



20 — 21 BOARD REPORT

GRC'S

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

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

OCTOBER
2020



2020/2021 BOARD REPORT

OCTOBER 2020

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent



**GRAND RAPIDS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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

MISSION

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

CORE VALUES



ROOTED IN CHRIST



EDUCATED FOR LIFE



CALLED TO SERVE



**CONNECTED THROUGH
RELATIONSHIPS**



**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.

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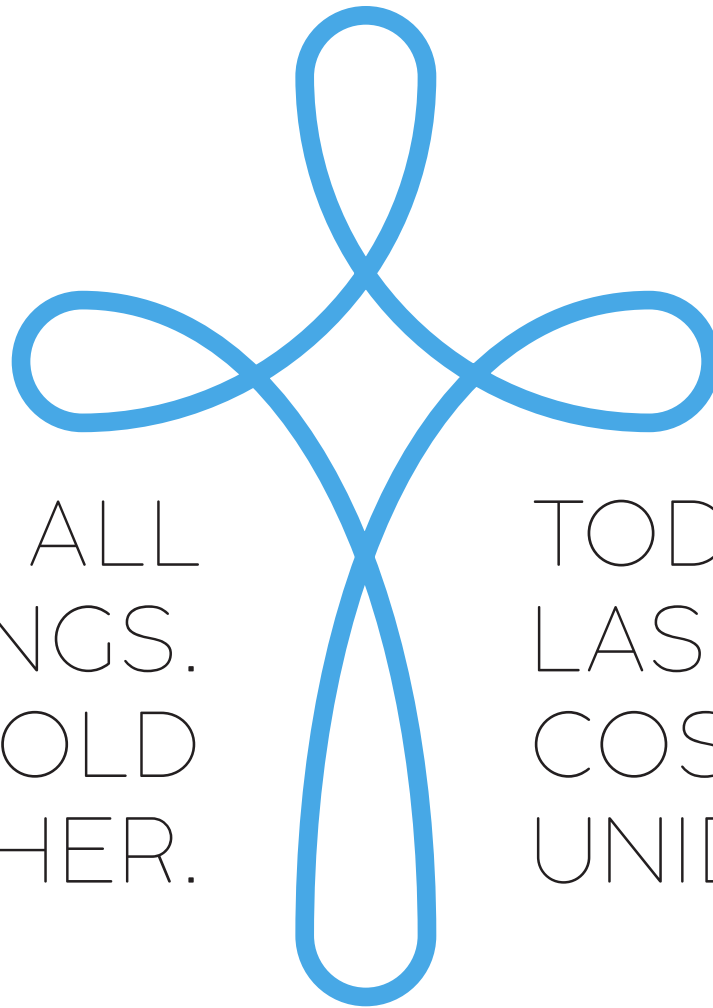
Tom DeJonge, Superintendent



**GRAND RAPIDS
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DISTRICT THEME.



ALL
THINGS.
HOLD
TOGETHER.

TODOS
LAS
COSAS.
UNIDAS.

*He is before all things, and in Him,
all things hold together.
— COLOSSIANS 1:17*

*Él ya existía antes de todas las cosas
y mantiene unida toda la creación.
— COLOSENSES 1:17*

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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.

OCTOBER 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
19	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS HUB
20	10:00 am	GRCS Foundation Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
21-23	All Day	No School — Staff Professional Development	All Campuses
27	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons

NOVEMBER 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
2	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
5	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
9	12:30 pm	GRCS Education Committee Meeting	GRCS HUB
13-14	7:30 pm	GRCHS Play "Its A Wonderful Life: Radio Play"	This event will be streamed live from the CAW Auditorium. Tickets for the live stream are \$10.
19	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
25 - 27	All Day	No School — Thanksgiving Break	All Campuses

DECEMBER 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
3	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
7	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
7	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	GRCS Board Room
10	2:30 pm	GR Promise Zone Trustees Meeting	GRPS
12	7:30 pm	GRCHS Concert: "The Christmas Pops"	This event will be prerecorded on the CAW stage and be available for viewing on Saturday, December 12 at 7:30pm. Tickets TBD.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Board:

The October board meeting marks the beginning of our 10th week of school this fall; given the complexities, we faced this year, what a great accomplishment for our students, families, and staff! It has been a time of both great challenge and wonderful satisfaction as we welcomed nearly 2,200 PS — 12 students for full-time in-person learning.

To date, we have two students (one preschool student and one high school student) and two staff (one childcare worker and one middle school coach) that have tested positive, which resulted in quarantining a preschool classroom at the Iroquois Campus, Team 1 Kindergartners at the Evergreen Campus, and a few selected students at all levels. Our investigations of these incidences have been thorough and our communications with parents and the health department have been prompt. Hats off to our faculty and staff for their incredible diligence and hats off to our parents for being so great about completing the daily health screen and doing all they can to honor the health department guidelines.

