



# 20 — 21 BOARD REPORT

GRC'S

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

**Tom DeJonge, Superintendent**

DECEMBER  
**2020**



# 2020/2021 BOARD REPORT

DECEMBER 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.

# 2020/2021 BOARD REPORT

DECEMBER 2020

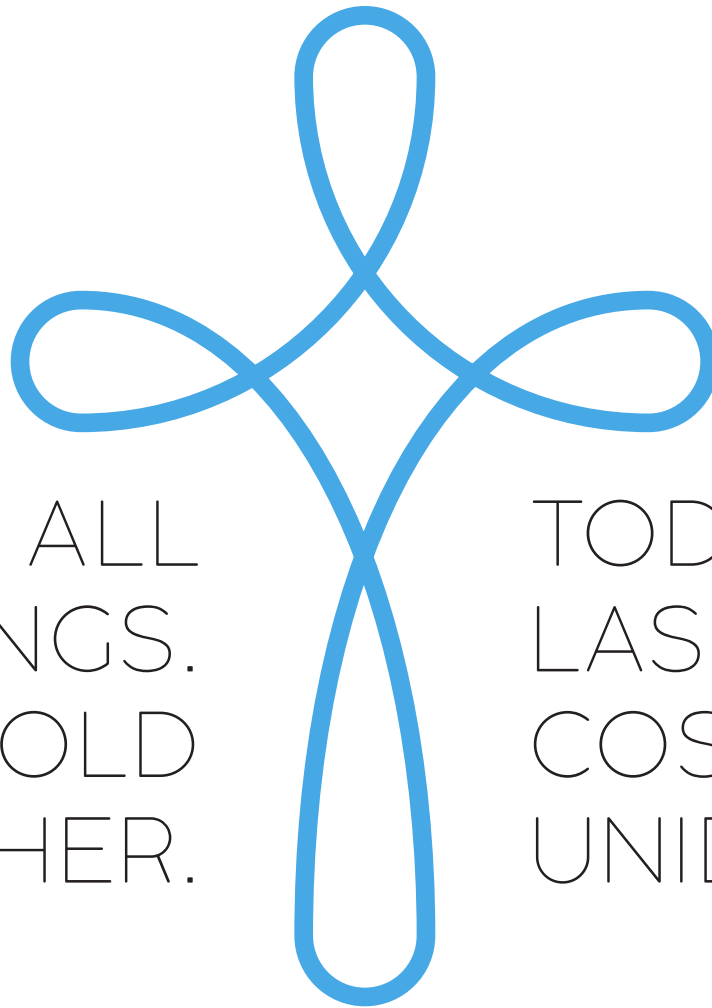
Tom DeJonge, Superintendent



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

### DECEMBER 2020

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
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 7:30 pm. Tickets TBD.

### JANUARY 2021

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
6	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
7	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
18	12:30 pm	GRCS Education Committee Meeting	HUB
19	10:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
20	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
26	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons

### FEBRUARY 2021

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
1	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
4	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
15	6:00 am	GRCS Board Annual Meeting	HUB
18	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
18-19	All Day	PD for Staff	All Campuses
23	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons

### MARCH 2021

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
1	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
8	12:30 pm	GRCS Education Committee Meeting	HUB
11	2:30 pm	Promise Zone Board of Directors Meeting	GRPS
15	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
23	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Board:

As we individually and as a Christian school community prepare for the Christmas season and the many celebrations that are a part of the holidays, it is with a grateful heart that we are able to explicitly recognize the season's true meaning with our nearly 2,200 students. Though the year has come with many challenges and uncertainties, in Christ we are comforted in the certainty we have that, through His birth, we are able to confidently move forward in the knowledge that — in Him — all things truly are held together.

This month's board meeting is intended to draw our attention to the coming school year. The board will:

- Get its first look at a draft of the 2021-22 operating budget parameters that have already been reviewed by the Finance Committee,
- Be asked to approve the 2021-22 school calendars so that our admissions team members may use them as the 2021-22 admissions efforts swing into full gear,
- Review the status of identifying board candidates to fill up to three vacant board seats,
- Consider strategic recommendations found within the CESA Institutional Review report, and
- Further discuss the impact of potential future educational programming and campus utilization.

If it sounds like a full agenda, it is, and our work and discussion represent important steps we will take to be well prepared to both close the current school year in the spring and open school smoothly next August.

