

## Educational Program Report to the CCS Society Winter 2017



### New CCS Staff Members

The impact of quality teachers on quality learning is well documented. CCS is blessed with an outstanding K-12 teaching staff. The following teachers joined us for the 2015-16 school year:

- **CCS Edina Campus**
  - Ms. Lori Voxland teaches 1st grade, returning to the classroom full-time after several years of subbing while raising her children. Previously she taught 6th grade in the Anoka-Hennepin school district for 12 years. She earned her undergrad degree in elementary education from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and a masters of education through St. Mary's University.
- **CCS Blaine Campus**
  - Mr. Tim Van Boekel has 6th graders as his homeroom class and teaches middle school language arts. He is a 2015 University of Northwestern-St. Paul graduate with double majors in elementary education and Bible, and middle school Communication, Arts, and Literature Endorsement.
  - Ms. Stephanie Christiansen teaches kindergarten. Previously she was site director and lead teacher for Lake Area Discovery Center at the CCS-Edina campus. She is a University of Northwestern, St. Paul, graduate with a master's in organizational leadership and undergrad training in elementary and pre-primary education.
  - Ms. Emily Wirth directs our 6<sup>th</sup> grade and middle school choirs. Ms. Wirth previously taught elementary music at our Edina campus during the 2006/2007 school year. Ms. Wirth is also the Director of Worship at Faith Baptist Church. She earned her undergrad degree in music education at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN.
- **Calvin Christian High School**
  - Mr. Alexander Tien leads a high school advisory and teaches high school history and English, along with middle school geography. He graduated from Trinity Christian College, in Palos Heights, Ill., with a degree in secondary history education and a minor in special education, then taught for one year at Lansing Christian School in Illinois before coming to Calvin Christian.
  - Mr. Jonathan Posthuma was hired to teach CCHS Band & Choir and also leads our Praise Team. He received his undergraduate degree in Secondary Music Education from Dordt College and a Masters of Music Degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 2015. In addition to teaching, Jonathan is also a musician and composer.
  - Along with her high school advisory responsibilities, Ms. Kelsey Wieberdink teaches 6th grade math, 8th-9th geometry, 12th grade language arts, and international student literacy. She attended Belhaven University in Jackson, Miss., earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a reading concentration and a math endorsement. Before coming to Calvin Christian, she taught at Victory Christian Academy in Hibbing, Minn., for two years.
  - Ms. Emma Theis is a 2014 graduate of Bethel University where she earned a B.A. in Journalism. In addition to teaching Journalism and Yearbook, Miss Theis has been job-sharing with Mrs. DeVries in the CCHS office.

## **CCS seeks Christian Schools International Accreditation**

- **CCS School Improvement Team:** Since Spring of 2016, the CCS School Improvement Team (SIT) has been working with our CSI Accreditation Regional Coordinator to complete our work on “Measuring the Mission”--the CSI process for schools seeking CSI accreditation. Members of Calvin’s SIT are as follows: principals Steve Groen, Jack Shields, and Wendell Schaap; teachers Paul Clemens, Amy Teunissen, and Holly Radke; and parents Linda Marcus and Sue Vande Kamp.
- **School Profile and Self Study:** Teams made up of administrators, teachers, Board members and parents work to gather information about CCS for the School Profile and evaluate CCS programs and practices for the Self Study. Teams for the self-study evaluate CCS in four areas:
  - Strand 1: Leading with Purpose
  - Strand 2: Teaching for Learning
  - Strand 3: Leading for Learning
  - Strand 4: Learning in Community
- **School Improvement Plan (SIP):** Based on the results of the Self Study, the School Improvement Team creates the SIP, which outlines six goals with measurable objectives and strategies to be completed in the next five years.
- **Site Visit:** On April 10-12 a Site Visit Team, led by Glenn Vos (former superintendent at Holland Christian School in Michigan), will spend three days visiting CCS campuses, meeting with parents, teachers, administration, and students. Their observations and recommendations will be communicated to CCS and a recommendation for accreditation given. The purpose for their visit is as follows:
  - validate the School Profile and Self Study;
  - review the School Improvement Plan and make recommendations;
  - complete a written report for Christian Schools International.

## **Education Committee**

- **Curriculum Review:** A curriculum review process and timeline for on-going reviews was one focus area for this committee during 2016-17. A more in-depth review process is in place, and CCS leadership will be using in-service days in 2017-18 to help teachers learn how to lead curriculum review in ways that develops teachers and strengthens curriculum and teaching practices from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Each CCS teacher will be involved in one of the following curriculum review teams in 2017-18: language arts, science, math, technology
- **Policy Governance:** Another focus area for the committee was shifting its functioning from a working committee to a policy committee to align with new board policy governance. The committee completed the Education Policy statements for our Board Policy Manual. As we provide interpretation to the policies, they will guide our practices, measurements and accountability for our educational program.

## **Teaching for Transformation**

Year 3 of our Teaching for Transformation implementation is the most important year in terms of solidifying TFI as an ongoing Calvin Christian School practice, establishing it in a system that allows it to

thrive. It involved moving our learning from Early Adopters (Year 1) to Full Teacher In-service Training (Year 2) to Living out the practices of TfT in **Professional Learning Communities**.

- Our aim for Teaching for Transformation at CCS continues to be to help our community see God's story and live God's story.
- **TfT Staff Meetings**, led by our TfT Lead Teachers at each campus, are held on a monthly basis. These meetings are meant to be collaborative work times. Commit to Try's (C2T) and sharing those efforts are key to the momentum and accountability that helps sustain the TfT process and development.
- Our **Teacher In-service** days have been focused on developing Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), so that TfT and professional development could join hands, so to speak, and begin to live consistently at the level of teacher leadership and collaboration.
- **TfT Lead Teacher peer coaching**: Our lead teachers continue to play a key role in leading TfT change and professional development at CCS and their respective campuses. They continue to meet with teachers on a regular basis and lead our monthly TfT staff meetings. The rhythm they are establishing is one of Commit to Try--Share--Celebrate, a rhythm that is also finding its place into our PLC structure.

### **Staff Development**

**Living Curriculum:** This professional development tool will help CCS store and facilitate professional development. Our aims in using this tool are to be more consistent and timely with teacher feedback, as well as teacher goal-setting. In addition, the format encourages accountability for plan follow-through.

### **Community Partnerships**

CCS K-12 continues to desire community connections and partnerships that enhance authentic and relevant Christian teaching and learning. The list below offers examples of those valuable connections:

- CCHS again in 2016-17 is providing **Post-secondary Education Options** (college credits) by teaching University of Northwestern St. Paul college courses at the high school level. James Vande Glind teaches Concepts of Biology (4 credits) to 11th grade and Environmental Science (4 credits) to 12th grade. Wendell Schaap teaches Introduction to Literature (4 credits) to 11th grade. In addition, Paul Clemens teaches AP Calculus.
- High School students complete semester-long projects that include an **experiential learning** component. In the fall of 2016, 11th and 12th grade students were engaged in projects with the following community partners: Bridging, Stepping Stones Free Bikes for Kids, Hidden Treasures Thrift Store, Springbrook Nature Center, and Pregnancy Care Center. 9th and 10th grade students were engaged in **service-learning** at the following community partners: Northport Elementary School, Lynwood Care Center, Innsbruck Care Center, The Dwelling Place, The Alexandra House, Habitat Restore, Stepping Stone, Hope for the Community, and Urban Homeworks.
- The **Lake Area Discovery Center** (preschool) at CCS Edina has had an increase in enrollment from their first year. Partnered events and shared teachers are important aspects of this partnership.