As we begin the 2nd quarter of the school year, we are looking forward to the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. Planning for the 2021-2022 school year is well underway, which includes drafting an operating budget for the Finance Committee to review in December, initiating enrollment projections, and drafting our 2021-2022 school year calendar. Throughout this process, we will work closely with the appropriate board committees in concert with the Administrative Council. Watch for things to unfold over the next two months.

Thank you for your tremendous support throughout the summer and fall seasons. We couldn't do our work without your engagement, prayers, and support. We will meet in person at the Hub beginning at 6:00 p.m. and I will send out a Zoom link for anyone unable to attend in person on Monday afternoon.

Enjoy the fall weekend,

Tom.

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DISTRICT THEME.



CAMPUS
THEMES
STORIES

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

As we begin the school year physically distanced and unable to gather together as an entire school for chapel, we have worked to remind students that we are held together through our faith in Jesus Christ. We have met virtually, with chapel being broadcast into lunch classrooms, and have not shied away from the reality of our divided world. We are claiming God's promises of unity in the body of Christ.

One of the ways that God holds us together is through our relationships.

It is a difficult time to build deep relationships, especially for those who are new to GRCHS.

Earlier this fall, our student congress decided to host a “**Mix-It-Up Lunch**” outdoors. They assigned all students to mixed lunch groups so that students could be intentional about getting to know some new students.

Each group was led by a student congress member and met outdoors where they could be physically distanced.



One new way that we are setting a strong, unified foundation for our students is through a new freshman skills course.

For the first time, all ninth graders are taking a course together that focuses on giving them the skills that they need to be successful in high school.

We are excited not only that they are learning academic skills but also spiritual, social, and emotional skills. This is a reminder that God uses us to hold His Kingdom together.

GRCHS Chaplain Mark VanderWerf and Director of Academic and Innovative Programs Nick DeKoster have led our district in preparing a plan for our **Growing Deeper** series for the 2020-2021 school year.



GROWING
DEEPER

The purpose of **Growing Deeper** is to encourage, inform, and grow together. As parents, teachers, and church leaders engage the work of Christian discipleship, we want to encourage one another, be informed by best practices, and grow together as a Christian community.

The Growing Deeper speaker series is one of the ways in which GRCS extends its mission of Christian education by partnering with parents and churches to learn from leading experts to gain strategies and tools to engage important and relevant issues while fostering our Christian faith within ourselves and our students.

In conjunction with the 2020-2021 Growing Deeper events, we will be hosting a community-wide book-read of Lisa Sharon Harper's book, *The Very Good Gospel*. Thanks to the board for reviewing the book and giving us the green light to move forward with our faith formation and Growing Deeper efforts!

The topics of this year's Growing Deeper have been drawn from and informed by her important book. This year we will be looking at topics like political engagement (CHP. 10), racial justice (CHP. 9), mental health (CHP. 5), faith formation in an age of COVID (CHP. 4), and creation care (CHP. 7).

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DISTRICT THEME.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Although we greatly miss time for corporate chapel at the middle school, many blessings have come out of our new chapel format.

It has been a blessing to know that all students and staff around the district have been worshiping under the same theme: **All things. Hold together.**

Teachers have been sharing meaningful chapels each week, which are shared with homeroom teachers & students to help us focus on this theme.

Through the venue of prerecorded chapels, many students have been able to be involved and share what the different aspects of this theme mean to them! A lot of voices are being heard!

During the first week of school, we invited staff members to share what the theme verse means to them. We heard from many different people with different angles on the theme verse:

- Mr. Riley: God is in control
- Ms. Eames: God goes before ALL things...not most things or some things.
- Mr. Bouwman: Tape holds us together & so does God!
- Mrs. Grulke: No matter if learning from home or school, God holds us together
- Sra. Abreu: God is our common denominator!
- Mrs. Sajdak: What do the words in the verse mean? HOLD: grasp, carry, support
- Mr. Newman: God holds ME together! Let's find ways to let HIM do that with and for us! (worship, reading the word, be still & getaway, share the current with others)



BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Our District-wide theme, **All Things. Hold Together.** has felt especially meaningful in the context of our current global health crisis.

Throughout the summer and into the fall, teachers and administrators have had to carefully consider almost every aspect of school in the face of many unknowns and evolving realities.

We have made and remade plans for learning in-person, at home, and a mix of the two. We have had to pivot and readjust our teaching in new ways that maintain student learning, establish classroom communities, and keep everyone safe.

