrity. The governance badge is embodied in the successful completion and fulfillment of the above criteria in their everyday school administration activities and used for planning ahead.

Meet the Principals

Dr. Patricia Jackson, Principal St. Paul, Austin



I am most excited about being able to serve the families and students of the Austin community this year. It is truly an honor to be able to work with a school population that has

deep roots in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. It is a marvelous thing to be able to work with all of God's children and the stakeholders in the Austin community.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old, he will not depart from it." In Matthew 28:19-20 we are given the Great Commission to spread the gospel to all of the nations of the world. So, as the Father instructed us to live a righteous life by following His commandments, the Words of Jesus (the ultimate teacher) set the foundation for my personal professional mission as an educator and administrator to serve.

St. Paul Lutheran School's purpose is to provide students with a quality education in a manner that promotes Christian faith and helps students to develop a Lutheran perspective which is rooted in Holy Scripture. It exists to help students develop spiritually, mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically to their fullest potential and to demonstrate their faith through Christian service.

The Lord has provided a place for Christian education to be shared at St. Paul Lutheran School. He has also purposed my life for service in the field of education. Therefore, my mission and that of St. Paul align. He is the vine, and the fruit of my labor is to the glory of His holy name.

May God be praised for the wonderful things He has done. I am blessed to be affiliated with the Rosa J. Young Academy legacy program. Much like Mrs. Young, it is my desire to bring Lutheran education to diversified populations on a global level.

John Murphy, Principal Pilgrim Lutheran School



My voyage in education began back in 2010 when I joined Teach for America. My first two years were spent at Cross County High School in Cherry Valley, AR,

nestled in the Mississippi Delta. It was an incredible experience. In 2012, I moved to Chicago, where I was part of the founding team at Hansberry College Prep in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood. I spent three meaningful years there as part of the Noble Network of Charter Schools. Teaching was just the beginning; I coached football, wrestling, rugby, and track and spent my summers coaching and mentoring at Teach for America's Summer Institutes. My next chapter took me to Perspectives, where I taught English and History across grades 9-12. I also had the chance to help establish their early college/dual enrollment program. In 2020, I decided to pursue my Ed.D in Urban Educational Development at UIC, which eventually led me to a two-year administrative role in Chicago Public Schools before finding my way to Pilgrim this year. I expect to finish my doctoral program in early 2025.

This year, I'm genuinely excited about immersing myself in Pilgrim's mission of "Academic Excellence with a Heart." It's an opportunity to understand and embody what that mission truly means and how we can collectively live our values. I'm eager to build a strong, collaborative community of educators and families who are dedicated to steering Pilgrim toward an ever-evolving future. We'll focus on best practices, innovative ideas, and an ambitious recruitment strategy.

My personal mission within the field of education is in perfect harmony with Pilgrim's values. I'm here to cultivate a collective and nurturing community that places academic excellence and compassion at the forefront. I believe that together, we can bring Pilgrim's mission to life in the most meaningful ways.

Outside of Pilgrim, you'll often find me enjoying quality time with my wife, Tory, our dog, Tully, and our cats, Hayden and Addison. I'm an avid fan of board games, football, fitness, and fiction. I have a passion for reading, and this year alone, I've happily devoured 57 books and counting.

Tracey Robinson, Principal Saint Luke Academy



I have lived in Chicago, Illinois my entire life. I have been married for 29 years and I am the mother of four beautiful children. I have four siblings, in which two are deceased. I have deep love and admiration for my father, who is 98 years young! He instilled in me a love for humanity and a great work ethic.

I started working for Chicago Public Schools in January 1991, as a Kindergarten teacher. I retired from CPS in 2020. I then worked for the Archdiocese as a 4th grade teacher. I later transitioned to teaching 10th-grade English Language Arts and working on the Westside of Chicago, in the Austin Area, as a Curriculum Specialist. I created a curriculum for an afterschool program that gave care and support to children in that area as a means to keeping them safe and engaged in educational activities. Additionally, I worked as the Educational Director at the Goddard School of South Loop, in which I developed the first curriculum for the Early Childhood Education program.

I am currently the New Principal at Saint Luke Academy. I am honored to serve the children, staff, church and community! I am looking forward to working with stakeholders and increasing enrollment. My goal for this school year is to recruit families and children for a 3rd-grade program for the 2024-2025 school year.

Saint Luke's Academy Mission Statement: Fostering Curiosity, Building Community and Developing Character since 1882.

