

18 | 19 BOARD REPORT

GRCs

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

March 18,
2019



THEME

*Culturally
Competent*

2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

MARCH 18, 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

MARCH 2019			
18	5:30 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
19	7:30 pm	GRCES Spring Program, 3rd & 4th Grades	DeVos CAW
20	7:30 pm	GRCMS/GRCHS Band Concert, 7th — 12th Grades	DeVos CAW
21	6:00 pm	Black Tie Blue Jeans 2019: iLuminated!	DeVos CAW
25	7:00 pm	Anxiety Resource Center Workshop	The Garage @ GRCHS
26	7:30 pm	Senior Solo Night	DeVos CAW
29		Spring Break —No School	

APRIL 2019			
1 — 5		Spring Break — No School	
8 — 12		Evergreen Flex Week — No School	
8 — 12		iXplore — GRCMS & RCS	
10	7:00 am	Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
16	6:00 pm	Protecting Young Eyes Workshop	The Garage @ GRCHS
18	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
22	10:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting	RDV Corp
22	6:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
26	5:00 pm	Rockford Christian Auction	Rockford Christian
30	7:30 pm	GRCHS Musical <i>Forbidden Broadway</i>	DeVos CAW

MAY 2019			
1 — 4	7:30 pm	GRCHS Musical <i>Forbidden Broadway</i>	DeVos CAW
2	7:30 am	Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
6	7:00 am	Executive Committee Meeting	GRCHS Board Room
7	7:30 pm	GRCHS Choir Concert	DeVos CAW
9	12:00 pm	Advancement Committee Meeting	GRCHS Conference Room
13	12:30 pm	Education Committee Meeting	GRCHS Conference Room
13	7:30 pm	GRCMS Choir Concert	DeVos CAW
14	7:30 pm	GRCHS Orchestra Concert	DeVos CAW
16	3:30-5:30 pm	Retirement Open House: Mark Krommendyk, Judy Rooy, and Jim Koop	Iroquois Campus Media Center
16	6:30 pm	Celebration of the Arts and Retirement Open House for Denise van der Laan	GRCMS Media Center
20	7:30 pm	GRCMS/RCS Orchestra Concert	DeVos CAW
22	7:30 pm	GRCMS/RCS Band Concert	DeVos CAW
29	8:00 pm	High School Graduation	Calvary Church, East Beltine
28 — 31		High School Exams	GRCHS

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

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,

Over the past several months, the board, administrative team, and a small group of staff have been considering how to advance our cultural intelligence work both strategically and in ways that are able to make meaningful impact within our school community. One of the discussions at this month's board meeting will be to formally charge a new joint committee of the board, known as the Cultural Intelligence Committee. Joint committees are identified in the GRCS Policy Handbook and, by definition, are comprised of board, administrator, and faculty representatives that work together to advance a particular area of focus. The Cultural Intelligence Committee does not yet have a formal charge approved by the Board of Trustees, and we hope to confirm that this month.

Sara Seth, Assistant Principal who also serves as our PS-8 Spanish Immersion Coordinator, and I have been in conversation about faculty and administrative representation on the committee. We have identified several key staff as well as possible parent representatives who have both expressed interest in serving and who would provide excellent input as committee members. Following the board's discussion at this month's board meeting, she and I hope to launch the committee's first meeting in April.

It is important work. I am thankful that the board has identified it as one of our goals in the current strategic plan and I look forward to strengthening our efforts in the critically important area of cultural intelligence.



Tom DeJonge

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

We view cultural competence as a Biblical calling to further appreciate each other as image bearers of Christ. For this reason, our Youth Culture Club (YCC), led by English and Psychology teacher, Rona Das, was formed.

Rona writes, “YCC is committed to cultivating a culturally inclusive environment where diverse thoughts and expressions are valued and appreciated--no matter a student’s race, socioeconomic status, political party, or other defining features. We want to provide all students the opportunity to educate each other and learn about current events, politics, and culture in a way that unites our school and the local community. In the past, we have hosted a dance and donated the proceeds to a local charity.