Simply put, it can feel like we've had to rethink all things, and we are left wondering if it will all hold together. Colossian 1:7 has been a welcome solace. Our theme verse reminds us that God goes before us. In Him, we find refuge and strength.

Family Time, our time of communal worship at Rockford Christian, remains a time for all of our K-8 students to start their week rooted in worship and praise.

Grade levels have taken turns leading Family Time over Zoom and sharing reflections on our theme. While we miss being all together in the worship center, we also give thanks for the technology that makes connecting in this way possible.

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Evergreen art teacher, Mary Garrod, created a banner that greets us when we first walk into the building and reminds us of the theme verse.

Students in Team 3 were blessed with a fun, virtual opportunity late in September. Mr. Luis Chen of Wormies, a vermicompost farm in Jenison, Zoomed with the students and taught them all about the how, what, who, and where of compost.



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This special guest made for the perfect tie in to a science unit on the flow of energy through an ecosystem.

Students prepared questions for Mr. Luís and collaborated with him on the initial plans of a “Pumpkin Drive” — a possible event hosted at Evergreen to encourage families to dispose of post-Halloween pumpkins in an eco-friendly way.

Team 3 students will use further tech skills, art skills, and communication modes to advertise this opportunity to the other Teams at Evergreen. From the investigation of God’s creation to the utilization of communication, Team 3 is getting a firsthand look at how ALL things hold together in Christ.

Evergreen students gather in their classrooms or virtually from home for a Zoom chapel each Friday morning. We continue the tradition of prayer circles, special speakers, and classrooms leading chapel. During the month of September, we focused on God creating **All Things**. He made all things, and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:3

Special Speakers at Evergreen:

- Mrs. Bakker introduced the theme verse during our first chapel.
- Mr. Phil Warners challenged the Evergreen students to take care of God’s creation.

Team 1 first grade students shared artwork to show their favorite part of God’s creation. They also made and shared a video in which they recited a Bible verse from the book of Genesis.

Team 3 students drew pictures of the Bible stories they were studying and shared them during chapel. They also created a jigsaw puzzle that shows the Bible stories they are studying and included a piece representing their story.

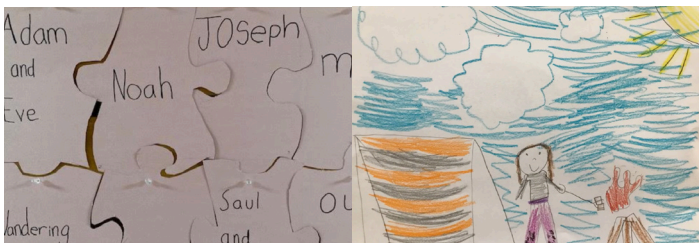
JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The district-wide theme of **All Things. Hold Together.** has been something we are reminded of daily here at the Iroquois Campus.

This campus is bustling with life each day, and with things like social distancing, the challenge of continuing the tight-knit Iroquois culture is challenging, but we are reminded daily that, **All Things. Hold Together.**

There have been a lot of changes due to the global pandemic, but our teachers and kids have and continue to adjust, and with the reminder “*He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together...*” school is happening! Learning, faith development, friendships are all happening.

With everything that is new and different, I am reminded daily that in the midst of the many challenges, **All Things. Hold Together**, and the Spirit of God is present.



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STRATEGIC PLAN.



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

Through Tim's leadership, the leadership of the Executive Committee, and the full engagement of each of the board's committees, we are well-positioned to identify the board's strategic priorities going forward. Subsequent to the CESA Institutional Review in November 2020, there will be additional clarity on several items that will likely become important areas of focus for the board and administrative team as we look ahead:

- In light of the current strategic plan expiring in 2022, the beginning steps in the development of a new five-year strategic plan
- Future administrative transitions in order to strategically equip the Schools to continue the many positive accomplishments that have been achieved in GRCS' educational program and financial strength
- Accreditation and our future engagement with CSI or another body
- Continued strengthening in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Strategic determination of protecting accessibility for parents who desire a Christian education for their children but are unable to access it without financial support

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STRATEGIC PLAN.



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

We were excited to learn that we have seven National Merit semi-finalists this fall! This is more than any other school in West Michigan. It is certainly a tribute to our faculty, staff, and students for the hard work they put forth.

Our faculty and staff have done an amazing job simultaneously teaching in-person and virtually. All classes are live-streamed for virtual learners and are recorded for students to watch later.

Recently, we added SWIVL cameras that follow the teacher throughout the room and more accurately pick up sound throughout the room.

Our virtual learners continue to report through regular surveys that they are having a good experience learning online.

