

# 18 | 19 BOARD REPORT

# GRCs

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

October 22,  
**2018**



**THEME**

DISCIPLES  
OF  
*Christ*

# 2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

OCTOBER 22, 2018

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS CALENDAR OF EVENTS — LOOKING AHEAD

Below is a brief summary of our school schedule and upcoming events where you are either scheduled, or may wish to attend. For a full list of Grand Rapids Christian Schools event options, please visit [grcs.org/calendar](http://grcs.org/calendar)

OCTOBER 2018			
22	6:00 pm	GRCS Board Room	GRCS Board Room
22	7:30 pm	7th/8th Grade Band & Orchestra Concert	DeVos CAW
24	11:30 am	Fles Society Luncheon	GRCHS Town Square
25-26		CEA Convention (No School)	South Bend, IN

NOVEMBER 2018			
1	7:30 pm	Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
1	10:00 am	GRCS Foundation Board Meeting	RDV Corp.
5	7:00 am	Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
8	12:00 pm	Advancement Committee Meeting	GRCHS Conference Room
8-10	7:30 pm	GRCHS Musical: <i>Curtains!</i>	DeVos CAW
13	12:30 pm	Education Committee Meeting	GRCHS Conference Room
13	7:00 pm	GRCHS Showcase	GRCHS
15	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
16	8:00 am	Pastor's Breakfast	GRCMS
21-23		Thanksgiving Break (No School)	

DECEMBER 2018			
3	7:00 am	Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
6	7:30 am	Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
8	7:30 am	Holiday Pops Concert	DeVos CAW
11	7:30 am	GRCHS Band & Orchestra Concert	DeVos CAW
12	7:30 am	GRCMS / GRCMS 7th -12th Choir Concert	DeVos CAW
13	7:30 pm	GRCMS 5th/6th Band, Orchestra & Choir Concert	DeVos CAW
17-20		GRCHS Exams	GRCHS
18	7:00 pm	GRCES IQ Christmas Program (K-2)	DeVos CAW
24- Jan. 2		Christmas Break (No School)	

MISSION

VISION

VALUES

GOALS

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS MISSION

*Preparing students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society.*

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS CORE VALUES

Rooted In  
Christ

Connected Through  
Relationships

Called to  
Serve

Educated  
for Life

Untied with Home  
and Church

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

*By using their unique gifts to glorify God, pursue personal faith, and bring about shalom in the world, graduates of Grand Rapids Christian Schools will be...*

### **CULTURALLY COMPETENT**

Prepared to engage with a diverse range of people and ideologies.

### **COMMUNICATORS AND COLLABORATORS**

Prepared to work in a team environment, articulate ideas, and consider multiple viewpoints.

### **THOUGHTFUL NEIGHBORS**

Prepared to practice hospitality, compassion, service, and empathy for those around them.

### **JUSTICE SEEKERS**

Prepared to actively pursue greater wholeness in the world by working for justice and practicing stewardship.

### **CREATIVE SOLUTION FINDERS**

Prepared to identify issues, engage in critical thinking, and persistently work toward solutions.

### **LIFELONG EXPLORERS**

Prepared to live a life of discovery and wonder in God's world.

### **DISCIPLES OF CHRIST**

Prepared to follow Christ with faithfulness, resilience, and humility in a broken but hopeful world.



## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Board,

I am often asked about what makes Grand Rapids Christian Schools distinct. Questions ranging from whether it is truly any different from other high-quality schools in our area, if it is a value worthy of significant investment, and if it is focused more on secular rather than scriptural values come from current families, alum, and individuals from the broader community. There are many features that are distinctive about Grand Rapids Christian, but one feature truly stands out and is best explained through stories.

Witnessing our opening-day chapels at several schools. Nearly 500 students gathered in the gym at the Iroquois Campus and welcomed the new school year in praise to God. Students from all walks of life worshiped and praised God in song and through prayer as a Christian community. Seeing the children and staff come together, singing songs of praise (in both English and Spanish I might add!) touched my heart and served as a wonderful reflection of why I sent my own children to Grand Rapids Christian Schools, why I pray that my grandchildren someday will attend a Christian school, how Christian education matters in God's redemptive story, and how important it is to raise children in an educational environment where they learn that God's truths are evident in all things and in all places.