I look forward to our meeting and the opportunity to engage your best thinking as we move forward. We will meet in person, though a Zoom link will be provided for those who are unable to attend in person. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m.

Until then, enjoy your weekend! See you soon,

Tom.

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## DISTRICT THEME.



**CAMPUS  
THEMES  
STORIES**

### **BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL**

In a year where we've experienced many disappointments, one of the things we miss the most is not being able to worship together in person during chapel. We were so thankful to be able to hold one outdoor chapel as an entire student body in the stadium. Our students sang worship songs together and reflected on our theme verse and what it means to be God's hands and feet in holding each other together throughout our challenges.

There is no doubt that disappointment in the many losses we've experienced at school during recent weeks leads to feelings of isolation and sadness. Even during the switch to virtual instruction, we continue to remind each other of our theme, "All Things. Hold Together."

Our student congress is working to strengthen our relationships as we celebrate the holiday season with "12 days of Christmas." Students will lead virtual devotionals, participate in service opportunities, and work together on other fun events. Some of these fun events are virtual Christmas cookie baking, an ugly Christmas sweater competition, a gingerbread house competition, and Christmas song/movie tournaments. We are grateful that our theme continues to impact the way we live together as a Christian school community.

### **SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL**

The Colossians 1:17 theme is proving to be a very important theme this year at the middle school. Not only are we using this verse to unite us through all of our chapels this year, but we are also feeling it amongst staff as well. Along with the extra challenges that teachers are experiencing during a pandemic, daily life plunges ahead. As a community of colleagues at GRCMS, we have continued to use our theme All Things. Hold Together. to help support each other through the trials of life.

Staff members comfort each other through the loss of elderly parents, through cancer treatments of spouses, through family members struggling with depression, through financial trials. In times like these, we find much comfort in reminding each other that God indeed holds all things together.

We have looked specifically at three different areas in our weekly chapels so far into ways that God holds all things together. God KNOWS all things. God SEES all things. God WORKS in all things. As we move into the Christmas season, at the middle school we want to pause and take a few weeks to think about what Christmas really means. Sometimes we just get used to hearing the same Christmas story year after year. But do you ever think to really WONDER about it? Do you wonder what it felt like to be Mary? What about Joseph? What might you wonder this Christmas season about Jesus coming to this earth to save YOU?

### **BEN BUURSMAN — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL**

Amidst a year of zoom calls, physical distance, and limited gatherings, opportunities for connection and togetherness have felt all the more important. Our district-wide theme has proven to be one such opportunity. During our Thanksgiving Family Time, an opening video of students from each of GRCS' five campuses offering thanks served as a visual reminder of our connection in Christ. In Him, all things hold together!

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## DISTRICT THEME.

### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

How does energy flow through an ecosystem? This question led Evergreen's Team 3 students down a path of dissecting owl pellets, imagining the food web present in "The Grove" outside their classroom windows, and diagramming photosynthesis using actual parts of trees. The same question also brought up the idea of composting. While many of the 4th and 5th graders compost food scraps at their own homes, they had never seen the process executed on a large scale.

Enter Mr. Luis Chen, founder of Wormies, a vermicompost farm in Jenison. His willingness to Zoom with Team 3 helped them learn the ins and out of the compost. Luis toured students through the farm as he taught them what healthy compost looks like and why it's so beneficial for the environment.

Acting as true collaborators, Team 3 students asked how they could get involved with Wormies. Luis' response? Host a pumpkin drive! Pumpkins, an excellent ingredient to compost, were soon to be in excess after Halloween. Students got to work making posters and video advertisements. A month and a half later, Luis pulled away from Evergreen with a trailer packed with pumpkins while Team 3 students walked away understanding more about both science and service!

—By Graham Schultze, Team 3 teacher.





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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**

Each fall, the Nomination Committee is charged with identifying potential candidates to fill vacant board seats. That process is well underway, and a slate of outstanding candidates reflecting the skills and qualities needed to preserve the strength of Schools' financial health, strategic mindset, and faith doctrines that are the bedrock of our mission has been developed. I am thankful for the Committee members' commitment to this process and am very pleased with the caliber of the individuals that have been identified.

