

# THE COURIER

*SUMMER  
2019*

Published by the Board of  
**COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**

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## *Academic Diligence with a Christian Emphasis*

Preparing students for life beyond high school is a priority at Covenant. Curriculum is designed with an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills within the framework of Christian education. This issue of the Courier will examine the steps our Seniors take to prepare for college and future employment within the context of faith and spiritual growth.



## *Congratulations Class of 2019!*





## FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Rick Noorman



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experiences that are used to teach that content as the student is led through a particular time span of their life. Through the curriculum they are led to become what we had envisioned for them to become at the end of that time. The Glossary of Education Reformed has this to say about curriculum;

“The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. In dictionaries, curriculum is often defined as the courses offered by a school, but it is rarely used in such a general sense in schools. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning. An individual teacher's curriculum, for example, would be the specific learning standards, lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and teach a particular course.” (From the GLOSSARY OF EDUCATION REFORM <https://www.edglossary.org/curriculum/>)

### Curriculum: The Essence of the Christian School

There are several very important factors that are involved in the work of the Christian school as it strives to accomplish its stated mission involving the education of our youth. For the Christian school to be effective in its work, it must have a solid commitment from the parents and good support from the community of believers. It must have teachers who are thoroughly grounded in the principles of Reformed education, skilled in the practice of teaching, and able to relate well with parents and students alike. It must have the facilities and the resources necessary to carry out the work that must be done. Finally, the most essential element of any educational institution is a curriculum designed to help the school meet its instructional goals for the students.

Curriculum is much more than just the subjects that are taught in the school. It is the content that is taught in those subjects and it is the learning

More simply stated, curriculum might be thought of as the “floor plan” or “blueprint” for what is going to be taught, learned, and experienced in the school over a period of time. Whatever this period of time is, we hope that each student will be equipped with what they need and prepared for the next phase of their life. That might be moving from first grade to second grade, from 9th grade to 10th grade or from 12th grade to college/work/the home.

Every school has a vision of how they will shape and nurture each student to become the type of person that will be able to be best prepared to meet the challenges of life. The curriculum for a Christian school would certainly have that goal as well and will include aspects of a religious or spiritual nature that are to be a part of the formal instructional program.

Outside influences often impact the work of the school. The home, the church, friends, and even the influences of the world factor in. For a school to be effective in its work and to have accountability to

those who establish and maintain the school, there needs to be effort put into the development of and the guarding of the curriculum. If the school has determined that a particular class will have the goal of instructing the student in a particular topic but the teacher never gets to that topic or decides that they don't think that topic is important, there is going to be a problem. Although this needs to be the work of the entire faculty, it has to take direction from someone who is in a position to see the big picture. Someone has to be able to see how it all fits together. This is the work of a Director of Curriculum. Through work with the faculty and School Board, it involves the determination of specific goals and objectives for each class, the documentation of these into a visible format, and then the monitoring of the work to ensure that these things are being done. The curriculum can be adjusted and changed, but it should always be done through intentional movement from one position to another rather than just a randomly drifting away from the documented course to something else.

### Director of Curriculum

The curriculum of a school is composed of many different parts, which are controlled by many different people. This makes keeping track of the curriculum a very difficult process. In light of the recent growth and the projected growth of our school in the years ahead, the Board of Covenant Christian High School recently made a decision to hire someone, on a part-time basis, to do the work of a Curriculum Director. Mr. Kyle Bruinooge, a member of our teaching staff since 2012, has been hired for this position. Beginning in September, Mr. Bruinooge will be teaching for three periods of the day and devoting a half day to this new work. The Board believes that this is an important position for our school. Some of the reasons for this were evident in the grounds that were stated to justify this position.

1. This would relieve the Administrator of a portion of his duties that will continue to grow as the school and staff grows.
2. School and staff growth has made management of the curriculum more difficult.
3. This would allow for dedicated attention to curriculum matters and greater follow through on needs and improvements.
4. This would allow for better coordination with feeder school curriculum.
5. It would ensure that spiritual principles are found in all courses taught at Covenant

Some of the more specific tasks of the Curriculum Director include the following:

1. Lead the Curriculum Committee which is made up of one teacher from each department.
2. Produce and maintain a Curriculum Guide that can be accessed by students and parents. This guide will give pertinent information on all the course offerings and all curriculum requirements.
3. Produce and maintain curriculum documentation for all courses.
4. Examine the content of all courses to ensure that important concepts that are in the documents are being taught and that there is no unnecessary overlap of content in multiple courses.
5. Make sure that foundational biblical principles are embedded into the work of each class.
6. Ensure that school-wide instructional goals are included in all classes.
7. Develop a process or pathway for curriculum change.



