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**BOARD
REPORT**

GRCs

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

Tom DeJonge, Superintendent

JANUARY
2022



2021/2022 BOARD REPORT

January 2022

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.



 ONE

ANOTHER

JOHN 13:34-35

LOS UNOS S

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



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.

FEBRUARY 2022

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
2	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
17	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
17	12:00 pm	Advancement Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
17-21	NO SCHOOL	Mid-Winter Break	All Campuses
23	6:00 pm	GRCS Annual Meeting	HUB
22	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons

MARCH 2022

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
2	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
3	7:30 am	GRCS Finance Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
21	12:30 pm	GRCS Education Committee Meeting	HUB
21	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
22	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons
31	NO SCHOOL	Professional Development for Staff	All Campuses

APRIL 2022

DATE	TIME	WHAT	LOCATION
1 – 8		Spring Break — No School	All Campuses
13	7:00 am	GRCS Executive Committee Meeting	GRCS Board Room
18	6:00 pm	GRCS Board of Trustees Meeting	HUB
19	10:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
21	8:00 am	New 2 You Board Meeting	GRCS Board Room
26	7:00 am	Cultural Competence Committee	Iroquois Learning Commons



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Board:

Welcome back from Christmas Break and Happy New Year to all. I trust your holiday season was enjoyable. Jacquie and I hosted our two kids, their spouses, and three Australian Shepherds for almost three weeks as our son and daughter-in-law traveled for their belated honeymoon for the two weeks following Christmas Day. Quite a houseful but wonderful in every way. Always tough to say goodbye and see the kids off to homes NOT in Grand Rapids...

This month's board meeting will focus on the proposed 2022-2023 Operating Budget. Mike Meeuwsen, as Board Treasurer, and Jim Primus will walk us through the many assumptions and program details that led to its development, and you will have time for discussion and ask any questions you may have. The board will be asked to approve the proposed budget in anticipation of our preparing and mailing the Annual Meeting Notice, which is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, 2022, to the GRCS Membership for its approval.

In addition to approving the proposed budget, the board will also be asked to approve three board nominees to fill board term 2022 – 2025. The nominees have been recommended by the Nomination Committee and reviewed and unanimously approved by the Executive Committee. Information on each of the nominees is included with the board packet you have received. Like the proposed budget, the GRCS Membership will be asked to approve the board nominees at the Annual Meeting as well.

We will meet in the Hub at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, January 19. See you then!

Tom



CAMPUS THEMES STORIES

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

The Faith Formation branch of our student congress led our school through the season of Advent by preparing daily devotionals for teachers to share with students. We are so thankful for student leaders who brought us closer to the Lord during the season of Advent. You can read those devotionals at www.grcs.org/blog.

SARA SETH — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

This past month, we had the opportunity to open our doors at the middle school to another local Christian school's stakeholders as they began to plan with AMDG architects to reimagine their own educational spaces for students. AMDG helped us design our educational collaborative and support spaces before moving to the campus on Chesaning and Burton in 2015. Both Mr. Brent Dykstra and Mr. Peter Baldwin helped accompany the site tour to help explain some of the ideas behind the design. It was a blessing to share and talk with other Christian school leaders about how to design spaces to best serve students.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Each week at Rockford Christian begins with "Family Time" or chapel first thing Monday morning and ends each Friday afternoon with "Community Time." During Family Time, each class takes a turn leading the whole school in worship; second graders, for example, recently highlighted God's command to "serve one another" by inviting the school to join them in collecting needed items for Kids Food Basket. Community Time, on the other hand, is set aside for building relationships within our school. Sometimes this looks like a team-building challenge within a homeroom; other times, it might be buddy classes working together in our Maker Space on a collaborative project. Both of these weekly experiences provide rhythm and depth to our work and draw the Rockford Christian community closer to God and to one another.

GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

Evergreen's playground takes a unique form in the snowy months of winter. In the eyes of the students, the piles of snow created by our plowing service become mountains, villages, forts, and factories. As we lean into both the joys and challenges of having children as young as kindergarten and as old as 5th grade out for recess at the same time, I'm so pleased to report that these cold recesses have been times of collaboration, creativity, and thoughtfulness. While it's not completely void of elementary drama, the playground has been a clear venue to witness our theme in action these past weeks.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

Students, staff, and families on the Iroquois campus partnered with East Congregational Church in an annual food drive again this year. Fourth-grade students and their teachers greeted at the church and collected non-perishable food and hygiene products from those who donated. The church said their shelves were getting quite low and that the drive came at just the right time. Teachers were able to share how the food was used, and in giving to this food drive, students and their families would be helping others in need. A great experience for our kids who donated and who helped unload. Thank you to all who participated!



