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**BOARD
REPORT**

GRCs

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

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

OCTOBER
2021





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.



 ONE

ANOTHER

JOHN 13:34-35

LOS UNOS 

A LOS OTROS

JUAN 13:34-35

*A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,
if you love one another.*

— JOHN 13:34—35

*Este mandamiento nuevo les doy: que se amen los unos a
los otros. Así como yo los he amado, también ustedes deben
amarse los unos a los otros. De este modo todos sabrán que
son mis discípulos, si se aman los unos a los otros..*

— JUAN 13:34—35



THEME INTRODUCTION + BIBLICAL CONTEXT

BY: Mark VanderWerf, GRCHS Chaplain

On the night of his betrayal and arrest, Jesus gave his disciples his love mandate: ***“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”***

***Love, love, love, love / agape, agape, agape, agape.
One another. One another. One another.***

In these parting words before his crucifixion, Jesus doesn't want us to miss his point: love one another. And what does this love look like? The context of John 13 gives us a startling picture.

The scene is an intimate one between Jesus and his friends on the night of his arrest (in the Christian tradition this is called Maundy Thursday). Jesus gathered with his disciples to share a final meal and then proceeded to wash their feet. This foot-washing scene may strike us as odd (when was the last time you washed someone else's feet?), but it was a common one in the 1st century, but it was a task relegated to servants. Jesus, as he is prone to do, flips the script.

Jesus takes the form and role of a servant (cf. Phi. 2), to demonstrate what true love looks like. Love humbly looks to the interest of one another. What is even more, when Jesus went around the circle kneeling before his disciples to wash their dusty feet he eventually came to Judas and kneeled before him, removed his sandals, and gently washed even his feet. Such an act upends how we often think of one another. Even Judas is included in Jesus' 'love one another'!

It is important to note that we do not muster this love for one another from our own strength or willpower. Instead Jesus says, ***“As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*** Not only does Jesus model what love for one another looks like, he is the reason we can love one another. One writer put it this way: *“Only the person who has been loved can love.”* In Christ, we have experienced love and seen love in action. In response, Jesus calls us to extend that love to one another.

These final words from Jesus are an incredible invitation. Biblical commentator, Frederick Dale Bruner states, “The mutually lived-out heart love of Christians for one another will be the single greatest missionary force in the world.” Catholic scholar Raymond Brown, commenting on this passage also notes, *“as long as Christian love is in the world, the world is still encountering Jesus.”*

If we step back from John 13 and zoom out to look at the whole biblical narrative, we find this indistinguishable connection between our love of God and love of one another throughout all of the Bible.

For instance, when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was in all of the Scriptures he linked two commandments together: the first and greatest commandment is to love God, said Jesus, and the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself. To love God and to love others are linked together like the two sides of a Möbius strip — one side naturally leads to the other.



While our theme of one another arises out of John 13:34-35, it can be found all throughout the New Testament as well. There are at least 59 times that the phrase is used in the New Testament, each time giving instructions on how Christians are to “do life together.” The most common usage has already been mentioned: “love one another.” This gets mentioned no less than sixteen times in the New Testament. Perhaps that’s our overarching call and all of the rest of the “one another” passages help us understand how we do just that:

We honor one another (Rom 12:10)

We build up one another (1 Thess 5:11)

We serve one another (Gal 5:13)

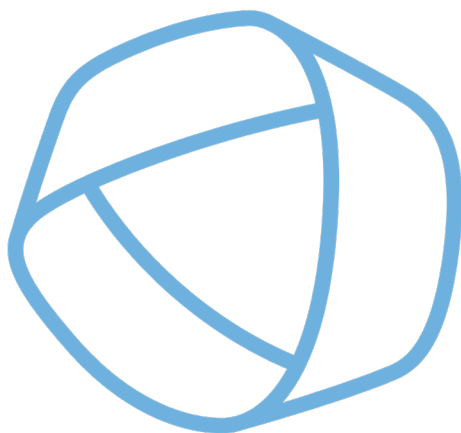
We forgive one another (Eph 4:2, Col 3:13)

We are kind and compassionate to one another (Eph 4:32)

We confess our sins to one another (James 5:16)

We show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

It is our hope that the theme of “**one another**” and all the various manifestations of it through the New Testament will help us explore all the various ways in which we are called to love one another for “**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**”



THE MÖBIUS STRIP:

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he responded that we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind. And he continued by saying that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

All throughout the Scriptures, these two commands are bound together as if our love for God is what compels and shapes our love for one another. Likewise, as we get proximate to and love our neighbors well our love of God is deepened and enriched.