The Spanish Immersion program is in its second year at the high school. Our tenth-grade immersion students are in AP Spanish and are taking New Testament in Spanish. Spanish teacher, Raquel Rodriguez, is partnering with the administration to support the program.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Virtual Learners Liaison — Based on feedback from staff and parents, we have identified the need for a consistent communicator and collaborator who, alongside our classroom teachers, is available to assist our virtual students.

We have an experienced teacher who is connecting students, parents, and teachers together as the students learn from home.

We have found that this position has helped make the online process for students more effective and cohesive. We are blessed to offer this extra support to our online learners.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Teachers at Rockford Christian have demonstrated incredible resilience and flexibility in their craft this year. Students have benefited immensely from teachers' willingness to try new technologies and rethink their instruction. If you come for a visit, you'll see evidence of this before you even make it in the building; teachers have been taking their classes outside in record numbers.

Outdoor instruction aligns well with health department recommendations for preventing the spread of the virus, and importantly, teachers have been willing to explore the ways it can also benefit student learning. Some lessons are better suited than others for a trip outside, but teachers have noted how the movement and fresh air can increase student focus.

Students in 2nd-4th grade each have their own yoga mat that they take outside, and a "camp chair" was a part of the required materials for middle school.

We've added five outdoor classrooms to our campus and continue to look for ways to enhance our outdoor learning environment. We pray that the virus will soon become a distant threat, but even when that day comes, I suspect you will still find us learning outdoors.



ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Most of the teachers at Evergreen are teaching in the classroom and are providing virtual learning for students who are currently learning at home.

- Each teacher has created a schedule with Zoom links so that students at home can join the classroom each day.
- Materials that students need to access during the day are all in a plastic crate that can be transported between home and school so that all students have the materials they need.

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STRATEGIC PLAN.

- Teachers and students use SeeSaw in grades K-3 and Google Classroom in grades 4-5 to communicate as their main technology platform.

Elementary grade-level professional learning teams from the three elementary campuses have worked together over the last five years to identify essential writing, reading, and math standards.

- Last year a committee of elementary teachers representing each grade and campus was formed to develop an updated report card that aligns with the identified essential standards.
- The committee received input from each elementary teacher.
- The new report cards, grades K-4 (and 5 Evergreen), are ready to be implemented this school year and will assist classroom teachers and interventionists as they intentionally instruct in the classroom and provide interventions for students.

Elementary teachers from all three campuses met with their grade-level professional learning teams during professional development.

These groups of teachers continue to align their assessments to the essential standards that have been identified.

This work ensures that all students continue to grow and learn at high levels.

NWEA Map assessments are administered to students in grades one through five at each elementary campus three times each year.

After each test cycle, each teacher completes an NWEA Map reflection form.

Then, each teacher meets with the building administrator and Student Support Services Coordinator to review student data, set goals for students for the school year, and discuss curriculum and instruction based on assessment data.

The fall cycle of NWEA Map assessments and reflection meetings has been completed, and it is clear that students continue to learn and grow at high levels.

Teachers continue to teach, and students continue to learn. But, most importantly, our teachers continue to lovingly care for their students during this challenging time. Teachers continue to guide and teach students how to live in a Christian community in the classroom, even when

they are required to be six feet apart. Our teachers are a beautiful example of God's love to their students each day.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Each Iroquois teacher met with the Iroquois leadership team (John Barkel, Kim Primus, Ronda Pifer, Jenny Marsh, Vanessa Abreu, and Ann Bakker) to review student MAP assessment data from the fall tests students took.

Together, we reviewed student assessment data, had conversations about goals and objectives for each teacher's class, and provided encouragement and support for teachers.

Although our teachers taught virtually last spring, students' MAP test results from this fall showed little effect.

This is a true testament to the teacher's hard work and dedication, as well as parents and teachers partnering together for the social and educational well-being of our kids.

The Iroquois teachers continue to work incredibly hard through simultaneously teaching both in person and virtually to students at home.

The technology we have is truly a gift and allows those kids at home, who just can't come to school for various reasons, the opportunity to learn from their beloved teacher. No doubt, this is a challenge to carry out, but our teachers are overcoming the challenge and continue to do an amazing job each day.

KIM PRIMUS — INCLUSION DIRECTOR

It is such a blessing to partner with teachers, coordinators, and administrators to support students well. We seek God's guidance knowing that He is before all things and is the One in control of all. I am often touched by the strengths that each educator brings to the table when we meet to discuss how best to support our students with unique needs. The gift of Christian communities is evident on all of our campuses.

The Inclusion PLT meets regularly with a focus on aligning inclusion practices on all campuses. Each meeting begins with a time to celebrate what is happening on each campus. A few of the recent celebrations were the new hire of a special education teacher (Dani Roskamp), support of the new transportation director (Tim Hoving) with my requests as the director of inclusion services, and positive social interactions observed during recess times. What follows the practice of celebration is a detailed instruction on the

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STRATEGIC PLAN.

responsibilities for inclusion. We are in this together. In partnership. With God before all things.