Saint Luke's Academy Vision Statement: Saint Luke Academy students will be faith-centered, independent learners who are challenged to achieve academic and personal success, demonstrate respect for the global community, continue to nurture their faith and are able to make informed life decisions.

My Personal Mission Statement on Education: I truly believe in educating the whole child. I believe children should receive a quality education, and be given social emotional skills that will enable them to effectively communicate and live with others in a global world.

Fun facts: I love American and World History. I enjoy traveling and experiencing different cultures throughout the world.

Michelle Runge, Principal St. John's Lutheran School



My name is Michelle Runge and I am the new principal at St. John's Lutheran School. However, I am not new to St. John's, because since

the fall of 2004, I have been the 8th Grade homeroom teacher/HSP Math teacher. St. John's Lutheran School exists to provide a Christ-centered education in a safe environment to a culturally diverse student body that engages the whole child through an innovative academic program that promotes a love of learning and a life of service. At a young age, I felt like God was calling me to nurture God's children in their faith as they grow academically, socially and emotionally. I am excited that I not only have the joy of doing this, but now I have the opportunity to lead educators and parents to do the same. I cannot wait to see what God has planned for our growing school community this year and beyond!

I have been happily married to my husband Jake for just over 7 years and I am one blessed mama to Bryson (5) and Colton (3). When I am not at St. John's, I love spending time with my family and friends and cheering on The Ohio State Buckeyes.

Mark Schaetzlein, Principal Bethesda International Academy



Joining the Bethesda International Academy family in June, I have been blessed to be welcomed by the staff, students and families of Bethesda

International Academy. Truly one can feel Bethesda's "transformational learning, anchored in faith" and surrounded by God's love.

As a three decade educator in the public school system, I have gained a wealth of administrative leadership as an Assistant Principal for Activities and Operations for the last twenty years at Buffalo Grove High School in the Northwest Suburbs. I earned my Bachelor's degree in the Teaching of Mathematics from the University of Illinois and my Master's Degree from Aurora University in Educational Leadership. All of these experiences lead me now to answer God's call as Bethesda's newest Principal. I am honored and blessed to be able to apply my love of Christ to my daily work and hope that throughout the year, all students, staff and families will feel the Spirit move them in ways toward academic success and love. I can feel it and I hope all of our families do as well.

I am a proud "girl dad" of two amazing daughters, Maddie (25) and Abby (22).

Throughout the start of this school year, I want all to remember that today, like every day, is a great day to be a Bobcat! I hope to apply my personal servant leadership into action each and every day to help students grow socially, emotionally and academically. May God bless us all on this school year journey as we shine our light onto others.

Dr. Della Weaver, Principal St. Paul, Dorchester



My name is Della M. Weaver. I am honored and humbled to introduce myself as the Principal of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran School for the 2023-2024.

First, welcome to all returning families as well as to all new families. Hopefully, you have enjoyed many memorable "Family Moments" with your children during this summer break that will help to sustain you through times of trials and gladden your hearts even more through triumphant times. Family is very important to me. I welcome and cherish this opportunity to continue serving St. Paul! Whereas, I know the returning St. Paul School Families, and look forward to meeting the new families, my goal is to get to know each and every family even better through our interactions during this school year. You are in my heart and prayers.

I came to St. Paul as a seasoned Chicago Public Schools (CPS) elementary school teacher with experience in teaching, literacy instructional coaching, administration of after-school programs, mentoring new teachers, designing, developing and implementing a schoolwide Young Author Program, and coordinating a parent program. My work at St. Paul School began in 2013. During this tenure, I have served as Title I Teacher, Reading Instructional Coach, Upper Grade Math Teacher, Provided Small Group and 1-on-1 Instruction and Interventions, Presented Professional Development, Assistant Principal, and New Teacher Mentor. Education is my passion!

FEATURING

BETHESDA INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY





When families come to tour Bethesda International Academy, many say they immediately feel like they've found the right home! From the greeting at the front office to the purposeful energy of the Main Building to the excitement in the Early Childhood Center, the learning community at Bethesda is wonderfully welcoming and upbeat. Students, staff, and families enjoy a Christ-centered community which is culturally diverse – where kids feel like they can easily belong. At Bethesda, nobody's different, because everybody's different!

Bethesda welcomed a new principal in early summer, Mr. Mark Schaetzlein. An award-winning administrator in northwest suburban High School District 214, Principal Schaetzlein has experience as an academic leader as well as the administrator of student activities and large events. He came onboard in June, and jumped in with both feet, overseeing the summer program as well as preparing for the new school year.