This interrelatedness is symbolized in our graphic by the use of Möbius strip where one side naturally leads to the other showing that we cannot separate our love of God from one another.

As we seek to grow in living out these “one another” passages, we also recognize that we cannot do this alone.

And so the “O” of the **One Another** graphics show three “sides” or faces representing the partnership that is required between **church**, **family**, and **school** as we nurture students’ faith in God and seek to faithfully live out the “one another” ethic of the Bible.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING 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 2021

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
18	6:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
19	10:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting	HUB
20-22		NO SCHOOL — PD and CEA Conference	

NOVEMBER 2021

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
4	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
15	12:30 pm	GRCS Education Committee Meeting	HUB
11-12	7:00 pm	GRCHS Musical: <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (Tickets: \$10 each)	DeVos Center for Arts and Worship
13	1:00 pm	GRCHS Musical: <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (Tickets: \$10 each)	DeVos Center for Arts and Worship
13	7:00 pm	GRCHS Musical: <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (Tickets: \$10 each)	DeVos Center for Arts and Worship
18	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
23	7:00 pm	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Campus
24-26		NO SCHOOL — Thanksgiving Break	

DECEMBER 2021

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
2	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
6	6:00 pm	Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
8	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
11	7:30 am	GRCHS Christmas Pops Concert	DeVos Center for Arts and Worship
20-31		NO SCHOOL — Christmas Break	

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Board:

Our October board meeting marks the beginning of the 2nd quarter of the 2021-2022 school year. It has been an eventful first quarter, as you know, and we have settled into our school routines!

Fall sports will wind down over the coming weeks and winter sports are right around the corner. Rehearsal for this year's fall musical, *Beauty and the Beast* is underway, Parent-Teacher Conferences have been or will soon be scheduled, and staff is geared up for the annual fall CEA Convention (formerly known as Teachers Convention for those of you who have been around a while!), which will be held on October 21-22, 2021.

Regarding CEA, you will be interested to know that Grand Rapids Christian Schools will host CEA for the first time in many years. Traditionally, CEA is hosted in South Bend, IN. It will be held at Grand Rapids Christian High School, and we anticipate over 1,000 Christian educators from across Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin to gather for this annual professional development event. CEA offers a time for corporate worship, training, rejuvenation, and reacquainting with fellow Christian educators from throughout the midwest and will be a wonderful opportunity for all.

This month's board meeting will allow for the Finance Committee and Jim to review the proposed revised 2021-2022 Operating budget, which was reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on October 7. It is based on adjustments based on actual vs. projected enrollment, corresponding revenues, and expenses since it was initially approved by the Membership last February. In addition, the Education Committee will provide a summary of its work over the course of the summer and early fall. We will meet in the HUB at the central office at 6:00 pm on Monday, October 18.

See you Monday night. Until then, enjoy the remainder of the week and the upcoming weekend.

Tom



CAMPUS THEMES STORIES

SARA SETH — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Under our theme of *Love One Another*, during the month of October, we have been focusing on what it means to **build one another up**. The 7th & 8th graders have spent time getting to know each other in small groups that meet on a regular basis.

Eighth-grade small group leaders will continue to build community within their small groups as they grow closer together in their spiritual walk with God. Our 5th & 6th graders had the opportunity to hear from Mr. DeBoer's brother-in-law, Captain Raidel Leon-Martinez, a chaplain in the Air Force stationed in Germany. He spoke with our students about his journey growing up in Cuba to becoming a chaplain in the AirForce. He related his own life of building others up and encouraged our students to do the same. He challenged them to go to the root of loving oneself in order to prepare to love those around them just as Jesus has commanded us in Mark 12:31 to "love your neighbor as yourself."

Mrs. Diane Boerma, one of our 5th-grade teachers, shared her talent with students and teachers at the middle school by creating bulletin boards in the hallway with purposeful design to reflect our theme of *One Another*. She shared some of the thinking behind the creation of these bulletin boards with the students and staff. In the bulletin board pictured below, you will notice that the theme is displayed in the color green. This was intentionally chosen as green is a representation of growth, giving the message of loving one another by helping each other grow. The middle school community is reminded of this theme on a daily basis as they walk the halls of the school.





