

18
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19
BOARD
REPORT
GRCS

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

January 14,
2019



THEME

**& COMMUNICATORS
COLLABORATORS**

2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

JANUARY 14, 2019

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

| JANUARY 2019 | | | |
|--------------|----------|--|-----------------------|
| 7-18 | | GRCHS <i>Winterim</i> | GRCHS |
| 7 | 7:00 am | Executive Committee Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 10 | 7:30 am | Finance Committee Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 10 | 3:45 pm | Professional Status Committee Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 14 | 12:30 pm | Education Committee Meeting | GRCHS Conference Room |
| 14 | 5:00 pm | Board of Trustees Meeting (w. Sandra Upton, CIC) | GRCS Board Room |
| 15 | 6:00 pm | The Internet & Anxiety: Keeping Kids Safe | The Garage @ GRCHS |
| 22 | 3:45 pm | Professional Status Committee Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 24 | 10:00 am | Foundation Committee Meeting | RDV Corporation |
| 28 | 6:15 pm | Donor Engagement Dinner | GRCS HUB |

| FEBRUARY 2019 | | | |
|---------------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 | 7:00 am | Executive Committee Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 7 | 7:30 am | Finance Committee Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 14 | 12:00 pm | Advancement Committee Meeting | GRCHS Conference Room |
| 18 | 6:00 pm | GRCS Annual Meeting | GRCS HUB |
| 21 | 8:00 am | New 2 You Board Meeting | GRCS Board Room |
| 22 & 25 | | Winter Break — No School | |
| 28 | 7:30 pm | 7th — 12th Grade Orchestra Concert | DeVos CAW |

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

United with Home
and Church

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

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 PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE STORIES



BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Collaboration is built into the fabric of our faculty culture at GRCHS. Each week, we start with an hour of collaborative time where we focus on student learning. We work in department/course teams to come to consensus on what we want students to learn, how we will assess it, how we will respond when they don't learn, and how we'll respond when they already know it. I believe that as we've learned how to better collaborate as adults, we've learned how to better teach this essential skill to our students.

The next two weeks at GRCHS are an exciting time as we begin our *Winterim* term. *Winterim* provides an opportunity for different learning experiences that help students learn to communicate and collaborate. In unique courses, students do more collaborative, project-based learning. Some specific courses that focus on collaboration and communication are: The Amazing Race, Gaming Unplugged, Robot Shop, The Art of Improv, Leading

Authentic Worship, and Spanish in the Community. The entire freshman class, made up of students from over thirty different middle schools, take the course "Life Together." They will come together and spend ten days growing both personally and as the class of 2022 as they participate in fun, team-building activities, worship, community service, and a series of sectionals on a variety of subjects. Students will hear from Grand Rapids Christian staff and leaders from the community as they learn more about their gifts and talents and discover ways that God might use them to serve here at school, in their homes, and later in the workplace. Some sophomore, junior, and senior students will travel around the globe during *Winterim*. While being immersed in a cultural experience, students learn by exploring and serving a community unlike their own. learning how to work as a team with trip leaders and peers as well as with those that they come into contact with in each new location. Many juniors and seniors will venture into the community and do professional internships. In these internships, students experience firsthand what it means to collaborate in the workforce and have effective communication with colleagues and clients.

We also will begin small groups this month at the high school. Small groups meet twice per month and are made up of an adult small group leader and 12 students, 6 males and 6 females, from 9th - 12th grade. In these small groups, students have an opportunity to get to know students that they might not normally know. They also will reflect on chapel, pray together, and discuss important issues. One of our goals in having these critical conversations is that students learn to articulate their ideas, listen to others, and consider multiple viewpoints. It's also a chance to even disagree in a way that honors God.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

GRCMS is in the midst of developing a Student Advisory Council in order to create a formal avenue for the students and staff to have dialogue and share ideas back-and-forth. For the past number of years, there has not been a "student council" or something like it at GRCMS, and the Student Life Team and staff members had been discussing this idea as a

way to give students a voice and promote leadership gifts in students.