We partnered with the Refugee Education Center for Coin Wars and registered seniors to vote. Every other Friday we hold a student-led meeting where students can present a topic of their choice like the government shut down or how Christmas is celebrated around the world. We also host Game Day and help plan holiday parties so that all culture groups feel represented. We have open enrollment, and committed students can

attend the additional Tuesday meeting to prepare for future events.”

There are two subgroups of YCC, Bridge Builders and Global Ambassadors.

Bridge Builders is led by staff sponsors Kia Delaney, LaShone Manuel, and Rae Hudnell. The mission of this student organization is to be a reconciling community that builds a legacy, empowers leaders, and embraces our ethnicity without compromise. Bridge Builders is devoted to enhancing professional development and leadership abilities through educational, cultural, and social outreach.

Global Ambassadors’ Leadership Team, led by staff member Julie Watson, is currently a great mix of international and domestic students. The GRCHS Global Ambassador club is a service-leadership club with meetings and social activities that aim to have an impact on the entire school community by broadening global perspectives, developing cultural understandings, and creating a passion for God’s people. Global Ambassadors serves many purposes. One reason the club exists is to connect globally-minded students with the International Student Program and to connect students with cross-cultural backgrounds.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Over the past two months, our GRCMS students and staff have engaged in conversations and study about a variety of topics to highlight the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Black History Month. These lessons and activities have helped to highlight the continuing issues around race in our nation’s history as we seek to better understand one another and work to build God’s Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” in our GRCMS community and broader world.

For example, in January, we celebrated the life and work of Dr. King in a schoolwide chapel; we watched videos about Dr. King’s life, sang songs about our collective Kingdom-building work, and finished by listening to a section of a speech Dr. King once gave to middle school students.

Our “**Build the Kingdom Here**” theme for this school year has allowed opportunities in chapels and other school activities throughout the year to discuss “cultural competency” and to help our students to envision the breadth of the Kingdom and to learn to understand the diversity of people and backgrounds in God’s world and to understand how we live and learn together.

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE STORIES

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

RCS practices full inclusion for our students with more significant disabilities. I am gratified to witness our students regularly engage with their classmates who have differences.

Every Monday and Tuesday one of our staff, Mr. David Worst, who lives with Cerebral Palsy, works throughout the building in a multitude of support roles. Last week I was called upon to assist a preschooler that was struggling with some sadness. As I was talking to her, David came by and asked me if he could engage with the child. In ten minutes David had her fully engaged back in her classroom. The child saw David for who he is. Not just a man in a wheelchair but a man she could trust. His presence throughout the school is a blessing to all our future graduates.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Cultural awareness and respect is a core value at Grand Rapids Christian Schools. Our ability to welcome and include all of God's people is at the very center of our being. One way to think of this is to say that everyone that joins this community finds our school to be their home; not just a place they visit, but a home. This value drives many of our decisions.

One of our big goals currently at Iroquois is to make sure that every child in our school can see themselves in the books we have available in our library and classrooms. The staff shared this goal with the PTO and the PTO gave each classroom \$100 to spend on culturally diverse books. In the library this month, Mrs. Boss included culturally diverse books in this year's Eagle Book Award collection.

Almost every student in the school will read the 10-12 books selected for the collection during the month of March. Oral readings are posted online. Students follow up with conversations about the books with Mrs. Boss. While I am sharing a couple of events here, cultural awareness is not an event at Grand Rapids Christian Elementary School. It is a way of life. I am writing to share a little bit about what is happening here. I am also writing to encourage you to talk about cultural diversity with your kids at home. I encourage you to practice cultural awareness in your church too.

Welcoming, respecting, and caring for all people is a big goal. Unity in Christ happens when we love and value the diversity with which He has blessed us.