BRAD MOCKABEE — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

We are grateful to start up small groups at the high school again this year. Our small groups meet twice monthly and it's a great time for us to form genuine relationships with one another. Students are placed in a group of roughly 12 students made up of students from each grade level. Small groups exist for the following reasons:

- Every student is known by and connected to a group of peers and an adult. Students grow in their relationships with each other and have fun together.
- Share joys and concerns, pray for each other, and grow in our faith.
- A safe place for students to discuss issues in our school and community that are relevant to young people. At times, these discussions may relate to chapel.
- A safe place for students and staff to hear different perspectives and to learn how to disagree with each other in a way that honors God.
- Discuss school business and get student feedback.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



At Rockford Christian, we have been able to live into this year's theme in both big and small ways. Our weekly family times have explored our theme, and visual reminders of **One Another** are found in our hallways.

Students have also connected the theme to real-life examples at school. Mr. Phil Warners, our Direct of Outdoor Education, recently shared how a 2nd grader told him that our Gaga pit had become overgrown with weeds. Phil enlisted the help of the 1st-grade class to weed the area during their weekly outdoor education class. The 2nd grader who first noticed the need was then able to thank the first-grade class for the tangible way they showed love!

GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

Evergreen staff and students have been thrilled to have "Team Time" back on the weekly schedule this year. Team Time is a unique time during which students are working together in kindergarten through fifth-grade multi-age groups. These small groups have focused on skills that help one another feel loved here at school. Team Time has covered greetings, apologies and forgiveness, and compliments so far this year. We will continue teaching, practicing, and applying these skills throughout the year in order to foster a beautiful social environment here at Evergreen.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

We are thrilled to restart our buddies program. Our older grade students buddy up with a student from one of our younger grades. Kids talk about this. They talk about their buddies, whether they are older or younger. This gives our older students the chance to use the leadership skills they are learning at school. The younger students look forward to spending time with an older student and look forward to the day they can be the "older" student and lead.

1

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

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The Nomination Committee is an important board committee, and it will begin its work in the next month. In order to ensure GRCS' long term health and viability for future generations of students, of critical importance is identifying board nominees that

- Possess a strategic mindset,
- Have prior board experience,
- Understand the unique nature of GRCS' 100-year tradition of integrating Reformed perspective in all of learning,
- Are dedicated to strategic financial planning, and
- Embrace the importance of looking forward rather than year-to-year.

Rebecca's and Debbye's board terms expire on June 30, 2022. In the event they do not wish to serve a second term, the Nomination Committee will identify the qualities and characteristics necessary to fill their open seats. Looking ahead, it will also consider future board transitions. Several board members' terms expire in 2023 and the Committee will consider whether it may be wise to increase the overall number of board members in order to ensure smooth board transitions over the next several years.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE FOCUS

One of the very effective ways the Board of Trustees governs is by empowering board committees to focus on areas of strategic importance and timely relevance. The Education Committee's focus this year is a great example of how board committees and board governance work hand-in-hand.

The Committee has begun a thorough review of concerns expressed by parents related to GRCS' position on issues that have become a very significant part of our national dialogue over the past 24 months, including cultural competency, racism, same-sex unions, and various other related topics.

The Committee's focus is to review the concerns as they pertain to instruction within the context of a Christian school rooted in Reformed theological doctrines. The Committee has mapped out and will host a series of focus groups and interviews with staff, students, and others who are able to provide valuable input on the issues. To date, the Committee has met with elementary and secondary teachers and plans to meet with secondary student representatives prior to Christmas break. The Committee will provide a written report to the board no later than its May 2022 meeting.



2

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 — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

GRCHS continues to grow in the way we welcome and support all our students academically, spiritually, and socially. Our freshman skills classes provide each student with the skills needed to be successful at GRCHS. After assessing the needs of our tenth — twelfth graders, we added a few sections of mastery skills for students in those grades who need specific support in academic skills. We continue to utilize a variety of resources in supporting students. Our National Honors Society students provide peer tutoring support for classmates. Some of these tutors stay in the freshman and mastery skills classroom, while others stay in the town square to support other students.

We are offering a new Bible and Theology course to our international students. The purpose of the class is to introduce biblical foundations and reformed theology to students who do not have that foundation. The course has provided us with some awesome opportunities for conversations about our faith and a safe place for students to ask questions.

SARA SETH — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

During our Professional Development time in February of 2020, we brought in a specialist from Solution Tree to help us learn more about the benefits of using proficiency scales to nurture student learning. The use of these scales helps ensure we know where students are at in their learning progression. This year our teachers are working on units with clear proficiency scales to help students self-assess their learning. This work will continue throughout the school year and into the future.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

New to GRCS elementary teachers met before school began to learn about elementary curriculum and assessments. Charisa Talsma, RCS ESS, and Inclusion Coordinator, provided training so that teachers would be prepared to administer the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Training, which gives teachers pertinent information about student reading levels and needs.