One of the recommendations found in the CESA Institutional Review report, included in this month's board packet, ties directly to the current strategic plan and addresses the topic of the Board of Trustees' progression toward a self-perpetuating governance model. Important initial steps to advance this model were taken several years ago when GRCS Bylaws were revised and adopted by the board. We are now approaching a time to further consider next steps that have been recommended. There are strategic reasons for that to occur and further explanation about and discussion on what this exactly means is warranted. I will be asking the Executive Committee to further explore this over the coming months but highlight it for the full board as a topic for our further discussion.

#### **JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL**

In mid-November, the Iroquois campus invited special guests to tour the building, get a glimpse of the artifacts that remain from previous GRCS campuses as well as the Ottawa Hills High School, and get a snapshot of the great things going on in the Iroquois building. These guests were from CESA (Council Educational Standards and Accountability).

Being part of their study gave us principals an opportunity to share about the realities of our awesome school system. We were able to further explore areas we desire to grow in, while we were also affirmed in the wonderful spiritual and academic efforts that have been going on for some time. It is greatly appreciated that our school board and superintendent find value in being reviewed as a system.



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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**

The recent mandate to change to 100% virtual learning was certainly disappointing, but our faculty and staff were ready. Earlier this fall, our department team leaders worked with the administration to prepare a schedule that allowed for direct instruction and synchronous learning over Zoom, along with time for asynchronous learning and time for interventions as needed. We also continue to offer support in the building to students who receive services. We are thankful that these students are able to take their virtual classes at school and get support as needed from faculty and staff.

The move to virtual learning has a big impact on assessments. With finals approaching, teacher teams are considering the best way to accurately assess students' learning from the past semester. Rather than focusing on content knowledge, teachers will primarily focus on assessing essential skills that may be better assessed through a presentation, project, essay, or interview. Teams have the flexibility to work with students to provide them with the best opportunity to show all that they've learned this semester.

#### **SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL**

All GRCS teachers were given the opportunity to earn credit toward continuing education through a program called PD Pathways. PD Pathways provides GRCS teachers with a personalized professional development experience that empowers them to choose when, where, and how they learn. Pathways are tailored to the staff Marzano

growth plan, the GRCS strategic plan, individual school improvement plans, and other GRCS learnings.

Julian Newman, Diversity & Inclusion Consultant to GRCS, delivered Part 2 of a time dedicated to helping middle school teachers focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Not only did he help teachers work through their own journey in understanding racism, but also what it means to be a teacher and role model to middle school students who carry the same struggles and questions in our broken society.

Simon Jaynes, co-founder and Executive Director of Christian School Management, came to spend a week with the middle school staff and administration to discuss possible ways to improve scheduling at GRCMS. Mr. Jaynes worked with Grand Rapids Christian Schools about six years ago and returned to help us review our schedule and building space after moving to the new campus at Chesaning and Burton. We were blessed to have him working with us to focus on our mission and vision to provide an education to prepare students to become effective servants of Christ in contemporary society.

#### **BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL**

Excellent teaching is marked by reflection and growth. During a recent professional development opportunity, Rockford Christian teachers headed to the Outdoor Discovery Center to take their learning outside. Teachers worked in collaborative groups to solve problems and consider ways they might work with their own classes outdoors. The experience left all involved refreshed and ready to implement new ideas on our campus.

When the year began, each campus worked on preparing for the possibility of in-person instruction, virtual learning, and a hybrid of the two; teachers at Rockford Christian now seem to be doing all three simultaneously! Potential exposures and quarantines have kept teachers on their toes, balancing the needs of both virtual and in-person learners. No matter the form of instruction, it has been amazing to see the ways teachers have maintained classroom communities and academic growth.

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## STRATEGIC PLAN.

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

Teachers, Grades K-4, have worked diligently the past few years to align curriculum, instruction, and assessments to state and national standards. We use benchmark assessments to determine student growth.

This fall the elementary administrators also surveyed teachers to get a sense of what is working in the classroom and what is still needed as teachers continue to provide excellent instruction in each classroom. The information from the survey will be used by teachers and administrators to further the exemplary work that is already underway.

### **JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL**

GRCS preschool teachers were involved in a professional development experience, as well as a handful of meetings that focused on an assessment for our incoming kindergarteners. This assessment is age-appropriate for our young kiddos. It provides additional data to guide our educational support services (ESS) teams to provide necessary and appropriate supports for our incoming kindergarten students.

Although we find it incredibly important to make sure our kindergarten students experience school in a way they will enjoy and grow socially, this assessment will get kids on the best academic track more efficiently than before.