Hearing a father's heartfelt reason for sending his children to Grand Rapids Christian. We recently hosted a planned giving workshop for families interested in learning more about the many ways people are able to charitably support GRC. The presenter, who is also a parent of several children at GRC, capitalized on the opportunity to first speak personally of his own children's experience at Grand Rapids Christian. With a crack in his voice and a few tears on his cheeks, he recalled a recent conversation around the family dinner table after having seen *Wonder*, a movie about a little boy who was born with a facial deformity. That night, his elementary son reflected on the movie's message at dinner and - in his own words - quickly applied Romans 15:7, "*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*", his school's theme verse for the year, in a very simple yet profound way. A real testimony to raising a disciple of Christ.

I recognize that Christian education is more than simply emotions. However, it is often true that one's understanding of and commitment to a particular purpose leads to an emotional response. The stories above are reflections of individuals' strong beliefs in the value of and illustrate a Christian education's distinct nature. That distinction is seen through the deeply held beliefs that every child's faith journey matters. That Christian schools are one avenue for God's redemptive work to be accomplished. And that it is essential to ground students in the truth that God is redeeming the world and, through them, His redemptive purpose will be realized.

I am thankful that our teachers and staff embrace the opportunity to equip students to be effective servants of Christ in environments that welcome all students and families into our schools. It is a humbling honor and true privilege to play a role in that process.

• Tom

# GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE STORIES

## DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Prepared to follow Christ with  
faithfulness, resilience, and humility  
in a broken but hopeful world.

GRCS

### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL



Our theme verse for the year is 1 Timothy 4:12. It reads *“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”* Our theme for the year is **“Leave Your Mark.”**

We’ve been able to tie our theme into many areas of our school, both inside and outside the classroom. It’s been a regular part of our chapels, as well as a great way to challenge our athletic teams and other extracurriculars on how they represent our school and their God in our community.

Last week we held our freshman and senior retreats. Seniors were given the opportunity to reflect on their (almost) four years here at GRCHS and discuss both how they have and how they still hope to leave their mark on our school community. One of the activities that they participated in that day was to open a “letter to self” that they wrote in 9th grade. That letter included their

hopes for high school and beyond. For many, it was a very emotional experience. Students could both celebrate how far they’ve come and refocus on where they want to go in their relationships with Christ. Seniors were also given the chance to participate in an “open mic” time where they thanked classmates and teachers and reflected on God’s faithfulness over their time at GR Christian. It was a powerful time for our senior class!

Last year, three of our teachers attended the Colossian Forum and were trained in facilitating difficult conversations that contain conflict. *The Portrait of a Graduate* talks about “a broken but hopeful world.” The hope that comes from the Colossian Forum is that “our darkest conflicts become the places where the gospel shines the most brightly.” Alongside a group of students with diverse perspectives, they piloted these critical conversations in weekly meetings and had a wonderful experience. This fall, three more faculty members are being trained to continue this biblical work with our students.

### ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Each month, GRCMS recognizes eight **“Eagles of the Month”** — one female and one male student at each grade level whose attitude and accomplishments have gone above-and-beyond to make positive contributions to the school community. **“Eagles of the Month”** was created by GRCMS Student Life Coordinator Rueben Riley as a way to promote positive student behavior and to recognize students who embody Christ’s calling to bring love and build community.

**“EAGLE” of the month** is an acronym representing the following five qualities and characteristics:

- E**ngage and participate positively
- A**chieve academic success (doing one’s best in class)
- G**row in faith and knowledge of God
- L**ead by example
- E**mbrace and care for others

We believe that recognizing students that model these five attributes is important for promoting a positive culture among our student body on the GRCMS campus. The students that are selected each month are by no means the only good examples around campus; at the same time, it is important to publicly recognize positive contributions to community.

Because our mission is to prepare effective servants and disciples of Christ, recognizing the Eagles of the Month allows us to show the student body that we value the attributes and highlight students that demonstrate faithfulness and humility in their consistent positive contributions to school.

# GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE STORIES

## MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Every year, the elementary school adopts a theme for the year. Our theme for this year is “**Creation Care.**” We have lots of wonderful ideas for how we will use this theme to share many truths about the God we love with your children.

The Bible verse we have chosen to highlight with our theme is: Psalm 24:1 (NIRV) *“The earth belongs to the Lord. And so does everything in it. The world belongs to him. And so do all those who live in it.”* We are using our theme to focus on the faith practice of caring for God’s creation. We are talking about how God has given us an amazing place to live and how we express our thanks by taking good care of it. Taking good care of our earth means recycling, reusing and reducing.