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Evergreen students meet for Team Time each Thursday afternoon in multi-age groups to focus on our theme, Communication in God's Creation. At the end of February, two of our Evergreen students eagerly led Team Time by introducing the Chinese language to their schoolmates.

After being introduced to the language, students moved into their small groups to discuss important words and phrases and then used Google translator to find and teach important phrases.

During our March Team Time, Evergreen students are learning to communicate through facial expressions and through sign language.



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

Grand Rapids Christian Schools has been blessed by the professional experience and expertise of a veteran leadership team in each of our five campuses. Two years ago, I presented a summary of future leadership transitions to the Board of Trustees in order to provide a visual representation of anticipated changes due to the likelihood of retirements over a 5-6 year period of time.

We realized first-hand this year that those transitions are, in fact, occurring! Mark Krommendyk and Harry Knol will officially retire as principals at GRCS and RCS respectively. I am thankful that we were prepared to move forward with seeking their replacements and even more thankful that we have secured two highly-talented principals to provide leadership at these two schools in the years to come.

Included in this month's board report are the resumes and other corresponding documents to formally introduce you to John Barkel and Ben Buursma, the individuals that will take the helm at GRCS and RCS effective July 1, 2019.

These two men will each relocate to Grand Rapids later this spring and are eager to begin their responsibilities.

They had opportunity to visit with our administrative team, tour their schools, and meet their staffs on Wednesday, February 27, 2019. Each one was enthusiastically welcomed with open arms! I am currently working with each of them to confirm a Spring date for GRCS and RCS parents to personally meet and welcome them to GRCS.

Special thanks to Jill Ellens and Julie Westra, Ann Bakker and Harry Knol, and each of the other members of the interview team for their dedication and time spent in prayer and discernment. They spent three Saturdays interviewing up to 14 applicants, which is both an invigorating and exhausting experience! Each member of the search team did a terrific job, and I am deeply thankful for their dedicated service to this important process.



JOHN BARKEL AND FAMILY
NEW PRINCIPAL AT IROQUOIS



BEN BUURSMAN AND FAMILY
NEW PRINCIPAL AT ROCKFORD

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

On February 22, GRCHS, GRCMS, and RCMS hosted world renown consultant, Tom Schimmer, to discuss assessment and reporting (grading).

It was a great day for all 5 - 12 faculty to hear more about the path forward in establishing a standards-based mindset to instruction, assessment, and reporting. We learned of many well-established grading practices that are harmful to student learning and actually decrease student achievement. At the high school, we have created a subcommittee of our leadership team that will take what we learned and create a plan to move forward in changing our practices. This plan will include a plan to communicate changes with students and parents in a way that strengthens our partnerships.

March 6 was our 9th - 11th grade testing day (PSAT and SAT). It's also the day where our seniors go out in the community and serve in memory of John Zoerhoff, a 2001 graduate of GRCHS who passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

John, a former student of mine, had a heart for service. Our seniors, led by Dean of Student Life, Eric Taylor, and other faculty members, served in the following locations

in our community: Samaritas Senior Community, In The Image, New 2 You, God's Kitchen, GRECS Evergreen, GRECS Iroquois, World Missions Thrift, ICCF, Comprenew, DeGage, Gilda's Kitchen, William C. Abney, Bridgeway School, and Ken - O -Sha School. It was an awesome day for our seniors to partner with these organizations to spread Christ's love!



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

On February 22 at our Professional Development Day, all of our GRCS 5th — 12th grade teachers from Rockford Christian School, GRCMS, and GRCHS met together in The Garage at the High School to hear from Tom Schimmer, a Solution Tree consultant, about grading and assessment practices at GRCS.