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

One of our former students, Brad Szotko, contacted Kim Primus about options for his Eagle Scout project. As a former student at Iroquois and the middle school, and now a current high schooler, Brad experienced the blessing of a friendship with a peer who has Down syndrome. This is a friendship that continues to this day. Brad was excited about the possibility of doing something to impact students like his friend. We decided that giving attention to the middle school sensory room would be the focus of his project. Brad raised funds to transform the dated sensory room into a calming space to accommodate sensory needs. This safe space has walls that are now painted a calming blue and new shelving units for organization. There is a bubble wall, weighted blanket, cocoon swing,

a variety of liquid floor tiles, and an assortment of sensory tools (fidgets). Students learn that sensory tools are items to help you do your best.

It is a joy to see the excitement on students' faces as they enter the updated sensory room. Many students will benefit from Brad's effort to make a difference for students who receive inclusion support. Thank you, Brad, for a job well done!



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## STRATEGIC PLAN.

### **SHEILA VANDERWOUDE — TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR**

Technology literacy can be defined as the ability to creatively, effectively, and responsibly use the appropriate technology to access, communicate, integrate, and evaluate information. With the opportunities and challenges we have experienced during the pandemic, we have seen enormous growth in technology literacy! Here are a few glimpses that reflect some of this growth visible in both staff and students.

- A 5th-grade student remotely opened with prayer at Family Time at Rockford Christian.
- The 4th-grade team at GRCS Iroquois Campus created an Epic digital library of books for each summative assessment in reading. Learners are eager to read and then reflect on the book while giving them the power of choice.
- A resistant writer has greatly improved his skills because his teacher now lets him write using his iPad.
- A sing-along video created last spring by a support staff of the student's favorite song is used today as a "reward" at school.
- Seesaw has become a treasured favorite tool for teachers to create and share activities with their students. Students share their evidence of learning in Seesaw, and this spring, filmed videos that reflected their personalities at home!
- Relationship building continues both in-person and virtually. One student told his support staff that he really misses zooming with her because he really liked having her in his kitchen!
- During a remote small group intervention session, an issue between siblings and a dog left the online student in tears. The teacher paused the math instruction to pray together.

# 2020/2021 BOARD REPORT

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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.

#### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Last month, GRCS hosted another part of our Growing Deeper series. Julian Newman both presented and answered questions about cultural competency and flexibility. As we've come to expect from Julian, he was engaging and humble as he invited our audience into a difficult conversation. It was encouraging to see so many members of our community watching and participating on Zoom and on Facebook Live. We look forward to continuing this conversation in the weeks and months ahead.

Our student congress continues to work as a bridge between administration and students. Through regular meetings with the Executive branch and the principal, we recognized that there would be a benefit to our entire student body having an avenue to share their thoughts. Because of this need, our student congress members decided to host regular town hall meetings. Last month, they hosted their first meeting and gave students a safe place to discuss issues of race at school. They were encouraged by the participation and good conversation that took place.

At our October professional development session, we decided to give faculty and staff some choice about how to best grow professionally. One of the focuses was cultural competency and staff had the opportunity to view the film *Just Mercy* and reflect in conversation with each other or to go on a walking African American history tour of Grand Rapids. Faculty reported that both experiences were very positive and beneficial to their work with students.

#### SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

**Kakuma & Acts of Kindness** — The Student Advisory Board at GRCMS worked very hard to launch a campaign to help raise funds to send computers to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Students met with Mr. Simon Luk and his son Isaiah Luk (current GRCHS student) to learn about the need for student resources in the library in Kakuma. GRCMS students offered Acts of Kindness to family and friends to help raise funds for students over 7,500 miles away! They were able to raise enough money to pay for 15 laptop computers and the funds to get them delivered to the camp. Please pray that the computers will be safely delivered and put to good educational use!

As a continuation of our professional development time with Julian Newman, he has asked to become part of regular monthly meetings with the middle school staff. Teachers will have the opportunity to engage in "Conversations with Julian" where they can continue to talk about and ask questions about the difficult concepts of understanding each other through different races and different cultural backgrounds.

The middle school students participated in a "Blessings Project." They spent time-making cards, banners of thankfulness, and flowers for our friends at the Clark Retirement home. These were delivered to the retirement home in lieu of visitations this year, in hopes of bringing some joy to the residents during this holiday season.