Parents are invited to join us in praying that our children will grow closer to Christ and to each other as we share how much God loves each one of us. We encourage parents to partner with us in talking about our theme whenever they can at home. When children hear the same message at home and school, the power of the message is multiplied. We covet prayers and ideas as we look for ways to make our theme come alive in the lives of our children.

## ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL



Our Team Two *Disciples of Christ* led us in worship during chapel time on Friday, September 14. These students prayed and read scripture. They also created a beautiful banner which is hanging in our worship space. The banner is a visual reminder that our roots are in God, Jesus and the Spirit with the support of prayer, scripture, worship and singing.

## HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Walking the RCS hallways, I am continuously reminded of the incredible gift of Christian education. Evidence of growing *Disciples of Christ* and our mission to equip his servants is clearly present. How do I know?

- Every morning at 8:00am, a group of staff faithfully gathers in the band room to pray for the RCS community.
- 5th graders meet once a month with adult mentors to engage in a “Know God” book study.
- 7/8th graders once a month lead groups of younger grades in discussion at Family Time (called community groups).
- Staff members intentionally and faithfully lead devotions with their classes each morning, spending time in prayer and opening scripture.
- At our first Family Time, a parent who had lost his wife to cancer the day before attended. He was recognized and prayed for by the Principal and again by Mr. Phil during the family time. It was a beautiful example of faithfulness and resilience in a difficult time. The children are cared for and loved by the staff on a daily basis which includes help from our School Social Worker to understand and support a grieving child. I saw a beautiful thing, in that a grieving parent chose the RCS community to share his grief publicly, but he also sought comfort for himself and his two children.
- RCS was blessed to have Mr. David Worst participate and present at one of our first Family Times. David, who has Cerebral Palsy, works at the school two days a week. His message that day and continually is one that exemplifies faithfulness, resilience and humility. He is connected to and loved by the students. A faithful parent volunteer provides his transportation to and from RCS every Monday and Tuesday.

When I began my role as RCS’ principal, I wondered if I would experience and observe first-hand these kinds of examples of faith nurture. Would they be simply routine activities? To what extent would students and staff be truly engaged in discipleship and faith formation. As I walk the halls, visit classrooms, participate and occasionally lead classroom devotions, and talk with staff and students, I have found that the teachers and students are very attentive to this core value and that teachers deeply engaged with their students and this community. To follow Christ you need to know Him and at RCS, students and teachers truly do know Christ.

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 1

Strengthen the Board of Trustees' strategic role to ensure its leadership of the institution in order to advance Grand Rapids Christian Schools' mission for future generations of students.

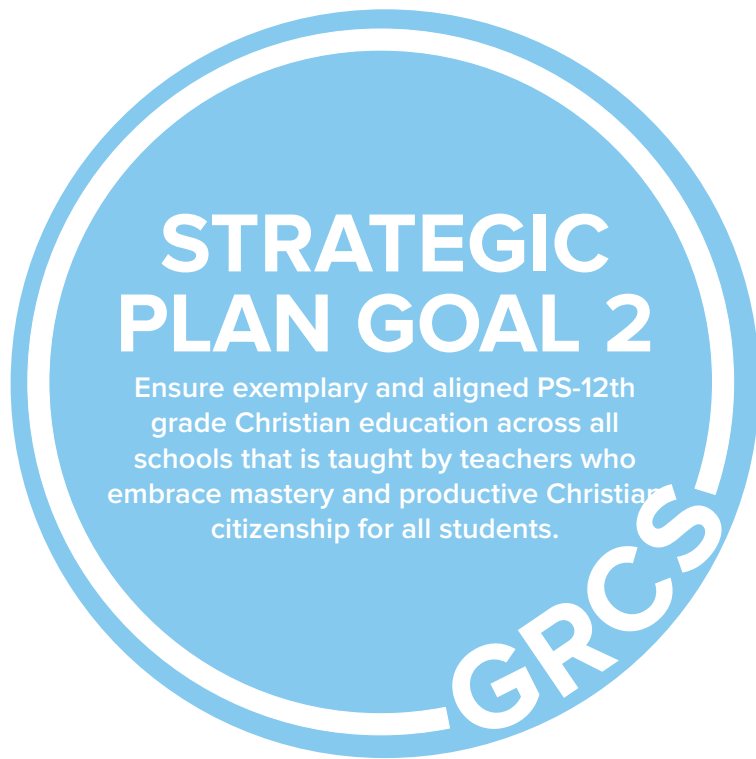
GRCS

#### **TOM DEJONGE — SUPERINTENDENT**

The 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, approved by the Board at its retreat on August 22, 2018, is now official and provides the roadmap for us to follow over the next four years. As was true for the prior strategic plan, it is a consolidated document that incorporates the goals of the most recent school improvement plan and accreditation report. The new plan becomes the foundation of our board's and administrative team's efforts and it will remain a priority in our educational program, operations, and advancement planning in the year to come.

