



20 — 21 BOARD REPORT

GRC'S

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

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

JUNE
2021



2020/2021 BOARD REPORT

JUNE 2021

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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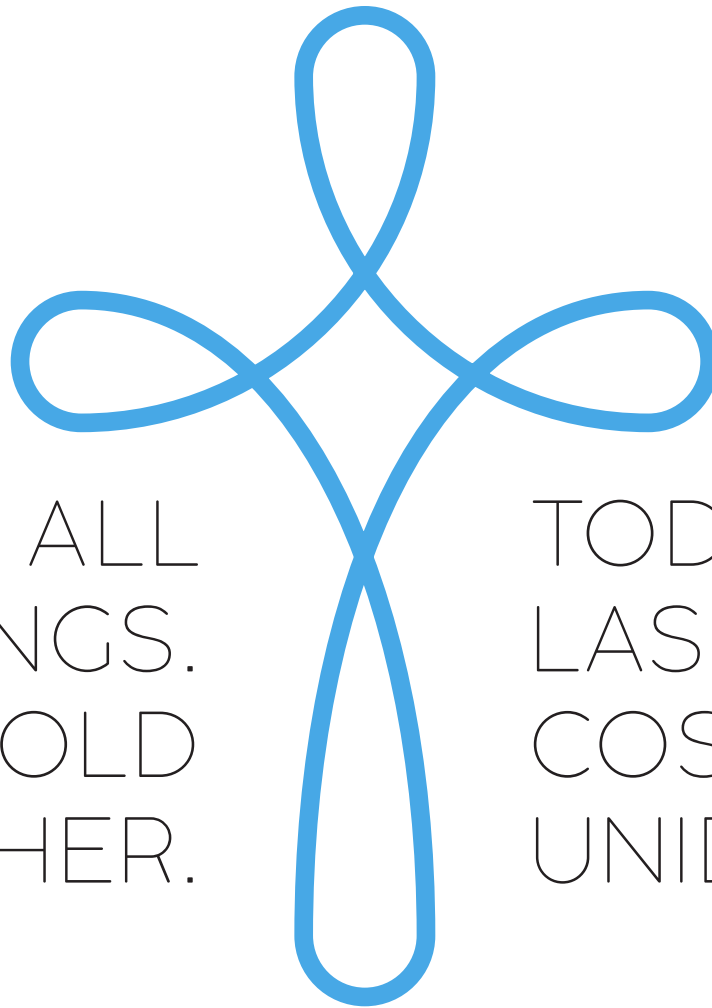
Tom DeJonge, Superintendent



**GRAND RAPIDS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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

DISTRICT THEME.



ALL
THINGS.
HOLD
TOGETHER.

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

TODOS
LAS
COSAS.
UNIDAS.

*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.

JUNE 2021			
DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
3	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
7	7:00 pm	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
7	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
22	10:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Board:

We closed the school year with a half-day for students on Thursday, May 27, 2021. Looking back on a very eventful year, I have nothing but gratitude to express to you, parents, students, and staff for everyone's resilience, flexibility, dedication, and extraordinary efforts since we opened school nearly 10 months ago. God's presence was truly experienced in many ways, and looking back, it is clear how His hand guided our work. Though things are not guaranteed to be fully back to normal in the fall, the relaxation of a number of health restrictions we are now enjoying suggests a much more normal fall than for what we planned last summer.

This month's board packet includes important information for your review. It is a full agenda and, in light of several letters the board received over the past few weeks, it is possible that we will have a handful of parents attend the meeting. I have been in contact with several of them to explain how the board executes its work through committees and reassure them that they will have the opportunity to personally share concerns with the appropriate board committee. Tim will direct the conversation, and we will review the concerns on Monday night.

A note of celebration and thanks to Patti Harris and Jill Ellens, whose respective board terms expire this summer. Each of them has served two consecutive terms, having joined the board in 2015. They have been invaluable assets as board members, and I have tremendously appreciated their passion and support of our efforts. They will certainly be missed.

I trust you have enjoyed the warm weather of late and the start of the summer season with your friends and families. Jacquie and I will be on vacation in mid-July and the kids will each be able to join us at a cottage on Lake Michigan for a good portion of our time on the lake. We are definitely looking forward to the time together.

Will see you Monday night at 6:00 pm in the Hub!

Tom

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DISTRICT THEME.



