

2018 – 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

Consolidated Accreditation And School Improvement Plan

**Timothy Alles, President Board of Trustees
Thomas DeJonge, Superintendent**

Approved August 22, 2018

Table of Contents

2018-2019 Board of Trustees	Page 2
Mission and Core Values	Page 3
Goal One	Page 5
Goal Two	Page 6
Goal Three	Page 7
Goal Four	Page 8
Goal Five	Page 9
Appendix One: Portrait of a Graduate	Page 10
Appendix One: Portrait of a Professional Educator	Page 11

Grand Rapids Christian Schools Board Of Trustees 2018-2019

Timothy Alles - President, '20

Michael Meeuwsen - Vice-president, '20

Thomas Prince - Treasurer, '20

Patricia Harris - Secretary, '21

Paul Devries, '19

Jill Ellens, '21

Candace Smith-King, '19

Julie Westra, '19

David Vanwingerden, '20

MISSIONS STATEMENT

Preparing students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society

CORE VALUES

Rooted in Christ

Impressing a strong knowledge of God, a love for His word, and an understanding that all we do is in honor of Him are fundamental to a Christian school education. Rather than measuring all aspects of program against worldly standards, we measure program against biblical standards in order to equip students to live out their faith in their relationships, character, and service to others.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. “

Proverbs 22:6

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

Educated for Life

Passionate and dedicated Christian educators develop learning environments and implement effective and relevant instructional practices that engage today’s students and build a love for learning. What, when, and how we teach must effectively transition all learners to be effective servants of Christ in today’s society, which is global, digital and technology rich, and driven by innovation and creativity. What students learn from us must prepare them for what God calls them to do, motivate them to be the best they can be, and instill a love for learning that is lifelong. Further, we must equip them to be Christian leaders within their homes, churches, and communities on a local, national and international level today and for the decades to come.

Deuteronomy 4:9

“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”

Connected through Relationships

Relationships are essential to learning, and precede a student’s ability to cognitively engage in the learning process. We must create a community of learning that starts with the student’s personal relationship with Christ. Further, our learners must experience intentional, positive, caring relationships with parents, peers, and school staff. It is through meaningful relationships developed in a Christian context that students mature in their faith, strive to achieve, experience success, and fulfill their God-given potential.

Philippians 2:3-5

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above

yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

I Corinthians 12:25-26

“...so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

Contemporary Testimony, Paragraph 34

“In our world, where many journey alone, God, by His gracious choosing in Christ, gathers a new community – those who by God’s gift put their trust in Christ. In the new community all are welcome; the homeless come home, the broken find healing, the sinner makes a new start, the despised are esteemed, the least are honored, and the last are first. Here the Spirit guides and grace abounds.”

United with Home and Church

Strong spiritual foundations are firmly established when Christian home, church, and schoolwork in partnership. Christian schools exist to assist parents to fulfill the biblical mandate to “train up their children in the way they should go” and collaborate with the church in teaching children in God’s truths.

Contemporary Testimony, Paragraphs 46 and 47

“We are the family of God, serving Christ together in Christian community (church)... We offer our lives to building the kingdom, teaching and modeling the ways of the Lord so our children may know Jesus as Lord and learn to use their gifts in lives of joyful service (family). Serving the Lord in whom all things hold together, we support sound education in our communities and we foster schools and teaching in which God’s truth shines in all learning (school).”

Ecclesiastes 4:12

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Called to Serve

Excellence in God’s eyes is doing one’s best in Glory of Him. As a Christian school, we affirm that all that we do, the culture we establish, the relationships we build, the lessons we teach, and the activities we support must be defined within the context of whether they bring honor and glory to God. Service is an opportunity for Christ to be visibly revealed as the Lord of all things. Through service we engage in worshipping God and extending the love of Christ in transformative ways through our actions.