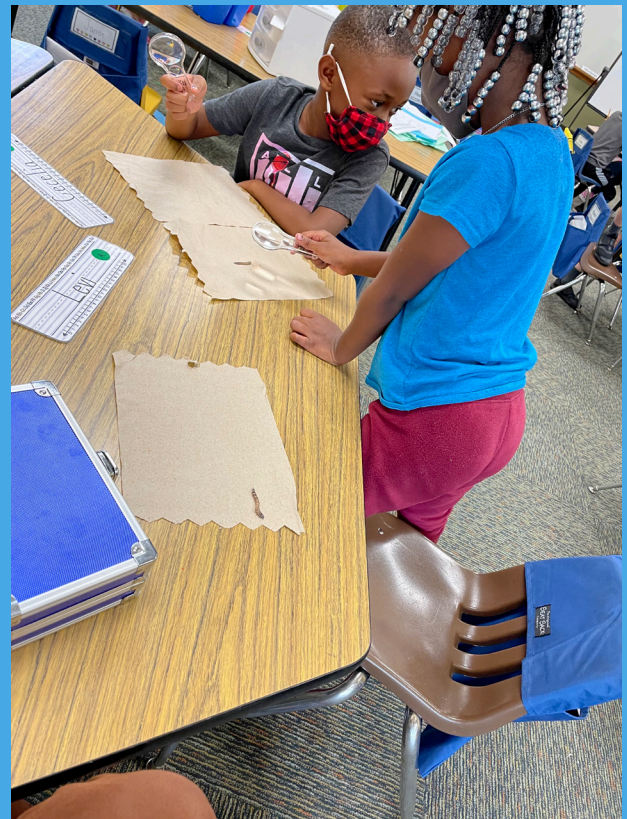
JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

Students have completed taking the NWEA MAP assessment. This assessment is designed to inform teachers about any gaps in instruction and helps define each student's learning needs. In the upcoming weeks, administrators will meet with teachers to review their student's MAP scores and to make sure supports are in place for students and teachers.

GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

With the team teaching structure at Evergreen comes the opportunity to fluidly and creatively group students into smaller groups. While Team 1, for example, consists of 32 students, they have two teachers in the classroom. Thus, they can strategically group students based on grade or developmental level per the given subject/unit. It's exciting to witness the creativity and utilization of resources (both personal and physical) that allows for meeting students right where they are academically.

Science class lends itself nicely to great inquiry-based and hands-on learning. Students across all grades have been conducting investigations in which they are physically involved with the learning. Team 1 has observed and studied invertebrates in their classroom thanks to Ms. Falak's purchase of a few containers of "superworms"; Team 2 is studying the difference between air temperatures in different parts of the state by creating micro-beaches and taking their temperatures; Team 3 was seen last week with tennis balls and ramps outside, testing kinetic and potential energy.





3

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 — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

During the weeks of September 15-October 15, the high school offered a number of learning opportunities (Focus Times, etc) related to Hispanic Heritage Month. On September 28, the high school chapel was also led by a group of Hispanic and Latino/a students. In this bilingual chapel, students were taught and practiced how to say our traditional chapel opening in Spanish: "The Lord be with. ... And also with" // "El señor esté con ustedes" ... "Tambien con usted". Students led a schoolwide prayer for the people of Haiti facing numerous recent humanitarian struggles. Students watched a short video from famed Latin American pastor and missionary, René Padilla where he talked about the church as a "school of love" where we learn to love and serve one another, a school from which we never graduate; we are always learning.

The rest of the chapel was a panel conversation between chaplain Mark VanderWerf and Spanish teacher Raquel Rodriguez, along with eight Hispanic and Latino/a students. They reflected on particular gifts that they cherished from their cultures and how their cultural background shaped how they understand and live out the Christian faith. Together they read selections from Isaiah 60, Matthew 2, and Revelation 7. They discussed how these passages teach that God delights in the "wealth of the nations" (Isa 60:11) and that "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9) will bring unique gifts into the Kingdom of God and present them as acts of worship just as the Magi "opened their treasures and presented [Jesus] with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11). The chapel was a joyful celebration of Hispanic culture and our Hispanic and Latino/a students. At the conclusion of the chapel, all students were asked to reflect on their own cultural and ethnic background and to consider the rich gifts that each person from every cultural and ethnic background brings into God's richly diverse kingdom as gifts of worship to Christ the King.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

The Iroquois Cultural Heritage Month Committee exists to organize and honor set heritage months throughout the school year. This month is Hispanic Heritage Month. Students are learning about Hispanic culture and prominent Hispanic individuals who have had an influence on American culture.

