



## Superintendent's Report April 21, 2008

Dear Board Members:

The month of April represents a fresh start in schools. A new season, warmer weather, longer days, and the beginning of the last quarter of the school year signify our work for this year is nearly over. It is always amazing to me to come to this point of a school year and realize how quickly it has gone by. School year schedules seem to make time fly; after all, it was only yesterday when we were dedicating Eagles Stadium, wasn't it? And wasn't the opening of the new gymnasium only a very distant reality?

Well, it's now April – and I imagine that the new school year will be here in the wink of an eye.

This has been a year filled with many important decisions, great accomplishments, and essential work. We have engaged more members of our community in the process of our work than ever before. As we prepare for the end of the year and come to the completion of nearly a year of strategic planning, I am reminded of how all of our efforts are in God's hands. Though He has equipped us with the ability to complete the

work he has empowered us to do, the outcome and glory is His. Our work as faculty and yours as members of the Board is subject to His supreme power.

Thanks be to God for His perfect plan. Thanks be to God for the gifts and talents with which each of us have been blessed. Glory to Him for the great things He will do through us, His servants.

Looking forward to seeing you at Creston and Evergreen Christian Schools Monday evening. We will meet at 7:00 p.m. Until then, enjoy your weekend and the season that is springing before our very eyes!

### Monthly Update

#### **Enrollment**

2008-09 enrollment agreements are being submitted each day. Though it is too soon to confirm projections, elementary principals report that enrollment in at least one of our key entry points, kindergarten registrations, is strong. That news is encouraging and we will continue to stay on top of this and all other enrollment information from now until the start of the new school year.

#### **Student Information System**

All registrations and other student information will be managed through Blackbaud, a student information system we will implement GRCS-wide in the fall. This system will, for the first time, integrate our business office, admissions office, instruction office and all student assessment and report card information, parent information, and development office information. A single student information system has been a goal for many years and we have been able, through our recent technology study and technology reorganization efforts, to move forward to finally streamline the dissemination and integration of information between home and

school in a way that has not been available until now.

We are looking forward to unveiling Blackbaud in the fall.

### **Personnel Policies**

The personnel policy revisions reviewed by the Board several months ago continue to be reviewed by the Professional Status Committee. The Committee has met on two occasions and the Personnel Committee of the Board met with representatives of that committee on April 18. The Board will not be asked to approve final recommendations until the Committee has completed its work, which means it could be as late as May or June. When information is confirmed, the Board will receive the final draft for its review and approval.

### **Partners for a Racism-free Community**

On March 28, I had an opportunity to attend the annual *Partners for a Racism Free Community*, held this year at Steelcase University. Several of our administrative team and teaching staff were also able to attend. *Partners* is an *excellent* conference and provides community-wide leadership in identifying and removing racial and ethnic barriers that exist within educational and business organizations throughout Kent County.

### **Business and Industry**

Char Grasmeyer, Development Office, hosted our annual Business and Industry Network breakfast at the CAW on the morning of March 27. More than 75 individuals throughout West Michigan attended this breakfast and heard keynote speaker Bob Israel's message of Christian business leadership and the impact a positive attitude has on success at work and home.

The Network is one of a number of ways GRCS has expanded its Development outreach and has become an important part

of our annual fund development efforts. Char has done a top-notch job in organizing this and many other development events each year. Hats off to her for her fine work.

### **Excellence in Education Grant Awards**

On March 11, I had the opportunity to assist in the annual distribution of Grand Rapids Community Foundation's *Excellence in Education Awards* to GRCS' teacher recipients. This year's awards went to Creston Christian School, Millbrook Christian School, and Grand Rapids Christian Middle School. Teachers at each of these schools applied for Community Foundation grants to support literacy instruction (Creston), diversity awareness (Millbrook), and writing instruction (GRCMS).

My thanks to each of the teachers who took the time to apply for a grant and for searching for ways to continue to improve learning for GRCS kids!

### **Strategic Planning Updates**

A significant amount of time and energy is being spent preparing for the Board's May review of the strategic planning recommendations; most task forces have now completed their work. Jane Eaves, Consultant, has been an invaluable resource to GRCS of late and has worked with us in the preparation of the final documents for board review.

### **Administrative Retreat**

As work continued in each of the strategic initiative task forces, our administrative Council, comprised of GRCS central office administrative staff and building principals, met in a two-day retreat on March 24 and 25 to review the progress of each task force and to provide administrative input in each area. Our administrative team's understanding of and input into final recommendations is needed, as they will be instrumental in implementing the plan itself.

Jane was present at the two-day Administrative Council retreat and provided excellent leadership throughout the discussion.

The retreat was held at the Woodlawn CRC Ministry Center, a great facility that allowed everyone to be close to school while still being away from the day-to-day issues that often make it difficult to accomplish important work in an uninterrupted fashion. My thanks to Peter Jonker and Mike Abma, Woodlawn CRC pastors, for making the Worship Center available to us. It was time very well spent.

### Immediate Next Steps

A combined meeting of the members from each task force has been scheduled for April 28. At that time, all task force participants will be thanked for their *many* hours of study and have an opportunity to hear about the focus of each task force. On April 29, the Strategic Planning Committee will receive the first draft of the report and have opportunity to discuss the recommendations from each of the committees, ask questions, and request additional considerations be given to specific areas if needed.

Jane will also be present at each of these two meetings and will facilitate the discussion at each.

### April's Meeting

No formal action will be requested of the Board at the April meeting relative to the elements of the strategic plan. April's meeting will provide an opportunity to provide the Board with an update on progress, answer any questions members of the board may have, and discuss the anticipated strategic planning schedule for the remainder of the year.

Please note that I have scheduled a special Executive Session of the Board for May 12. At that time, the Board will have its first opportunity to discuss all recommendations

in closed session. The May meeting provides the first opportunity for open meeting discussion and I have tentatively scheduled Town Hall Meetings in late May and early June in anticipation of the Board's request for me to share the recommendations with our community and to gather its feedback.

I have attached an updated strategic planning calendar to this month's report so you can stay connected with the meetings and communications that are scheduled between now and the June 16 Board of Trustees meeting.

### Looking Ahead

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|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 21 | Executive Committee Meeting (rescheduled) @ GRCS – 11:30 a.m.                   |
| April 21 | Board of Trustees Meeting @ Creston and Evergreen Christian Schools – 7:00 p.m. |
| April 22 | Parent Advisory Committee Meeting @ GRCS – 7:00 p.m.                            |
| April 28 | Combined Meeting of Strategic Planning Task Forces @ GRCHS – 7:00 p.m.          |
| April 29 | Strategic Planning Committee Meeting @ GRCS – 4:00 p.m.                         |
| May 6    | Strategic Plan Document Mailed to Board of Trustees                             |
| May 8    | Operations and Finance Committee Meeting @ GRCS – 7:30 a.m.                     |
| May 9    | Personnel Committee Meeting @ GRCS – 1:00 p.m.                                  |
| May 12   | Executive Committee Meeting @ GRCS – 11:30 a.m.                                 |
| May 12   | Executive Session of the Board of Trustees @ GRCS – 7:00 p.m.                   |
| May 15   | GRCS Foundation Luncheon @ Penn Club – 12:00 noon                               |
| May 19   | Board of Trustees Meeting @ Rockford Christian – 7:00 p.m.                      |

## **Attachments to this Month's Report**

- Correspondence
- New Correspondence
- GRCS Response to Recent Correspondence
- Board Resolution
- Staff In-service Day Summary
- Media Releases
- Media Coverage
- Task Force meeting minutes
- Summer CAW Camp
- Student Information System Implementation
- Schedule