We look forward to having a dedicated professional working in this very important area of our school program. We believe that in time there will be much valuable information available to help parents and students better understand the educational program at Covenant Christian High School. We pray for God's blessing upon Mr. Bruinooge and the work that he does for our school.

### Recent Curriculum Changes

Over the past couple of years, the Curriculum Committee has recommended to the Education Committee and the Board several changes to our curriculum.

1. We began several years ago to teach a course in English Literature and Composition. This course could be used to meet the two-semester 12th grade English requirement and prepare the students to take the AP exam. This course, taught by Mrs. Emily Boersen, is now registered as an official Advanced Placement course. Successful scores on this exam can be used to earn college credit.
2. Two years ago, we added an Advance Placement course in Statistics. This course allows us to meet the needs of students who desire to continue their math studies in an area practical to further work in business and industry.

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3. To assist our students who continue on in school in the area of engineering and computer science, we started a course in Computer Programming. Mr. Matt Elzinga has been teaching this course for the past two years.

4. This past year, we dropped the requirement for all students to take Computer Applications. This decision was based on the fact that our students are getting good exposure to work with the computer and the need to focus entirely on the Microsoft Office package was not always helpful to students. This course will still be offered as an elective.

5. Last spring, we made the decision to make significant changes in our Religion curriculum. We have dropped the requirement for 9th grade students to take Cults and Non-Christian Religions. We believe that many of the concepts of this course are being covered in other courses. We hope to offer this as an elective to 12th grade students in a few years. We will be adding a semester of Church History giving students four total semesters. There will be two semesters in 10th grade, Ancient and Medieval Church History, and two semesters in 11th grade which would be Modern and Reformed Church History. In addition to these required courses in Church History, one semester of New Testament Survey for 9th grade and one semester of Worldviews for 12th grade will be required. This change will take us three years to complete as the students work their way through the classes.

6. Several years ago we added a course called Global Issues to our Social Studies department. This class was designed to help students investigate the historical causes of many of the issues that we face in our world today and consider the Reformed perspective of these issues.

Development of the school curriculum will continue to take place as we consider the needs of our students given the changing world that we live in. Some courses may become irrelevant because of changes around us and other courses may need to be developed to meet new needs. Guiding every decision will be concern for the development of the student so that with body, mind, and soul he will be well equipped to serve God wherever God places him. As a School Board, Administration, and Faculty we prayerfully seek God's guidance as we make important decisions in the area of curriculum.

## OUTGOING BOARD PRESIDENT

Nick Kleyn



## Congratulations to the Class of 2019

The School Board extends our sincere congratulations to the fine graduates of the class of 2019 and we hope and pray that they may take the things they have been taught at Covenant Christian High School these past four years and use them in their life callings and to the glory and honor of God.

We also take this opportunity to thank retiring teacher, Mrs. Meghan Van Overloop. We thank her for her many years of teaching and helping students at CCHS grow in the fear and knowledge of God. We pray that she may be blessed as she now takes up her work as a mother in the home

I have enjoyed being on the School Board the past three years, and I pray that the Staff and the School Board will continue to work hard for the good of our covenant children.

## BOOSTERS COMMITTEE

Doug Kaptein



After a couple of years of investigating, laying the groundwork, and working with the Board, the Boosters now have a direction. The Athletic Boosters are a parent run organization that helps raise funds for each sport that Covenant offers. There are representatives from each sport that get together 3 times a year to come up with ideas to help each sport. So far, we have purchased an ice machine for the training room and we were able to purchase a new scoreboard for the soccer field. Ideas continue to come in and



each idea is discussed. Right now, there are 7 or 8 couples that are representing the Boosters.