**CAMPUS
THEMES
STORIES**

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

As we reflect on the past school year, there were certainly challenges and hardships. There were, however, many blessings and opportunities for growth. We are specifically thankful for our community that modeled unity in Christ through difficult times. When so many things could have divided, all things were held together through Jesus Christ.

It was an emotional end to the school year in many ways. There was certainly a sense of relief but also a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. It was specifically emotional for our class of 2021. We were so proud of the way they celebrated and the maturity they showed in reflecting on their four years. We were grateful to be able to hold special events for the class of 2021, including our senior chapel, senior mixer, senior banquet, and graduation. They professed God's faithfulness in providing for them and holding them together over the last four years.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

We had a fantastic end to our middle school year as we once again came around our district theme of All Things Hold Together. We came together outdoors as a student body to sing praises to our faithful God. We were reminded once again how only God could bring us through this unpredictable school year. It felt so appropriate to sing together again as a student body.

Our 8th-grade graduates experienced a beautiful last night as a middle schooler on the high school football field. Mrs. Allen (middle school choir teacher) worked with the choir students and Miss Mueller (American Sign Language teacher) with the 8th graders to learn the song Thrive by Casting Crowns. As the students signed the song for their parents, grandparents, teachers, and friends, they reflected upon how God has made each one of them for more than just surviving; God made them to thrive. It is each teacher and administrator's prayer that our 8th graders move on from middle school, seek their God-given talents, and THRIVE in the years to come.



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DISTRICT THEME.

THEME — CONTINUED

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN PRINCIPAL

Every Monday morning this past year, K-8th grade Rockford Christian students would connect for a time of worship over Zoom. While we are grateful for the technology that makes this possible, everyone missed being in the same physical space for our family time chapels. (Christ became flesh and dwelled among — he didn't Zoom for a reason.) Our last day of school was also the first time we gathered together in person, outside for family time. Worshiping together again was a true gift to our community and a beautiful way to end a year where God has truly held us together.

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The Evergreen students gathered in the grove on the last day of school for our annual graduation chapel. The Team Three Olders (graduates) invited guests to join us that day. It was a beautiful, sunny, cold day. We were able to celebrate their years at Evergreen. Then, the graduates and teachers lined the sidewalk for a final car parade to celebrate the school year.



JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Upon completion of this school year and throughout the past year, we get to reflect on our theme, All Things. Hold Together, which couldn't have been a more appropriate theme for this year. He put the right people in the right places and at the right time. Staff, students, parents, and administrators all came together to make this school year a success. It was not without its challenges. There was much that could have permanently divided us, yet, we were held together by the righteous hand of God.

On the final day of school, we invited parents and friends to celebrate our oldest grade, the fourth graders. The timing was just right. COVID restrictions lifted just enough, the weather was perfect, and the Holy Spirit was felt among us out on the soccer field. As we sang "The Blessing" to the departing fourth graders, it was certainly a time of honor to honor them, and it was so much more. It was a time we were all TOGETHER! Masks were down, and voices carried in praise. There was no talk of vaccines or no vaccines, presidents or politics. Our beautifully diverse community was united as one body. We were all exactly who we were intended to be. God held us together, and we give him all the honor and glory for allowing us to complete what I will call both a challenging and wonderful school year!.

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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

The Executive Committee has begun a review of several sections of GRCS Bylaws related to governance and board election. The Committee's discussion is in response to one of CESA's recommendations included in the report that was provided following its institutional review last fall. Additional discussion is yet needed, and a full review of any proposed changes will be provided to the board of its discussion and support when completed.

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Evergreen students, staff, and families are excited to welcome Mr. Graham Schultze as the next Evergreen principal!

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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 commit to high levels of learning for all students at Grand Rapids Christian. This means that we encourage all students to consider taking AP classes. This year, nearly half of our students took at least one of our 15 AP classes, giving them the opportunity to experience a college-level course and potentially earn college credit.

This summer, many GRCS educators will participate in a workshop called “Teaching as a Christian Practice.” This workshop is taught by David Smith, Professor of Education and Director of the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning at Calvin University. There are many layers to Christian education, but this workshop focuses on how our faith impacts our pedagogy. It asks the question, “How does our faith impact the way we teach?” We are thankful for this partnership and for the opportunity for many of our faculty to be refreshed and to refocus their work over these two weeks.

