

THE COURIER

**2023
WINTER**

Published by the Board of
COVENANT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

1401 Ferndale Ave. SW
Grand Rapids MI 49534
616-453-5048
www.covenantchristianhs.org

Board Members

John VanUffelen - President, John De Vries - Vice President
Curt Gritters - Secretary, Joel Holstege - Treasurer
Nate Van Overloop - Vice Secretary, Tim Kaiser - Vice Treasurer
Dan Monsma, Mark Meulenberg, Steve Huizinga



What do you find easy in the area of balancing authority and friendship?

“I enjoy teaching high school because of the opportunities there are to have engaging discussions with the students. Students learn that their thoughts and opinions are valid and respected. In this way, students are able to have a meaningful conversation with the teacher as well as their peers, which in turn can encourage the growth of that student-teacher relationship.” - Miss Alyssa DeVries

“The operation of a Christian school can be compared to the composing and arranging of a beautiful piece of music. The school is a complex unit of many individual voices and instruments that are brought together to perform a task. All of the individual parts must be in tune with each other for this to be accomplished. There must be a foundational agreement, a unity of the individual parts, before there can be relationships that will produce a pleasing harmony.”

- Mr. Rick Noorman (page 2)



FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Rick Noorman



Administrator's Report	Page 2
President's Report	Page 4
Education Committee	Page 5
Exchange Student Notice	Page 5
Finance Committee	Page 7
Building Committee	Page 8
Enrollment Committee	Page 8
Technology Committee	Page 9
Teacher Profile	Page 9
Life with our Students	Page 11
Student Life	Page 13
Welcome to New Staff	Page 14
Athletic Director's Report	Page 16

many wonders of creation, we experience it every day but seldom appreciate it for the marvel that it is. When there is unison of voices or instruments, the sounds produced have identical wavelengths. True unison of two or more voices or instruments can be very beautiful. A good vocal example of this true unison is the centuries old Gregorian chant. Those songs involved all members singing the same note as one voice. There is beauty in the unity of sound.

Most of the music that we hear today is harmony, not unison. Harmony involves combining different pitches that are produced at the same time, to make a sound which is greater than the sum of its parts. This blending of different pitches we commonly call "chords." The complexity of the harmonic scales and beauty of chords can only be achieved when the relationship between notes is based on a foundation of unity in the pitch. For these chords to be pleasant to hear, the voices or instruments must first be in tune with each other.

The operation of a Christian school can be compared to the composing and arranging of a beautiful piece of music. The school is a complex unit of many individual voices and instruments that are brought together to perform a task. All of the individual parts must be in tune with each other for this to be accomplished. There must be a foundational agreement, a unity of the individual parts, before there can be relationships that will produce a pleasing harmony.

**UNITY, HARMONY AND RELATIONSHIPS
IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

While observing a recent rehearsal of our orchestra, I was impressed with the first activity that the students had to do. That activity was the tuning of their instruments. The conductor took the time to make sure that every string of every instrument was producing the same musical pitch as all the others. It took a while as each member heard the tuning note and then adjusted their strings to match the tuning source. The conductor, with a very sharp ear, noticed that the sound still had some unpleasantness about it. One or more strings were not in tune with the group. One by one the instrumentalists played individually until the errant strings were discovered. The adjustments were made and the sound of all of the instruments became the sound of one.

Over the years, I have come to appreciate the few minutes that a band or orchestra takes to make sure that all of the instruments are in tune with each other. If the pitch is off, the entire song carries with it the unpleasant sound of one instrument working against the others. When they are all on the same pitch, there is confident anticipation of what is to come. Having been involved with music for my entire life, I find the science of music and sound waves to be fascinating. The physical foundation of music is a wonderful testimony of the ordinances of creation that God has put in place. Like

It is important for us to give thought to the foundational elements necessary for the existence of our Christian schools. These elements are usually found in a "Basis of Belief" or "Mission Statement" of the school, and would likely contain some foundational principles. The work of the school must be based upon the Word of God, with the view of God as the creator and sustainer of all things. The school must be parental in its establishment. The operations of the school are carried out by a Board that is elected by the parents. The educational program must be centered on teaching the children to keep the way of the Lord, living their lives in His service and to His glory. Teachers must be competent to teach the content of the curriculum but must also be able to fully integrate the Reformed perspective into their teaching and into the life of their classrooms. The life and discipline of the school must be Reformed. Every part of school life must be in tune with the principles of the Reformed faith. Discipline must be carried out consistently with love and with the well-being of all the children being the goal. The agreement of all parties on these matters is the unison aspect of the Christian school. Regular discussion of these matters is the tuning that must be done to keep everyone on the same wavelength.

All of these things are essential and foundational to the existence of the Reformed Christian School. Once the school is set up and organized, with a staff in place, a curriculum to teach and students walking into the building, we move to the

operational phase. This is where all of the diversity in gifts, talents, interests, and personalities come into play, producing the beautiful harmony that is found in the school. From this point on, one of the most important concepts to consider for the success of the school is relationships. Just as every note in a musical chord must relate to the other notes, so every part of the work of the school is relational. This is the operational essence of covenantal education.

At the center of all the relationships is the covenant relationship that God establishes with us. He is our Friend/Sovereign who rules over us and lovingly cares for us. We are His friend/servants who love Him and serve Him in all that we do. He rules in love, perfectly, over every soul that is in the school and every soul at the school is called to carry out their work in loving service to Him and to their neighbor. Evidence that this takes place is observed throughout the building each and every day. No matter what our role is, it is a great blessing to be able to take part in this process.