#### BEN BUURSMAN — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

Outdoor Education continues to be a productive avenue for community partnerships at Rockford Christian. Middle school students recently headed over to Plainsong Farm to learn about regenerative farming practices and help prepare the soil for winter. Healthy food is a foundational aspect of any community and our students now better understand how what they eat impacts themselves, the land, and their broader community.



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DECEMBER 2020

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## STRATEGIC PLAN.

### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Julian Newman joined the Evergreen staff meeting on Wednesday, November 19 to talk with staff and answer questions. Julian will also join the Evergreen staff meeting on Wednesday, December 16.

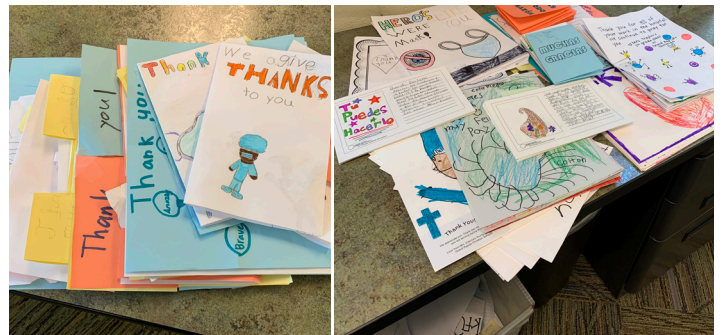
There is a Wonder Wall in the Imagination Station at Evergreen. Each week students are encouraged to think about and write questions about the book/topic the librarian reads during library class. The questions are then posted on the Wonder Wall. These are some of the questions that Team One students posted during election week:

- Can you vote for anyone?
- Can you vote for 2 people?
- How many years have we been doing this?
- I wonder if my dad will choose my mom?
- What are election points?
- Can you vote for kids?
- How many presidents have we had?
- Why have there been only boy presidents?
- How do you know when to vote?

### JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

A wonderful service opportunity was presented to us the week before Thanksgiving. A Spectrum Health employee presented me with the idea of our Iroquois students writing letters, cards, and drawing pictures of thanks for the employees at Spectrum Health. I presented it to teachers who jumped on the opportunity immediately. Our kids offered prayers, Bible verses, words of encouragement, and heart-filled messages to encourage the health care workers at Spectrum who are on the front lines. We sent Spectrum Health about 500 notes and cards to share with employees over Thanksgiving.

This act of gratitude was covered by WOOD TV 8! Reading the cards and notes of appreciation and prayers from our kids at Iroquois sure was a blessing, and I know was appreciated by the doctors, nurses, and various other healthcare professionals at Spectrum Health.



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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.

#### LA'LEATHA SPILLERS — DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPAL

##### Eagles Fund

Total raised as of November 23, 2020 is \$775,823.

The 2019 — 2020 Impact Report (annual report) was mailed to over 15,000 friends of Grand Rapids Christian Schools during the first week of November. The publication's theme was "Thrive" and based on the scripture Isaiah 44:4, *"They will thrive like well-watered grass, like willows by streams of running water."*

The year-end appeal is finalized and at the printer and as of the publication of this report will have arrived to over 8,000 in the Grand Rapids Christian Schools community. The electronic appeal was sent on November 16. This year's appeal features parents, staff, grandparents, and alumni. The theme is "Together We Soar" and based on scripture Isaiah 43:19, *"We are drawn together by God, who will do a new thing through our collaboration."*

The Development team continues to implement a donor-centered fundraising and development model. Based on our donor analysis we know that our donors need and want:

Prompt, meaningful acknowledgment of their gifts and contributions

Confirmation that each gift, regardless of value, will be assigned to a specific program, project, or initiative (tuition reduction, student support services, exceptional academics, fine arts, etc.) that benefits Grand Rapids Christian students both in the present and future.

A report on the measurable results achieved in that program, project, or initiative (tuition reduction, student support services, exceptional academics, fine arts, etc.) they are supporting before they are asked for another gift.

Donor retention strategies being implemented include:

- Celebrating our first-time donors and making them feel special. Regardless of gift value, in addition to their acknowledgment/gift receipt, each first-time donor will receive a personal hand-written note with a GRCS token of appreciation.
- As this is the busiest time of year for giving, the development staff will make weekly "Thank You" calls to all donors in November and December.
- The GRCS Board will also be asked to make "Thank You" calls to donors in the new year.