One of the ways that we raise money to help the athletic program is by providing concession stands at a number of the sporting events. We make concessions available during the fall for the soccer and volleyball games, and during the winter basketball season. Another way to raise money is through fundraisers. We oversaw the alumni game this past March and have a few more

ideas going forward. The Craft Show and a small donation from the CCHS golf outing also provides us with some funds to use.

With Covenant looking to improve all of the facilities for our athletes, we are looking for more couples to help us out. It is a great opportunity to get involved and to work with couples that you might not know. If you would like to get involved and be part of something special, please email Doug Kaptein at [dkaptein32@gmail.com](mailto:dkaptein32@gmail.com).



### Choir Field Trips



On December 17, the Chamber Singers sang at the Lemmen-Holton Cancer Pavilion in Grand Rapids. It was a great opportunity to sing for the patients and their loved ones and even see a few familiar faces. Our prayer was that God would use the music to comfort the patients there who were battling cancer.



Choir Trip on March 4 at  
4th Presbyterian Church in Chicago

# Career and Guidance Center

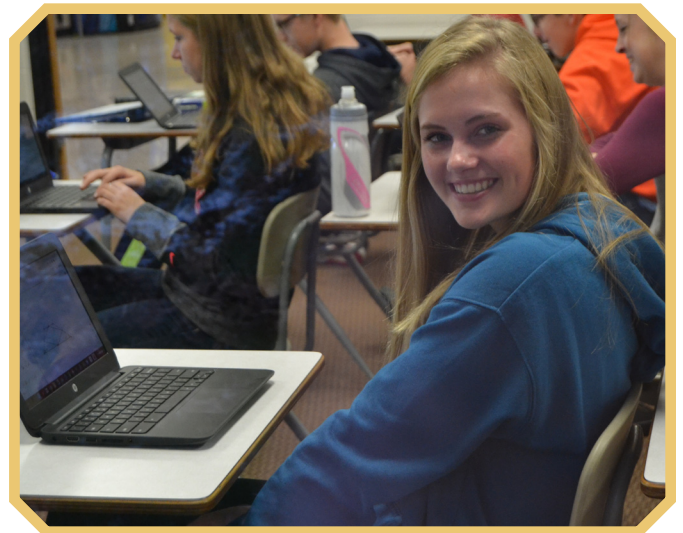


## Investment in SAT Preparation Reaps Strong Results

The best preparation for the SAT is a challenging high school curriculum. Therefore, SAT preparation begins in the classroom. However, it is not wise to take the SAT without doing some specific preparation for the test. Our students start the process of preparing to take the SAT as 11th graders already during their 9th grade year by taking the PSAT 8/9. The process continues when students in the 10th grade take the PSAT 10. In the fall of the 11th grade year the students have the opportunity to take the PSAT/NMSQT (which also is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship) and then finally in the spring of 11th grade the students take the SAT.

To specifically prepare for the SAT the students can access the Test Prep booklets that are available in the Guidance Office. These booklets can be beneficial and serve their purpose. There are test taking tips and full practice tests available in them. That being said, the best way the students can prepare for the SAT is by taking full advantage of Khan Academy and what it offers. Khan Academy is a FREE online test prep website that works hand in hand with the College Board (the company that administers the PSAT and SAT tests) to provide the students top notch test preparation.

Starting in 10th grade, Mrs. Bergman helps each of our students set up a Khan Academy account and a College Board account online. She also helps each student “link” the two accounts together so that they share information. The benefit of this is that Khan Academy then has access to each student’s PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10 results and customizes a test preparation program for each student based on the results of those tests and what areas need to be worked on. This customization helps each student use their time wisely and focus specifically on the areas that need the most attention. Mrs. Bergman meets individually with each student during their 10th grade year and 11th grade year to show them how to use Khan Academy and make the most of the website’s resources.



For the students who choose to use Khan Academy and make an intentional effort to do so we have seen great results. We have had students who have answered over 500 questions in Khan Academy and seen improvements of over 140 points in their test scores. With these gains in test scores, students are earning for themselves thousands in scholarship money they otherwise wouldn’t have gotten. Sadly, the problem is that many of our students choose not to use Khan Academy or some choose to use it for an hour or two and expect results which simply aren’t going to happen. So, please encourage your son or daughter to use Khan Academy consistently and intentionally.