Mark 10:43-45

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

1 Peter 4:10

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

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

Identified needs:

Christian schools include three organizational partners who work in service to the school's students:

1. The board establishes the mission, hires the Head of School, engages the Head of School in establishing the vision, plans for the future, and provides the resources (money and facilities) needed for that plan to succeed;
2. The administration, led by the Head of School, articulates the vision, aligns the vision to the Board's strategic plan, carries out the board's strategic plan, and supports the faculty to success; and
3. The faculty serve the children, deliver the mission, and act collaboratively as a professional learning community. The staff support both administration and faculty by engaging with resources and planning for their effective deployment.

In order for Grand Rapids Christian Schools to continue to thrive, the board must focus its attention on ensuring effective school leadership, administrative and board transition, and sustained strategic governance.

- **Measurable Objective 5-1**
Adopt an annual process for Board self-assessment.
- **Measurable Objective 5-2**
Adopt a policy for gathering ongoing parent feedback.
- **Measurable Objective 5-3**
Develop a policy for disposition of student records.
- **Measurable Objective 5-4**
Develop an administrative transition plan in order to sustain strength of administrative team.
- **Measurable Objective 5-5**
Create board handbook to ensure effective onboarding of new Trustees and ongoing strategic board leadership.

GOAL #2

ENSURE EXEMPLARY AND ALIGNED PS-12TH GRADE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS THAT IS TAUGHT BY TEACHERS WHO EMBRACE MASTERY AND PRODUCTIVE CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL STUDENTS

Identified needs:

Grand Rapids Christian Schools staff must complete its identification of essential standards/targets for all disciplines, including establishing consistent and aligned Biblical perspective benchmarks. In addition, there is lack of consistent organizational commitment to the development of a common curriculum and to ensuring all students learn the essential standards and grade-level benchmarks, that all students meet growth level expectations, and that intervention plans are in place for those students who have yet to meet growth expectations.

- **Measurable Objective 3-1**

Establish, demonstrate, and apply a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework of instruction that provides support to ALL students to ensure mastery of grade-level content standards.

- **Measurable Objective 3-2**

Align 100% of all content areas to state and/or national standards and document the standards in Curriculum Trak according to the following schedule:

- Elementary – 2018
- Middle – 2019
- High School - 2020

- **Measurable Objective 3-3**

Document a curriculum revision process for Grand Rapids Christian Schools.

- **Measurable Objective 3-4**

Document 100% of GRCS biblical/faith integration standards in all content areas in Curriculum Trak by December 2018.

- **Measurable Objective 3-5**

Implement GRCS assessment plan so that teaching staff at GRCS knows and utilizes the content of the assessment plan and is able to ensure learning is targeted on the mastery of essential standards and grade-level benchmarks for all students.

- **Measurable Objective 3-6**

Identify, launch, and evaluate a teacher evaluation tool and evaluation process that is consistent with State of Michigan requirements and aligns GRCS Core Values and vision for teaching and learning

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.

Identified needs:

Grand Rapids Christian Schools desires to be a learning community that embraces all families in West Michigan who desire a Christian education for their children. As GRCS has become more diverse racially, socio-economically, and in serving students with increasingly diverse learning needs, GRCS must identify specific areas where improved staff competency and communication is needed in order to effectively serve all students.

- **Measurable Objective 3-1**
Establish a three-year partnership with the Cultural Intelligence Center (CIC) to assess our current progress toward diversity and inclusion, analyzes the findings, and implement recommendations for building cultural intelligence across the school community.
- **Measurable Objective 3-2**
Ensure that Grand Rapids Christian Schools' facilities and website provide accessibility and support the dignity of all individuals within the school community by August 31, 2018.
- **Measurable Objective 3-3**
Ensure equity of access to academic, behavioral, and social emotional support is available for students at Grand Rapids Christian High School
- **Measurable Objective 3-4**
Implement a new student information management system by the spring of 2018.
- **Measurable Objective 3-5**
Reaffirm, revise, clarify and further articulate GRCS' Core Values to ensure diversity and inclusion is explicit and embedded in policies and practices.
- **Measurable Objective 3-6**
Complete a comprehensive review of all GRCS policies to determine if they act as a benefit or barrier to building an inclusive culture.
- **Measurable Objective 3-7**
Develop a systematic plan for student behavior and school culture that is proactive and relational in nature, restorative in function, and that engages students as part of the process.