KIM PRIMUS — DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION SERVICES

The Director of Inclusion Services meets regularly with each Inclusion Coordinator to identify individual needs of students being supported with inclusion services. Discussions are focused on topics including supports, strengths, struggle areas, interventions, accommodations, modifications, one-on-one support, Eagle circles (peer support), communication, and partnership.



BEN BUURSMAN — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

RCS elementary teachers worked with three consultants from Responsive Classrooms this past August to begin implementing a student-focused, social, and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. Responsive Classroom is comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers. Some comments from teachers about the Responsive Classroom Training:

- I was able to dissect the current way I teach and reflect on how I can make simple yet intentional changes to make my classroom and better place for students to feel safe and learn.
- These past two days focused on the heart aspects of teaching, I am really eager to get in and implement new options into the classroom. I appreciated the discussion around teacher language and having it connect back to the agreed-upon norms. This work reminds me of the need to understand my students' typical developmental stages and adjust expectations accordingly. I am truly excited about this work.

GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage month, PTO member Emily Davis decorated the shadow box in our entryway. Alongside that, we have been playing the music of a variety of Hispanic artists during drop-off in the mornings. We display an iPad within our shadow box with a Slides presentation displayed, offering information about who the artist is, where he or she was born, and what genre of music is his or her specialty. We plan to wrap up our celebrations with a Gallery Walk hosted at Iroquois, where they have multiple posters, artifacts, and more displayed throughout their hallways this month.

Julian Newman is joining Evergreen for chapel on Friday, October 15. In preparation for his visit, students have brainstormed questions about race and will have an opportunity to ask Julian these questions. Team 3 even requested a special 15-minute follow-up with Julian in order to ask some of their deeper questions that might go over the heads of our youngest students during chapel.



Friday, October 8, Team 3 students walked to the GRCS Ice Rink where they helped Plaster Creek Stewards plant native species around their new retention pond. Ecosystems and stewardship of land both are topics that come up regularly in our science curricula, and this was a beautiful opportunity for Team 3 to see this in action.



SARA SETH — GRCMS PRINCIPAL

Throughout the year, middle school students will be given opportunities to serve others through service work: Just this past week, our 5th-grade students had the opportunity to clean up the school grounds by collecting small pieces of trash on the property. Not only does it create a cleaner presence at the middle school, but it also reminds students of their responsibility to care for God's creation.

The 5th graders also spent some time decorating sack supper bags for the Kids' Food Basket. It was fun for them to use their creativity to bring a little job to other children in the Grand Rapids area.

The 8th graders had the opportunity to work with Plaster Creek Stewards on a somewhat new project for them at Eagle Pond, which is right by Eagles Ice Center. This bowl-shaped rain garden has recently been reshaped to cool, slow, clean, and absorb parking lot runoff. The 8th graders have just started their Ecosystem unit and are focusing on the cycles that are present within ecosystems that keep them living and thriving, so this was a great opportunity for our students to get some instruction from the educators who work with Plaster Creek Stewards, hands-on experience, and an opportunity to volunteer in our community by helping them plant native plants in the rain garden.

This fall, the middle school will be welcoming students from Guatemala through the Faces & Our Cultures Program. It provides a wonderful opportunity to practice hospitality as well as learn about a new culture! The Guatemalan students will stay with host families and attend classes as full-time students at GRCMS through the month of November. We pray for health and safety for these middle school children while they are far from home.

We work very hard at the middle school to intentionally welcome new students into our school system. Our student life team has orchestrated "getting to know you" lunches for each grade level. Former GRCMS students join in this community time to help welcome these new students into our school. Teachers meet weekly to pray specifically for all of the new students in our classrooms. The student support team checks in on new students to ensure their academic, social, and spiritual growth at GRCMS. It has been reported time and again that our students and teachers at GRCMS create a loving and accepting environment for our new students.



4

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.

MICHAEL CALHOUN — CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

At Grand Rapids Christian Schools (GRCS) we are engaging in something truly transformative, preserving a 100 year legacy of excellence and aspiring toward a future where every student discovers their passion, develops their talents, and brings those gifts to the world. This vision requires the support of a comprehensive Advancement effort that goes far beyond the work of an individual or any single team at the Central Office. Instead, it must live as a collective movement across the entire district, supported by intelligent connection points. Marketing, Communications, Admissions, Brand Management, Fundraising/Development, and Community Engagement activities must all work together, seamlessly partnering with each distinct campus to design end-to-end transformational experiences for the students and families God has called us to serve together.