GRCHS doesn’t shut down for the summer! During the month of June, students continue learning in our Summer Session. Nearly 200 students will take one of our seven Summer Session workshops or classes. Taking summer classes gives students flexibility when creating semester schedules, allowing them to add electives or other courses that might typically be difficult to schedule.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

There are two significant projects that our seventh and eighth graders participate in as they wind down the school year. Our 7th graders work very hard in both their science and English language arts classes to research and present a health topic of interest or importance to them. Through this final cross-curricular project, students learn how to do accurate research, put their research into clear written form, fine-tune their presentation skills, collaborate with classmates while learning about an important health condition.

The 8th graders are asked to bring together their learning throughout the year by making a number of cross-curricular connections to a chosen theme. The students are challenged to review their notes from their 8th-grade classes, dig deep into what they have learned, and make meaningful connections to an important theme they took away from their 8th-grade year. As their final task in middle school, students present their theme, visuals, and class connections to an 8th-grade teacher. It is a well-designed project that helps prepare students with important skills for their continued learning in high school.



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STRATEGIC PLAN.

GOAL 2 — CONTINUED

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD PRINCIPAL

We are grateful for faculty, staff, students, and families who all worked together to make in-person learning possible this year. We are even more grateful that we could still learn in person, but outside of school! Off-campus trips at Rockford Christian provide an invaluable opportunity for experiential learning opportunities. Our 4th graders spent a week at John Ball Zoo studying a specific animal; 5th graders worked together for three days in the woods at Camp Roger; 6th graders explored Sleeping Bear Dunes; 7th graders camped at Ludington State Park; 8th graders biked all over Mackinac Island. Each of these experiences gave students a different view of God's world and a deeper understanding of our Creator God.

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Team Two students met virtually with students from the Calvin University Math Methods class. The Calvin students prepared math lessons based on math standards and then met with the Evergreen students over zoom to teach the lessons. Each Evergreen student participated in four math lessons led by college students.

Teachers, grades K-4, completed their final data analysis for the 2020-2021 school year. Teachers work through this process with administrators and student support coordinators three times each year. The assessment data showed student growth this school year.

Teachers had the opportunity to work with the technology staff on May 28 to further our learning and understanding about SeeSaw, which is the Learning Management System that we use in our preschool and elementary classrooms.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

With our year-end, our teachers, Inclusion and ESS Coordinators, and our support staff from Grand Rapids Public Schools held meetings with parents to update them on how their kids are doing throughout this year. In many cases, we get the honor of continuing support for some students, and in some cases, we were able to graduate students from receiving services. In all cases, we were thrilled to share students made great growth, which is due

to a fantastic partnership between our teams at school and parents. We are blessed to have such a wonderful partnership with parents, as partnership is foundational to each student's success in all things regarding school.

Also, Teachers had the opportunity to work with the technology staff on May 28 to further our learning and understanding about SeeSaw, which is the Learning Management System that we use in our elementary classrooms. Teachers will be spending the next year and beyond furthering their familiarity with Seesaw.

KIM PRIMUS — INCLUSION DIRECTOR

There were many changes as support was planned and put into action due to the learning needs because of Covid. Teachers, inclusion coordinators, and inclusion support staff adapted to meet the needs of students receiving inclusion services. Student-centered planning continued to address the unique needs of students and their families. In-person, virtual, and hybrid instruction was offered as we focused on how best to support students. It was great to see individuals doing what they could to provide individualized instruction that was engaging. It was great to observe how everyone partnered during this unique school year.

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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

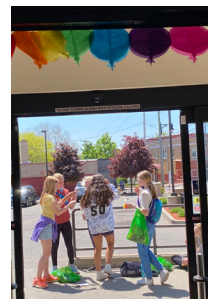
We are excited to announce a Unified Sports program at GRCHS! Under the leadership of Missy Meekhof, Kim Primus, and Becky Breuker, the program kicked off in May as many staff and students in the school signed a banner committing to make GRCHS an inclusive community. The first annual Unified Sports Cornhole tournament also took place in May. It was an awesome night to see students with varying intellectual abilities partner together to have a great time. GRCHS will have a unified sports basketball team in 2021-22 and hopes to add other activities and events in the future.



Successfully transitioning students to high school is one of our top priorities. This month, the intervention teams from the middle school and high school met to discuss our incoming freshman class so we can best support them when they arrive in the fall. We are thankful for each incoming student and for the different gifts that they will bring to our school. We are also thankful for a collaborative spirit between the middle school and high school teams.

