

18 | 19 BOARD REPORT

GRCs

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

April 22,
2019



THEME JUSTICE
SEEKERS



2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

APRIL 22, 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

APRIL 2019			
22	10:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting	RDV Corp
22	6:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
25	4:00-8:00 pm	Spanish Immersion Parent Connection	Village Square, GRCMS
26	5:00 pm	Rockford Christian Auction	Rockford Christian
30	7:30 pm	GRCHS Musical <i>Silent Sky</i>	VanWesep Studio Theatre

MAY 2019			
1 — 4	7:30 pm	GRCHS Musical <i>Silent Sky</i>	VanWesep Studio Theatre
2	7:30 am	Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
5	3:00 pm	Hark-Up! Spring Concert	DeVos CAW
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
9	7:00 pm	5th & 6th Grade Environmental Program/Band Concert	Rockford Campus
13	12:30 pm	Education Committee Meeting	GRCHS Conference Room
13	7:30 pm	GRCMS Choir Concert	DeVos CAW
13	7:00 pm	Rockford K—4 Spring Program	Rockford Campus
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	GRCMS
17	6:00-8:00 pm	Evergreen & Iroquois Family Fun Night	Iroquois Campus
20	7:30 pm	GRCMS/RCS/Evergreen Orchestra Concert	DeVos CAW
22	7:30 pm	GRCMS/RCS/Evergreen Band Concert	DeVos CAW
23	3:30-5:30 pm	Retirement Open House: Mary Witteveen & Holly Haan	Evergreen Campus
28	8:00 pm	High School Graduation	Calvary Church, East Beltine
28 — 31		High School Exams	GRCHS

JUNE 2019			
3	7:00 am	Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
3	6:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
4	5:30 pm	Evergreen End of Year Picnic and Art Show	Evergreen Campus
5	7:00 pm	GRCMS 8th Grade Graduation	DeVos CAW
6	7:30 am	Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
6	7:00 pm	Rockford Christian 8th Grade Graduation	Rockford Campus
7		Last Day of School (Half Day)	GRCMS, RCS, Iroquois
19		Last Day of School (Half Day)	Evergreen



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,

When confirming the qualities represented by Portrait of a Graduate, I requested that a consultant from Independent School Management (ISM) review and provide us with feedback on what we created prior to it being finalized and published. We learned about Portrait from ISM, and it was important to me that the final draft articulated the qualities of Grand Rapids Christian Schools' graduates in a compelling way. I was so pleased to hear from ISM that they strongly supported each one, stating that they both reflected the spirit of who we are as a Christian school institution (they know us well and have worked with us multiple times over the years) and truly articulated a distinct portrait of a GRCS graduate. Justice Seekers was, in particular, highlighted by ISM as a distinctive quality that very few schools either envision or are able to articulate. In ISM's words, *"Schools that envision this as a desired quality in their graduates are few and far between. Justice Seekers reflect your unique mission as a Christian school and calls for your graduates to make an impact in a society that desperately needs seekers of justice now more than ever."*

I am honored to work in a school and with a staff that embraces this and other qualities that are described in Grand Rapids Christian's Portrait. Reading through the principals' and other administrators' reports this month and throughout the year has been a true affirmation and reflection of the focus of our work. That, along with the many things being done in our schools and classrooms in support of our strategic planning goals, is exciting to each of us who is called to serve our students here.

Thank you for honoring our work and bolstering our efforts. Your strategic support encourages us to continue to focus on our mission of preparing effective servants of Christ in contemporary society.



Tom DeJonge



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE STORIES

JUSTICES
SEEKERS

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

GRCS

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Next week, 45 GRCHS staff and students will attend the “Stand Against Racism” event put on by the CRC Office of Race Relations. This event is part of the YWCA’s national campaign to eliminate racism.

Last month, GRCHS staff and students participated in “Coin Wars” to raise money for The Refugee Education Center. The Refugee Education Center “focuses on educating youth as a means to connect refugee families more quickly and completely to the West Michigan community.”