You can learn more about Tom Schimmer and his work at www.solutiontree.com/presenters/tom-schimmer.html

It was an engaging and thought-provoking learning session as Tom challenged us to consider how our grading and assessment practices not only allow us to ensure student learning but also to give hope to our students that they can continue to grow and learn. It was valuable to have the conversation across 5th - 12th faculty together in order (a) to make sure we all hear a consistent message and (b) to allow for the opportunity for cross-grade, cross-discipline, and cross-building dialogue about our practices so that we can continue to move toward greater consistency in our grading and assessment practices for the benefit of our students and families.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

The Iroquois staff participated in all-day professional development with the rest of GRCS on February 25. The preschool staff worked with their aides to deepen their understanding of the student portfolios we implemented last year in the morning. In the afternoon, the preschool teachers talked about the Marzano teacher evaluation model. This conversation was facilitated by me.

The Iroquois support services staff attended the Michigan Conference on Exceptional Children this past weekend. Two takeaways they shared on their return were that we need to continue to develop our understanding of what baggage children bring with them to school and that administrative support and vision is critical for a successful student services program. The engagement of our people is impressive!

ANN BAKKER — GRCS EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

K-4 (and 5th Evergreen) classroom teachers met at Evergreen on February 22 for Professional Development to work with Jennifer Felipe, a consultant from the Heinemann Publishing Company. Each teacher received The Reading Strategies Book and The Writing Strategies Book. Jennifer worked with teachers to learn how to implement reading and writing strategies into classroom instruction.

A few quotes from teachers to give you a taste of their thoughts about the day:

“Jen was very clear, gave real-life examples, easy to listen to, and engaging! I loved connecting to reading and writing, and getting to actually practice ourselves along with thinking about strategies that we can use in our own classroom.”

“Very practical training AND it was nice to get the books.”

While K-4 classroom teachers were working with Jennifer Felipe, our PE teachers attended a Professional Development event off campus, our Art teachers participated in online PD, and our Preschool teachers spent time focusing on assessment and on the Froebel gifts. All of these PD events move us closer to the aligned curriculum.

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

In an effort to further cultural intelligence at GRCHS, we celebrated both Chinese Lunar New Year and black history month with food celebrations. Nancy McCarthy and our food service team provided us with Chinese food for Lunar New Year and soul food at the end of black history month.

On February 19 and 20, the Christian Learning Center came to GRCHS to do a site visit and an analysis of our Student Support and Inclusion Services. We eagerly await their feedback but move forward confidently pursuing God's call to serve all students in an inclusive community.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Throughout the past month, a number of activities have occurred at GRCMS to help our students develop their understanding of cross-cultural competencies.

The 8th graders had lessons on the impact of Dr. King and many other unsung heroes and events of the Civil Rights Movement to get a broader understanding of the individuals and events that impacted change in our nation's history. They talked about important events like

the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Birmingham Children's Crusade. After learning about these individuals and events, they focused on these questions together: *"What difference does this all make in the year 2019? Or, more importantly, in each and every one of our daily lives?"*

During the week of MLK Day, the 7th graders gathered in Village Square to watch a portion of a History Channel documentary on the life of Dr. King. They also examined what made Dr. King a dynamic speaker. They looked specifically at his "I Have a Dream" speech for its content and impact on America, as well as for its great examples of a powerful and impactful speech and examined his tone, voice variation, word emphasis, crowd involvement and repetition of words.

The 6th graders read articles about and quotes from Dr. King and how he helped to change America, watched the Children's March as a community and discussed its impact, and reflected on our MLK Day chapel in their weekly journals. The 6th grade also watched the movie Hidden Figures in February both because of its focus on the African-American women who are the central characters of the film and because it fits within the 6th grade study of space in February.

In addition to what the classroom teachers did at the various grade levels, the GRCMS Learning Commons team did a variety of intentional activities with the 5th and 6th grade students during their weekly library times. With 6th grade, they read books about Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights movement. With each of the books, students chose different adjectives to describe Dr. King. Students also read the *"I Have a Dream Speech"* and marked the sheet by highlighting words that were repeated, words they didn't understand, and parts of the speech that spoke to them in a special way.

After reading the speech, they watched Dr. King give the speech. They pushed all of the tables and chairs to the side and told the students to pretend like they were at the speech; the students cheered and clapped and sang along. After viewing the speech, they discussed the differences between reading and viewing and listed more adjectives to describe Dr. King.