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

The Spanish Immersion sixth and seventh graders had the opportunity to visit various places on Grandville Avenue and learn more about the history of the area as well as the Hispanic culture right here in Grand Rapids. They supported local Hispanic establishments; they used their Spanish to communicate with the store owners/workers. They learned about opportunities to contribute and volunteer through the Cook Library or even take Latin dance classes. Finally, they visited the Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association, explored the small museum within, and learned a lot about the changes in the area over the years. Over the past few years, Grand Rapids Christian School has been a member and supporter of the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Grade	WEEK 1 POINTS	WEEK 2 POINTS	TOTAL	WEEK 3 POINTS	TOTAL POINTS
5	3	4	7	3	10
6	4	2	6	2	8
7	2	3	5	4	9
8	1	1	2	1	3

Plaster Creek Stewards & Trash Bash: Our middle school teachers and students have been practicing being thoughtful neighbors by partnering with Plaster Creek Stewards. They have been working to

care for our watershed through a rain garden project at the middle school. A staff member also challenged the students to a "Trash Bash." Students were asked to collect as much trash from around the playground over a three-week period. Through this challenge, our playground stayed very clean, students took responsibility for taking care of God's earth, they began forming good environmental habits, money was donated to Plaster Creek Stewards,

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STRATEGIC PLAN.

GOAL 3 — CONTINUED

and the 5th graders won the challenge and earned a pizza party!

All four of our middle grades were blessed by being a part of grade-level community building to finish out the school year. Students were able to worship God together and continue to build relationships with their classmates. Our teachers put a lot of time and effort into planning something new for the students to make for a fun finish to the school year yet keep students safe and healthy. Our 8th graders headed to Timberwolf Lodge, a Young Life camp up north in Michigan. Our 7th graders went to Grace Adventures up in Mears on Silver Lake. The 6th graders ventured out with their tents to Camp Scottie in Newaygo. Finally, the 5th graders spent a soggy but fun day at Cran Hill in Rodney, Michigan. We feel blessed that our students could spend this time with their teachers and their peers..

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Elementary preschool — 4th-grade teachers gathered at Rockford Christian School on Friday, May 28, for a day of Professional Development. Mr. Julian Newman met with staff members in the morning to talk about cultural competence.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

The teaching staff from all three elementary schools were blessed with further training led by Julian Newman on May 28. Julian is gifted at engaging our teachers, sharing relevant information, and providing us all with challenges that we all hope will be part of furthering our knowledge and skills as we navigate through the sinister realities of racism. We are encouraged and should aim to be a “third space” school. A school where, given our differences, we are a place where that welcomes both sides of an argument to conversation and community. What a great place to become!

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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.

AMY ORR — EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AND MARKETING

The Admissions team remains focused on responding to inquiries, moving prospective students through the admissions process, and converting as many inquiries as possible into Continuous Enrollment Contracts. Once the enrollment contract has been received, we have been working with new families through the onboarding process of setting up their ParentVUE account, completing the verification process, and explaining what they will need to do to set up their Smart Tuition account.

Our lead goal data for May shows that there continues to be interest in our schools similar to, and in some cases in excess of 2019 (pre-COVID).

May Lead Goal Data	2019	2020	2021
Inquiries	37	33	64
Applications (1st — 12th)	33	23	32
Registrations (PS & K)	24	8	24

Enrollment continues to progress toward the projection goals set for our team. Some campuses have already achieved and even exceeded projections. The high school is slightly lagging, but that is somewhat normal for this time of year. We continue to receive inquiries from prospective 9th-grade students and hope that trend will continue over the summer.

Enrollment — Continuous Enrollment Contracts as of May 29, 2021

	Preschool	Projected Preschool	K-12	Projected K-12
Evergreen	29	20	89	93
Iroquois	180	175	487	477
Rockford	84	65	181	178
GRCMS			435	440
GRCHS			761	790
TOTAL	282	260	1953	1978

LA'LEATHA SPILLERS — DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT EAGLES FUND

Total raised as of May 25, 2021 is \$1,608,013.05.

We are currently at 94% of the \$1.7M goal for the 2020 - 2021 fiscal year.

We are incredibly grateful for these contributions to date and extremely thankful for the hundreds of parents, grandparents, staff, alumni, and friends who partner with GRCS to make an investment in our students and further demonstrate their commitment to making Christian education accessible. THANK YOU!