Through the leadership of Jeremy Pyper, our building facility manager, GRCHS has revamped its recycling system to drastically reduce the amount of waste we are producing as a school.

As part of our service learning program, our Spanish department has formed meaningful partnerships with a variety of local schools. We have students that serve regularly at the Bridgeway school for refugees. We also partner with Buchanan, Ken-O-Sha, and Cesar Chavez elementary schools to learn and serve.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

During iXplore Week 2019 (April 8 - 12) at GRCMS, our 5th—8th grade students had many opportunities to work for justice and practice stewardship in their classes and activities. Some classes learned about other people and cultures and the impacts people have had on one another over centuries; in other classes, as they prepared to hike and camp, students also thought about the impact of their activities on the environment and people and local economies around the sites that they visited.

The students were challenged during chapels during iXplore Week to think about how — right here and right now — they can be part of God’s Kingdom work. Our guest speakers focused on our “**Build the Kingdom Here**” theme and our theme verse, 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.”*



Personally, I had the opportunity to travel with the photography class to Detroit on April 11 and 12. As we prepared to leave on Thursday morning — and very intentionally throughout the trip — the teachers (Ms. Tanis and Mr. Greidanus) did a great job of talking with the students about the years of changes in Detroit: its rise to national prominence in the early 20th century with the birth and growth of the automobile industry, the challenges of racial inequality and injustices throughout the city’s history, and the recent rebirth and rejuvenation of the city.

The teachers were very intentional about discussing the importance of the people of Detroit and challenging the students — in the photographs that they had to take for the class as well as in their thinking about what they saw in Detroit — to find ways to see and show the beauty of Detroit and the revival of the city. Even in a class initially focused on photography, they took the opportunity to help our students to think about issues of justice and stewardship as they attempted to get the kids to see how we are all created in the image of God and all responsible for the good of those around us.

2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

APRIL 22, 2019

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GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE STORIES

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

A great big “thank-you” to everyone who sent in food items for the iXplore middle school service learning opportunity with Kids Food Basket. One recent Monday afternoon, the 5th-8th graders were able to assemble more than 1,200 bags of trail mix with help from Kids Food Basket interns. Our students were able to hear from three of the Kid’s Food Basket Interns about the program and the impact it has in the community. The students listened intently and asked great questions before they started the service project.

Part of RCS’s work is to build within our students an appreciation of the world in which we live and to reinforce



that we are stewards of the resources given us. Every Friday, 5th graders work to gather all the recycle materials and fill the outside containers. As part of iXplore, a group of students built containers to organize the recycle centers at RCS.

Did you know that RCS 6th grade students, under the leadership of teacher Phil Warners, built an entire interpretive nature trail in the woods behind the school? They learn and practice stewardship of natural resources. In addition they work to maintain Belding Road by routinely picking up trash.

For 2019-2020 school year, RCS has chosen as its theme: **Love in Action** and Romans 12:9-21. As we continue to work with The Portrait of a Graduate in both our understanding but also our planned actions to contribute to the development of our students, this new theme will fit well with and support Working for Justice and Practicing Stewardship.

4th Graders formed partnerships with 4th graders at Stocking School in Grand Rapids Public Schools this year. They worked to purchase books and also meet the students.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

Justice Seeking is a wonderful basis for making decisions and deciding on actions at GRCES. When the decisions we make promote justice we are teaching children to seek justice by modeling it.

One way this plays out is in the choices we make for supporting service opportunities. This year, our final school-wide service opportunity will be partnering with a GRCS parent, Simon Luk, as he raises funds to buy books for a library in a refugee camp in Kenya. Simon and his wife immigrated from this same camp years ago and have remained close to people working and living there. The camp is primarily home to refugees from South Sudan fleeing war and famine. Simon has told his story in chapel here. Simon has a son, Isaiah, in the middle school. The library serves to give young people access to reading materials they need to do school.