In order to keep the goals of the plan in front of you as board members and provide evidence of our focused efforts, we will once again utilize the monthly board report. This year, given our work on Portrait of a Graduate and the goals of the new strategic plan, the board report takes on a new look. Will be curious to see what you think!

# GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS



### **BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL**

At GRCHS, we began the year by creating two school-wide teams to support our MTSS framework that supports student learning. The school leadership team is made up of administrators and department chairs who work together as a guiding coalition for the school, ensuring that we have distributed leadership and healthy change. One focus area early in the year has been the implementation of our new teacher evaluation plan. Some teachers on this team will be the first teachers evaluated using this new tool. Including teacher leaders in this process ensures that we are transparent about expectations and that we stay focused on professional growth.

The other school-wide team is our school intervention team. This team, led by Nick DeKoster, is made up of administrators, counselors, students support/inclusion coordinators, and our social worker. This team creates referral systems, evaluates our interventions, and implements plans for our “tier 2 and 3” (most at risk) students.

During the week of October 15, we will send two groups to workshops focused on best practices in MTSS

and curriculum/instruction. Most members of the school leadership team attended a conference together on October 15 and 16 to continue to learn about best practices in leading the MTSS framework. We also will send our entire math department to a workshop that focuses on curriculum and instruction as a mathematics professional learning team.

Members of our administrative team and teaching faculty continue exciting discussions around the Spanish Immersion program transitioning to the high school. Over the last 1.5 years, we have been meeting with Calvin College to discuss how we can partner to give these students challenges and opportunities using the Spanish language. We are close to solidifying a plan that could potentially result in SI students finishing high school with enough college credits for a minor in Spanish. More importantly, we believe there will be many opportunities for these students to serve and learn more about God’s world.

### **ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL**

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a system of student support that we have begun implementing this year at GRCMS. This has been an initiative undertaken on all GRCS campuses as one of the key goals in the new strategic plan. By implementing a MTSS framework, our goal is to provide “certain access” for support to all students so that we have a systematic process by which we identify and provide necessary academic and behavioral supports and interventions to our students.

The implementation of the MTSS framework has been initiated this year and will take a couple of school years to fully implement as we modify time in schedules and reorganize positions and personnel to serve students in the various tiers of support with the appropriate levels of service. Our goal in providing “certain access” is that we will be flexible and fluid to provide support for any student requiring it in a “timely, targeted, systematic” way.

The implementation of “Focus Time” in 7th and 8th grades at GRCMS this year has been one tangible change in the schedule as part of the MTSS implementation. Just as it does at GRCHS, “Focus Time” has allowed for interventions, enrichment, and study sessions to happen for students for 30 minutes, four times per week (Monday – Thursday). The GRCMS students utilize the same app that GRCHS students use in order to select a Focus session to attend each day or they are locked in by a teacher or other staff member to a session that would be beneficial to their learning.

For two separate weeks at the end of September, our GRCMS



## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

5th graders had the opportunity to learn for five days at John Ball Park Zoo. This partnership has existed for a number of years now for Rockford Christian and GRCMS students to learn at the Zoo alongside their teachers and the Zoo's educational staff. Students from two 5th grade homerooms went one week and students from the other two 5th grade homerooms went the following week. Students learn a number of science and social studies standards during the week, work individually and in groups, and have the chance to observe one animal for an hour per day each day during the week. We are blessed to have this opportunity to partner with John Ball Zoo as a local educational partner!

### MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

GRCS Administrative Professional Learning Team has adopted the Marzano Evaluation Framework to provide teachers with effective feedback on their instruction and the conditions for learning in their classrooms. Marzano has identified teaching and learning elements that are effective in promoting student growth. The feedback focuses on student learning results rather than instruction.