## Profile of Guidance Counselor Mr. James Haveman

### **1. Can you tell us a little about your background and how long have you been employed at Covenant Christian High School?**

I grew up in Hull, IA where I attended Western Christian High School and eventually graduated from Dordt College in 1995. I have been blessed to be in education in many different places, California, Iowa, and Michigan. This will be my 12th year working at Covenant. Tanya and I will be married 25 years this summer and have three boys, Tyler, Derek, and Damon

### **2. What is the most rewarding aspect about being a guidance counselor?**

**The most** rewarding aspect of my position is seeing things go well for the students whether it be with their post-high school planning or in their personal life. They experience a lot of pressure so to see them confident and excited about what God is doing in their lives is both rewarding and exciting.

### **3. What is something your students have taught you?**

They have taught me to despise cell phones and how they take away from interpersonal communication.

### **4. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing students today?**

Putting their cell phones down and learning to work hard for something that doesn't bring an immediate reward would be the greatest challenge.

### **5. What do you like to do in your free time and why do you enjoy doing it?**

I enjoy spending time with my wife and boys. Because we have no other family in Michigan besides the five of us we get to enjoy a lot of time together. We appreciate being on the golf course as much as possible or enjoying the waters of Michigan either at Dumont Lake or the beaches of Lake Michigan.

### **6. How long have you worked in education? Why did you decide to work in education?**

I have been involved in education since graduating from Dordt in 1995 (other than five years in Iowa). I decided to get into education because I enjoy working with God's covenant young people. It is rewarding to be there for them and with them as they experience the ups and downs of being a teenager.

### **7. What is it about what you do that you are passionate about?**

Pure and simple, my joy is in the interaction with the students and being available to them.



### **8. Why do you choose to work with high school students?**

They are fun! Also, while they "think" they "know" everything, they really are seeking direction and guidance. In education we are the last ones who get to work with the students before they go on to college or the work place so we have to make the most of every opportunity we have with them.

### **9. What aspect of working at CCHS do you most enjoy?**

Working with the students and the no cell phones policy during the school day.



# VALEDICTORIANS



Being named valedictorian has come to symbolize one of the highest honors you can achieve academically in high school. Covenant Christian High School was blessed with six Valedictorians in the graduating Class of 2019. We congratulate the following Valedictorians!

## What are your plans for after graduation?

**Brett Kalsbeek:** GVSU for Business management.

**Alex Van Uffelen:** Calvin College to major in Biochemistry and then to hopefully enter Med School

**Sara Langerak:** Davenport University for business

**Jacob Elzinga:** GVSU for mechanical engineering

**Abigail Cammenga:** Entering the workforce

**Joshua Zolen:** GVSU for business.



## How has CCHS prepared you spiritually and academically for life after graduation?

**Brett:** Covenant prepared me through its rigorous curriculum and clear applications of each subject to my reformed worldview.

**Alex:** Academically - many classes were offered that helped narrow my focus as to which career I would like to pursue. But more importantly, spiritually, the religion courses have helped shape my worldview. The other classes, regardless of subject matter, were always taught from a godly and Christian perspective. I was taught of the major religions and cults surrounding me so that I will be able to be a witness towards them of my faith, and confidently teach of my faith in contradiction to certain aspects of theirs. Each class has made me more equipped to enter college this coming year, and years to come as I am more grounded in my faith as a result from these past four years of high school, and the previous nine years of grade school.

**Sara:** I have learned in every subject about the great and glorious God we have, giving us a reason to praise and glorify God in all our studies.

**Jacob:** CCHS has prepared me spiritually by providing a place where I am surrounded by Christian teachers who strive to help me grow spiritually as well as challenge me academically to allow me to grow to the best of my abilities

**Abigail:** Covenant has prepared me academically and spiritually for life ahead through the simple fact that the students there are taught from a Christian perspective. I have learned to look for God in every aspect of my life whether it be math or my relationships. Academically, I have also been equipped to grow as a Christian. For example, I have studied classes such as economics, accounting, and a variety of other math classes which have prepared me to use whatever income God gives me properly.

**Joshua:** CCHS made me realize how important it is to be a part of a body. Although there may be good education in the public schools for a lot less money, I realized how crucial it is to be surrounded by those of like faith. As I move forward and understand that I am no longer a part of this specific body, in the same sense, I appreciate the amazing opportunity I've had in the 4 years to be surrounded by my brothers and sisters, and I know this experience will be of great necessity as I enter the college life.