Education is seen as a path to better lives by families in the camp. We are blessed to have a direct contact who can ensure money raised will be well used. Simon will be working with the staff service-learning committee to introduce the project. The committee will expect the students to do small things to raise money themselves. Staff will also share justice concepts with the students as part of the project.

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Team Two students are reading biographies about heroic justice seekers such as Ruby Bridges, Malala, and Martin Luther King. They are finding out that seeking justice often means going “against the grain” and standing up for what you believe in despite what others think.



Team Three students attended Zoo School for a week in March. While at John Ball Zoo, our students learned about conservation, animal care, and other environmental concerns. They came back to school with a deepened desire to care for God’s creation.



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

There are many ways to ensure a board's strategic function. One way is to ensure policies and procedures are in place that ensure highly talented, strategically-minded board members are identified to fill vacant board seats. Nine years ago, a governance task force charged by the Board of Trustees at that time recommended important changes to our governance policies, and I am pleased to report that those changes have resulted in practices that have been sustained and position Grand Rapids Christian Schools' strategic board leadership going forward.

The changes are reflected in how board members are selected, nominated, and approved. They are reflected in how new board members are "on-boarded" and how board members hold themselves accountable. This month, we will discuss the self assessment board members were asked to complete in August 2017. This assessment, initially taken in draft form, includes an opportunity for board members to reflect on the board as a whole as well as on their own personal contributions and engagement as a member of the board.

At its April meeting, the Executive Committee reviewed the tool; Tim and others will lead a discussion on its purpose and how the results of the assessment will be used in the fall. The self assessment is but one way the board is able to remain diligent and understanding of its strategic role.

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

As students begin to register for classes for the 2019-2020 school year, we are seeing exciting growth in our computer science and business classes. We've added Intro to Business and Personal Finance classes as well as an upper level AP Computer Science class.

On April 26, we're partnering with Fifth Third Bank for a "financial empowerment day." Our marketing and accounting students will take part in this event.

We continue to emphasize career exploration and readiness as we work with students. Students interning in the workplace began through our Winterim program and is expanding to semester courses. Over the last two years, we've had over 200 students intern in over 160 different places!

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

GRCMS and RCMS hosted the annual iXplore Week from April 8 - 12. Students had the opportunity to take a class or two about a variety of topics: sewing, camping, photography, soccer, the art of illusion, "Down on the Farm," video games, fly fishing, theatre, fashion design, baseball, and creative expression in the form of painting or various "maker" ideas. There were also a couple of different classes on understanding other cultures and foods and activities. This list only scratches the surface of the options and activities in which students engaged. A group of 28 eighth graders and teacher/parent chaperones also went to Gettysburg, PA for the entire week!

One might ask, "Why take an entire week away from our 'regular' curriculum in order to take just one or two classes?" What are the benefits of having time to focus on a topic or two for an entire week?"

What I have learned over the years about iXplore Week is that it not only helps students transition back from Spring Break but, more importantly, it also helps them to learn in greater depth about a topic or two for the week.

This year, GRCMS introduced the option of not only full-day classes but many half-day options as well so that kids could opt for two classes instead of one. The structure of having just one or two classes per day allows students and teachers to take more time and opportunity to do larger projects without hourly or daily breaks (in some cases) and to go off campus to a variety of places both near and (sometimes) far away.

The pace of the week means that we are not rushed for time, and the opportunities for student choice in their classes and learning in multi-age groups are also further benefits of iXplore Week. The week is a ton of extra work and planning for teachers and adjunct staff who come to teach the classes, but they find it to be worth it for the opportunities that the students get to learn about a variety of areas of God's beautiful and unique world.



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCES IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

One important way we meet this goal is to hire great people. We have offered contracts to three new teachers for the 2019-2020 school year.

