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BOARD  
REPORT

GRC'S

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

**Tom DeJonge, Superintendent**

JANUARY  
**2020**



# 2019 —2020 BOARD REPORT

JANUARY 2020

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**GRAND RAPIDS  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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

MISSION

VISION

VALUES

GOALS

## MISSION

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

## CORE VALUES

Rooted In  
Christ

Connected Through  
Relationships

Called to  
Serve

Educated  
for Life

United with Home  
and Church

## 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 CAMPUS THEME VERSES

### EVERY STORY WHISPERS HIS NAME

GRCES IROQUOIS  
PSALM 89:1

*I will sing of the Lord's  
great love forever; with  
my mouth, I will make your  
faithfulness known through  
all generations.*

### GOD IS MY ROCK

GRCES EVERGREEN  
PSALM 18:2

*The Lord is my rock, my  
fortress and my deliverer;  
my God is my rock,  
in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my  
salvation, my stronghold.*

### LOVE IN ACTION

ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN  
ROMANS 12:9-12

*Be joyful in hope, patient in  
affliction, faithful in prayer.  
Share with the Lord's people  
who are in need.  
Practice hospitality.*

### DO SMALL THINGS WITH GREAT LOVE

GRCMS  
ROMANS 12:9-10

*Love must be sincere.  
Hate what is evil;  
cling to what is good.  
Be devoted to one  
another in love.  
Honor one another  
above yourselves.*

### LEAD ME TO THE ROCK

GRCHS  
PSALM 61:2-3

*From the ends of the earth,  
I call to you,  
I call as my heart grows faint;  
lead me to the rock that is  
higher than I.  
For you have been my refuge,  
a strong tower against the foe.*



## 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](https://grcs.org/calendar)*

### JANUARY 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
23	6:30 pm	GRCMS Variety Show	DeVos CAW
24	7:30 am	Meet Us in the Middle	GRCMS
27	6:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
31	7:45 am	Future Eagle Day	GRCHS

### FEBRUARY 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
3	7:00 am	Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
4	6:30 pm	Protecting Young Eyes Workshop	GRCMS
6	7:30 am	Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
6 — 8	7:00 pm	GRCHS Musical: <i>The Addams Family</i>	DeVos CAW
10	6:00 pm	GRCS Annual Meeting	GRCS HUB
14		Half Day of School No School	GRCES IQ/EV, RCS, GRCMS GRCHS
17		No School — Winter Break	All campuses
20	8:00 am 12:00 pm	New 2 You Board Meeting Advancement Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room GRCHS Conference Room
26	10:00 am	Foundation Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
28	7:30 am 7:45 am	Meet Us in the Middle Future Eagle Day	GRCMS GRCHS

### MARCH 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
2	7:00 am	Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
5	7:00 pm	Evergreen Spring Concert	DeVos CAW
6	7:00 pm	LaughFest	DeVos CAW
10	6:30 pm	GRCMS Showcase	GRCMS
16	12:30 pm	Education Committee Meeting	GRCHS Conference Room
17	7:45 am	Future Eagle Day	GRCHS



## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Board:

It is a joy for our Grand Rapids Christian Schools faculty and staff to share the wonderful ways God has blessed nearly 2,300 students at our five campuses this year. Our school climate is one of excitement, learning, and dedication as we educate and nurture the faith of His image-bearers. We pray that you, too, share that excitement and are thankful to you for your role in advancing our students' educational journeys!

January is a month that culminates many weeks of focus on GRCS finances and governance. I am pleased to report Grand Rapids Christian Schools' financial position is strong. We will begin the new school year debt-free and tuition and charitable resources continue to be maximized in ways that allow us to achieve our mission to prepare students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society. As you know, this year's enrollment surpassed our expectations, with elementary enrollment continuing to surge. In addition, we have established a capital reserve that ensures our properties are maintained well. And, thanks to the tremendous support of churches and generous donors and friends of our schools who donated more than \$1.7 million dollars to the Eagles Fund this past year, we distributed \$2.6 million in variable tuition discounts to families unable to afford the full cost of tuition on their own.