### What is one piece of advice you would give to underclassmen?

**Brett:** As cliché as it sounds, stay motivated and try to develop a passion for each subject. Also, take full advantage of the social opportunities this school provides.

**Alex:** Keep a positive attitude towards everything that happens and always wear a smile!

**Sara:** Don't take for granted your friends and family and tell them you love them.

**Jacob:** My advice would be to never deal with your work with anything but your best effort.

**Abigail:** To take the four years they have at Covenant to establish godly friendships, because the people one surrounds themselves with are those that will impact and change their lives.

**Joshua:** One piece of advice for my underclassmen is that even though it is important to do well in school, I believe it is more important to enjoy your high school experience. This does not mean going out on the weekends and involving yourself in ungodly activities, but it does mean to understand that there are going to be failures at Covenant and in your life. Don't let these failures stop you from serving God but learn from them to the point that you can find comfort in them.



### What is your favorite memory of CCHS?

**Brett:** Homecoming, especially senior year: both the competitions between the classes and the basketball games.

**Alex:** Our class trip in West Virginia

**Jacob:** Singing around the fire on the senior class trip.

**Abigail:** The senior class trip. I really enjoyed talking to people in my class I haven't gotten to know as much as others. Also, I enjoyed strengthening my personal friendships. Finally, nothing can beat the beauty of rafting underneath blue skies on a warm spring day in the mountains of West Virginia.

**Joshua:** I know it has been mentioned before, but my favorite memory was our senior class trip. I got to experience the closest bond of 80 students I could have imagined. If this is the only thing I remember when looking back on Covenant in 50 years, I will be satisfied with everything that took place in Covenant.



# COMMENCEMENT ADDRESSES



We thank the following three young people for sharing with us excerpts from their speeches given at this year's Commencement on May 31, 2019.

## ***Brett Kalsbeek***

Aristotle once said; "Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity." From a secular point of view, this quote defines what we have gained from our last four years here at Covenant Christian High School. We have been given the fundamental tools and proper mindset to "make something of ourselves in the real world". I have another quote from Aristotle: "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." I'm not sure about the context of this quote or what exactly Aristotle meant by it, but I imagine he was referring to the overall morality of mankind. We at Covenant understand this quote on a much deeper level- spiritually.

The very basis of this school is the firm foundation of instruction according to the word of God. This is what sets us apart, and also what makes our education here so valuable. I was asked to speak about and emphasize this "value", but I think we all understand and can agree that instruction founded on biblical principles cannot be appraised like a house, or a car. Proverbs 16:16; "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver?". The Bible itself tells us the value: beyond earthly payment, beyond material compensation: priceless! This is especially seen in the fruits of this institution: young men and women of God dedicated to serving and glorifying Him in every aspect of their lives. We have been properly prepared and equipped for our spiritual battle against sin, Satan, and self through this wonderful educational opportunity known as Covenant Christian High School.

## ***Alex Van Uffelen***

The past four years at Covenant have been a blessing to each of us, as students, in our own unique way. We would like to thank our parents, grandparents and all supporters for this education which we have received as it will help us in the years to come as we pursue higher degrees, or enter the workforce in the next few days.

As we look towards this next stage in our life, it is impossible to do so without reflecting on what came before. We were taught of the history of this world and all the previous civilizations, of the cults and other

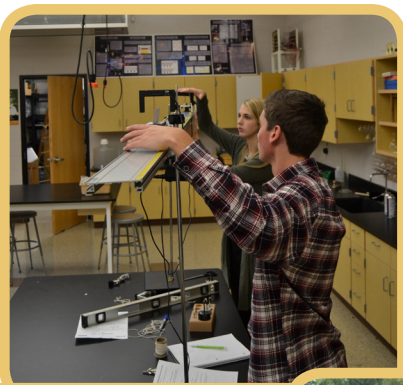
religions which surround us. We were also taught algebra, geometry, chemistry, anatomy, physiology and the other science courses as well, but most importantly, no matter the subject, the content was always conveyed to us from a Christian perspective.