A very important relationship is the one between the parents and the school. The parents, working through the School Society and the School Board, bring the school into existence and set the basis for its operations. This basis and the subsequent work that occurs must be in tune with Scripture and the Reformed Confessions.

Out of this main relationship will come the relationship between the parents and the teacher. “*In loco parentis*” is the common term used to describe this relationship. The teacher stands in the place of the parent. The authority given to the parent to educate their children is delegated to the teacher and the teacher assumes this responsibility in the setting of the school. When all are in tune, this brings the gifts and talents of all involved to bear upon the education of the children. It is essential that parents support the school in every way possible. They should make the school and the teachers a part of their family devotions and prayers. This is one way that children will see their school as an extension of the home. It is also important that parents support the teachers by making sure that the school work is getting done. Children, by nature, may be prone to settle for mediocrity. It is the combined efforts of the parents and the teachers that can spur them on to do their very best. It is such a privilege for those of us who work in the school to be able to serve parents in this capacity, to know that the parents support this work, and to see the blessings that result as the student matures spiritually and grows in his/her ability to honor and serve God.

Out of “*In loco parentis*” comes the relationship between the teacher and the student. Much could be written about this very special relationship in Christian education. The two most important concepts that must always be remembered are love and respect. Teacher and student must love each other as those who are one in Christ Jesus and loved by Him. And, teacher and student must respect each other. The teacher must be respected for the place God has given him/her and the authority that comes from the parents. The teacher must respect the student as one who has been redeemed by God and gifted with a mind and talents and abilities that must be

developed so that their relationship with God can be deepened. The teacher/student relationship is one that can become very dissonant and unpleasant in the school if all are not in tune with God and with each other. I can testify that there are good teacher/student relationships at CCHS. There is respect shown to the teachers in the classroom. The teachers show a genuine care for the well-being of the students and dedicate themselves to helping them grow in knowledge and in their life. There are good formal interactions that take place in the classrooms and informal interactions in the hallways and during events. A good spirit between teachers and students abounds in the school.

The most difficult relationships in the school to keep in tune are the relationships between students. The obstacles to keeping all of the students tuned to the proper note are many and as varied as the number of students in the school. There are so many different interests, aspirations, maturity levels, and abilities within the student body. There are also a wide variety of influences in their lives. The home life can be different, the friend group can drive the way that kids think, and the events of their lives can have a profound effect on their outlook. All of these things can inhibit the unity that should be exhibited in the school. The true unity of the student body can only be found in the hearts of the students. In the heart, there is only one faith, one hope, and one Lord. On the outside we see many differences, however we can see from I Corinthians 12 how all of these differences can complement each other and contribute to the proper work of the body as a whole. This is the harmonious work that goes on in our schools.

The final relationship that is important is what we call collegiality; the relationship between the teachers. The full staff of teachers must have respect for each other and for the work that they do. They must be in tune with each other and with the overall goals of the school. This is especially important in the development and the teaching of the curriculum. There must be openness to having discussions and to supporting one another. The entire teaching staff must be aware of the impact that each teacher can have on the school as a whole.

Christian education depends upon so many vital interactions to be done properly. As teachers, we pray often that all of the different gifts may be used to benefit the work of the school. We must also remember to pray that all involved can maintain the foundational unity necessary to make our efforts work together in harmony. Just as the orchestra members were poised to play their musical piece, I look forward with confident anticipation to the year 2023 and all that God has in store for us at Covenant Christian High School. Please pray for us as we strive to do our best work in praise to the God who directs all things.

BOARD PRESIDENT
John VanUffelen



I had the privilege to join my wife for her 50-year reunion with the CCHS class of 1972 this past month. It was a time of reflection, reminiscing, and celebration of God's gift of CCHS. Members of the class recalled the original CCHS four classroom high school with no gymnasium and marveled at the growth and changes at CCHS over the past 50 years.

Beyond the physical changes and expansions of the facility, teaching and learning processes have transformed with the advances in information technology of computers and internet. The early classes of CCHS students used pencils and papers, took typing class, and were excited by the invention of calculators; today's students use computers for research, writing, and submitting homework. The world's societal and economic developments have changed educational requirements to prepare students for their vocations. Over the years, God has blessed CCHS with increased enrollment that has enabled CCHS to expand its educational offerings. CCHS and its Board have and must constantly plan for changes, whether they are brought by external societal or economic factors or changes within student body makeup and needs.

On the other hand, not much has changed at all! The mission and purpose initially established for CCHS has not changed. The desire of parents for the faithful covenant Christian education of their children has not changed. The zeal of the teaching and administrative staff to teach and guide students in the fear of the Lord has not changed. The zeal of the Board to provide the facilities, the learning environment, and a qualified teaching staff to support the educational development of our students has not changed.

This is because all that relate to His kingdom and its preservation is changeless, as God is. Malachi 3:6 "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed".

As a Board, we continue to prepare for change. Our focus at this time is on preparations for the most rapid increase in enrollment that CCHS has ever experienced. Enrollment is projected to increase by 22% over the next three years and another 10% in the subsequent three years. The foresight and planning of previous Boards provided a three-phase plan to accommodate this growth. With phase 1 completed and the second phase approved and set to begin, the Board is busy with planning for the final phase. We expect to present the final phase of the project to the Society in 2023. The growth of the student body not only requires expansion of the physical facility, but it also requires additional teaching staff and administration. The Board is presently reviewing its administrative needs and is working toward developing a plan for our administration that will not only meet the needs of our expanding school, but will also prepare us for imminent retirements within our administrative staff.