I share this information as a reminder of the significant impact the board's careful review and support of our annual operating budget has on the health and vitality of our financial position and educational program. As we prepare for this month's meeting and you consider our recommendation to approve the proposed 2020-2021 budget, rates of tuition, and board nominees - each unanimously approved by the Finance and Executive Committees respectively at their meetings earlier this month — we pray that our planning and reporting is clear, concise, and reflective of what is needed in order to continue on a path that strategically ensures Grand Rapids Christian Schools' future strength.

Blessings to you and your family as we begin second semester and anticipate the coming of spring! Thank you for entrusting our administrative team and faculty with accomplishing all that is essential in order for us to achieve GRC's mission. And thank you for your prayerful support of our staff as we partner with you in our students' educational journeys.



Tom



## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS CAMPUS THEME VERSES



### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

GRCHS just wrapped up our 2020 *Winterim*, a two-week term between semesters where students can either take innovative classes, intern in the community, or travel on a service or educational trip. Our theme verse for *Winterim* is 1 Peter 4:10. It says, “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.”

*Winterim* is a unique opportunity for students to discover their gifts and passions and consider ways in which they might use these gifts both during their time at GRCHS and after high school.

A key part of our *Winterim* program is the continued, intentional integration of our 9th graders into our school community. We do this through a morning course called “Life Together.” In the course, students learn more about themselves, their classmates, and God’s world. The goals of the course are for students to learn more about their gifts, to get to know their classmates on a deeper level and unify the class, to learn more about our school and what makes us healthy, to serve together, and to ultimately grow closer to God. Our prayer is that students have a greater understanding of God’s goodness and that they grow closer to Jesus through this experience.

### ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Our GRCMS theme this year is “Dream Small: Do Small Things With Great Love.” As part of our celebrations and remembrances of Dr. King on MLK Day — and as a way to continue forward the work of racial reconciliation, justice, and bridge-building that he modeled — we have some important events planned for January 20 and beyond.

In our MLK Day chapel on January 20, we showed a video created by Julian Newman, pastor of Tribes Church in West Michigan and creator of Culture Creative, who is working with GRCS to help facilitate our cultural competence work. We watched his video “7 Components of ‘Trans-Cultural Bridge-

Building” with our students: <https://vimeo.com/36111757>.

As we move forward from this chapel, we plan to have Julian and other GRCMS staff lead Focus Time conversations around the 7 Components over the course of the second semester in order to engage our students in important conversations about how they can be bridge-builders both now and into the future.

Dr. King once said that “if I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.” He did great things for the Kingdom, and we are called to follow his lead. As our school theme this year has emphasized, we want to do both the small things and the big things that will help us all learn from one another and grow together as the body of Christ at GRCMS; each small thing that we do will help us to be God’s agents of renewal and reconciliation in the various communities of which we are a part.

### BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

The two weeks leading up to Christmas break always have a palpable excitement to them. There are Christmas concerts, gift exchanges, and sweets everywhere you look. At Rockford Christian, our “Jingle Bell Post Office” adds to the excitement. Over those two weeks, third graders collected and delivered hundreds of notes, pictures, and words of encouragement all over the school. Preschoolers through eighth graders made good on the opportunity to show “Love in Action” by writing letters to one another. I certainly felt loved to get a picture from each of the preschoolers in Mrs. Decker’s 3’s class!

Another wonderful example of “Love in Action” could be seen in our Middle School every Monday and Thursday in December. On those days, students could choose to forgo their jeans and sweatshirts for a dress or a tie as a part of International Justice Mission’s (IJM) “Dressember.” Middle schoolers learned about IJM’s work to free children and families from modern-day slavery and looked for ways to raise funds to support their mission.

### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The Team One students led chapel at Evergreen on Monday, January 13. These young students shared stories and scripture that they’ve learned in class this year about leaders who lived out our theme that God is our Rock. They created artwork to accompany the Bible stories. It was beautiful to be led in worship by our kindergarten and grade one students.



## 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.

#### TOM DEJONGE — SUPERINTENDENT

The Nomination Committee wrapped up its work last month and confirmed three board nominees: Khan Nedd, Leroy Stegink, and Nancy Triezenberg. Nomination Committee members reviewed a substantial list of possible nominees and, after having contact with a number of them, narrowed the list down to these individuals. Each of them reaffirmed their interest in serving as members of the board in the past week and have submitted a completed Board Nominee application to Sara, which will be shared with the full board at our meeting this month. They were approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on January 8, and they represent the qualities and skill sets identified by the Executive Committee last fall, bringing a wealth of experience in the field of education, strategic thinking, and business/finance acumen.