We have identified twelve students (a combination of 7th and 8th graders) to establish the first Council in late January and will use the students to help us formulate what this group can be moving forward. We believe that the students should have investment and ownership in what this Council becomes.

A Student Advisory Council fits very well with the Portrait of a Graduate theme for this month because it allows students to collaborate with both other students and staff, and it gives opportunity for regular communication in school between the staff and student body. We hope that this Council will provide an opportunity for the students to have a direct voice in the culture and climate of GRCMS, as well as to take a direct role in promoting student leadership in the building.

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN PRINCIPAL

7th and 8th grade science students helping preschoolers understand Kinetic Energy. The Middle School students had to learn the principle and then share the knowledge, while in teams, in a way the preschoolers would understand.



MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Collaboration and communication are a way of life in strong effective schools. Teacher to teacher, parent to teacher, administrator to teacher, administrator to parent, administrator to administrator, teacher to student, and student to student; all these relationships are built on strong collaboration and excellent communication. At Iroquois, teachers and staff communicate and collaborate together and with parents and set an example for their students even as they encourage the students to do the same. Here are a few examples:

- Grade level teacher teams meet twice a week. Once a week they talk about instruction and curriculum. They work hard to make sure the education a child gets will be the same quality no matter which teacher they have. They share instruction ideas and plan together. Once a week grade level teams meet with support staff. In these

meetings, they identify student needs and decide how they can, as a team, best meet those needs. These times to meet are built into the schedule.

- Faculty council meets once a month. Faculty council provides a way for teachers to ask questions and to communicate needs with the administrator. Agendas are set together. These meetings promote a real sense that teachers and administrators are working as a team.
- Administrators and support team leaders meet once a month. Our focus is to talk about students that would benefit from social work and/or behavioral support. We set plans and interventions together. We also vet each situation to make sure we are working together.
- Teachers communicate with parents every week. They use blogs and home notes to share what students are doing here at school with their parents. The feedback we get from parents is that they are satisfied with the communication they get from teachers.
- Students meet with adult leaders in prayer circles twice a month. Students share their prayer needs and then pray for each other. Each prayer circle time starts with a look at a part of our school theme for the year. Leaders share and teach. They help kids to see deeper truths for themselves. They help kids apply Christian truths to their own lives. Students learn empathy. They learn to see concerns from the point of view of others. They also learn to listen to each other and to see life from another's point of view.

ANN BAKKER — GRCS EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

At Evergreen we are uniquely positioned to equip students to be effective **Communicators and Collaborators**. Each Thursday afternoon all students and teachers meet together for Team Time. Students meet in cross-grade-level groups to learn and work together as we explore the 2019-2020 Evergreen theme which is Communicating in God's Creation. During the month of December, the Team Time groups learned about how to communicate God's love at Christmas. The entire student body gathered to explore various Christmas symbols. Then, students split out into their teams to make Christmas cards for residents of the Veterans' Home. Team Time is an excellent opportunity for students to learn how to work together. It's exciting to watch the older students assist the younger students. Close friendships and good working relationships form during Team Time as students learn to be effective **Communicators and Collaborators**.

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

STRATEGIC PLAN 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.

GRCS

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Our school leadership team is made up of both administrators and teacher leaders. This leadership team meets every other week for 80 minutes to gain consensus about best practice and to create a plan to work towards these best practices at GRCHS. While each department team leader works collaboratively with both Nick DeKoster, the Director of Academic and Innovative Programs and with me to align curriculum, the leadership team decided collectively that we would have two focus areas to move our faculty forward in increasing student learning. First of all, we are working to develop a standards-based mindset in our classrooms which causes us to rethink the way we assess and grade students. A consultant will join us on our February 22 professional development day to work with middle school and high school faculty on this important transition. The other area of focus is our new Marzano teacher evaluation model. Having teacher leaders be a part of the implementation process helps faculty focus on their professional growth rather than the evaluation. This new model gives us common language about core

instruction that helps us all grow in the ways we teach and the knowledge of how students learn. This year is a pilot year for GRCS using this new evaluation method with roughly 10 teachers evaluated using the new tool. Next year, all faculty will be evaluated using the Marzano tool.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

During the current school year, GRCS administrators and teachers have been piloting a new teacher evaluation tool that we refer to as the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. The Marzano model was recommended by a study committee of teachers and administrators in the 2016-2017 school year, and administrators and a group of teachers were trained on its use in the summer of 2018.