This year, the goal is to pilot this evaluation framework at each campus. Here at Iroquois, we are working with two pilot groups, the 3rd grade teachers and the most recently-hired Spanish immersion teachers. These pilot groups are studying the elements, developing lesson plans specific to the Marzano Framework, being observed, and participating in feedback. Each pilot group is working with Sara Seth, Chris McWhertor, and me. Sara, Chris and I participated in the summer training for the framework so we could provide direction in the process and provide consistent feedback on the observations.

The staff and administration at the elementary agree the new evaluation process done well will be an important part of our systemic efforts to “ensure exemplary and aligned PS-12th grade Christian education across all schools that is taught by teachers who embrace mastery.”

### ANN BAKKER — GRCS EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Evergreen teachers are currently reading, studying and discussing the book The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity by George Couros.

Some quotes from the book:

*“Change almost never fails because it's too early. It almost always fails because it's too late.”* (Seth Godin)

*“When we think differently about the things that we are used to seeing daily, we can create innovative learning opportunities.”* (Couros)

### HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Along with the other campuses, RCS is implementing the Marzano Evaluation tool as a pilot. I am piloting the new tool with two RCS teachers, and we will use this experience to inform our full implementation next year.

RCS staff members are increasingly using data and dialogue at bi-weekly grade level PLT meetings to identify students who need interventions and then designing and implementing interventions aligned with that level of support. This is a change from how the former ESS support was provided to classroom teachers. It is specific to the students' academic needs and rooted in carefully analyzed student achievement data.

# GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

## STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3

Establish a Christian learning institution that is reflective of, demonstrates respect for, and supportive of deepened relationships within Grand Rapids Christian Schools' increasingly diverse student body and the broader community.

# GRCS

### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Last month, the social studies professional learning team was asked to perform an “audit” of the way they teach history within the context of race. The hope is to ensure that historical truths that have often been omitted from textbooks and state standards are presented to students with a Christian perspective. We are striving to make the curriculum more relevant and meaningful for our students of color.

Last month we began our trainings with the **Cultural Intelligence Center**. Scheduled to attend the trainings is at least one teacher from each department as well as a staff person from the administrative team, food service staff, front office secretaries, counseling department, custodial staff, and athletic department. We will also have six staff persons certified as trainers to continue this important work in the future.

Our Inclusion Coordinator, Linda Greenfield has begun meeting with Kim Primus, who leads our K-8 inclusion program. These meetings will ensure K-12 alignment in academic, spiritual, social, vocational, and co-curricular programming for elementary, middle, and high school students. Our inclusion staff is leading the **Eagle Links**

program to facilitate peer to peer support and friendships. The club has already resulted in more visibility of our inclusion students and more opportunities for us to celebrate the gifts of all our students.

### ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Our spiritual theme for the school year at GRCMS is “*Build the Kingdom Here.*” We are focusing on our collective and individual roles as Kingdom builders—both locally and globally. Our theme verse this year is Micah 6: 8 - “*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*”

We want our middle school students to understand that they are part of God’s work of building His Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” by each action each day—both “here” at GRCMS and also “here” on God’s earth. Some of our initial chapels have focused on helping students to understand the breadth of God’s Kingdom and on helping students to understand the journey of attitudes toward individuals with disabilities—how humans move from ignorance or pity to care and friendship to ultimately seeing one another as co-laborers in God’s Kingdom work.

### MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Enrollment inquiries for the 2019-2020 are starting to come in and in the last two weeks we have had three inquiries for children with special needs. Clearly our reputation in the community is positive in this area. It is our prayer that all children interact with the wide diversity of children in the Christian community while they attend school here.

These enrollments are important. It is in the day-to-day interactions that happen under the nurturing guidance of loving Christian educators that children truly learn to understand each other, to accept each other and to encourage and support each other.

Parents and other educators that visit us consistently remark that they can see our commitment to serving all children. They see the financial support we put behind our program. They also see the commitment of the staff.

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

### **ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL**

Grand Friends Day was a wonderful opportunity to welcome many guests to our campus. Evergreen students led worship with and for Grand Friends, gave many tours of our building, and spent time with our guests who represented a diverse group of adults.

### **HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL**

We are grateful at RCS that a community donor has come forth and provided an additional \$11,000 earmarked for tuition assistance. This helps families who are choosing RCS, but for whom the cost of tuition might be an insurmountable barrier. We recognize and embrace diversity in all areas of life - social, economic, race, intelligence, disability and others.