My thanks to the Nomination Committee for its work and thorough review throughout the process:

- Tim Alles, Current Board President
- Dave VanWingerden, Current Board Member
- Julie Westra, Current Board Representative
- Rita Buitendorp, Former Board Representative
- Paul Jeltema, Former Board President
- Larissa Hollingsworth, Former Board Member





## 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.

#### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Each GRCHS faculty member participates in *Winterim* by either teaching a course, visiting and supervising interns who are placed outside our schools, or by leading a trip.

Many of these experiences are rooted in Christian service.

In our freshman course, Life Together, our entire 9th-grade class went out into the community twice, serving at ten different locations. Their experiences were impactful both on the communities they served and on our students.

Many other trips or courses incorporated service into their experiences.

Our men's basketball team served multiple times, visiting our elementary schools to read to the youth and passing out coats to the homeless.



#### ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

We are looking forward to an afternoon of professional development together on February 14 where our middle school teachers from GRCMS and Rockford Christian School will get to work together on strategic plan goals around defining and promoting effective academic and social behaviors for our students, as well as continuing to refine our previous work related to curriculum alignment, formative assessment, and standards-based teaching and grading. These professional development opportunities are an important way for us to ensure that both middle schools in GRCS are implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum and that our teachers are working together to ensure best practices are implemented for student learning.

#### JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The Iroquois campus has experienced a great partnership with our high school this past month.

First, the 9th graders came by during two of their days of Winterim to spend time with several Iroquois students. They spent time reading, working in math groups, and building connections with each other. It was great to see our young students interact with our high school students.

Secondly, the GRC Men's Basketball team came by as well to read to our younger students. It was great having tall young men in their basketball warm-ups work with our kids. The Iroquois students thought that was great. We truly have a wonderful community here at Grand Rapids Christian, beyond our buildings.

It is MAP assessment time. The students in first through fourth grades (and into middle school) participate in MAP assessments three times a year. These assessments are helpful to guide teacher instruction and help in the process of determining if students are in need of supports of any kind. This testing round, our third and fourth graders are able to take the MAP assessment on the iPads. Taking this test on the iPads is significant in that the test can be taken in a familiar and comfortable environment (their desk and classroom) and will give a more accurate result.





## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 2, CONT'D

#### **ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL**

January is a busy and focused time of learning for students. It is also a time for assessment. We use a variety of assessments to monitor student growth and to ensure that the content and curriculum that we use are effective. Beginning in first grade, students take the NWEA MAP assessment three times each year in September, January, and May. Teachers also use the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark leveling assessment to monitor the reading level of each student.

AimswestPlus is an assessment that we use with kindergarten and first-grade students to determine progress in foundational skills. We use these three assessments to monitor student growth, determine specific interventions for students, and to ensure that our curriculum is aligned to state and national standards.

#### **KIM PRIMUS — DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION**

The third pillar for Inclusion Services focuses on Student-Centered. Each student is valued as a unique child of God, created in His image, with areas of strengths and struggles (Psalm 139:13-16). As a full member of general education classrooms, each student also receives additional support from Inclusion Staff who ensure that the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications needed for a successful school experience are provided. Individualized educational plans are tailored for each student's gifts and areas of need.

The big smiles on students' faces when they are a part of their classroom experiences remind us of the importance of this. Following a group presentation in one classroom, a student pumped her hands in the air and said, "We did it!"



## 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.

#### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

*Winterim* is an acknowledgment that learning doesn't and shouldn't happen only within the four walls of a classroom. We rely on community and global partners to support us in the efforts to immerse our students in a global, contemporary society. Guest instructors teach unique classes, allowing students to expand their experiences in the classroom. Just a few of the courses taught by our more than 30 guest instructors are: The Courts and Law, Grand Rapids City Police Youth Academy, Drivers' Training, Independent Cinema, Intro to Photography, and Landscape Architecture.