This year, we have been piloting the tool with a group of teachers on each campus. At GRCMS, we have been piloting the tool with four teachers. Eric Burgess (principal), Lynnette Kooienga (academic program coordinator), and Sara Seth (assistant principal) have each been trained on using the Marzano tool, and they have been pairing up to do formal evaluations of teachers and to collaborate with the staff members in pre-observation and post-observation conferences to discuss the lessons and share observations and evidence about each lesson.

The first round of formal observations were completed before Christmas break and, while we have a lot still to learn with the Marzano tool, we are discovering that it provides rich opportunities for conversation about learning and teaching. We look forward to continuing to use this tool to help our teachers grow in their craft and become more effective educators for their students.

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Harry Knol (Principal), Julie Barrett (5th grade teacher), and Becca Iverson (3rd grade teacher) have worked through one round of the Marzano Evaluation model completing one full observation apiece. The learning from this first pilot implementation was highly beneficial and accomplished many things including: how to manage the iObservation online tool, what to abandon and what to embrace in the process, and how can we make this a fair and effective process that contributes to the growth of teacher's pedagogy.

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Effective communication and true collaboration are essential tools for accomplishing this goal. Collaboration at Iroquois is more than being friends and getting along. It is looking at what we teach and how we teach together and coming to common understandings. It is learning and then adopting best practice. We employ a number of tools to help us meet this goal. One way we meet this goal is to train teacher leaders so that they can share with and lead colleagues. At Iroquois, Kate Traylor is now a Reading Horizons trainer, Jenny Marsh is an expert in using running record methods to level students in reading, Ronda Pifer and Kim Primus are trained to use social stories to help kids understand social situations, and Judy Rooy and Vanessa Abreu are literacy coaches who meet with other literacy coaches in the county. Another way we meet this goal is to host learning labs. Teachers watch a colleague teach and then discuss what they saw. The conversation is facilitated by a trained coach, Cyndi Malefyt. The conversation is focused on instruction methods and best practice. Teachers are challenged and learn. The overall outcome is that teachers are learning and implementing best instruction practices.

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Aligning curriculum to standards in a multi-age, inquiry-based school is always an exciting challenge! During our January staff meeting, we plan to look carefully at Social Studies standards and Technology standards to determine how we can weave them together with our theme, Communicating in God's Creation, as we develop plans for exciting and challenging Team Time activities for the month of January.

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

On January 21, GRCHS will honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King through a half day celebration. Our theme for the morning is Different Experiences but One in Christ. We will begin and end the day worshiping together and reflecting on the beauty and strength of God's diverse kingdom while celebrating our unity as a GRCHS community. For the bulk of the morning, students will get to select two breakout sessions in which they will learn about Dr. King, understand more about issues of diversity, and do things to help make a difference in their community. Every session will contribute to a quilt that will be a visual representation of both our individual uniqueness and our unity.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

During This goal echos our commitment to not only include all children, but to educate and serve each child well. Our commitment to diversity means we must be home to all kinds of learners. It means when a child needs help, we are there to help. It means that when a teacher needs support, we are there with support. We partner with parents, help students, and support teachers systematically. When parents and/or teachers have concerns about how a child is learning or behaving, it is our normal practice to set up a meeting to talk. We call these meetings Child Study Meetings or Student Support Meetings. The classroom teacher, the support staff, the parents, and I meet. We talk about what we are seeing. We share what we think and develop an action plan. We get to know the student deeply. We develop a common understanding and establish a strong partnership between parents and school. We set up academic and behavioral interventions. We support teachers and parents. These meetings are always attended by Ronda Pifer, Jenny Marsh or Kim Primus, and by me. This is a big time commitment for all of us, but we all believe this is the most important thing we do as a school. This December, we met to talk and share about ten students.