Mrs. Eena Wright will be teaching 3rd or 4th grade next year. Mrs. Wright has worked at Rehoboth in New Mexico and has been teaching for Holland Christian the last 4 years. She is nearing completion of a Masters in Ed. Leadership at Calvin.

Mrs. Taylor Asfour will be teaching 3rd or 4th grade next year. Mrs. Asfour has been working here for the last two years as a tech aide, an ESS aide, and an on-call substitute teacher. She has been excellent in each of these rolls, and we are excited to give her an opportunity to take on her own classroom next year.

Mrs. Abigail Hendriksen will be teaching a Spanish Immersion classroom next year. Mrs. Hendriksen has filled two back-to-back maternity leave positions this year and knows us well. She has done an excellent job, and we are excited to have her join us.

ANN BAKKER — GRCES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

Classroom Learning Labs provide the context for teachers to experience in-depth, professional growth within a collaborative learning community. We typically schedule five Classroom Learning Labs during each school year for GRCES and RCES classroom teachers. Labs are hosted by GRCS teachers and facilitated by the Reading Coach or the Academic Program Coordinator.

This year, six teachers visited Elizabeth Wolf's classroom to observe and learn about Math 3-Act Tasks, four teachers visited Kate Traylor's classroom to observe and discuss Reading Horizons (phonics), and two teachers visited Vanessa Abreu's classroom to observe Writing Workshop.

We look forward to a Reading Workshop in Judy Rooy's classroom this spring. A Math Workshop Learning Lab was also offered and so many teachers indicated a desire to attend that we will host a Math Workshop Learning Labs in Kate Faber's classroom at RCS and in Graham Schultze's classroom at Evergreen this spring!

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3

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

GRCS

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Our Eagle Links program intentionally makes connections between students receiving inclusion services and general education students. Bible and Theology teacher Larry Borst has been a fun part of this connection working with students to grow plants in our greenhouse that are native to West Michigan.

As we go through the hiring process, determining the cultural intelligence of our candidates is of great importance. All of our final candidates for each position will be required to take the cultural intelligence assessment from the Cultural Intelligence Center.

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

On March 15, we celebrated our annual Foreign Language Chapel at GRCMS. All of our songs were sung in Spanish, and verses and other reflections were shared in multiple languages. We celebrated the fact that our GRCMS community represents ten different home languages (including American Sign Language), and students were able to share about the theme verse in the respective

home languages of their families. This chapel provided one unique opportunity for all of our students to represent the diversity of nationalities, languages, and cultures that are a vital part of our GRCMS family.

On March 22, 6th graders had two great opportunities to celebrate distinctive cultural differences and to learn about new things. The 6th graders in the Spanish Immersion Program took a cultural trip to Chicago to experience Hispanic and Latino culture first-hand; they visited a Hispanic art exhibit, visited authentic restaurants, and explored Spanish-speaking portions of the city. The other 6th graders who were back at GRCMS took the afternoon to learn more from guest speakers and student presentations about a variety of cultures around the world and to try out authentic foods that were brought in by the students. In both cases, our students not only celebrated the diversity of God's creation and our GRCMS community but also had experiences to learn and try new things in a hands-on way — not just from reading about it in books!

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL



Once a month there are inter-grade level Bible studies that are led by the Middle School students.

ANN BAKKER — GRCEES EVERGREEN PRINCIPAL

As part of the Social Studies curriculum and standards, Team One students recently studied and reflected on their world and themselves in the past, present, and future. This led to lively and productive discussions about themselves, their families, and their communities.

Students sharing about their past was so interesting because all students reflected on how they have grown, including students from different countries and students sharing adoption stories. All students were eager to share their stories and listen to others' stories. These students developed posters with pictures and stories about their past, present, and future plans.



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.

