

**Grand Rapids Christian Schools  
Board of Trustees  
Monday, January 21, 2008**

**GRCS Offices**

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**Members Present:** Eric Boender, Cathie Brassler, Tricia Dodds, LaRissa Hollingsworth, Dan Holtrop, Dan Hubka, Paul Jeltima, Ross Leisman, Jim McClurg, Jim Schipper, Dave Tiesenga, Gayle VanGessel, Tim Wiersma

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Tom DeJonge, Jay Laninga, Eric Burgess, Lon Swartzentruber

**Guests:** Jane Eaves, Consultant

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Jim Schipper, President
2. **Devotions and Opening Prayer:** Tim Wiersma, GRCMS Representative
3. **Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION MADE BY DAN HOLTROP AND SUPPORTED BY TRICIA DODDS TO** approve the minutes from the December 17, 2007 board meeting

**MOTION PASSED**

4. **Public Comment**

A. Patterson - clarified December 17, 2007 letter sent to members of the board and School Program task force as representing GRCS members employed at Calvin College and spouses

M. Swets - questioned whether or not policy revisions are available prior to meetings of the board; asked for additional information about the board's decision to refinance remaining bond debt

5. **Special Reports**

- a. Educational Student Support Recommendation – Tom DeJonge  
Tom reviewed a recommendation on the provision of educational support services for K – 12 students for the 2008-09 school year

**MOTION MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SUPPORTED BY CATHIE BRASSER** that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools' Board of Trustees approves the Educational Student Support recommendations for the 2008-09 school year as presented by the Superintendent on January 21, 2008 and directs the Superintendent to initiate the transition regarding the management of educational programs and staff with the Christian Learning Center with an understanding that the Personnel Committee will review the hiring policy of current CLC teaching staff.

**MOTION PASSED**

- b. Proposed 2008-09 Budget Discussion – Jay Laninga

**MOTION BY DAVE TIESENGA AND SUPPORTED BY CATHIE BRASSER** to move to Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing a proposed 2008-09 budget and corresponding rates of tuition

**MOTION PASSED**

c. Strategic Planning Initiative Task Force Reports and Recommendations – Tim Wiersma

1.) Spiritual Formation – Lois Brink

Lois reviewed progress of Spiritual Formation task force, informing the board that recommendations will be submitted in June 2008 in the following areas: Shared Time, staffing, accountability and assessment of spiritual climate, programs and operations, service learning

2.) School Program – Tim Wiersma and Tom DeJonge

Tim and Tom reviewed the context of task force discussions and data studied, which included: enrollment history and trends, individual school building/level expense/revenue comparisons, building utilization, instructional program; provided a summary of task force conclusions, including the impact of enrollment decline on operations and expense duplications (more than \$1 million in 2007-08), desire to keep costs down having negatively impacted instructional program and educational services

Board Discussion

Discussion included questions about Rockford Christian School enrollment history, projections, and retention of Rockford Christian Middle school students to GRCHS; expense/revenue comparisons at individual school level; impact of enrollment decline and operational redundancies; retention of students from elementary to middle and from middle to high school level; definition of “neighborhood”; review of historic quality and comprehensive nature of GRCS programs and educational services

Public Comment

A. Patterson - shared concerns related to impact of school size resulting from consolidation, including impact on student issues, diversity within community; emphasized need to look at options other than only consolidation; expressed concern for anxiety amongst parents; encouraged transparency in the process of study

F. VanLiere - acknowledged difficulty of the task, referenced the strength of GRCS parent involvement and importance of neighborhood presence; questioned whether current parents may choose other schools in a consolidation; encouraged board to invest in education

M. Swets - stressed the importance of minutes being taken at task force meetings

M. Hogeterp - expressed concern about wording of motion; need to look at multiple options, encouraged transparency in decision-making process

**MOTION FROM THE SCHOOL PROGRAM TASK FORCE** that the Grand Rapids Christian Schools’ Board of Trustees charges the convening of two subcommittees of the School Program Task Force to study and report their recommendations to the Board no later than April 21, 2008:

a) **SUPPORTED BY TRICIA DODDS** that an Educational Programs and Service Subcommittee identify for implementation educational programs and instructional services that are essential for ensuring a comprehensive, affordable, and high quality school program.

**MOTION PASSED**

b) **SUPPORTED BY GAYLE VANGESSEL** that an Operations and Infrastructure Subcommittee develop a plan for the consolidation of the Creston/Evergreen, Millbrook, and Oakdale campuses in order to:

- Maximize resources to support educational programs and instructional services
- Align actual cost per child at the elementary level to the cost of tuition
- Reduce operational expenses and increase tuition assistance through efficiencies and economies of scale

- Stabilize staffing
- Secure consistency and continuity of educational program and services
- Eliminate parent uncertainty and concern about viability of elementary school program
- Respond to long-term demographic trends within the City of Grand Rapids
- Lessen the subsidizing of the elementary school program

**MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION FROM JIM MCCLURG AND SUPPORTED BY DAN HOLTROP** to expand the scope of the School Program Task Force committee to include middle and high school.

**MOTION FAILED**

- 3.) Funding Model – Jay Laninga, Eric Burgess  
Tabled until February 18, 2008
- 4.) Financial Viability – Lon Swartzentruber  
Tabled until February 18, 2008
- 5.) Visibility within the Community – Eric Burgess  
Tabled until February 18, 2008
6. **Items for Information, Discussion, and Action**  
Personnel Committee – Dan Holtrop  
Tom reported that the motion to approve revisions to Sections 300 and 500 of the GRCS Policy Handbook presented to the board would be tabled until February 18, 2008 board meeting to allow time for him to review proposed personnel policy revisions with staff
7. **Correspondence**  
Letter from A. Patterson received  
Email from N. Woltersdorf distributed  
Emails from M. and D. Peterson distributed
8. **Round the Table**  
Discussed potential need to schedule a special meeting of the board for the purpose of further reviewing the proposed 2008-09 budget; Finance and Operations to review further revisions at this time
9. **Closing Prayer:** Jim Schipper
10. **Meeting Adjourned:** 10:18 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sara Buchholz, GRCS Administrative Assistant