As the new Chief Advancement Officer (CAO), I am excited to help shape the journey ahead, and I am extremely grateful for the hard work of the Advancement Team during the months leading up to my arrival. Despite the ever-present challenges of COVID and a season of leadership transition, they worked tirelessly over the summer to ensure a strong start this year, and we continue to build on those Advancement efforts today. With this in mind, let me highlight a few key activities and important updates:

CAO ON BOARDING AND INTRODUCTION TO GRCS COMMUNITY

There is always a flurry of important communications that go out during the first month of any new school year, and this year saw increased traffic due to the need for critical updates regarding COVID mitigation and Health/Safety Protocols for in-person learning. Given this reality, it seemed best to let things settle down before sending any formal announcements to the GRCS community introducing me as the new Chief Advancement Officer. It was absolutely the right decision, and we're thankful that things are finally starting to settle into a more normal rhythm. We are in the process of developing an updated communication plan to make this introduction to all staff, families, alumni, and donors very soon.

CAO LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the GRCS community and to lay the groundwork for greater connectedness of Advancement efforts across the district, I have dedicated significant time over the last month to engage in a listening/learning tour with various administrative leadership and teams. This is just the first step in ongoing relational investments that will offer a consistent Advancement presence and intelligent connection points with each campus. This endeavor also extends to extra-curricular spaces (Athletics, Theater, Orchestra, Music, Robotics, PTO, etc.) as these groups are often involved in various fundraising activities throughout the year. In the weeks ahead, I will also be expanding this listening/learning tour to include more key relationships across the greater GRCS community (including students, families, donors, partners, and alumni).



GOAL 4 — CONTINUED

100-YEAR CELEBRATION

Although our centennial celebration had to be pushed back more than a year due to COVID, we are hopeful that we will be able to launch this extended season of celebration in the Spring of 2022. We have partnered with a creative firm (Grey Matter Group) to develop a comprehensive plan for this season of celebration that will include a variety of special elements, engagements, and experiences designed to honor our 100-year legacy while also casting a compelling vision for our next century of impact. We recently invited 10,000 of our current families, staff, and alumni to participate in an online survey highlighting what they value most about GRCS, as well as other insights that will help shape the planning process moving forward. The Advancement Team is excited to celebrate this remarkable moment in meaningful ways while also positioning it as a launchpad for the future through the corresponding Go Forth funding initiative.

GO FORTH FUNDING INITIATIVE

As we look back, preparing to celebrate the legacy forged over the last century, we are also looking ahead to the next 100 years and inviting the GRCS community to invest in future generations with the **Go Forth** funding initiative. This initiative is a three-year \$11.5 million campaign that, when fully achieved, will strengthen educational programs and opportunities for all students at each of our five campuses. After wrapping up a successful “quiet phase” last month, we have begun to expand the circle of conversations in preparation for the public launch of this special campaign. Together, the 100-year season of celebration and the corresponding **Go Forth** campaign will lead to fresh connections and deeper engagement of our extended community (students, families, staff, alumni, donors, partners, supporters, etc.).

As of October 12, 2021, we have raised 63% of our \$11.5 million goal!

2020-2021 IMPACT REPORT AND YEAR-END APPEAL

The annual impact report is in its final review before going to print next week. The district-wide theme for the 2020-2021 school year, “**All things hold together,**” was inspired by Colossians 1:17, which says, “*He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together,*” and it was especially fitting given the unique challenges brought on by COVID. This year’s report highlights that theme in action, celebrating the resilience of our students, staff, and alumni as they overcame the challenges of a global pandemic. The Impact Report should begin arriving in mailboxes in early November and will be followed by the Year-End Appeal a few weeks later.

ENDOWED FUND STATEMENTS

The annual endowed fund statements are currently in process and will be mailed out next week.

OPEN POSITION: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The recent transition of La’Leatha Spillers to pursue other opportunities outside of GRCS has created a critical gap on the Advancement Team. We are grateful for the many positive contributions La’Leatha made while serving in this capacity and we trust that God will lead us to the right candidate to fill this open position. With this in mind, we are developing an updated job description and hope to post this opportunity before the end of this month.