Thank you to our parents who sent us to Covenant Christian High School and to our grandparents, uncles and aunts, and other supporters who made this education possible by your generous contributions. As graduates, we all look back at this education with thoughts which are bitter sweet. On the sweet side, we see the next stage in our life coming closer and closer, the career which we have dreamed of pursuing is right around the corner. However, the last time walking through the halls made us reconsider how we went about school each day. It was a blessing to walk through the halls, to see our friends and fellow believers each and every day, and to discuss with them in a manner that is founded on love and kindness towards the neighbor. Covenant was our second home, and now we are moving. We are moving on in our life. This education, and the principles learned in the light of scripture will leave with us.

## ***Sara Langerak***

In this amazing adventure at Covenant Christian High School, we have learned of God's faithfulness and love throughout every subject taught. In every up and down, God has always been there, guiding our weak hands down the path that He has planned for us in eternity. This journey came with struggles and trials, but God has always been our Comfort. He was there in all our friend struggles and relationship problems. He was there when a best friend was taken to glory. He was there in family trials, being the comforting hand to get us through the day. He was there every time we doubted His goodness. God is our Strength and Rock. He only is our Comfort. Don't ever forget that, fellow classmates.

These last four years have been incredible. I sincerely thank each and every one of you, classmates, because you made this an amazing experience. You reflected the love that God has put in your hearts. Your radiant smiles everyday, except maybe during exam week, have lifted many up out of hard days and tough trials. In an hour, we will walk out of this building, turning the next chapter in the story of our lives. We will all be headed out in different directions, but God will guide each one of us. God has been with us as we went through Covenant together, and He will be faithful, even unto the end.



Senior Writing

Senior Classes

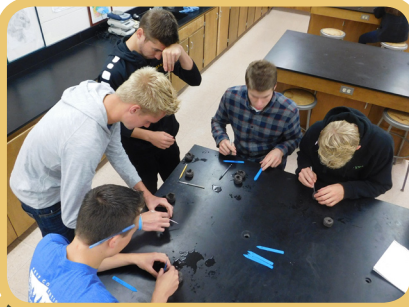


Anatomy



Physics

Advanced Biology



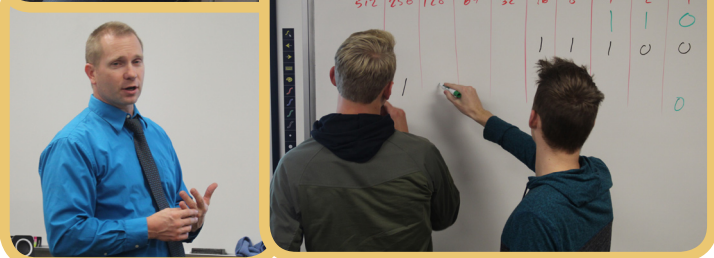
AP English



Pre-Calculus



Functions, Statistics and Trigonometry



# CAREER DAY

This year, Covenant held Career Day on May 3. The day began with an opening address to the student body by Rev. Decker, followed by three breakout sessions where students were able to learn about possible career options, and finally, the day concluded with an inspirational speech by Kevin Van Overloop.



Career Day provides a platform to develop meaningful connections between our students, alumni, and friends. Combined with the career assessment inventories, which the guidance department gives to our students, this day helps give direction to them as they begin to consider future college and career options.





## Senior Class Trip

ACE Adventure Resort was the destination of choice for this year's senior class trip. White water rafting produced an outdoor adventure that will be remembered for years to come.



**FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**  
**Travis Van Bommel**



The 2018-19 Spring seasons came to an end June 3. It was one of the wettest spring seasons that I can remember. Lots of raking, trench digging, and Diamond Dry to get fields ready, and it seemed like it happened every day. Our 2018-19 teams had some success, some wins, some losses, and some challenges. Although Covenant's teams did not "bring home" a district championship this year, our young people did an excellent job of representing our school.

We thank you for your support of our teams this year. We need your support in order to make the athletic program work. Please remember to support and thank our coaches as well. After a full day of work, they go to practices and games to help our student athletes compete. It is a challenging task! If you have an interest in helping our young people in this way, please consider coaching at our schools!

As you read this, I assume that our fall sports teams are either practicing already, or will begin soon. The fall teams will begin practice on August 12, and games begin soon after. Schedules can be found on the Athletic Department Website.