##### Events

Due to COVID-19, we were not able to hold our annual Fles Society (planned giving) luncheon. However, we did want to acknowledge all Fles Society members and share with them how much we appreciate and miss them. In November, all Fles Society members were sent a heartfelt note and a thank you gift.

##### Professional Development

In November, Development staff completed a 3-part training on Donor-Centered Fundraising through Cygnus Applied Research, Inc. with leading fundraising innovator Penelope Burk.

#### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

On The GRCS admissions team transformed Expedition Kindergarten into a fun and relevant virtual event for students moving from preschool to kindergarten at the Evergreen Campus.

Each student who is moving up to kindergarten received a special box of supplies in anticipation of the October 19 Expedition. The supply box included a GRCS pencil case with clothespins and rope to make a tent at home, a flashlight, colored pencils, and coloring pages, and the book Llama Llama Loves Camping. On the evening of the

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CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

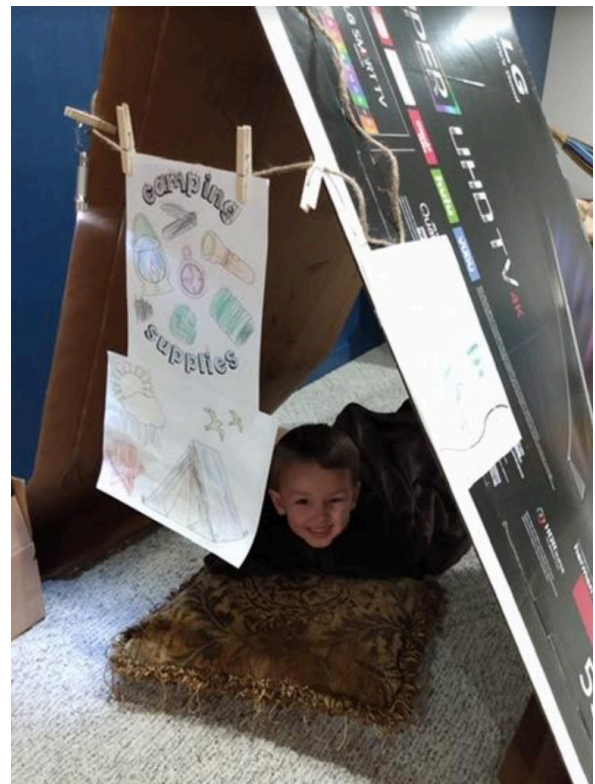
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## STRATEGIC PLAN.

event, these young students and their families gathered at home to participate in the Expedition Kindergarten virtual event.

Mrs. Bolt, Evergreen Media Inquiry Specialist dressed in her camping clothes and read the *Llama Llama* story to the children. Mrs. Nyenhuis and Mrs. Warren, Team One teachers, presented information about Team One at Evergreen Mrs. Michelle Ogdahl wrapped up the evening by sharing information about registration for Kindergarten.

Students returned to preschool the next morning bubbling with excitement about Expedition Kindergarten and their enthusiasm about moving up to kindergarten next school year.





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## STRATEGIC PLAN.



### 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.

Work on the 2021-22 Operating budget continues. A DRAFT budget was reviewed by the Finance Committee at its December 3, 2020 meeting. A proposed 2021-22 budget, complete with enrollment projections and 2021-22 tuition recommendations, will be presented to the GRCS BOT at its January 2021 meeting.

#### JIM PRIMUS — CFO

The 2019 — 2020 Audit is complete. Beene Garter Managing Partner Tom Rosenbach met with the GRCS Finance Committee on November 5, 2020, and gave a very positive report. GRCS received the Internal Control letter at that time and provided written responses to the Beene Garter's recommendations and management comments. The GRCS Finance Committee reviewed and approved those responses prior to the letter being returned.

Through the first four months of the 2020-21 fiscal year, the operations budget is on track with respect to both revenue and expenses. Specific expense overages are Covid-related (Maintenance and Repair and Substitutes).

The GRCS Business Office has submitted to Macatawa Bank its application for PPP Loan Forgiveness. Because of the amount of the Loan, GRCS is also required to complete the SBA form 3510 Loan Necessity Questionnaire. GRCS is working with Beene Garter to complete and submit the questionnaire along with the appropriate supporting documentation.