SHEILA VANDERWOUDE — TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR

One of our current technology plan's goals is to prepare students to live as safe, responsible, and innovative Christian digital citizens when searching, consuming, creating, and sharing content.

Last year, the technology staff reworked a digital citizenship scope and sequence plan for grades K - 12 aligned with the state and national technology standards.

We started implementing this new plan last winter, focusing on integrating digital citizenship within classroom topics as much as possible.

One area of focus is on cyberbullying and hate speech, where we discuss what to do if someone is mean to you online, how to be upstanders, how to de-escalate drama, and how to respond to hate speech.

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STRATEGIC PLAN.



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.

TOM DEJONGE — SUPERINTENDENT

I sense good momentum in our diversity, equity, and inclusion work this year. The Cultural Competence Committee, a joint committee of the board composed of board, faculty, and administrative representatives, has already met once this fall and has scheduled meetings throughout the 2020-21 school year. The committee reviewed several areas on which to focus our work this year, including:

- Instituting a framework that guides teachers to think inclusively as they plan
- Identifying lessons and educational opportunities for the students
- Completing an audit of the current curriculum
- Establishing a series of 3 - 4 coordinated seminars for each building on diversity, inclusion, and equity
- Coordinating planned engagements/discussions around The Very Good Gospel through Growing Deeper and a complimentary book such as Multi-ethnic Conversations
- Further strengthening our seeking applicants of color for teaching and administrative positions at GRCS
- Developing a process to support formal recruitment and retention of faculty of color
- Developing an annual DEI Report to distribute to the parent and broader community
- Communicating strategic vision, challenges, and actions taken to demonstrate DEI

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Our faculty and staff completed part two of our professional development with Julian Newman. We met altogether in the morning in the stadium, and Julian met with each department in the afternoon to discuss curriculum and pedagogy.



Student Congress has been working hard to support a positive, welcoming school culture.

As mentioned earlier, they hosted a mix-it-up lunch, but they have also led several other initiatives:

They created signs throughout school, thanking a variety of faculty and staff for their roles in getting school ready during a pandemic.

They hosted cookies and conversations weekly for our new students, giving them a place to make connections. They formally assigned a mentor to each new student so they could start the year having at least one person that they could connect with when needing support.

The executive committee of our student congress has been meeting regularly with me to discuss areas where we can be more inclusive. Julian Newman has participated in these meetings occasionally.

Our hope is to give all students both a space to “feel” as they discuss their experiences and a space to “build” as we create specific systems that make us an antiracist community.

This fall, the high school administrative team, Julian Newman, and a few members of the central office staff had the opportunity to meet with a group of alumni who authored a letter that was critical of parts of their experience at GRCHS.

They specifically hoped that GRCHS would strongly consider the way we welcome diverse families and teach about justice issues.

It was a great opportunity to hear real experiences and to share some of the changes we have made in the last few years.

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STRATEGIC PLAN.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

The middle school has a Student Advisory Board (SAB) made up of 7th and 8th-grade students who have written essays to express their interest in this leadership position. They have also been elected by teachers as positive role models in our GRCMS community.

The first endeavor of the SAB this school year is to continue our partnership of building onto the supplies at a library in Kakuma in Kenya. In the past, we have raised funds to send money to purchase books for this refugee camp library in Kakuma, and this year we are excited to have the opportunity to serve others in order to raise money to send computers that will help educate students in this camp.

Middle school staff had the opportunity to hear from Julian Newman, Director of Leadership and Culture, at GRCS. Many staff members shared that this time with Julian Newman to learn about aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion was an invaluable time that they would treasure and take with them to ponder and dive deeper into throughout the school year.

We look forward to continuing this time of learning and fellowship with Mr. Newman and the middle school staff on October 21.

The middle school staff is currently in a book study where they spend a portion of their staff meetings discussing *This Book is Antiracist* by Tiffany Jewell. The book was specifically written for adolescents. It teaches about social identities, the history of racism and resistance against it, and how you can use an anti-racist lens and voice to move toward equity.

Teachers have enjoyed connecting with each other through this reading in preparation for guiding students through discussions on anti-racism.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Julian Newman had the opportunity to introduce himself to our middle school students this fall. Using the power of story, Mr. Newman illustrated the importance of truly seeing others and listening to them. He challenged our students to be the generation that heals divisions and works to build Christ's Kingdom.

Mr. Phil Warners is serving at Rockford Christian in his new role as Director of Outdoor Education. Part of Phil's role includes developing and maintaining partnerships with the broader community.