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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

These past two weeks were *Winterim* at GRCHS. It is a two-week term between semesters where students have unique learning opportunities. They can take two unique classes at school, intern with an organization of their choice, or travel on a school trip. All freshmen take “Life Together,” a course that focuses on helping students learn more about themselves, their classmates, and what it means to be a student at GRCHS. Many other classes like CSI Grand Rapids or Spanish in the Community give students the opportunity to dive deeper into a content area. Others help students discover a new passion, like Guitar, Golf, or Tae Kwon Do. Many of our courses incorporate opportunities for students to learn through serving here in West Michigan.



SARA SETH — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

In the month of February, we look forward to an amazing school community opportunity. Local artist, Joel Schoon Tanis, will be working with our middle school students to create an invaluable mural to be displayed in the learning commons around the characteristics of the Portrait of a Graduate. Joel is a celebrated painter who has shown his work around the United States. He has illustrated various children’s books as well. Through his paintings and illustrations, he explores God’s creation and stories from a whimsical, child-like perspective. Tanis will be spending nearly a month working on this mural with the GRCS middle school students. He plans to teach the students about the process of creating art, including teaching about visual literacy, brainstorming about the content, and the actual creation of the mural. Each and every student will have the chance to be a part of each step of the process. Though this time of COVID and separation, it is a blessing to be able to come together and create something as a student body.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The first few weeks back at school in January are inevitably marked by an eager return to routine in our PreK through 8th-grade classrooms. Teachers do a masterful job creating safe spaces for students to be known and loved while at school. Morning meetings in our elementary classrooms provide a familiar structure for students to greet each other, preview their day, and hold up one another in prayer.



GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

Evergreen staff has been collaborating in efforts to update student data. Utilizing district-wide common assessments such as Aimsweb, Fountas & Pinnell, and MAP Testing, teachers, are gaining insights into the levels of growth of their students. With the support of our ESS coordinator and staff, Evergreen teachers use this data to create flexible, multi-age groups that instruct students at developmentally appropriate levels — these groups provide remediation, grade-level instruction, and enrichment to happen smoothly.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

The students and teachers at the Iroquois campus have had the honor of welcoming GRCHS students into their classrooms for the high school Winterim. GRCHS students are supporting students by partnering up, reading together, and creating relationships that are great for both Iroquois students and the high school students. We are glad to have this partnership with our high school and look forward to it continuing in future *Winterims*.

Writing in second grade has been focusing on students being *Thoughtful Neighbors*. Being a Thoughtful Neighbor is one of the attributes of our Portrait of a Graduate. Teachers, at the elementary level, are spending time with students developing foundational work and experiences that will support student growth in these specific attributes we desire for each of our students. At the elementary level, we continue to investigate and incorporate the attributes of the Portrait of a Graduate into our daily curricular work.



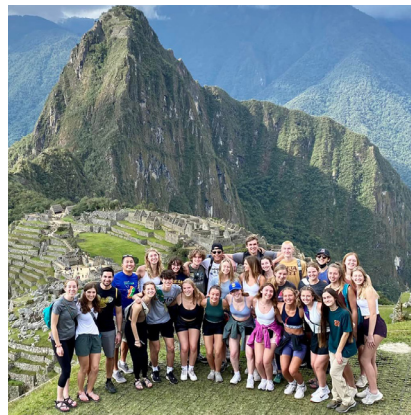
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STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3

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

Winterim Travel provides many students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a different culture. This year, our students traveled to the Grand Canyon, Miami, Dallas, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, The Dominican Republic, Peru, and Italy. Trips to Europe (London, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid) and the Galapagos Islands were rescheduled to June due to COVID. These firsthand cultural experiences give students a different appreciation for God's world and his people, growing their cultural competency and their desire to learn more in the future.



SARA SETH — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

The students at the middle school took on the challenge to collect pairs of shoes for GRCHS students to take down to the Dominican Republic on their *Winterim* trip this month. Many children in the Dominican are really in need of good-quality shoes. Our middle schoolers felt passionate about making this successful, and through class competitions were able to collect 558 pairs of shoes to be sent down to the D.R. with the group! A special thank you to Mrs. Kyla Padilla and Ms. Abby Gurka for organizing this shoe drive, as well as all of the teachers that reminded and encouraged students to seek out good quality shoes that they could part with!





GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

Each Team at Evergreen provides a weekly opportunity for a specific student to be recognized and honored. These students have the opportunity to share a little with the class about themselves and their families. Team 3 teacher John Park refers to this as the “Circle of Honor” with his 4th and 5th graders. Taken from his latest blog post: “Next week’s Circle of Honor student will be Clara. We will celebrate Clara as part of Team 3 and she will get to bring 1 or 2 things that are meaningful to her to share with the whole class!”

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

For the month of November, teachers, and students learned about the Native Americans during Native American Heritage Month. Students learned about much of the history, culture, and modern-day influences Native Americans have on the United States. Students took a gallery walk through the school to learn about Native American artifacts, famous Native Americans, and words that we often see here in Michigan and throughout our nation. While Native American history is part of our curriculum, this experience supports what is already discussed.

KIM PRIMUS — DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION SERVICES

As we strive to create interdependent communities on all of our campuses, we believe that knowledge is power. We share knowledge about disabilities in age-appropriate ways, using common language. The Director of Inclusion Services and the Inclusion Coordinators give classroom talks, grade level talks, and staff presentations to share about inclusion and various disabilities. It is our desire for the GRCS community to continue to learn and grow in their knowledge of inclusion and disabilities while learning how to support one another in community.

In individual classrooms, we have Eagle Circles in place to support students who receive inclusion services. Each circle consists of six peers celebrating the things that are going well and supporting individual needs. Because inclusion services are student-centered, each Eagle Circle is uniquely crafted for the student being supported by it. At times it is helpful to roleplay scenarios or preview activities that will take place in the classroom. Social thinking activities promote the growth of social skills in a safe environment. It is also helpful for a student to know who to turn to for help as questions arise during the school day. At the high school level, we also have Eagle Links. Students serve as Eagle Links when they come alongside their peers to support them during class and/or during unstructured high school experiences.

We are intentional as we look for students to experience school in the least restrictive environment. The use of peer support is one-way students can experience school in as natural a setting as possible. **All** have gifts to share in unique and special ways



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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

As we close out 2021 and begin a new year, God continues to bless our mission advancement efforts! We remain focused on building a solid foundation for greater connectedness across Grand Rapids Christian Schools (GRCS) and the community of students, families, and alumni it serves.

The final weeks of 2021 were filled with a frenzy of important activity, focused on finishing strong and carrying that momentum forward. We remain truly grateful for the generous community of GRCS families, staff, supporters, and friends who continue to partner with us and invest in future generations. Together, we are engaged 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!

MARKETING, ENROLLMENT, AND ADMISSIONS

December marked the unofficial start of the admissions season and we kicked things off with Expedition Kindergarten at the Evergreen, Iroquois, and Rockford campuses. These events are designed for our current preschool students, and kindergarten registration opens up to all current families during these events. Given the ever-present challenges of COVID, this year included a mix of in-person and virtual events and engaged 104 families across our three elementary school campuses.

Showcase at Grand Rapids Christian High School took place on December 9th. It's always a special event as we open up the High School campus to both current GRCS 8th graders and students from across the Grand Rapids area who are interested in exploring all GRCHS has to offer. This year, we were pleased to host around 70 families in person and another 13 families who joined us virtually for the event.

We also opened preschool registration to all current families and staff the last week of December, and the month of January is full of Preschool and Kindergarten Open House events at each campus (which will also be a mix of virtual and in-person). These events mark the opening of registration for new families who are interested in joining the GRCS community. Additional events for prospective students like Future Eagle Days, Ada Christian Campus Visit Days, and Meet Us in the Middle will take place through April.

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT AND YEAR-END APPEAL

Our 2020-21 Impact Report and year-end appeal letter were very well received - generating almost \$420,000 dollars in support of the Eagles Fund, GRCS' annual fund. This is worth celebrating because the Eagles Fund enables us to open our doors to families who are not able to afford the full cost of a Christian education. Additionally, the Eagles Fund invests in innovative programs and student support services, helping to ensure that every student has the best opportunity to flourish at Grand Rapids Christian Schools. Thanks to the generous response of our community to these mailings, the Eagles Fund already stands at \$1.27 million, about 75% of our \$1.7 million goal for the 2021-22 school year.



100-YEAR CELEBRATION AND GO FORTH FUNDING INITIATIVE

We remain actively engaged in the planning of our extended season of celebration (which will kick off later in 2022) to mark our centennial. We met with our creative firm (Grey Matter Group) in December and are currently in the final steps to refine our big idea/rally cry for this once-in-a-century celebration.