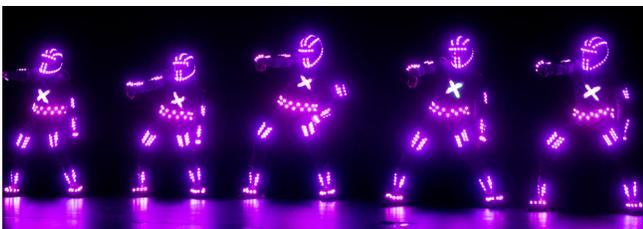
GRCS

LINDSAY HART — DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

On March 21, 2019, friends of Grand Rapids Christian Schools attended our annual fundraising event Black Tie Blue Jeans.

Throughout the evening, guests heard stories from graduates Ade Ayoola and Tommy Doles, as well as current GRCS parent Charlette Muller. These stories highlighted the importance of Christian education in the lives of our students beyond the walls of Grand Rapids Christian, as well as the importance of providing an inclusive community for students like Isaac Muller and those who learn alongside him.

Attendees of this year's event also enjoyed a performance by technology dance group iLuminate!



This event serves an important purpose as it is the primary fundraiser for the Eagles Fund.

Our goal was to share the impact that giving to this annual fund has by showcasing just a few of the stories that exist as our graduates set out to make their mark on the world. By investing in the students of Grand Rapids Christian, our message is simple — donors not only ensure the continued strength of our educational programs and provide students' seamless access to technology and Student Support Services, but also prepare students to live lives of discovery and service in Christ's kingdom.



We are grateful to the individuals and businesses who generously partner with us and continue to invest in the lives of our students and families as we prepare students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society.

ADE IS A JUSTICE SEEKER.



Ade graduated from Grand Rapids Christian High School in 2014, the University of Chicago in 2018, and is completing her first year at Stanford University School of Medicine. Ade received the Knight-Hennessy Scholarship which is designed to bring students studying in different fields together to collaborate and create solutions to some of our world's most complex issues. Ade shares that she felt not only prepared academically but her faith and the value of seeking justice was affirmed in her during her time at Grand Rapids Christian.

"...the things I continued on in college were started while a student at Grand Rapids Christian High School ... pursuing justice in the hopes of making the world a better place defines who I am. Going through school and seeing Jesus as this justice seeker, a man who wanted to revolutionize the world and bring it into a system of love and compassion all started at Grand Rapids Christian."

2018-2019 BOARD REPORT

APRIL 22, 2019

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Fundraising efforts continue in the Advancement Department. This month we will send out our spring appeal mailer and kick off our annual phone-a-thon.

We have also begun discussions about the upcoming 100 year celebration which will take place in the 2020-2021 school year. Our centennial celebration serves as a reminder of how faithful God has been over the years and how exciting the future is for Grand Rapids Christian Schools students!

ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

On March 12, we hosted our annual Showcase night for prospective students and families. While this is primarily a time for 4th graders and their families to visit GRCMS, we had visitors for each grade level who were able to meet our staff and to learn about the diverse community of faith and learning at GRCMS. We are very blessed to represent families from all over Grand Rapids and West Michigan and to welcome many new students and families into our school for 2019-2020!

MORE PHOTOS FROM BLACK TIE BLUE JEANS



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 nine months of the 2018-2019 fiscal year (year-end June 30), the GRCS Operating Budget is tracking well with respect to both Revenues and Expenses. The 2018-2019 budget includes a contingency of \$250,000, which we use only to address revenue shortfall and/or additional expenses that sometimes occur. Any year-end budget surplus is used to reduce prior years' operational deficits.

The 403(b) replacement plan is scheduled to be available to staff on September 1, 2019. The Christian School Retirement Investment Consortium (CSRIC) has been working together with legal support from Miller Johnson on the details of the plan. GRCS will provide up to a 4% match to eligible staff beginning January 1, 2020. The Plan will have two investment providers, Midwest Capital and GLP, who in May 2019 will begin providing Plan education to eligible participants.