While Rockford Christian has some notable long-term partners such as Camp Roger, Mr. Phil continues to connect our students with new community partners. This fall, students walked next door to help out at Grass Lake Orchards. They picked apples, made cider, and learned a bit more about what it means to be a thoughtful neighbor.

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Julian Newman spent a Zoom day (new phrase these days!) with our elementary teachers during the August Professional Development days. Teachers expressed great appreciation for the information that Julian shared. Since then, teachers have continued to challenge each other as we continue to grow and learn. Several teachers have suggested the next steps in our journey, which we are exploring at this time.

A small group of teachers plan to attend the Introduction to Responsive Classroom virtual conference on October 21.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Kicking off the school year, Julian Newman spent a day with staff in a training that had a great impact on all of us. During this time with Julian, teachers and staff were able to intentionally reflect and learn about the devastation of racism and how we can all continue or begin the journey towards reconciliation and healing.

This time together was amazing in so many ways. Teachers and staff are grateful for Julian's wisdom and knowledge, genuine support, and the continued efforts GRCS is making towards deepening in cultural competence.

The Iroquois Guiding Coalition (an elected group of administrators, teachers, and staff focusing on creating a vision for the Iroquois campus) met to reflect on the training time with Julian and take what was shared and make sure it continues.

One of our meetings' practical takeaways was to review the several months of the year that are dedicated to the heritage and celebration of specific cultures.

Currently, we are celebrating Hispanic Heritage month, which has been awesome. This has given us the opportunity to honor Hispanic heroes in our world, including several teachers, parents, and students. A big thanks to Vanessa Abreu, our Spanish Immersion Director and Iroquois Guiding Coalition member, who has coordinated this all for the Iroquois campus.

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STRATEGIC PLAN.



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

The Executive Committee determined to investigate several outside firms to assist in securing a new Director of Advancement, a position formerly held by Lindsay Hart. The Committee hopes to narrow down the list of possible firms at its November meeting and looks forward to launching a national search in seeking applicants to fill this important position.

Securing an individual for this position, along with other transitions in executive leadership anticipated over the next several years, is a strategically wise decision by the board and positions GRCS to ensure a smooth transition in administrative leadership in the years ahead.

AMY ORR — ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR

Enrollment Data.

Count Day was September 23, 2020. Clearly, these are not the numbers we would have hoped to report (see enrollment data page)

Prior to COVID, we were well on our way to make or possibly even exceed projections because of Continuous Enrollment. However, from May through August, we experienced a steady stream of parents choosing to suspend their contract or opt-out altogether.

One of the biggest hits was at the preschool level – many families chose to keep their children home this year. The other two large discrepancies between actual and projected enrollment were at Rockford Christian and the Iroquois Campus.

You can see that 139 students have an enrollment contract on file but chose to suspend it this year. Were those students all officially enrolled this year, we would have surpassed projections.

While it was very difficult for the admissions team to watch this decline and see families with whom we have spent many hours choosing to leave, we pressed on.

We extended our enrollment deadline for the first semester adding three rolling enrollment deadlines, allowing students to start school on August 19 and 27 as well as on September 1. This contributed to the number of new students we were able to enroll – particularly at the high school, which ended exceeding projected enrollment.

We have 163 new students in the 1st-12th grades system-wide. Last year, we had 162 and 146 the year before. In a COVID year, having the highest number of new students in 3 years is a true testament both to God's grace and how hard the Admissions Team worked over the summer.

We will now begin the process of projecting enrollment for 2021-2022. To do so, we will have to take all the suspended contracts into account.

Hopefully, all of them return, and hopefully, we keep all the new students – some of whom may have come simply because of COVID and liking how GRCS was handling things.

Overall, we will take a conservative approach so that we are basing the budget on projections that we can achieve.

Admissions Marketing Plan.

When schools closed in March, we had to move to a virtual environment for which we weren't prepared. We did film some virtual tours of our empty buildings, which our team has used over the last few months. Still, we have learned from experience and are currently filming video at all of our campuses, anticipating and preparing for the majority of our events to be virtual.

In addition, we are finding new ways to make sure we connect with families. We are blessed with a great Admissions Team – they have lots of ideas and have positive attitudes about figuring out how to reach families during a pandemic.

[Click HERE for the 20-21 Admissions Marketing Plan.](#)

When we are able, we are holding small events on our campuses, but in general, our admissions events will be virtual – and we will be prepared with video to show prospective parents and students what it's like in our classrooms.

These events will also be available “on-demand” and be able to be repeated later in the year without a significant

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STRATEGIC PLAN.

amount of additional work, expanding the reach and reward of each event.