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Evergreen families gathered at school on Tuesday, December 4 for our annual Cookies and Carols event. Families met in the Evergreen Commons beginning at 6:30 p.m. It was a full house with parents, students, siblings, and teachers sitting on chairs and on the floor. One of the highlights was the Team Three students leading the group by singing and acting out the Twelve Days of Christmas. After singing Christmas carols for about 30 minutes, we moved to the Evergreen gym where our PTO parent volunteers served punch and cookies. It was a great opportunity for Evergreen families to mingle and talk and get to know each other better.

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

Communicators and Collaborators is an important characteristic of our graduates. They are prepared for this in their classrooms, through discussions, and through a variety of experiences and exposures throughout their time at GRCS. As an Advancement team, We have also come to know the benefits of working collaboratively and understand how the mission of Grand Rapids Christian is advanced when separate departments work together to share ideas and accomplish goals. I am grateful for the contribution that each person brings to this team.

In Early December, the Board of Trustees approved Variable Tuition and Continuous Enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year. We have sent out information to our staff and families, informing them about these exciting changes. We also invited members of the Christian Education Committee at our supporting area churches to come to an informational meeting regarding these changes. The application process for Variable Tuition has begun, and Continuous Enrollment Contracts will be sent to current parents in January.

Last month, we completed two Kindergarten preview events for current families and opened up class registration after those events. In the coming weeks, we will host our Preschool and Kindergarten Open House at 3 campuses. We are anticipating full classes for preschool and kindergarten! The admissions team continues to give tours, meet with families, and host admissions and scheduling events. This is a busy time of year as we promote and show our schools to hundreds of prospective families.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Admissions tours and events begin in earnest when we get back to school in January and last throughout the entire second semester. It is one of the most exciting parts of the job to introduce new families to the Christian learning community at GRCMS!

As I wrote about in last month's Board report, we already hosted an event for Evergreen Christian 5th grade students and families in early December. We look forward to welcoming many prospective students and their families to our three Meet Us in the Middle events in 2019: January 25, February 18, and May 3. These days are designed to welcome both students and parents to GRCMS with parent meetings in the morning and "shadow" experiences for kids.

We also have our annual GRCMS Showcase event scheduled for March 12, beginning at 6:30 p.m. This event is an opportunity for families to come and hear from each grade-level team about the Christian community and opportunities for learning in faith at GRCMS.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

We invited parents of current preschoolers to join us for an evening of "kindergarten" in December. We called the event Expedition Iroquois. It was well attended and parent feedback was very positive. Preschool kids got to experience a kindergarten lesson taught by the kindergarten teachers. They also got to go to a few of the co-curriculum classes kindergartners go to. The event was planned by the admissions staff, and we should recognize them for the work they did and for how well the event was organized. We opened kindergarten enrollment up to current preschool families during the event and have had a tremendous response.

2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

JANUARY 14, 2018

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

I wrote about the Explore Evergreen event in the December Board Report. Team One teachers met many of the incoming Kindergarten students at Explore Evergreen and now look forward to seeing them again at our Pre-K Open House on January 22. We also look forward to welcoming incoming Preschool students at the Open House on January 22. It is wonderful to have an admissions team that works closely with the staff at Evergreen to welcome new families and to ensure a smooth transition into a new school year for our young students.

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

Through November 30, 2018, the GRCS operations budget for 2018-19 is on track with respect to both revenue and expenses (summary attached).

The GRCS Compensation Committee met in October and December 2018. The Committee is comprised of faculty members from GRCHS (2), GRCMS, GRCES, and RCS, along with GRCS Central Office staff (2), and three GRCS BOT members. The Committee traditionally meets every fall, prior to the development of the next Operational Budget, to have open dialog relative to staff wages and benefits. Primary discussion this year was relative to the CSI pension and the 403(b) replacement plan.