The Learning Commons team also had the opportunity to read a variety of biographies to the 5th and 6th graders that are about people whose backgrounds span many cultures. Here is a selection: Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library, So Tall: Sojourner Truth, Separate is Never Equal, Bravo: Poems Celebrating Extraordinary Hispanics, We are Grateful: Otsaliheliga, Dia's Story Cloth, Fish for Jimmy and many

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

more. The Learning Commons team always make sure when purchasing books for particular units that they look for books from many perspective and cultures. Because all of the students are reading more non-fiction, this has been an excellent way to ensure that they read books based on various cultures.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

The preschool classrooms welcomed some very special friends to read to them in the library. Dr. Eugene and Maxine Cain, grandparents of one of our students enrolled in the Spanish Immersion preschool, came and read and acted out the book *Jalani and the Lock* to all preschoolers. They came in traditional African clothes and with African instruments. The reading was interactive and was a true celebration of culture. The book is the work of author and artist Dr. Lorenzo Pace.

You can learn about Dr. Pace and the children's books he has written at this link

<http://lorenzopace.com/2015/09/25/about-dr-lorenzo-pace>

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.

GRCMS

AMY ORR — DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS

December through March have been busy months for the Admissions Team, hosting events at each of our campuses to encourage preschool to kindergarten retention, promote preschool and kindergarten registration, and encourage parents and students to visit and shadow in middle and high school.

At the same time, we rolled out both Variable Tuition and Continuous Enrollment, communicating with parents, staff, and supporting churches about each of these new programs designed to improve retention and overall enrollment.

We are pleased to report that our events have been well-attended and that many of our campuses are currently at or over projected enrollment for next year based on the Continuous Enrollment Contracts we have received.

Please see the attached Admissions Update and enrollment chart for additional details and statistics.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

We hosted the annual GRCMS Showcase on March 12, 2019, where we welcomed students and families who are interested in joining GRCMS in the coming school year. This event allows for the opportunity for prospective students and their families to come out to hear from our teachers and other support staff about the Christian community and school program at GRCMS. This is a great night of building community and looking forward to the upcoming 2019-2020 school year!

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 the first seven months of the 2018-19 fiscal year (year-end June 30), the GRCS Operating Budget is tracking well with respect to both Revenues and Expenses. The 2018-19 budget includes a contingency of \$244,000, which we use only to address surprise expenses or revenue shortfalls that sometimes occur.

The 2019-20 GRCS Operating Budget was passed at the Annual meeting on February 18, 2019. Highlights of the budget include a 1.5% wage increase for staff, steps for eligible faculty, an Eagles Fund goal of \$1.7 million, a Variable Tuition model by grade level with a top end increase of \$450/student, and a contingency of \$365,000 (1.5% of Operating expenses).

The Christian School Retirement Investment Consortium (CSRIC) Board continues to meet to work out details related to a 403(b) replacement plan for the CSI Pension. The Consortium, currently comprised of twelve Christian Schools in Michigan (11) and Wisconsin (1), will have the plan ready for enrollment on September 1, 2019. Tom DeJonge and Jim Primus are meeting with GRCS staff to begin clear communication of plan details.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

One important way a school can ensure financial sustainability is to have strong growing enrollment. Enrollment at Iroquois for next year appears to be strong. Preschool is filling up and we have 35-40 more kindergarten students enrolled than we have in school this year.

Another way we can ensure financial sustainability is to offer a wide range of family-friendly services that make us attractive to parents. We offer many choices for preschool, a multi-age preschool, choice between 3-day and 5-day kindergarten, Spanish immersion, wrap-around daycare, and a strong summer kids care program. This summer we are pleased to be adding a targeted program for students that are behind in reading. The program is called Summer Session Jr.

A final way-way we can positively impact financial sustainability is to have a strong reputation in the greater Christian school community. We continue to field requests for visit and questions about how we do things. This week the administrators from the Parkland Christian Academy are visiting our preschool.