Our Admissions Team acknowledges that while we are having to learn new ways to do our job and reach prospective families, one benefit of COVID is it is encouraging us to retool and rethink. Not everything we do will just be done this way this year. We will have a variety of ways to do admission going forward.

2020-2021 ENROLLMENT DATA

	PS	proj.	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	PS-12 TOTAL	PS-12 proj.	K-12 TOTAL	K-12 proj.
IQ	142	175	90	102	73	93	92									592	658	450	483
EV	15	20	15	17	16	8	14	14								99	107	84	87
RCS	51	65	23	19	19	19	16	16	14	12	24					213	250	162	185
GRCMS								82	119	111	113					425	439	425	439
GRCHS												190	186	201	206	783	771	783	771
TOTAL	208	260	128	138	108	120	122	112	133	123	137	190	186	201	206	2112	2225	1904	1965

NEW STUDENT DATA

New 1st — 4th	29
New 5th — 8th	30
New 9th — 12th	104
TOTAL	163

WITHDRAWALS PS-12

	Suspended	Opt-Out
EV	17	10
IQ	61	69
RCS	44	53
GRCMS	12	16
GRCHS	5	37
TOTAL	139	185

VIRTUAL LEARNERS

Evergreen	0
Iroquois	19
Rockford Christian	0
GRCMS	20
GRCHS	50*
TOTAL	91

*Plus 6 flexible schedules

DIVERSITY DATA

	PS	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Asian	4	1	2	4	3	2	2	4	0	5	4	13	18	18	80
Black or African American	8	10	6	7	10	9	9	8	16	18	19	23	21	27	191
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Hispanic or Latino	11	8	9	2	8	2	6	7	1	4	5	9	6	7	85
Native Hawaiian (Other Pacific Islander)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Two or More	12	8	16	6	8	7	7	11	3	5	12	5	14	9	123
White	173	101	105	89	91	102	88	103	102	104	150	136	142	145	1631
Totals	208	128	138	108	120	122	112	133	123	137	190	186	201	206	2112

Diversity: 22.7%

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LA'LEATHA SPILLERS — DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPAL

As we closed the 2019 - 2020 fiscal year-end (06.30.2020) and began 2020 — 2021, the Development team continued to engage donors and prospects through personal calls, socially distanced visits, and Zoom meetings. We've also begun to dig further into our data. We want to be intentional about better understanding the demographics and psychographics of our constituent groups and their understanding of the Eagles Fund.

By understanding giving patterns and acquisition and retention rates, we will create strategic development initiatives and development plans grounded in donor research and best-practices for our giving community.

Eagles Fund

Total raised as of FY end 06.30.2020 was \$1.4M, 91% of the 2019-2020 goal.

Year	# of Gifts	# of Donors	# New Donors
19-20	2,725	1,288	109
18-19	3,058	1,479	165

Percentage of constituent groups that gave to the Eagles Fund in the FY ending 06.30.20:

Year	Board	Alumni	Parents	Faculty/ Staff
19-20	90%	4%	24%	27%

Our goal is to increase the number of new donors (acquisition rate) and retain (retention rate) our current donors through development best practice. This will create opportunities to align our current and new supporters with an understanding of the Eagles Fund and how their support positively impacts current and future students.

Other Development Updates

The school year's beginning is filled with many preparations for appeals and solicitations for the first half of our fiscal year.

The annual report is complete and currently at the printer. The publication's theme is "Thrive," and based on Isaiah 44:4 — *"They will thrive like well-watered grass, like willows by streams of running water."* The report should arrive to our constituents in early November.

The year-end appeal is also in production and will feature parents, staff, grandparents, and alumni. The publication's theme is "Together We Soar" and based on Isaiah 43:19 —

"We are drawn together by God, who will do a new thing through our collaboration."

Annual endowed fund statements were distributed at the end of September.

Development staff also completed training through Independent School Management and attended Christian School Management's Development Retreat. Additional professional development focused on donor-centered fundraising is scheduled to take place in November.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

New Family Orientation:

On Monday, August 17, we welcomed 26 new students and their families to the middle school!

Although we had to be careful with numbers and social distancing, we had a great time gathering outdoors with families and teachers.

Small groups were able to tour the school and help students feel excited and prepared for their first days of school! What a blessing to welcome so many new students to the middle school campus!

Classroom Connect:

Typically parents flood into the classrooms to meet their children's teachers and hear about what will be taught in the coming year.

As many things have been reimagined this year, so was Classroom Connect.

Thanks to technology, teachers were able to share their plans for the year with parents via video, which was sent to each middle school family.

Co-curricular teachers also shared their curricular plan, all of which being made available to families to review on their own time.

Although the teachers were not able to meet parents face to face, they put a lot into making sure parents could learn about the year ahead!