Mr. Schaetzlein has enjoyed getting to know the families at BIA, and has had the opportunity to connect further with

students as the Volleyball Coach and Athletic Director. The team is doing well, and the school-spirit even better. Kids of all ages can be spotted wearing Team Spirit-wear every Friday – when all at BIA can dress-down from the typical school uniform, and show their pride wearing their favorite team shirt. Go, Bobcats!

As for what's next, Principal Schaetzlein is a big believer in continuous improvement for individuals as well as for the institution. He is looking forward to working closely with the excellent staff at BIA, to make a good school even better! In addition, he is evaluating programs and buildings and grounds as he sketches out long-term plans for the future. He's very grateful for the warm reception he's received, as well as the tremendous support from CLEF in so many ways.

"Transformational Learning, Anchored in Faith" is the BIA motto, highlighting the importance of Christ's teachings as students navigate growth in a changing world. One thing

that will NOT change is Bethesda's commitment to serving the needs of a diverse neighborhood by sharing Christ's love with all who walk through the doors. At Bethesda International Academy, diversity is a great strength. Here, nobody's different, because everybody's different!



**Bethesda
International
Academy**

Transformational Learning, Anchored in Faith



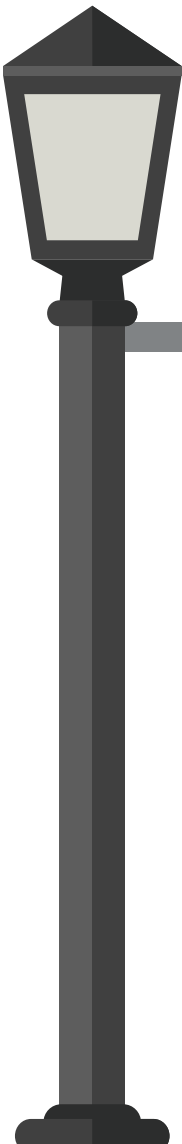
"Forward Focused"

by Amanda Hays, Admissions and Marketing

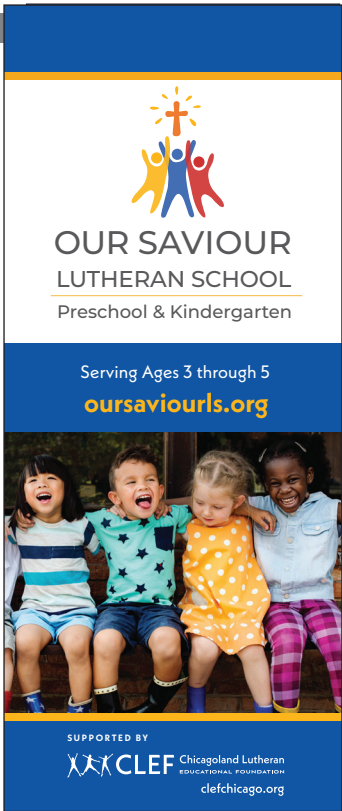
CLEF's Admission & Marketing Coordinators (AMC) have been busy leading tours, planning community engagement events, and enrolling new students, even after the school year began! I recently kicked off our monthly professional development sessions with a meeting in September focused on back to school marketing, admissions, and retention tasks. The October and November sessions will feature guest speakers and center on parent engagement and creating the perfect tour.

An overall theme for the AMCs this year is community engagement. Since the pandemic, schools have slowly brought back opportunities for connection. This year, AMCs will increase community engagement within the schools and with their wider communities. Some of our AMCs will reintroduce Parent Teacher Leagues and establish room helpers and mentor families to help increase retention. AMCs will expand school presence at neighborhood events, and connect with chambers of commerce, churches, schools, and businesses. I have been working with each AMC to identify and create new neighborhood partnerships, as well as to optimize presence at neighborhood events.

Aside from community engagement, AMCs continue to enhance school marketing through website design and updated collateral materials. I will design banners, brochures, and tour materials as well as review websites for many schools. I am excited to continue working with the AMCs during the 2023/24 school year to help increase retention and enrollment and to spread the word about CLEF schools!



Samples of an updated school lamppost banner, a 3' x 6' banner and a yard sign for Our Saviour Lutheran School.





L	I	F	H	E	Z	N	T	F	O	S	H	E	L	L	S	I	O	T	Z	Y	D	T
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VINES
SEEDS
SHELL
FARM
SKIN
STEM
PICK
LEAF
PULP
RIND
RIB
PIE



CLEF PRESCHOOLS AND GRADE SCHOOLS

- ## CLEF MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

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