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES



BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

So far in 2019, we've had roughly 50 potential future Eagles shadow current students in our building!

A few highlights from our music department!

- Symphony Strings had the honor of playing for the Opening Ceremonies of the MANS convention in the Fall. They played several selections while participants were entering but also had a solo feature, "Nearer my God to Thee" arranged by our own senior cellist, Sam Fynwever.
- We also had 3 orchestra students make MSBOA All-State orchestra this year and 5 singers participated in the State Honors Choir!
- Christmas Pops was very special this year with guest Artists Moxie Strings. Symphonic Band, Symphony Strings and Chamber Chorale all participated in this wonderful Christmas Celebration and fundraiser for the music department that brought our community together through music.
- A large number of our students participate in the Solo and Ensemble Music Festival and many advances to the state level competition next Saturday. All

choirs scored "Excellent" (1) in our district choral festival in February, and Chamber Chorale even achieved a perfect score (120/120)!

- The GRCHS choirs sang the National Anthem for a Griffins game in early March and got awesome reviews! Chamber Chorale also continues the tradition of participating in worship with our supportive church community. They sang for their third service of the year last weekend at La Grave CRC.
- Senior Solo night is coming up on March 29 where we feature senior music department solos, accompanied by the orchestra.

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

We Last week it was a full house of happy Dads and daughters as they danced the night away. We also had Mother and Son bowling evening this past weekend. Both events were well attended and fun.



Each 8th grader, in full costume, sat in a circle on the floor. A preschooler stood behind them and laid their hand on the 8th grader. When they were finished I witnessed the 8th graders stand up and hug their young prayer partner. Having PreK through 8th in one setting is a blessing.



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES

One of the many things Julie Barrett, RCS 5th grade teacher, brought back to RCS after attending CSI's Bible Symposium last month was The Immerse Messiah Bible discussion groups. This started with an open invitation by Julie to the middle schoolers at Family Worship Time to join her during lunchtime once a week on Thursday's to discuss the readings. The Immerse Bible presents the Bible to its "natural simplicity and beauty by removing chapter and verse numbers. Letters look like letters, songs like songs, and the original literacy structures are visible in each book". From this open invitation over 50 of our Middle Schoolers signed up to receive a Bible and engage in the readings and once a week discussions over the next 8 weeks. Staff members eagerly signed up to help Julie lead small groups of middle schoolers in the weekly discussions. The discussions center around four questions:

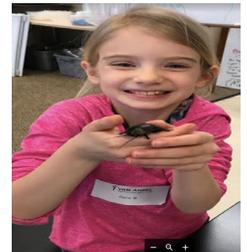
- What stood out to you this week?
- Was there anything confusing or troubling?
- Did anything make you think differently about God?
- How might this change the way we live?

RCS 8th graders, under the direction of their teacher, Sara Oren, performed the school play *Law and Order* on Friday, March 8. Over the hours of practice, they developed their performance skills and gave the audience a wonderful and funny performance. For our students, this was a great opportunity to have them understand that when something looks flawless in a performance it comes from diligent practice and work.

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Sixty-three Evergreen students participated in the February Enrichment Week this year. These students spent four days at the Van Andel Institute. They worked as scientists as they built flashlights and created magnetic cars for the Electrical/Magnet Extravaganza.

Students worked with plants and animals to do research and to make aquariums during the Outstanding Organisms session. Each group designed structures to withstand hurricanes and earthquakes to survive the Day of Disasters. It was an exciting week.



Evergreen Movie Night was on March 8. Students and their families were greeted by the smell of popcorn as they entered the building that evening. After gathering their popcorn, students sprawled out on blankets in the commons to watch the movie, *Ferdinand*. Team Three students sold concessions during the evening to raise money for Gift of Hope. This PTO sponsored event is always a fun evening for the Evergreen community.



**GRAND RAPIDS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**