The founding parents and grandparents would relish the comments of the reminiscing 1972 classmates! "My Christian education at CCHS was priceless;" "Our Christ-centered education prepared us for our pilgrim's journey;" "While at Covenant we met many lifelong friends;" "I often think of the gift the school and teaching staff have given me;" "I'm thankful to have had the privilege of attending there, and grateful it still continues and flourishes;" "Truly our God is good and faithful to us in our generations." We, as the Board of CCHS, prayerfully hope for similar responses from today's students when they gather for their reunions!



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

John De Vries



After the last two years, this year has started out relatively uneventful. This is great news for the Education Committee! We are using this quiet time to plan for changes over the coming years at Covenant Christian. If the school continues to prosper under the guiding hand of our Heavenly Father, we will have a large increase of students over the next few years. We will also be adding a lot of newly finished square footage to our campus. The administration and support staff are already working many hours with the steady increase in students and space. These positions will have to expand over the coming years. Discussion with other schools, our teachers, and the Board have already started so that we are ready for the growth. The school has been blessed with many volunteer hours to help get the plans in place. I look forward to seeing the changes happen.

Over the past 2 ½ years, I have stopped by Covenant many times. This is part of the privilege of being on the Education Committee. You can always stop in and check on how the school is running. The morning of writing this report, I spent time discussing safety with the administrator for a few minutes and discussed the game day activities with our athletic director. Mr. Haveman helped me embarrass my daughter in front of her classmates in PE. This was not rehearsed but it was very good timing for a dad. On the way out, I was able to sneak into the choir room to watch Mr. Gritters masterfully work his craft as the students sang joyfully, preparing for the upcoming Christmas program. I will miss these quick stops into school next year.

A few changes over the past year have brought Mr. Eric Pols and Mr. James Haveman back into the classroom. We are extremely grateful to have these men back in the classroom setting. Mr. David Mahtani has taken over the Guidance Counselor duties and has already met with most of the students. Miss Brittany Bylsma has taken over for Mrs. Ria Faber as the librarian. Miss Lindsey Holstege is filling in very nicely for Mrs. Sarah VanDyke in the academic support room. Mrs. Anne Deemter has taken up Sarah's pianist position for choir. We also have a new face representing Covenant as soon as you walk into school. We have transitioned from a shared front office position into a full-time position with Miss Leah Kuiper filling the role at the front desk. If you have not already, please give her a warm welcome. Mrs. Amy Mol and Leah are both working hard to keep up with the many tasks of running the office.

When you see Mrs. Sue Noorman, Mrs. Vonda Jessup, Mrs. Maria Lotterman or Mrs. Paula Mastbergen, please thank them for their many years of service in the front office and with the many other projects that they helped with throughout the years. Please pray for our teachers as they continue the important task of making sure our children are taught in the fear of God's name each day.

EXCHANGE STUDENT NOTICE

Rick Noorman



Representatives from Protestant Reformed churches who have visited contacts in Mexico, Korea, and India have been asked by families in those countries if their high school aged children could attend Covenant for a time. Our answer has always been that we are not authorized to enroll these students. At the request of several of our churches, Covenant began the process of getting certified to enroll foreign students. After some investigation into the process, our School Board gave their approval to start working toward certification. This was a very lengthy and involved process of gathering documents and information about the school and submitting them to the Department of Homeland Security, who oversees this program through the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). The SEVP is tasked with making sure that schools who accept foreign students are viable institutions that will provide an actual benefit to the students and that the schools will be able to account for the activity of the students. After starting the process last January and making our document submission in March, we had a mandatory site visit by a Homeland Security agent in July. Last month we received notice that our application was finally approved and we are now authorized to issue the necessary document to interested students in foreign countries. Upon receipt of our document, students can then apply for a student visa which will allow them to enter the United States.

Our Board wants to ensure that all students coming to Covenant are from homes that are in agreement with our Reformed beliefs. Before students can apply for government approval, our Board will still require the parents to work through the regular CCHS enrollment process. This includes an interview to ensure that the family is in agreement with our Basis of Belief and Mission Statement. There will also have to be assurances that proper arrangements have been made for tuition, support, and housing with a host family.

This is an exciting opportunity for the young people from other countries who may want to experience life in the United States and in a Christian school. It will also be a good experience for our students to have the opportunity to get to know and learn from students from other countries, to be able to share their faith with those from a different background. It is our hope that the Exchange Student program will be mutually beneficial to all who are involved.