The 2017-18 Audit is complete. Tom Rosenbach, managing partner at Beene Garter, met with the GRCS Finance Committee on January 10, 2019, and gave a clean report.

The GRCS Operating Budget for the 2019-20 school year is nearly complete! The details of that budget will be presented to the GRCS BOT at the January 2019 Board meeting for approval. If approved, a vote by GRCS constituency to pass the budget will be held at the annual meeting in February. The proposed budget addresses the following strategic goals:

- Financial aid allocation not to exceed 10% of operating expenses
- An increase in the percentage of operating expenses covered by tuition
- A fair increase in staff wages that exceeds CSI recommendation
- Ensures continued funding for staff professional development

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES



BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

What a joy it is to have first semester completed before Christmas break and to come back to *Winterim*! Over the next two weeks, students participate in unique courses, professional internships, or travel. I was the *Winterim* Coordinator when our program started in 2012, and I am more confident now than ever that our *Winterim* program aligns with our **Portrait of a Graduate**.

- Most of our students take new and exciting courses that give them fresh and unique choices while allowing teachers to share their own passions for topics that may not be offered in the core curriculum. This allows our students to discover passions and gifts that might otherwise be hidden. With smaller class sizes and a more concentrated time frame, students are able to form meaningful bonds with their instructors. This year, there is even an opportunity to earn college credit while dually enrolling at Cornerstone.
- Roughly 100 students will participate in internships both in our community and far away. This is an opportunity for our students to find out whether or not their placement is a profession that energizes them and uses their gifts. Historically, internships

have been so powerful for our students that we are even seeing recent grads maintain relationships with their placements and gain employment there. Some of the professions that our students are exploring are business, engineering, medicine, education, churches, physical therapy, counseling, construction, defense intelligence, auto mechanic, and music.

- Roughly 250 students are learning to engage with a diverse range of people and ideologies as they explore God's world on faculty-led trips. Each trip is unique and helps our students to be disciples of Christ who are **culturally competent, communicators & collaborators, thoughtful neighbors, justice seekers, creative solution finders, and lifelong explorers.**
- Our 2019 Winterim trips are:
 - Bahamas: Island School
 - Caribbean: Planes, Trains & Othermobiles III
 - Dominican Republic: Serve, Rest, Grow
 - Greece: The Odyssey & the Early Church
 - Guatemala: Praying, Participating, Partnering
 - Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice
 - New York & London: Cultural Capitals
 - Rehoboth, New Mexico: Explore & Serve
 - Rwanda: An African Adventure
 - Service in St. Thomas
 - Thailand: Conservation Expedition
 - Varsity Hockey Trip to Las Vegas
 - Girls Varsity Basketball Trip to Orlando



Visit facebook.com/GRCSWinterim to stay up to date on all the *Winterim* happenings!

The following art work by GRCHS teacher Jonathan Quist and his classes sits atop our main entrance and was created to represent the **Portrait of a Graduate** theme Thoughtful Neighbors.



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

- Becca Iverson's third grade class worked together throughout the entire school on a post office business called Jingle Bell Post Office. They completed their stamp sales and letter delivery which was done at the end of the day going through the halls of the school collecting mail from mailboxes singing Jingle Bells and finally counting the money as a class. Every noon hour, students sold stamps and paper while sorting mail already collected the day before. They raised \$86.70 for Kids' Food Basket! Thank you RCS third graders for helping STAMP out childhood hunger here in West Michigan while doing service and learning about running a business!
- One of many preschool Christmas programs for friends and families.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

- Brandon Helder, 3rd grade teacher, has written and published a children's book, Dot and Box. It is out in Spanish and English. The school is promoting the book and splitting the proceeds with Brandon. The school's portion of the proceeds will be used to purchase 30 iPads for our 3rd and 4th grades to use. Some of the schools we have shared this with are interested in having Brandon come to their school for an author's visit.
- The K-2 Christmas program on December 18 was a wonderful community event. The CAW was full. The program got rave reviews. What a great way to get in the Christmas spirit!





**GRAND RAPIDS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**