Roughly 100 GRCHS students were placed throughout the community in internships! These community partners open their doors for our students to get a glimpse into a potential career. Students interned in the medical field, architecture, and engineering. Many students leave these experiences affirming God's call for their lives after high school.

We had nearly 250 students travel all over the world as well for *Winterim*. They made amazing connections and learned so much about God's people and His world on the following trips:

- The Arizona Trail (Leaders: Kevin Van Harn & Paige Bokach)
- Arizona: Varsity Boys Hockey Trip (Leader: Nate Zietse)
- Bahamas: Island School (Leaders: Jonathan Quist & Sarah VanderVeen)
- Costa Rica: Touch of the Tropics (Leaders: Kara Kits & Krista Krygsman)
- Dominican Republic: Serve, Rest, Grow (Leader: Frank Padilla)
- Ecuador: Andes and Amazon Adventure (Leader: Paul Diekema)
- Europe's Great Cities: London, Paris, Florence, & Rome (Leaders: Priscilla Meeuwenberg and Lisa Rozema)
- France, Belgium, & Germany: Sights & Stories in W. Europe (Leaders: Seth Davies & Joe Brower)
- Hawaii: Hotspots, History & Island Hopping (Leaders: Stephanie Boven and Jillian Konyndyk)
- Jamaica: Jamaican Deaf Village (Leaders: Jenifer Gunnink and Mark VanderWerf)
- Orlando: Varsity Boys Basketball Trip (Leader: Eric Taylor)
- San Diego: Swimterim (Leader: Jeremy Pypier)
- Singapore: Lion City (Leader: Rona Das)
- South Africa: Beautiful Gate Orphanage (Leader: Bryce Lutke)





## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3, CONT'D

#### ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

On the morning of January 20, Mr. Ashanti Bryant, former principal of GRCMS and GRCS parent, and I invited GRCMS parents to school for a conversation over coffee to discuss the MLK Chapel and the “7 Components of Trans-Cultural Bridge-Building” video (which was shared with all GRCMS parents via e-mail). We wanted to have the opportunity to engage with our GRCMS parents about this important bridge-building work and to share with them some of the plans we have for opportunities for our students to engage in these conversations in the second semester.

In order to promote our GRCS Portrait of a Graduate characteristics of “Justice Seekers,” “Cultural Competence,” and of being “Thoughtful Neighbors,” it is important to keep parents engaged in this work, also, and to look for new opportunities to engage them in the conversations that we are having with their children so that all of us can partner together in this work toward community-building, justice, and racial reconciliation.

#### BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

The Kingdom-building work of Shalom is not limited to one particular day or lesson, yet Martin Luther King Jr. Day marked an important moment to gather together and affirm our collective call to seek justice. During our MLK Family Time, a few Rockford Christian sixth graders shared with our school the story of a “Change Maker” they had researched for a Language Arts project. From Jackie Robinson to Malala Yousafzai, each student detailed how courageous and brave actions by individuals began to change the structural and institutional forces that kept others oppressed and marginalized. We were challenged to think about how we might continue to seek justice and work for peace today.

#### JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

I was fortunate to visit one of our preschool classrooms where students were painting self-portraits, and was glad to see the variety of skin-tone options our students could choose from. They were able to mix colors to find just the right tone for them. I appreciate this thoughtfulness from our teachers, and am even more excited our students can have the opportunity to make a self-portrait that can better portray who they are.

The teachers at the Iroquois campus are all celebrating and honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. As a district, we chose to have a half-day on MLK Day so we can spend time talking about his legacy and how we can all serve God’s Kingdom. Although MLK Day is one day of the year, teachers spend several days of the school year focusing on this man who did wonderful things for our world and whose rich words echo still today.

#### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The Evergreen PTO sponsors several family events each year. Families gathered in the Evergreen Commons on December 10 for the annual Cookies and Carols event. We sang Christmas carols together and then ate Christmas cookies. This year Watsonel Paul, an Evergreen parent, and four of his fellow band members led the music for Cookies and Carols. It was a great opportunity for families to gather at school to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ together.