Covenant Christian High School
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
 July 2021 through June 2022

	Jul '21 - Jun 22	Actual	Budget	Over/Under
Income				
Tuition		2,250,670.61	2,462,630.00	-211,959.39
Church Collections		104,891.17	85,000.00	19,891.17
Pledges & gifts		486,041.72	425,000.00	61,041.72
CCHS Foundation Receipts		45,000.00	45,000.00	0.00
Special Education Receipts		162,965.15	144,736.00	18,229.15
Miscellaneous Receipts		3,971.99	4,800.00	-828.01
Interest Income		440.52	0.00	440.52
Total Income		3,053,981.16	3,167,166.00	-113,184.84
Gross Profit		3,053,981.16	3,167,166.00	-113,184.84
Expense				
Teaching & administration		1,605,243.92	1,628,000.00	-22,756.08
Custodial services		62,001.84	62,000.00	1.84
Substitute Teachers		5,179.00	1,500.00	3,679.00
Support Staff		105,325.39	115,700.00	-10,374.61
Office Staff		61,523.61	54,000.00	7,523.61
Athletic Director & Coaches		78,179.23	69,500.00	8,679.23
Covid-19 Payroll		0.00	0.00	0.00
Payroll Taxes		136,790.90	145,000.00	-8,209.10
Payroll taxes - custodial		4,800.00	4,800.00	0.00
Group insurance coverage		330,000.00	330,000.00	0.00
Teachers' Retirement expense		49,448.42	52,000.00	-2,551.58
Workers' compensation insurance		6,020.00	7,000.00	-980.00
Special Ed & Academic Support		138,009.42	107,000.00	31,009.42
Utilities		69,712.20	65,000.00	4,712.20
Water improvements assessment		3,394.08	4,000.00	-605.92
Telephone		5,691.50	6,500.00	-808.50
General insurance		18,862.49	17,500.00	1,362.49
Janitorial supplies		9,690.69	10,000.00	-309.31
Snow removal		5,747.50	6,000.00	-252.50
Trash removal		3,117.26	2,250.00	867.26
Grounds maintenance		18,000.00	18,000.00	0.00
General maintenance		64,000.00	64,000.00	0.00
Major maintenance program		60,000.00	60,000.00	0.00
Building furnishings		6,992.59	5,000.00	1,992.59
Teaching aids & supplies		18,178.58	18,000.00	178.58
Technology operating expense		26,000.00	26,000.00	0.00
Technology fund		32,000.00	32,000.00	0.00
Applied Arts Operating Expenses		13,427.49	20,000.00	-6,572.51
Physical education equipment		857.52	1,000.00	-142.48
Library		4,100.00	4,100.00	0.00
Copier replacement		1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00

Continued Jul '21 - Jun 22	Actual	Budget	Over/Under
Science lab supplies	6,414.61	7,000.00	-585.39
Equipment repair & replacement	237.12	3,000.00	-2,762.88
Teachers' development	3,211.27	18,000.00	-14,788.73
Music	6,124.15	6,800.00	-675.85
Band instruments	2,405.34	3,500.00	-1,094.66
Transportation expenses	539.28	2,000.00	-1,460.72
Office supplies	6,652.70	6,500.00	152.70
Equipment service contracts	15,436.95	11,000.00	4,436.95
Publicity & printing cost	1,363.06	3,000.00	-1,636.94
Postage	3,494.05	3,000.00	494.05
Federation dues	8,137.94	10,600.00	-2,462.06
Graduation expenses	3,828.33	4,000.00	-171.67
Accounting fees	12,750.00	12,000.00	750.00
Miscellaneous expenses	16,842.33	6,000.00	10,842.33
Property Acquisition	44,000.00	44,000.00	0.00
Debt obligations - facilities	0.00	0.00	0.00
Future Building Expansion	105,000.00	105,000.00	0.00
Rental property - heating	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rental property - electric	60.13	0.00	60.13
Rental expense - insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rental property - property tax	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expense	3,180,290.89	3,182,750.00	-2,459.11
Net Income	-126,309.73	-15,584.00	-110,725.73



Being stewards of what God has given us is a prayer that we make at every committee meeting. God has given us much and much is required. As parents at home we have to make considerations of how to spend the income we receive and here at Covenant we do the same. Pray for us as a committee and a Board as we continue to manage the finances of the school. With humble hearts and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father we have a budget of over \$3,000,000. This means that as parents we spend a lot of money investing in our children—an investment that is physical, mental, and spiritual.

The Finance Committee asks for help from all involved. We ask that the parents keep up on their monthly payments to ensure that funds are available for the operations of the school. At the end of November, families should have close to 40% of their tuition balance paid. If you are having trouble staying current with your tuition, please make contact with the committee. It's also very important that families stay current with their tuition to avoid falling too far behind. We also ask for all those who are able, to

prayerfully consider giving towards the Support Drive. You should have recently received a letter regarding this drive. The purpose of the drive is to be a supplemental source of revenue for the school in order to keep the costs down for all tuition paying families. This, along with the ongoing Capital Campaign Drive, is a great opportunity to be a part of the covenant community. Please keep CCHS in mind when considering your giving as we near the end of the year.

Included above is the financial report for the latest fiscal school year (July '21 – June '22). This report shows the difference between the actual income and expenses versus the budgeted amounts that were passed by the society back in the spring of 2021. The year was an unusual one with enrollment being much lower than expected when passed. This explains the reason that we ended up with a deficit of \$110,000. We can be thankful for the surplus of prior years as well as the church collections and drive contributions that enabled us to continue as planned. We thank you and our Heavenly Father for continued covenant support.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Nate VanOverloop



Psalm 136:1 “O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever.” As I write this after Thanksgiving, I am reminded to give thanks always. Our churches and schools have been through a lot, yet His mercy endureth for ever. I want to thank my fellow Building Committee members—Mr. Steve Huizenga, Mr. Mark Meulenburg, and Mr. Dan Monsma—for all of the work they do on the committee. We have a lot to be thankful for at Covenant Christian High School. Our feeder schools are growing and we are preparing for this. As we look forward to more students in the halls, we need to expand the building so we can provide for the wonderful increase God has given us.