MARK KROMMENDYK — GRCS IROQUOIS PRINCIPAL

At our April PTO meeting, the PTO passed its budget for next year. The PTO uses the funds collected during the current year to fund the coming year programs and expenses. PTO support is a little talked-about but much-appreciated part of our school. Simply stated, the PTO helps move our school from good to great!

Budget highlights from this past school year include:

- Distributing more than \$10,000 to classroom teachers to use at their discretion to support their instruction at the beginning of the year.
- Providing \$5000 towards the purchase of 30 iPads, software, and charging carts.
- Providing \$3000 to purchase books that represent diversity for our classrooms
- Offering \$20,000 to pay for field trips (and we will use every penny!).
- Paying \$4500 to cover expenses associated with field trip transportation.
- Approving \$7500 to pay for noon time playground supervision.

The PTO accepts the responsibility for raising this money in order to make their promises come true. The budget for the 2019-2020 school year is \$65,000.

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES



BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

As this spring season is upon us, we begin to think about change. It is hiring season in schools and this spring we had a very important role to fill at the high school.



Joan VanderWilp is retiring after 25 years serving as assistant principal/dean of students! She has lived out our theme verse 1 Timothy 4:12. She has “set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity” and has “left her mark” on our school and those of us who have had the privilege

to work alongside her. We will continue to celebrate her legacy as we wrap up this semester. In the next Home Bulletin, Joan will share some reflections from her time at GRCHS.

I am excited to announce Elizabeth Hoving as our new Dean of Students! Elizabeth has taught Spanish for 18 years, 14 of which have been at GRCHS. She is



incredibly respected by her students and colleagues and currently serves as both the world language department chair and as the chair of Faculty Council. Elizabeth is a passionate follower of Christ and has a heart for service, justice, and reconciliation. She is thankful that God has called her to partner with parents to

help our students learn to serve Christ both here at GRCHS and in the community. Join me in congratulating Elizabeth and welcoming her to her new role!

At GRCHS, we are rolling out an exciting new student leadership structure. In the past, the function of our student government has been primarily to plan events (dances, pep rallies, etc).

Our new model will create a partnership between building administrators and student leaders that can truly impact our school culture. Rather than dividing student congress by grades, students will be elected to a branch of government that better aligns with their passions and gifts.

The five branches will be:

- Spiritual formation
- Service
- School spirit
- Hospitality/diversity/equity/inclusion
- Events/activities.

There will also be an executive branch that meets regularly with me to discuss relevant issues in our school community.

We are excited about increasing our opportunities to partner with parents. Last month, we had a representative from The Anxiety Resource Center present to parents on the increase in anxiety amongst our young people. On April 16, Protecting Young Eyes was presented to parents and faculty on creating safer digital environments.



Bible and Theology teacher, Larry Borst, has been selected from a national pool of candidates to participate in a summer institute called “Religious Worlds of New York.” The institute is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and provides Larry a grant to study for three weeks in the city.



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES

HARRY KNOL — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL



Preschoolers in Brenda Decker’s class have been exploring **Leonardo DaVinci**. The students painted “Mona Lisa” portraits, and built inventions just like DaVinci.

Our Preschool study of **seeds, roots, and plant growth** was enhanced by planting lily of the valley roots. The pots are displayed in the preschool classroom window to watch the growth progress.



4th Graders spent an entire week at the **John Ball Zoo** immersed in the habitats, animal care, and an overall realization that God created a wonderfully diverse world. Following are pictures of 4th graders building penguin habitats, supporting goats, and celebrating parent volunteers. Because of the support of parent volunteers, teacher Bev Boersma was able to have her students enter into many parts of the zoo normally closed to the public and interact with the animals at a deeper level than just viewing from the outside.



iXplore was a great week where middle schoolers were exposed to other interests. The offerings were varied including a musical, mountain biking, backpacking, woodworking, literature, budgeting, an escape-room experience, three mile adventure, service project work for Kids Food Basket, and much more. Many thanks to the staff who diligently planned and parents who supported.





**GRAND RAPIDS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**