We are grateful for our two students with significant disabilities and how they are enfolded in the school community. RCS is expanding its support and inclusion through an increased implementation of Circle of Friends.

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 4

Implement a comprehensive advancement model where admissions, development, marketing and communications, and database management work cohesively to advance Grand Rapids Christian Schools' mission.

GRCS

#### LINDSAY HART — DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

The Advancement Team is off to a strong start as we have begun to roll out the plans that took place this summer. October is full of events, planning for year-end and preparing for upcoming Admission events.

Here are a few of the things on which we have been focusing:

- We have launched our new website and we look forward to our increased ability to drive and support advancement efforts through this new platform. Jana Hogle oversaw this project and did a fantastic job - thanks Jana!
- We also completed a thorough fundraising and advancement audit in order to coordinate and streamline advancement outreach to parents, grandparents, alumni, and donors and ensure we are working towards a coordinated and consistent communications message.
- One of our Advancement goals includes new donor engagement strategies. Last week, we hosted an Advanced Giving gathering with the intended purpose of updating interested attendees on the current state

of the schools; the vision for Grand Rapids Christian Schools going forward; and Jamie Kuiper, President of National Christian Foundations, shared some information on tax law changes and alternative forms of charitable giving. Tom DeJonge did a great job engaging the group in conversation and Jamie Kuiper offered insightful and helpful information. This event was very well received by all who attended.

- The annual report is complete and currently at the print house. We will portray Portrait of a Graduate in this year's report, which will be distributed to over 15,000 households. This should arrive in mailboxes around October 25.
- On October 24, we will have our annual J. Herman Fles luncheon. Kara VanDrie will be our guest speaker this year and will offer great perspective and insight on the importance of Christian education as a parent, volunteer and Advancement Committee member.
- The upcoming months will be filled with several different Admissions events at each campus. Each of these focus on showcasing Grand Rapids Christian Schools and offer a glimpse of who we are and what sets us apart from other schools. Each campus has a Director of Admissions who does a great job connecting with prospective families and walking them through the admissions process.
- We are currently working evaluating the effectiveness of our inbound and outbound marketing. Amy Orr, our Director of Marketing and Admissions, will develop a campus-specific marketing plan for the 2019-2020 school year, which will include updating and re-branding marketing pieces as needed. We are also meeting as an Admissions team to evaluate each event, revise as needed, and consider new retention strategies.
- In order to increase retention of students between Rockford Christian and GRCHS, Harry Knol, RCS' Admissions Director, and members of the Advancement Team met to discuss strategies to build connections between RCS parents and the high school. We focused our discussion on ways to strengthen the value of a Grand Rapids Christian High School education, ways to illustrate the strength of GRCHS' faith nurture efforts, and building on what students already have at RCS being also available at the high school. Next steps include further conversations between the RCS teaching and admissions staff, listening to input from RCS parents and students, and reaching out to parents about what they are looking for in a Christian high school experience for their children.

# GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

## STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 5

Ensure a business model for financial sustainability that supports the educational program and advances the mission of Grand Rapids Christian Schools.

GRCS

### JIM PRIMUS — CFO

GRCS Revised Operating Budget for the 2018-19 school year is complete, and was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee at its October 4 meeting. Highlights of the Revised Budget include a 2.0% wage increase for staff + Steps, 5% increase in Insurance Premiums, an Eagles Fund goal of \$1.70 million, Tech/Capital Allocation reduced to \$530,000, a tuition increase of \$295/student (3%), and an Operating Reserve equal to 1% of total operating expenses. A summary of the Revised Budget will be reviewed and approved by the BOT at its meeting on October 22, 2018.

With the completion of the 2018-19 GRCS Revised Budget, we will begin work on the 2019-20 Budget and expect to schedule a meeting in early November with the GRCS Compensation Committee.

The 2017-18 Audit is nearly complete. Beene Garter Managing Partner Tom Rosenbach will meet with the GRCS Finance Committee on December 6, 2018. We expect a clean report.

A number of area Christian Schools have worked together with Mike Hagerty, KISD, and Mary Bauman, Counsel at

Miller Johnson, over the past five months on developing a 403(b) Tax-Sheltered Annuity, known as Christian Schools Retirement Incentive Consortium, as a result of the CSI Pension being hard frozen effective September 1, 2019. Tom reports that the Executive Committee reviewed and supported this Defined Contribution plan as a replacement to the CSI Pension Plan at its meeting in early October. The BOT will be asked at its October 22 to authorize GRCS to join the Consortium.

### MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Financial stability rests in great part on enrollment. We are serving 201 preschool children this year and this is a gain of 27 over last year. Our preschool program needs to be exemplary for us to maintain enrollment and it is. What makes it exemplary?

High quality teachers - It starts here. GRCS preschool teachers are trained specialist that hold teaching degrees.

Solid commitments - At the Iroquois Campus. we have guiding principles and belief statements that drive our program. They are the basis of all decisions. They are the tape with which we measure ourselves. It is a blessing to be able to clearly share our program when potential parents ask questions.

Age-appropriate learning expectations - We have a curriculum and that details our learning goals for all children. Each learning target is presented as a continuum of learning where children are guided to learn while at the same time given the time they need to learn.

Robust assessment - Teachers keep a detailed learning portfolio that charts the child's progress on each element of the curriculum. Parents know what their children are learning.

### ANN BAKKER — GRCS EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

As we read the book The Innovator's Mindset, we are also looking carefully at some of the learning spaces in our building to determine how they can best be used for student learning.

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES



### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Last month, WOOD TV8 ran their daybreak show from Eagles Stadium. We had roughly 100 students come out at 6:00 AM to show school spirit and be part of their show. WOOD TV8 ran stories on the mark that Rich DeVos left on GRCS as well as the historical context that the GR City League provided for our game that week vs. West Catholic. It was a great day, made even better by the fact that we won the game!

It's been a great fall for our athletic teams! Here is an update on each varsity team:

- Our boys' soccer team is conference champs with a 12-0 record and are ranked #2 in the state. We will host state semi-finals on October 31 and it would be great to have our boys playing!
- Our girls' golf team is very young, but managed to finish second in the conference tournament and sixth at regionals. Rachel Muir qualified for the state tournament.
- Girls' volleyball is ranked #1 in the state and is conference champions. They are eager to make some noise in the state tournament. We will host regionals at 7:30pm on Nov. 6 and 6pm on Nov. 8.

- Boys' tennis is ranked #4 in the state and is regional champions for the first time in a decade! Six flight champions and the other two runner-ups make us very excited for their trip to the State Finals in Novi Oct. 19 and 20.
- Girls' swimming is ranked #7 in the state and have competed in the toughest swim conference in the state. We look forward to a very strong showing at the state tournament.
- Boys' cross country is ranked #8 in the state. They are the current frontrunners in the conference but still have one more conference meet. Regionals at Allendale are on Oct. 27 and the state finals are on November 3 at MIS.
- Girls' cross country is ranked #9 in the state and competes in the state's toughest conference. In the regionals at Allendale, they will attempt to qualify for state for the 18th straight year.
- Football is ranked #8 in the state in Division 3 and secured both a playoff spot and a share of the conference title with a thrilling win over EGR in week 8. The regular season ends at home on Oct. 19 vs Wayland. Selection Sunday on October 21 will determine our playoff opportunity.

### MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

The beginning of the school year has a lot of events that build our community. It is worth highlighting two here:

- Grand Friends Day - We hosted over 1,000 Grand Friends on Friday, October 5. Over 800 joined us for the all-school program in the gym. The day was a big success.
- Foot Frolic Frenzy - This is our annual PTO fundraiser. Our PTO business model is to raise every dollar we need for next year during the current year. This way we can budget with real money and not be working to make budget. We raise more than 90% of the money we need during this one fundraiser. We project that we will raise \$60,000 this year. In addition to raising funds for the PTO, Foot Frolic Frenzy is a school community event attended by hundreds of parents and grandparents during the day. They come to cheer their kids on. They come to enjoy a day at their school.

## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES

### HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

We welcomed approximately 240 grand friends at Grand Friends Day earlier this month. If you haven't seen RCS' pumpkin patch, a really neat feature started a number of years ago by a former RCS principal, stop by to take a look! RCS 2nd graders grew their own pumpkins, picked them, advertised them, and sold them at Grandfriends Day! It was great fun and a true sign that fall has arrived.

The RCS playground is intended to be an extension of the classroom and we have lots of property to explore! We are beginning a dialogue with the preschool teachers on how the school grounds can be enhanced to support Preschool and early grades through natural playscapes. And students have planned and are working to develop a nature trail through the adjoining property. Students will not only develop the trail but eventually serve as the naturalists for the trail leading younger groups of students.



**GRAND RAPIDS  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**