A few years ago, the Board put together a three phase project to prepare for this growth. The first phase, the Sports Complex, is now complete. We thank all those who have worked on this and those who maintain it. The Ad Hoc Committee then advised that we move to phase 3 before phase 2 because of our need for additional classrooms in the next school year. The Board agreed and the society has approved the four classroom addition. Work has begun on this addition; the bad soil has been removed and we are now waiting on some permits from the DEQ and the city.

The Ad Hoc Committee is now working on the final phase of the three phase project. The School Board, with the advice of the committee, has hired GDK Construction as the General Contractor for this project. GDK has experience with Christian schools and organizations. They know how to keep our students and staff safe in school and in the parking lot during a large construction project. GDK has begun to work with the Ad Hoc Committee and architect, Neale Bauman, to get blueprints so we can estimate the cost of this project. We plan to present the project with drawings and cost to the Society this spring. If it is approved the Capital Campaign will begin in earnest for this phase so that construction can be started as soon as possible. We thank you for all your prayers and support.



ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Curt Gritters



In support of another year of Covenant education, the Enrollment Committee met this summer with the 34 families requesting enrollment for their first child at Covenant. We continue this healthy practice to ensure new families agree with our mission statement, basis of belief, and admission policy.

Prior to meeting, families complete several enrollment application forms. These forms can be found online this year, thanks to notable efforts by Mrs. Mol and the office. In addition to saving reams of paper and rolls of stamps, it improved the speed of communication and reduced data-entry efforts at Covenant. Thank you for your patience with this new process, and we look forward to streamlining it more in the future.

The Board thanks returning families for their continued support of Covenant and extends a warm welcome to the following new families:

- Brian and Debbie Baldwin (Levi)
- Alex and Jeanine Bomers (Caleb)
- Brad and Kelly Butler (Kenton)
- Eric and Tonya Doezeema (Alivia)
- Drew and Lori Duthler (Sam)
- Nick and Lauren Dykstra (Madison)
- Keith and Holly Feenstra (Cody)
- John and Tara Flikkema (Lauren)
- Eric and Alicia Gritters (Camden)
- George and Cathy Kamps (Everett)
- Joseph and Valerie Kamps (Anna)
- Justin and Teresa Kamps (Logan)
- Mike and Lindsay Kerkstra (Landon, Nathan)
- Tim and Betsy Kleyn (Julia)
- Justin and Cathie Koole (Landon)
- Tim and Hannah Kortering (Drew)
- Andy and Kim Kuiper (Mara)
- Rev. Jon and Keri Mahtani (Levi)
- Chad and Katie Mingerink (Colten)
- Kurt and Ciri Mingerink (Kaden)
- Rick and Carmen Mingerink (Hailey)
- Crystal Mol (Sabrina, Jacob, Krystina)
- Brittany Nead (Ally)
- Scott and Jeanine Schuiteman (Josh)
- Phil and Paula Steenwyk (L.J.)
- Steve and Denise Uittenbogaard (Alaina)
- Mike and Monica VanderKolk (James)
- Mark and Michelle VanderSloot (Abigail)
- Brad and Cheri VanderVeen (Sidney)
- Justin and Nicole Visser (Megan)
- Eric and LeAnne Westra (Isaac)
- Dave and Jennie Zandstra (Troy)
- Mitch and Jen Zuverink (Avery)
- Ross and Rhonda Zuverink (Levi)

TECH COMMITTEE

Mark Meulenberg



Maintaining and promoting technology at CCHS is a privilege and a challenge. This tool is a wonderful gift but must be guarded carefully to be used in a wise way. The story of Tubal-cain in Genesis 4:22 comes to mind. He was an evil man, with a mastery in brass and iron. Through his advances, he aided the world in making it ripe for God's judgement. We need to be wise at CCHS in understanding the danger of technology. We also need to be wise in understanding that technology is a tool in the hand of our Creator, and that like brass and iron, it can be used to glorify our Father.

One of the ways the Technology Committee implements safeguards is through GoGuardian. This software allows us to track all usage of all activity on the Chromebooks and has special guidelines on items to flag and block.

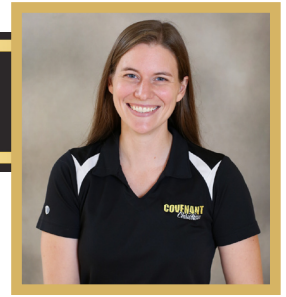
Since the last technology update, many upgrades have occurred at CCHS. One large upgrade is the addition of a 100 Mb fiber line to our 35 Mb cable. This move not only ensured a blazing fast tech experience for our teachers and office staff, but also provides redundancy if one line goes down.

Chromebooks are a big deal at Covenant. Every year we replace two carts with 30 Chromebooks each. Because this is now a yearly thing, this cost was moved to the operating budget. Another yearly cost is the replacement of five teacher computers. The Committee sees the importance of having a replacement schedule for all assets so that we are not confronted with surprises to our yearly budget. The last big-ticket item to our yearly operating cost is the ongoing service and support from Information Technology Systems (ITS). They have been doing admirable work since 2017. Last-but-not-least, we also collect money for needed periodic upgrades to the media lab, servers and Wi-Fi network.

Thanks are in order to the following members of the Technology Committee: to Mr. Rick DeVries and Mr. Matt Elzinga who have been helping for years, to Miss Brittany Bylsma who is taking the baton from Mrs. Faber and we give a special thank you to Mrs. Ria Faber for her many years of work on this committee and wish her well in her retirement.