SPRING APPEAL AND PHONE-A-THON

The spring appeal mailing and Phone-A-Thon kicked off on April 19th and will run through the end of the fiscal year (June 30). These efforts will help close the fiscal year as we work to reach our Eagles Fund goal by the end of June. All funds raised will continue to support tuition assistance and student support services. To date, \$55,890 has been raised as a result of spring appeal and phone-a-thon.

Your partnership and support mean a great deal to our students, both present and future. GRCS students are society's next generation of leaders, creators, and change-makers. Invest in them and ignite their future with a gift to the Eagles Fund. Your support is an investment not just in their future but in all of our futures.

Contributions can be made online at grcs.org/give.

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STRATEGIC PLAN.

GOAL 4 — CONTINUED

EVENTS

On Monday, May 24, 2021, the Eagles Golf Classic benefiting the Eagles Fund was held at Wuskowhan Players Club, West Olive, MI. Due to the overwhelming response, we reached capacity early and sold out! Twenty-seven sponsors were secured, and a total of \$180,000 was raised. Positive feedback was received by all, and we hope to have a save-the-date soon.

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

We were grateful to open up our building to host 8th-grade shadow students this spring! We had suspended the shadow program to limit visitors due to COVID but were able to welcome back all our GRCMS and RCMS 8th graders as well as some students from other schools. It was great to share more about our school community with those prospective students!

SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

As the school year comes to an end, the middle school has been busy preparing for the incoming 5th graders from our Iroquois campus and the incoming 6th graders from our Evergreen campus.



One of the strengths of our students at the middle school is their ability to show Christ-like hospitality and welcome new students into our community. The incoming students were excited to visit and see what their next school year will encompass. Students were given the opportunity to hear about what to expect and what to look forward to at the middle school. They met both teachers and students and took a tour of the building to begin to learn their way around!

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN PRINCIPAL

This past year, many of our admissions events went virtual, and the admissions team worked hard to create video resources to engage our families and community. The investment in these online experiences continues to pay dividends, even after the events have officially ended. Many prospective families have commented on how quickly they've been able to get a sense of who we are and what we believe from these materials.

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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.

JIM PRIMUS — CFO

Through the first ten months of the 2020-21 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 \$1,700,000, which, if unused, will be applied towards operational debt.

GRCS continues to wait to hear confirmation on the forgiveness of the PPP Loan received in April 2020. In February 2021, the SBA requested GRCS resubmit the Forgiveness Application without including Eagle Impact payroll costs.

GRCS has been working on additional funding opportunities as it relates to the health pandemic.

GRCS qualifies for the **Employee Retention Credit (ERC)** and is working alongside Synergi (specializing in tax credit and incentive recovery) in the application process. GRCS qualifies for the credit in 2020 and in the 1st quarter of 2021.

Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) is available to GRCS and other non-public schools that did not apply for the 2nd PPP Loan. The GRCS Business Office has completed and submitted the EANS applications for all five campuses. Those applications have all been approved. It is expected the funds will be released in June 2021, with reimbursement for qualifying expenses occurring after that.

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NEWS AND UPDATES.



NEWS AND UPDATES

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRCHS PRINCIPAL

On May 18, we had the honor of graduating 207 seniors in the class of 2021. We give thanks for a beautiful night to be outdoors together in Eagles Stadium as a school community.

We give thanks for a healthy end to our school year. In the month of May, we had zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 among our in-person students or staff. Our athletic department continues to test all un-vaccinated student-athletes weekly per MHSAA guidelines. We appreciate their servant leadership in taking on this huge task!

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN PRINCIPAL

Rock and Soul, the spring fundraising event sponsored by the Rockford Parent-Teacher Organization, close to doubled our fundraising goal. The philanthropic contributions of the parent community continue to complement our curriculum; enhance, enrich, and encourage the nature-rich education of our students; and support our staff and community.

ANN BAKKER — EVERGREEN CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

We were so excited to have the opportunity to go on field trips this spring. Team One students went to John Ball Zoo. Team Three students spent a day at Camp Scotty. They also had a private showing at the IMAX theater. It was so good to enjoy these exciting opportunities.

On the last day of school, Mr. Schultze led the Team Three students on a prayer walk around the Evergreen building. The class stopped at various places on the campus to talk about and offer prayers of thanksgiving and prayers for the future.