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

Identified needs:

Grand Rapids Christian Schools has increased its investment in admissions and development since these areas of focus were initially established in 1998. Traditionally, they have operated as distinct departments. Grand Rapids Christian Schools' efforts are strengthened through positioning itself as the faith-based school of choice for students from throughout the greater Grand Rapids community, continuous and sustained enrollment, and expanded charitable giving from increased sectors of the Schools' stakeholder groups.

- **Measurable Objective 4-1**
Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic communications, development, and marketing plan for Grand Rapids Christian Schools.
- **Measurable Objective 4-2**
Attract and maintain a diverse student body.
- **Measurable Objective 4-3**
Strengthen the culture of engagement of current students, parents, grandparents, alumni, and community.
- **Measurable Objective 4-4**
Promote public knowledge and understanding of Eagles Fund in order to achieve and sustain a \$1.7 million annual goal.
- **Measurable Objective 4-5**
Ensure that Grand Rapids Christian Schools is well supported to meet the needs of current and future students by pursuing opportunities to increase endowment.
- **Measurable Objective 4-6**
Effectively communicate and link strategic goals of the organization to individual goals of advancement team members.

GOAL #5

ENSURE A BUSINESS MODEL FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY THAT SUPPORTS THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ADVANCES THE MISSION OF GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Identified needs:

Grand Rapids Christian Schools retired a \$20 million long-term bond debt in 2012. In 2013, the Schools began to address a \$3.5 million operational debt that had accrued as a result of many years of annual operational deficits. Since that time, operational debt has been reduced to approximately \$1.5 million and it is necessary for the remaining operational debt to be eliminated and funds must be set aside to support educational programs, employee compensation packages to attract and retain high quality staff, and capital reserves to pay for the depreciation of the Schools' capital assets.

- **Measurable Objective 5-1**
Ensure effective and competitive staff compensation.
- **Measurable Objective 5-2**
Eliminate long-standing operational debt.
- **Measurable Objective 5-3**
Establish a capital reserve of \$1 million to fund for depreciation of capital assets.
- **Measurable Objective 5-4**
Distribute financial aid in an amount not to exceed 10% of overall annual operational expenses.

APPENDIX ONE: PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

When choosing a school, families have many things to consider: location, quality of education, safety, extracurricular offerings, and much more.

But what really sets one school apart from another? At Grand Rapids Christian, our mission is “preparing students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society,” and we take that calling seriously. Through our mission statement, vision for the future, core value statements, and daily goals both in and out of the classroom, we aim to mold students into the kind of servants who will care for and restore God’s world.

Yes, we educate students at a high level. Yes, we coach them on the field, direct them on the stage, and travel with them around the world. Many schools do these things well. But what really makes a graduate of the Grand Rapids Christian Schools unique?

Our Portrait of a Graduate describes just that.

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.

APPENDIX ONE: PORTRAIT OF A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

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

- Affirm students, parents, and colleagues as children of God and servants in His kingdom.
- Contribute to the Christian community by sending their children to a Christian school and being an active member of a Christian church.
- Model biblical principles when working with students, parents, and colleagues.
- Encourage and nurture the faith development of the students.
- Share their faith articulately with students, parents and colleagues.
- Integrate faith and Christian values in instruction and curriculum.
- Motivate students to recognize and use their God-given gifts to work in God's kingdom.
- Live a God-honoring life in keeping with the Basis of Grand Rapids Christian Schools.