TEACHER PROFILE

Briana Prins



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your background at Covenant?

I was born and raised in Hudsonville, Michigan. After graduating from Covenant, I got my bachelor's degree in education at Grand Valley State University. I also studied at the University of Limerick in the Republic of Ireland, and now assist the British Reformed Fellowship with booking for their summer conferences. Outside of work and traveling to visit family in Ireland, I love to hike and am an avid rock climber. I also read everything I can get my hands on, write as often as time allows, and listen to far too many podcasts. I've been teaching at Covenant for around eight years. I began working in the Academic Support room while I was getting my degree. Aside from breaks to study in Ireland and to complete student teaching, I continued here until I graduated from Grand Valley in 2014. I was then hired by CCHS to teach full-time. Currently, I teach Geometry, Algebra Concepts and Skills, and English 9.

Math and English are an unusual combination. What draws you to these subjects?

Even though math and English seem to be opposite from each other, they have a lot in common. At its core, algebra functions similarly to a language. We use numbers, variables, operations, and formulas to record the world around us in a beautiful shorthand language. Math requires understanding how to translate what a problem or expression says in that shorthand. We also need to be able to read what a formula directs us to do in order to apply the concepts we learn. Only after understanding the language can we dive deep into the logic, patterns, and order that math studies.

But English is a lot like math. Reading and writing require logic and structure as well. We work on ordering thoughts and evaluating our reasoning. We use structures and formulas to clarify and organize our writing. We even apply the logical fallacies addressed in geometry in our study of persuasion and argumentation. English is a creative application of mathematics' pure logic, while math utilizes a simplified language to further study that logic. The two depend on patterns, organization, and reading comprehension, even if they approach them from opposite directions.

I love teaching both English and math. Math is far more consistent and ordered. It's easier to track progress and growth, and it's amazing to see students advance.

Watching the light bulbs go off as students grasp a new concept, or seeing them reduce a complex equation down to a simple answer, is so satisfying. The steps are clear and ordered in a beautiful testimony of God's consistency. English, too, is wonderful to teach. There's a far more open structure so that we can try different things when the daily routine starts to feel dull, and there are so many opportunities to see each student's unique personality come out in their answers. We get to challenge arguments, see new perspectives, and share thoughts. Both subjects provide different insights and challenges. I'm thankful that I get to see students in both environments and that I can learn and grow with them as well.

What is your philosophy of education?

Teachers are here to help prepare students for their callings in life. This is a daunting task. We have to equip them with the skills necessary to do any type of job, to handle daily life, and to be a part of the body of Christ not only in action but also in spirit. At times, students and even adults wonder how learning a formula or reading a text from some dead guy actually prepares them for anything. I understand that; I was one of those students. However, the more I learned, the more I saw how God works through education and how I can use it to help students prepare for life.

We do read a lot of texts from dead authors, however, even if students eventually forget who Poe is or never read poetry again, they grow their reading comprehension through these diverse styles of literature. This is essential as we read Scripture, and also as we hear speeches or watch videos and read material for work, entertainment, or to stay connected to world events.

Additionally, my students practice identifying main ideas, evaluating points of view, and spotting logical fallacies, which are all skills needed to be discerning readers. That's especially important in a world of misleading, misguided, and false information. Moreover, students see new perspectives through listening to stories, articles, speeches, and poetry from all different places, times, and experiences. Through that, they can better understand the world around them and expand or refine their own perspectives. They can learn to ask challenging questions and explore lives and views that they would not otherwise see. Even if students forget a story, they remember the practice of good thinking, careful evaluation, and hopefully, even empathy.

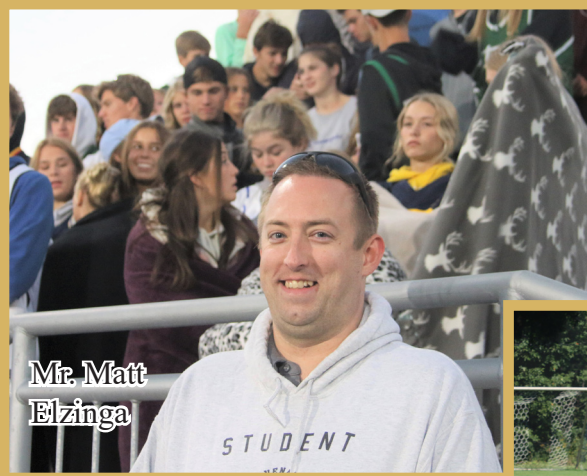
Teaching math is just as vital. It's not about ensuring every person can work their way through the quadratic formula. Yes, that's sometimes useful. However, even if a student does not remember the formula, they will have benefited from practicing it. When learning math, we

learn the process of logical thinking. We practice breaking down problems that are too big for us to tackle all at once. We learn to look for useful tools and patterns that might help us when we're stuck. We increase visual-spatial awareness. Things like writing proofs or showing work challenge us to order our thoughts, determine whether we are correct or only making assumptions, and also justify conclusions we make to others. Math pushes us to be accurate, to be patient, and to be logical. All of these are useful in life, even if someone never picks up another calculator.

Regardless of the subject, the calling to teach includes seeing the handiwork of God. We witness the revelation of His consistency, order, and complexity in math. We take time to explore and express His truth in language. We are humbled at the beauty of His written Word, as well as His perfectly designed Creation. We look to God in all we do, and hope to establish that pattern of thinking in the lives of each student God places in our classroom.