2021/2022 BOARD REPORT

OCTOBER 2021

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

GOAL 4 — CONTINUED



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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

AMY ORR — EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AND MARKETING

2021 — 2022 ENROLLMENT DATA

	PS	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.
Iroquois	183	109	91	108	75	94									660	652	477	477
Evergreen	35	17	16	18	20	10	15								131	113	96	93
Rockford	79	29	18	21	16	19	16	16	14	12					240	243	161	178
GRCMS							96	94	131	118					439	439	439	440
GRCHS											186	204	189	203	782	790	782	790
TOTAL	297	155	125	147	111	123	127	110	145	130	186	204	189	203	2252	2237	1955	1978

Withdrawals PS — 12 <i>*Attended 20-21</i>	Opt-Out
Iroquois	50
Evergreen	7
Rockford	63
GRCMS	20
GRCHS	23
TOTAL	163

New Student Enrollment	
Kindergarten	55
1st — 4th Grades	41
5th — 8th Grades	50
9 — 12th grades	107
TOTAL	253

New Kindergarten Enrollment	
Iroquois	33
Evergreen	8
Rockford	14
TOTAL	55

New Preschool Enrollment	
Iroquois	139
Evergreen	31
Rockford	62
TOTAL	232

2021 — 2022 DIVERSITY DATA

	PS	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Asian	3	4	2	3	6	3	2	2	5	0	8	7	16	16	77
Black or African American	11	8	8	6	7	11	12	9	9	15	32	18	19	19	184
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
Hispanic or Latino	20	10	6	11	4	9	3	8	7	1	7	6	10	7	109
Native Hawaiian (Other Pacific Islander)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Two or More	20	11	11	15	8	7	7	7	13	4	6	14	5	14	142
White	243	122	98	112	86	92	103	84	111	109	132	159	140	146	1737
Totals	297	155	125	147	111	123	127	110	145	130	186	204	190	202	2252

Diversity: 22.87%



COUNT DAY — SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

The projected goal for 2021-2022 enrollment included an additional 50 students above what our traditional projection formulas calculated. This was a big goal, but our admissions team tackled the challenge head-on. They worked tirelessly over the summer to connect with and enroll families. In fact, as of August 17, we had hit the targeted goal of 1978 students enrolled in K-12.

However, between August 17 and Count Day on September 15, mask mandates (both for and against) along with other incidents out of our control caused families to choose to leave GRCS. One of the biggest hits was at Rockford Christian as families chose to leave in favor of school districts that were not strictly following the KCHD mask mandate.

It was very difficult for the admissions team to watch this decline and see families with whom we have spent many hours over the years choosing to leave. The last-minute exodus did not give us time to recoup the losses. Therefore, we started the year at 1955 students K-12. This still represents 27 students more than the projection formulas predicted and 140 more students PS-12 than were enrolled in 2020-2021, for which we are grateful.

One enrollment highlight to point out is the great retention we had at the Evergreen Campus. Evergreen had four grade levels with 100% retention and only lost two students total from grades PS-4. Great retention, combined with the addition of new students, allowed enrollment at Evergreen to actually grow from 99 students (PS-5) last year to 131 students (PS-5) in 2021-2022. Student retention is the key to enrollment growth!

MARKETING FOR 2022-2023

As we look forward to 2022-2023, we have already begun to lay out our plan for admissions events. While last year almost all of our events were held virtually, this year will likely be a combination of virtual and in-person events. We will monitor the COVID situation closely and will switch in-person events to virtual if warranted. We will also take what we have learned over the last year and continue to offer virtual, on-demand content on our website and use inbound marketing initiatives directed toward that content in order to connect with as many prospective families as possible. To that end, we are filming updated content over the next few weeks.

We are encouraged to already be receiving inquiries for 2022-23 and have already started to schedule tours for preschool and kindergarten. Our first retention events begin at the end of November with *Focus on Your Future* and *Expedition Kindergarten*, followed by events for prospective families, including *Showcase* at GRCHS in early December and *Preschool and Kindergarten Open Houses* in January.

KIM PRIMUS — DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION SERVICES

Admissions and Inclusion Services have been working closely together as inquiries are received, so families are receiving consistent messaging and are hearing from the correct voices. Families have been appreciative of the approach we are using as their questions are being answered in a timely manner.

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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 2021-22 school year is complete and was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee at its October 7 meeting. The Revised Budget is built on 2021-22 K-12 enrollment of 1955 students and PK enrollment of 298 students. Highlights of the 2021-22 Revised Budget include a New 2 You Grant of \$375/student, 1.5% wage increase for staff + Steps, an Eagles Fund goal of \$1.70 million, support of annual Technology Capital and School Capital to \$600,000, and an Operating Reserve of \$200,000. The budget also includes a net total of \$700,000 income as a result of EANS (Emergency Assistance to non-Public Schools) reimbursement of qualifying expenses, of which GRCS has applied for and been approved.