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The admission staff is working with the Evergreen staff to plan a virtual Kindergarten Expedition Event in November and Preschool/Kindergarten virtual Open Houses during the month of January.

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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.

JIM PRIMUS — CFO

The GRCS Revised Operating Budget for the 2020-21 school year is complete and was unanimously supported by the Finance Committee at its October 1 meeting.

- Adjustments were made to the Budget approved in February, particularly as a result of the health pandemic.
- 2020-21 PK enrollment stands at 208 students (52 students below budgeted projections), and K-12 enrollment 1904 (61 students below budgeted projections).
- There are 139 students included in suspended enrollment contracts.
- The overall financial impact of tuition and other revenue as a result of the health pandemic is (\$1MM).
- The Revised Budget includes PPP Loan forgiveness revenue as well as County Funds revenue we expect to receive in 2020-21.
- On the expense side, adjustments to the Budget include an increase in Capital Allocation (from \$600K to \$1MM), Bad Debt expense (\$84K to \$220K), and the Operating Reserve from 1% to 7% of expenses.

With the completion of the 2020-21 GRCS Revised Budget, we will begin work on the 2021-22 Operating Budget and expect to schedule a meeting in early November with the GRCS Compensation Committee.

The 2019-20 Audit is complete after a virtual process this year, which went very smoothly. Beene Garter Managing Partner Tom Rosenbach will meet with the GRCS Finance Committee on November 5, 2020.

The CSI Pension Board has notified participating schools

that it is expecting total contributions of \$19MM as soon as possible, which will increase the GRCS' annual contribution (6.99%) to \$1,328,000. The CSI Pension Board will meet in October to determine the year in which this increased contribution will be paid (either 2021-22 or 2022-23).

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Philanthropic support plays an important role in sustaining excellent Christian Education. At Rockford Christian, families make good on opportunities to give back to our school community.

This October, we hosted our first-ever Harvest Hustle. The Harvest Hustle is a celebration of the autumn season, our connectedness as a school, and God's faithfulness in our lives. Students raised over \$20,000 leading up to the event and thanked their supporters by paying it forward through acts of kindness.

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NEWS AND UPDATES.

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

The week of 9/28/20 was Homecoming week at GRCHS! We certainly missed the traditions of a Homecoming dance and the student section at a Homecoming football game, but we found ways to make it a fun week. We had a dress-up theme for each day of the week and also had virtual events during lunch. Our seniors won the grade competition, and we were able to celebrate our school and come together at a time when we needed some fun!



ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The 2020-2021 Evergreen calendar was adjusted this year to align with the calendars of the other GRCS schools. We weren't able to offer the fall Enrichment Week the last week of September in the same way we've done in past years. However, we were able to offer a modified Enrichment Week for our Team 2 and Team 3 students.

- During the week of September 21-25, Team 2 students went to Camp Roger for two days on Monday and Tuesday.
- Team 3 students went to Camp Roger for three days on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- The Camp Roger staff focused on activities around our theme: All Things. Hold Together.
- Students participated in devotions, archery, canoeing, rock climbing, and team building activities at Camp Roger.



SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Partnership with School and Home: Zoom Conferences

Teachers are looking forward to meeting with parents in the latter part of October via Zoom conferences. Sign-ups have been sent out, and homeroom teachers plan to meet with each student's parent or guardian to partner with them in their child's journey at GRCMS.

BEN BUURSMAN — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Thanks to the Rockford Christian Parent Teacher Organization's generous support, a patch of weathered blacktop is now a beautiful outdoor playscape. The playscape was installed by the Outdoor Discover Network — a leader in the field of outdoor education.

Students have loved the new space. We are also grateful for donations by Great Lakes Landscape Supply and Grapids irrigation to beautify the space with mature trees.



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NEWS AND UPDATES.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

As you can imagine, teaching with a mask is hard for teachers as it definitely muffles their voice. Thanks to the Iroquois and Evergreen PTO's generous support, our teachers are now equipped with microphones that tie into the classroom sound systems. Teachers can now teach without having to strain their voices, and kids can hear much more clearly!

SHEILA VANDERWOUDE — TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR

Whether you are a student, parent, or staff, you have found yourself in the past seven months to be stretched with flexibility, adapting quickly to change, and learning new technologies.

Staff have re-imagined education, found new ways to meet desired outcomes, and grown quite adept at using video and other creative tools to teach, learn, and assess.

Parents have had more glimpses into the classroom, growing their knowledge of our teachers' work, the relationships that are built, and the faith integration that occurs.

Our schools continue to thrive and be nimble because we have had the needed technology resources of both equipment and staffing. We have been given time to learn new technologies, and we have dedicated staff and administration that continually work to provide a strong learning environment.