## 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.

#### TOM DEJONGE — SUPERINTENDENT

Welcome to La'Leatha Spillers as our newest member of the Advancement Department team. La'Leatha will serve as the Director of Development, filling a position that was posted but not filled during the 2018-19 school year. La'Leatha's first day was Wednesday, January 8, 2020. She comes to us with experience in fundraising and marketing, most recently at Bethany Christian Services. La'Leatha and her husband, Edmund, have one child, Peyton, who is enrolled in Spanish Immersion Preschool at the Iroquois Campus.

#### ERIC BURGESS — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

On Friday morning, January 24, we will host the first of three Meet Us in the Middle (MUITM) events, where prospective students for 2020-2021 and their families will come for an opportunity to participate in chapel, experience GRCMS by "shadowing" another student for the day, and allow parents to learn about the school and have questions answered. We have 15 prospective students signed up for the first event on January 24! You can learn more about Meet us in the Middle on the GRCS website at [www.grcs.org/middle](http://www.grcs.org/middle).

#### BEN BUURSMAN — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Rockford Christian's Preschool and Kindergarten Open House proved to be a valuable opportunity to connect with families and share insights into our Christ-centered, nature-based program. Over two-thirds of the 37 prospective families that attended chose to enroll their child! One parent wrote on their registration materials, "Hi! My sister and I toured this evening and fell in love with the preschool program and your staff!" Another parent shared, "I was actually considering touring another local preschool, however, I do not believe that is necessary now because I was so impressed tonight."



#### JOHN BARKER — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The Preschool and Kindergarten Open House was a fun night. We welcomed nearly 100 families, many new and some returning, to find out more about our excellent preschool and kindergarten programs. As we look forward to the next school year, it's exciting to know we will be loving and guiding a wonderful new group of students. We look forward to having them with us, whether they are new or returning.

#### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The admissions team regularly gives tours of the Evergreen campus to prospective families. We welcomed two new students to Evergreen in January.



## 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.

#### TOM DEJONGE — SUPERINTENDENT

We received very good news from CSI last month regarding the successful national efforts to reduce the insurance premiums CSI annually pays the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) in order to guarantee a pension for eligible employees.

Prior to the end of the 2019 calendar year, President Trump signed into law the SECURE Act, which included a provision to reduce the annual insurance premiums CSI (and other similar companies across the country) is required to pay to the PBGC for our Defined Benefit retirement plan by approximately \$6.5 million annually.

The Act results in a significant increase in the amount of funds that will now be applied toward funding the plan rather than toward insurance premiums, which ultimately impacts the long-term funding status and health of the Plan. We are communicating with CSI about the funding schedule increase its board instituted for each of the next two fiscal years in order to determine if the increases will be adjusted now that premium relief has been achieved but have no further information on that at this time.

#### JIM PRIMUS — CFO

Through the first half of the 2019-20 fiscal year, the GRCS Operating Budget continues to track well with respect to both budgeted Revenues and Expenses. The budget includes an Operating Reserve of \$500,000, which we hope to use only to address surprise expenses that sometimes occur.

The GRCS Proposed Operating Budget for the 2020-21 school year is complete and will be presented to the GRCS BOT at its January 27, 2020 board meeting for approval. If approved, a vote by GRCS constituency to pass the budget will be held at the annual meeting scheduled for February 10, 2020.

The Proposed Budget includes a New 2 You Grant of \$360/student (increase of \$15/student), a Variable tuition range which includes a maximum increase of \$320/student for full-time students, an Eagles Fund goal of \$1.6 million, a 1.5% wage increase for staff, steps for eligible faculty, a CSI Pension fee increase to \$878,000, and an Operating Reserve of \$250,000.



## GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATES

### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Graham Schultze, Evergreen Team Three teacher, piloted a Blue Apple science unit this fall. Blue Apple units are project-based science units created by educators at the VanAndel Institute for Education. The unit, Prevent the Spread, was all about learning what germs really are and what we can do to stop the spread. The culminating project for the unit had Team Three students creating and presenting Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for the younger students of the school. Mr. Schulte says, “While working through a project, students receive the empowerment that comes with investigation and reflection. I want my students to learn that they can stand toe-to-toe with a problem and then employ strategic reasoning to solve it.”

The Imagination Station is a new space at Evergreen this year. It is a space where students work together to explore STEM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). The Lego wall, Blokus, building blocks, iPads, and many other activities engage students in collaborative activities under the direction and planning of Mrs. Joni Bolt.