The 2020-2021 Audit is complete and went very smoothly. Beene Garter Managing Partner Tom Rosenbach will meet with the GRCS Finance Committee on November 4, 2021.

GRCS' annual contribution to the CSI Pension for 2021-22 is \$1,120,000, which is equal to 6.99% of \$16MM. For the following three years (2022-2025), the CSI Pension Board has confirmed it will be expecting to receive annual totals of \$19.6 MM, which will increase the GRCS annual contribution (6.99%) to \$1,370,000. This additional three-year liability was booked on June 30, 2021, and will be reflected on the 2020-2021 GRCS consolidated financial statement.

With the completion of the 2021-22 GRCS Revised Budget, we will begin work on the 2022-23 Operating Budget and expect to schedule a meeting in early November with the GRCS Compensation Committee.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Rockford Christian students and families raised over \$35,000 leading up to our annual Harvest Hustle. These funds are used by the PTO to support the curriculum and enhance outdoor learning opportunities for students PreK-8.



NEWS + CELEBRATIONS

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

HOMECOMING

Earlier this month, we celebrated homecoming week at GRCHS! It was a great time to celebrate both the past and also many awesome things happening currently in our community. Spirit week included competition by grades. Students could add points to their grade's score by participating in the dress-up theme or by winning a daily challenge. The week culminated with an awesome football game and a dance in the stadium for our juniors and seniors.



BEAUTY & THE BEAST

We are excited for our upcoming musical, *Beauty and the Beast*, which will be performed in the Center for Arts and Worship on **November 11, 12, and 13!**

In *Beauty and the Beast*, a wandering enchantress transforms a cruel and vain prince into a hideous Beast, leaving him only one way to reverse the curse — fall in love with another and earn her love in return. Belle, a beautiful book-lover, encounters the Beast and his castle full of enchanted objects while searching for her father, whom the Beast has imprisoned. Will they be able to break the spell before it's too late?

Disney's Beauty and the Beast is filled with unforgettable characters, awe-inspiring sets, and costumes, and classic tunes including, "Be Our Guest" and the title song. Bring the whole family to this evening of enchanted fun!

WINTERIMFEST

This past week, we celebrated "WinterimFest." WinterimFest is a time for each Winterim instructor to showcase her/his course for our students. Students walk from table to table, talking with each instructor and learning about their many course options for Winterim. We are very eager for Winterim 2022, our tenth Winterim at GRCHS!





GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

WEED, FEED, AND STOCK THE GARDEN PARTY

On Saturday, October 9, Evergreen hosted a small “Weed, Feed, and Stock the Garden Party.” This summer, five trees on the south side of our building were taken down due to disease. This left an unplanted stretch of dirt exposed to the sun. Weeds took over quickly and soon were the height of our roof! Thanks to a small collection of families, a kind hobby-farmer friend of Graham’s, and Birch Tree Bark and Stone, the site is now free of weeds, fed with manure and garden soil, and stocked with native species that will attract many pollinators next spring and summer.



STUDENT COMMITTEES

Multiple committees have been formed by students in these first months of school. One consists of Team 3 students and is in charge of keeping our Commons space neat and clean. Students sent “applications” to Mr. Schultze, who eagers “hired” students for a variety of jobs. The Commons has been looking good ever since. A multi-Team committee (made up of Team 2 and Team 3 students) is geared toward a school newspaper. “The Evergreen Times: Reporting for One Another” is set to print their first edition later this year.



NEWS — CONTINUED

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

The Iroquois campus had a successful Foot Frolic Frenzy. This is our one fundraiser for the year that is coordinated by the Iroquois and Evergreen PTO. All funds raised go to benefit the educational programs at both campuses. It was a rainy start to the day, so we moved the event inside. Kids were all donned in the 2021 Foot Frolic Frenzy shirt, and each class ran laps around the gym for 15 minutes. It is a great annual event where kids have so much fun, and all for a great cause.



KIM PRIMUS — DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION SERVICES

We now have our own accessible vehicle, thanks to the generosity of a donor who has a heart for students with disabilities. Last week our 7th graders visited ArtPrize, and our new vehicle made its debut. Four 7th grade boys enjoyed travel in brand new wheels. One of the boys said, "This is way better than the bus!" We are so thankful for this gift!