CULTURALLY COMPETENT PROFESSIONALS

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

- Show awareness that the students in our schools comprise many different backgrounds that encompass our view of diversity. This includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values, national origin, and political beliefs.
- Show awareness and understanding of how these differences are articulated in a school setting with different communication needs, learning styles and behaviors.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive campus and classroom for all students.
- Show respect for and, in turn, expect respect from all students, families, and colleagues on a daily basis.
- Work to create a learning space and experiences that will motivate and engage the abilities of diverse learners.
- Model cultural respect in interactions with students, families, and colleagues.

COMMUNICATORS AND COLLABORATORS

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

- Effectively communicate with colleagues, administrators, and parents in person, in writing, and using various media.
- Communicate effectively students with respect in ways that build and promote growth and maintain appropriate student-teacher relationships.
- Maintain a positive, collaborative, and responsible partnership with parents.
- Handle confrontations and disagreements sensitively and respectfully.
- Support colleagues personally and professionally, consistently following through with collaborative decisions.
- Collaborate with colleagues to implement curriculum that is aligned to standards.
- Treat confidential information sensitively..
- Show respect for and sensitivity to others when using social media.

THOUGHTFUL NEIGHBORS

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

- Demonstrate a pattern of behavior which reflects a Christ-centered life both inside and outside of school.
- Present a public presence (e.g., social media, neighborhood functions, church, clubs, associations, etc.) which is widely recognized as positive, open, warm, and respectful of others.
- Positively engage with community organizations, serving as salt and light.
- Dedicate themselves to the Golden Rule and Christ's command to love our neighbor.
- Demonstrate an attitude of humility, integrity, and grace.
- Show respect and sensitivity when handling a confrontation or disagreement and analyze issues from a variety of perspectives.
- Interact positively with colleagues and demonstrate positive attitudes
- Assume positive intent in interactions with the entire school community

JUSTICE SEEKERS

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

- Aid our students to view themselves as builders of God's kingdom here on earth.
- Allow students to understand and practice action-oriented tasks that are associated with justice and inclusion in their daily lives at school and in their communities.
- Instruct students on the different ways to appropriately resolve conflict with others, and model appropriate behaviors as faculty and staff in day-to-day interactions with colleagues..
- Show a commitment to justice through actions taken inside and outside of the classroom through resolution of issues between students.
- Show students how to recognize and understand injustice as they work through the curriculum, and help them to find ways to address injustice through community engagement.
- In conflict situations, listen to parents and students from all sides, and try to resolve injustices in a way that best serves all students.

CREATIVE SOLUTION FINDERS

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

- Understand that every student is uniquely created by God, fearfully and wonderfully made, and constantly look for ways to make learning authentic for all students.
- Respond to students' needs in a timely manner, varying teaching methodology in a way that benefits all learning styles, and offering opportunities for all students to enhance learning outside of the traditional classroom.
- Approach the act of teaching as a way to provide students with the ability to continue educating themselves through discernment and discovery, not just as a means to deliver content.
- Constantly look for ways in which they can communicate God's truth through their curriculum and encourage students to apply these truths to their own learning and lives.
- Work well in a collaborative setting, sharing and learning from each other and taking advantage of diverse viewpoints to solve and address issues in the school environment,

LIFELONG EXPLORERS

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

- Demonstrate a realization that learning is a lifelong journey for both students and teachers.
- Engage in regular reflections and self-assessments, both personally and professionally.
- Critically evaluate new methods of teaching and learning to best engage with their content.
- Create professional learning environments that promote active engagement, participation, and collaboration
- Continue education and training to remain current and meet State certification requirements.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A PORTRAIT OF A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

Romans 12: 6-7

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift . . . is teaching, then teach.

1 Corinthians 12: 27–29

You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it. First, God has placed apostles in the church. Second, he has placed prophets in the church. Third, he has placed teachers in the church. Then he has given to the church miracles and gifts of healing. He also has given the gift of helping others and the gift of guiding the church. God also has given the gift of speaking in different kinds of languages. Is everyone an apostle? Is everyone a prophet? Is everyone a teacher? Do all work miracles?

Luke 6:40

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Titus 2:7-8

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

James 3:1-2

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

Matthew 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.