I can't predict what God has in store for students, but if they can face challenges with an ability to see other points of view, and break down complex issues into simpler, logical steps, they will be well-prepared. Most importantly, if they know to always look to God, He will guide them through it all. That is the goal in teaching. It is a great calling, both rewarding and terrifying. Thankfully, I do not do it alone. Each parent and every teacher does their part. And even though I might fall short in educating, I hope that each lesson brings students a little closer to where they need to be.

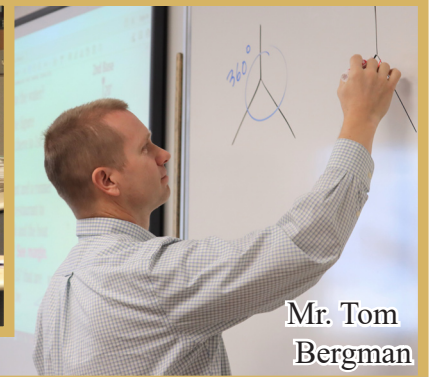




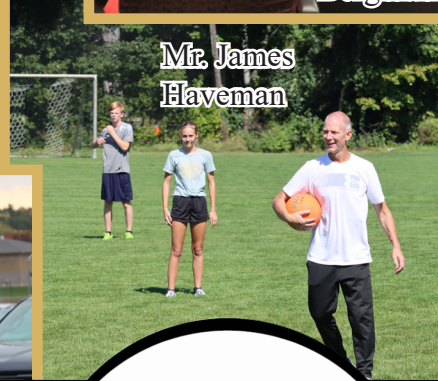
Mr. Matt Elzinga



Mrs. Mindy Bergman



Mr. Tom Bergman



Mr. James Haveman

Mr. Karl Dykstra



Mr. Rick Noorman



Meet the Faculty and Staff



Mr. Rick DeVries



Mrs. Jori Yeong



Mr. Dan VanUffelen



Miss Brittany Bylsma



Mrs. Anne Deemter



Mrs. Amy Mol



Mr. Joel Noorman



Mr. Eric Gritters

Mr. Scott VanUffelen



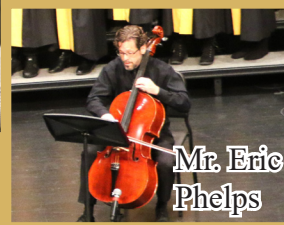
Miss Kristen Pawloski



Mrs. Ella Meulenberg



Mr. Jon Engelsma



Mr. Eric Phelps



Mr. Jon VanOverloop



Miss Alyssa DeVries



Mr. Eric Gritters

What do you find easy in balancing authority with friendship?
"It's easy to love the students at Covenant. They can be frustrating without a doubt, but they also are incredible. I get to see so many different instances of kindness, of brilliance, of joy, and of faith. Their personalities are all unique, but great in their own way. I hope that they can see that. Love is necessary to be an authority figure, and it's necessary to being approachable. And they make that love easy." - Miss Briana Prins

School Days

What do you find easy in balancing authority with friendship?

"When a student comes to me in a crisis, I genuinely want to help them. I was in high school once. I know the struggles they are going through. I know now what I didn't know then and I am excited to give them advice that could actually change their life for the better. I certainly had life-changing advice from teachers when I was in high school, so the thought of being able to do that for a student gives me a sense of purpose in that area of the job."

- Mrs. Ella Meulenberg



Miss Mary Schimmel



Miss Trisha Haak



Mr. Matt Elzinga

Mr. Dan Kuiper

Mr. Kyle Bruinooge



Mr. Jon VanDyke



Mr. Brantley VanOverloop



Miss Briana Prins



Mr. Ethan Mingerink



Mr. Travis VanBommel

Mr. Joel Minderhoud



Mr. Jared Noorman

Explain the importance (to you) of being more than "just a teacher" in the students eyes?
"Taking one or two minutes at the beginning of a class is a great way to connect with the students and discuss what things are going on in their life, and mine as well. It gets kids who don't usually take part in discussions to share, and it shows the students that I am not just a robot at the front of the room." - Mr. Jared Noorman

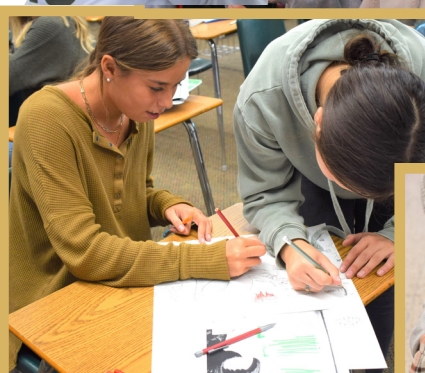
What struggle do you face with balancing authority with friendship?

“The struggle comes with the desire to want your students to “like you” and yet keeping them on task in the classroom. Often times keeping them accountable with rules or keeping the classroom managed means they won’t like what you say. It’s important to realize that these rules make for a calm and safe classroom which makes it a better environment for students to learn. At the end of the day, being a teacher means fostering a learning attitude in students and helping them flourish academically, socially, and spiritually. If they don’t like that, they may not like you at that moment.