An important part of honoring GRCS' legacy over the past century is renewing our commitment to advance the mission with future generations. The Go Forth 100-Year Anniversary Funding Initiative is a three-year \$11.5 million multifaceted campaign that when fully achieved, will strengthen educational programs and opportunities for all students at all campuses. God continues to bless this important endeavor and we are now preparing for the public phase (final half) of this campaign to kick off in conjunction with the 100-Year Anniversary extended season of celebration later this year.

As of January 11, 2021, we have raised 72% of our \$11.5 million goal!

We remain extremely grateful for the generous gifts that are leading the way through this important funding initiative, enabling us to Go Forth!

BRAD MOCKABEE — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

We are thankful for a very successful Showcase last month. Throughout the spring, we will host many Future Eagle Days where we can welcome potential GRCHS students. These visits include a tour, brief presentations from various GRCHS staff, and the opportunity to sit in classrooms and meet with current GRCHS students.

BEN BUURSMA — ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Situated in an area with strong public schools, Rockford Christian, continues to differentiate itself and attract new students through its commitment to excellent Christian education, unique PreK-8 model, relational atmosphere, and integrated outdoor education program. The COVID-19 pandemic has only highlighted the crucial need for students to make meaningful connections with others, as well as the many benefits of spending time outside in God's Creation – prospective families are often impressed with the meaningful ways both of these happen at Rockford Christian. Increased interest in our earliest grades offers hope and encouragement as we seek to advance the mission of Grand Rapids Christian Schools.

GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

Enrollment season is upon us and, thanks to the Admissions Team, Evergreen has hosted many tours of the past months. We look forward to the collective efforts for the Kindergarten Open house on Thursday, January 13, and the GRCES Preschool Open House on Thursday, January 20 — this will be our first preschool open house during which Evergreen and Iroquois staff members present together. Across the district, we offer a strong preschool program with a variety of options to serve our families.

JOHN BARKEL — IROQUOIS CAMPUS

The Iroquois admissions team is going full throttle right now, with several family tours taking place every week. Additionally, we have had one Kindergarten Expedition night (a virtual open house for kids and parents) and both another Kindergarten opening house and a Preschool open house coming up in the next few weeks. These events are well attended and are done very well by our admissions team. Our preschool open house will take place alongside Evergreen, giving parents a complete picture of both campuses and how each is unique and similar. A big thanks to our admissions team, as they do an extraordinary job creating these experiences for our new families.



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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

Through the first half of the 2021-22 fiscal year, the GRCS Operating Budget continues to track well with respect to both budgeted Revenues and Expenses.

The GRCS Proposed Operating Budget for the 2022-23 school year is complete, has been presented and approved by the GRCS Finance Committee at its January meeting, and will be presented to the GRCS BOT at the January 19, 2022 board meeting. If approved, the GRCS constituency will vote to approve the budget at the annual meeting in February 2022.

Highlights of the Proposed Budget include a K-12 budgeted enrollment of 1968 students, New2You grant of \$400/student (up from \$375 in 2021-22), a 4% wage increase for staff, steps for eligible faculty, a 403(b) employer contribution of up to 6% of employee gross annual wage (effective January 2023), a tuition commitment maximum of one full tuition for qualifying staff, an Eagles Fund goal of \$1.70 million, a CSI Pension obligation of \$1.3MM, and a Variable tuition range which includes a maximum increase of \$310/student for full-time students.



NEWS + CELEBRATIONS

SARA SETH — GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Calvin University has invited Latasha Morrison to join them to speak in their January Series Event this year. Five years ago, Latasha held her first Be the Bridge event at Grand Rapids Christian Middle School. Out of that event, many small groups were formed, including a few groups of various GRCS parents, staff, and community members that are still meeting today! Be the Bridge believes that complete racial unity and justice cannot happen apart from the reconciling work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit to move individuals to make peace with God and all humankind. After the half-day of school on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a group of middle school teachers plan to attend Latasha Morrison's session at Calvin University.

GRAHAM SCHULTZE — EVERGREEN CAMPUS

Prior to Christmas break, Evergreen hosted a Past, Present, and Future meeting, during which I outlined to families the “three Evergreen pillars” (inquiry-based learning, balanced calendar, and multiage classes) as they were at Evergreen's inception, as they are now, and what they may be in the future. Key changes include:

1. Bolstering our commitment to inquiry-based learning by pursuing candidacy to become an International Baccalaureate school.
2. Aligning our calendar with the rest of the district in order to ensure the availability of summer programming to all Evergreen families as opportunities like sports camps, Summer Session Jr., and theater camp grow.

Overall, the presentation was well-received, and the Evergreen parent community clearly expressed great trust in and support for the Evergreen teaching staff.