The GRCS Compensation Committee met on November 9, 2020, to review 2021-22 budget challenges and discuss 2021-22 staff wages and benefits. The Committee is made up of one faculty member from Evergreen Christian, GRCS, GRCMS, and RCS, two faculty members from GRCHS, 3 BOT members, and GRCS Administration. The Committee will meet again on December 14, 2020.

# 2020/2021 BOARD REPORT

## DECEMBER 2020

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent



**GRAND RAPIDS  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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

## NEWS AND UPDATES.

### BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

Despite an abrupt pause to a few of our fall sports teams' seasons, there is a lot to celebrate!

- **Cross Country** — The girls' team won the Regional race, including Madelyn Frens as the individual top medalist and the boys' team finished 2nd which qualified both teams for state. The girls have the current record of qualifying 19 years in a row. State Finals were so quiet and different but the teams still had a great time. Girls finished 3rd at state (Madelyn Frens finished 3rd as an individual) and the boys finished 9th!
- **Football** — Our team finished 3-3 in the regular season and then 1-1 in the playoffs after defeating Wayland round 1 and then losing in a hard-fought game to South Christian.
- **Girls' Golf** — Our team finished 4th in the OK White and then turned around and tied for first in the Regional, losing the tiebreaker on the 5th golfer. Ryann Breslin won the Regional win -2 under par! The girls qualified for state at MSU Forest Akers on Saturday, October 17. Our girls finished 10th at state finals with Ryann Breslin tying for the top individual spot overall with an incredible 70 including a state record 5 birdies in a row!
- **Boys' Soccer** — They finished the regular season ranked 4th in Division 2. The Eagles lost in the district finals in a penalty kick shootout. We also hosted the state semifinals and everything went well, including our first GoFan experience.
- **Girls' Swim and Dive** — Our swim and dive team showed incredible grit through their facility issues early in the season. Despite not having a pool for a month, our girls finished 4th in the conference. Becca Burrows set a new 50 free record! Currently ranked 8th in the state and awaiting a decision about their state finals.
- **Boys' Tennis** — The team finished 3rd in the OK White and ranked 6th in the state in Division 3. Won the district title and won their sweet sixteen match at

West Ottawa on October 15. Our Eagles lost in a tough quarter-final vs. Detroit Country Day.

- **Volleyball** — They are currently ranked 2nd in the state. The girls repeated as Conference Champs for the 5th time in a row and also repeated as District Champs. We hosted Regionals and took home another title. We await a decision by the state on the final week of the tournament to be played.
- **Winter Tryouts** — The hockey team and the girls' basketball teams are formed. All other winter sports still have to conduct their tryouts once the MDHHS opens athletics back up.

Our **theater department** pressed forward despite the challenges of COVID-19 and created a virtual production of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Students were masked and physically distanced and were still able to perform on stage. We were thankful for this opportunity!

*Winterim* is an integral part of the GRCHS experience. Because of the amazing experiences that our students have off-campus or with guests in the building, we decided to reschedule *Winterim* for the two weeks leading up to spring break. We pray that there will be many more opportunities for our students at that time!

### SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

In late October, middle school teachers had the pleasure of meeting with parents via Zoom conferences. It was definitely a different experience than the normal fall parent-teacher conference, however, we feel blessed to have this option to still be able to meet with parents during this unique year and partner with them in their children's education at GRCMS.

### ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

This year the Evergreen preschool students enjoy reading and listening to the stories *Creepy Carrots!* and *Creepy Pair of Underwear!* The books are written by Aaron Reynolds. We also talk about how they can write books of their own.

After reading the books one afternoon during exploration

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the students wanted to know if the author had written any more creepy books. I looked it up and didn't find more creepy books.

The students talked about how they had some ideas for books they wanted the author to write. We looked together on the computer to find a way to talk to the author and found an email address. So, we wrote an email to him and included all of the students' book ideas. He wrote back to us the next morning. He told us that he does have a new book coming out next fall. He liked their ideas and encouraged them to keep writing. Some of the students have written their own creepy books at school and at home. They are very excited!

— *By Dominique VanHill, Preschool teacher*

### **JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL**

We would normally be about two weeks away from our annual Iroquois Christmas concert. I'm thrilled to share that we are going to have a VIRTUAL Christmas concert, presented by the talented Iroquois students. Watch for the official recording of the concert to be sent out the week of December 14. The link can be shared with friends and family who will be able to enjoy their student's musical performance..

### **SHEILA VANDERWOUE — 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.