It’s also difficult to not see authority and friend as two very different things, like one is black and one is white. I do think that you have to have both to make a good classroom. Hopefully, as students mature they will come to see the importance of authority and structure in the classroom.” - Miss Macy Schimmel



Student Life



How do you balance being an authority figure and a friend (or someone the students can come to)?
“Be genuine. Be honest. Be kind. Be humble. Be gracious when possible, yet firm when necessary.” - Mr. Ethan Mingerink



Welcome New Faculty and Staff



Mr. Eric Phelps holds degrees in Cello Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (Bachelors of Music), University of Colorado at Boulder (Masters of Music) and the Mannes College of Music (Post-Graduate Diploma).

He is the conductor of an after-school orchestra called the Protestant Reformed Student Orchestra (PRSO) which was formed in 2012. The 2022-2023 school year marks the first year that Orchestra is being offered as a class for our high school students.

Mr. Phelps and his wife, Crista (Slopsema), have 6 children and are members of First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids.



Mrs. Anne Deemter serves as the piano accompanist to all three CCHS choirs; Cantate, Concert Chorale, and the Chamber Singers. Mrs. Deemter has accompanied many church services, choirs, and taught piano lessons. More recently, she has been teaching second grade music at Heritage Christian School.

She is married to Kent and they have five children (Ethan, Luke, Josie, Isaac, and Andrew). Mrs. Deemter and her family live in Hudsonville and attend Faith Protestant Reformed Church.



Miss Leah Kuiper is a graduate of Adams Christian School and Covenant Christian High School. After graduating in 2017, she attended Baker College earning an Associates of Applied Science degree and a Physical Therapy Assistant license. She worked for Progressive Physical Therapy and for Grand Rapids Public Schools before accepting a job at CCHS. She is excited to apply her skills in different ways as she takes on a new career path as the Office Assistant.

Miss Kuiper enjoys keeping busy, traveling, running, snowboarding, and babysitting her nephews. You may even see her at Mr. Burger (Wyoming) where she occasionally works an evening or a weekend shift. Miss Kuiper lives in Wyoming and attends Southeast Protestant Reformed Church.



Mr. David Mahtani graduated from Grove City College in Pennsylvania with a B.A. in Christian Thought. He later became certified in Elementary Education through studies at Western Governors University.

He has lived in many areas, including Grand Rapids, the Chicago area, Pittsburgh, Houston, and even Singapore. Mr. Mahtani has taught at Adams Christian, Eastside Christian, and Cornerstone Christian before accepting the Guidance Counselor position here at Covenant Christian High School. Previously, he has been a teacher, painter, seminary student, and principal.

His wife, Madri, is from South Africa and runs a cookie-decorating business from home. Three of their four children go to Adams Christian School-Myra (6th), Selah (5th), Zephaniah (3rd), and their youngest, Asher, goes to Eastside Christian Pre-School. As a family they attend First Protestant Reformed Church.



Miss Lindsey Holstege grew up in Jenison, MI. She attended Heritage Christian School and graduated from Covenant in 2020. After high school, she worked full time at Kooistra Chiropractic for two years. She is happy to be back in the school environment as an assistant in the academic support room, helping students succeed in their schoolwork.

Outside of school, she enjoys coaching the freshman volleyball team and being active with family and friends. Miss Holstege attends Faith Protestant Reformed Church, and enjoys being involved with church and school activities.



Mr. Eric Pols is in his second tour at Covenant. He graduated from Heritage Christian and Covenant Christian High School before attending Calvin University. After graduating from Calvin University in 2007, he taught at Heritage Christian for four years. He started his first tour at Covenant in 2011 and taught in the math department. He completed his M.Ed. from Calvin University in Education Leadership while teaching at Covenant.

In 2015, Mr. Pols and his family moved to Yucaipa, California, to teach at Hope Christian School in Redlands, California. Teaching in a multi-grade classroom and working on the development of a high school curriculum were highlights of his work. His family enjoyed many sightseeing journeys in their three years in southern California.

From 2018 to 2022, he was employed as a grower at Brower Greenhouses and a farmhand at J & J Farms in Hudsonville, Michigan. Mr. Pols felt God's call to return to the profession of teaching, and we welcome him and his family back! Eric is currently teaching Geometry, Algebra II, and World History. He and his wife, Katherine, along with their four children, attend Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church.

FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
Travis Van Bemmel



Covenant Christian Athletics plays a very important role in the life of the student body and in the school community here at Covenant. We need only go back 3 short years to be reminded of the loss of an entire spring season. For the 2020-21 season games were played but with very limited fan attendance. Now we are back at full strength with teams competing and fans in the stands. As we look back, we can understand a little more about how our Athletic Program benefits our students, and some of the things that we missed in those years.

The athletic programs at Covenant provide many opportunities for our students to participate and compete. They not only develop skills for the sports that they play, but they also develop friendships that will last a lifetime. Those who do not participate on a team have the opportunity to support their friends and classmates from the bleachers. Many of our students look forward to Friday night basketball at Covenant Arena, or soccer, baseball, track, and softball

at the new Athletic Complex. Some of our students stand along the running trails in various parks throughout West Michigan, cheering on their friends who run cross country. These events are an opportunity for our students to come together as a body. It is good to see our students come together to support and encourage one another at these events. Our athletes and students publically represent the school, the school community, and the Kingdom of God. Therefore, they bear a weighty responsibility.

With that responsibility in mind, let us remember the words of our Savior in Matthew 5:14, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

We look forward to seeing you at our events this year! Thank you for your support! **WE ARE THE CHARGERS!!**

