

STATEMENT OF REFORMED EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In partnership with Christian homes and churches, Grandville Calvin Christian Schools (GCCS) guide God's children into **responsible Christian discipleship**. This means we want to **enable our students to know God** as revealed in creation and His Word, the Bible. We also want our students to become aware of God's presence in their lives and the world.

Grandville Calvin Christian Schools **enable students to know themselves as unique image-bearers of God with unique gifts and abilities**. Through a well-rounded educational program and capable staff, we lead students to **unwrap their God-given gifts**. We help every child and young person develop his/her spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional, and social abilities to their fullest extent possible.

Grandville Calvin Christian School's curriculum **helps students grasp the full impact of humankind's fall into sin**—on people, on society and culture, and on the natural world—and the need for redemption and restoration. Accordingly, **we challenge students to use their talents and knowledge to become actively involved in service as God's agents in restoring all things to the way God intended them to be**.

Grandville Calvin Christian Schools help students recognize that all that they have and all that they are comes from God. He is the source of all things. Accordingly, **our schools want students to become faithful stewards**—persons who gratefully and tenderly care for and fully develop themselves, each other, and God's world.

We teach our students to **appreciate the diversity of God's people and cultures** and to recognize the contributions of the many ethnic groups that make up Christ's body.

In summary, Grandville Calvin Christian Schools train students to become disciples of Jesus Christ who both know and do—who hear God's call and respond, who come to know God and accept Him as their Savior and Lord. Through the education we provide, our students will develop the skills and desire to be life-long learners.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Christian education rests solidly on important biblical foundations or principles, each of which has profound educational implications.

*FOUNDATION #1: **God reveals himself to us.***

God reveals himself through His Word—both the written Word (Bible) and the incarnate Word (Jesus)—through creation, and through His continuing activity in history and among people.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF #1:

- The curriculum in a Christian school must include:

- ~ Biblical studies as well as studies of Christian and non-Christian responses to God's revelation.
 - ~ Studies of God's creation which stress its beauty and intricacy, the laws which govern it, humankind's use and response to creation, and the Christian's responsibility to preserve and protect God's handiwork.
 - ~ Studies of how God reveals Himself in the social, intellectual, political, and artistic history of people, including their accomplishments and failures.
- In each course, teachers emphasize that these studies are fundamentally studies of God's revelation.

FOUNDATION #2: *Humans are created in the image of God.*

As image-bearers of God, humans are rational, emotional, and moral creatures capable of perceiving truth, making choices, and exercising creativity. In addition, as image-bearers of God, humans are to be treated with respect and dignity. As human beings mature, they grow in their ability to perceive truth and make choices based on it.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS of #2:

- The Christian school curriculum is designed to enable each student to reach his/her maximum potential as an image-bearer of God.
- ~ The school promotes intellectual growth, helping students to master facts and grow in the ability to understand, analyze, synthesize, find information for themselves, and make responsible judgments.
 - ~ The school assists students in learning to manage their emotional life, teaching them to respond appropriately to events, people, and things.
 - ~ The school cultivates students' abilities to make responsible choices.
 - ~ The school instills in students a respect for their own bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. As such, students learn to keep their bodies physically and mentally fit.
 - ~ The school impresses upon students the need to respond to God out of gratitude for how He has made them and what He has done for them.
- Students in a Christian school learn to respect others as God's image-bearers.
 - The school's curriculum and environment demonstrate an appreciation for cultural diversity and the contributions of a variety of ethnic groups to history and culture.
 - The school respects the learning style and abilities of all students, assisting each one to develop his/her full potential.
 - An atmosphere of mutual respect and concern exists in the school among students and staff.
 - The Christian school is a community of caring where students and staff share joys and burdens and where they feel support and encouragement.

FOUNDATION #3: *Christianity impacts all of life and learning.*

Because religion penetrates all aspects of life, including education, Christian schools help students see and understand all of life through the eyes of God's Word.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS of #3:

- Christian schools help students learn that studying/learning is a religious response to God. No part of life is secular
- A biblical perspective is included in all courses.
- Teachers convey and model a world and life view which holds that all of one's life is a response to God, that all of one's life is religious.

FOUNDATION #4: *Sin has distorted God's creation and society.*

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS of #4:

- Teachers lead students to see the pervasiveness of sin throughout history on humans, culture, and all human institutions.
- Students learn how sin has distorted the peace, justice, and equality that God intended in his perfect creation.
- Students learn the impact of sin on their own lives and their need for salvation.
- Teachers help students learn to avoid sin and make responsible choices as children of God.

FOUNDATION #5: *Christ died to redeem all of creation—i.e. people, relationships, culture, etc.-- from sin and makes salvation possible for those who believe in him.*

Christ's redemptive work has enabled those who believe on him to experience new life. As new creatures in Christ, redeemed believers become God's agents for restoring the fallen natural world as well as human institutions and cultural activities, bringing harmony where sin brought disharmony.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS of #5:

- Teachers and coursework foster in students a realization that in Jesus Christ harmony replaces disharmony in human relationships to God, to others, and to the world, and to one's self.
- Teachers, through their teaching and modeling, lead students to a personal and ever growing commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Every course and activity in a Christian school is Christ-centered because in Christ all things have meaning and purpose.
- Teachers guide students to an understanding that in Christ all human activities and professions rise above the level of toil or duty to thankful service.
- Teachers encourage students to be life-long disciples of Jesus' love and healing.
- The Christian school encourages students to seek God's redeeming grace to flow through them into all their relationships.

FOUNDATION #6: *All of life should be a loving, grateful response for redeemed people.*

As new creatures in Christ, redeemed people live transformed lives that focus on gratefully living for the Master. Redeemed people fulfill God's commands to make stewardly use of all God's gifts, to share the good news of salvation, and to live lives of service.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS of #6:

- Teachers help students learn that their studies constitute a loving response to God.
- Students learn to respect God's created world and to cautiously care for and manage it, maintaining its beauty and working toward sustainable development that does not deplete natural resources.
- The Christian school helps students discover and unwrap their God-given gifts so they can use those gifts to serve God and others.
- Teachers enable students to understand that every aspect of a person's life should reflect a redeemed person's desire to serve and glorify God—in motivation, thoughts, speech, and actions.
- The Christian school teaches the importance of Christian service to God and others and provides opportunities for students to serve.
- Because every part of a person's being should be involved in grateful response to God, Christian schools address every aspect of a student's needs—spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional—and in a way that respects their level of development.
- The Christian school equips students to become builders of God's kingdom on earth and encourages them to use their talents in that kingdom-building role.

FOUNDATION #7: *The concept of the covenant.*

God embraces his children in a covenant relationship. As part of that two-pronged covenant, God promises salvation and his blessing, and parents who believe in Jesus Christ promise to nurture their children in the Christian faith and in godliness. When Christian parents present their children to God in Christ's church, the Christian community promises to support Christian parents in that covenant responsibility.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF #7:

- Christian schools acknowledge that parents hold the primary responsibility for educating their children.
- Christian schools development partnerships with parents to fulfill their covenantal responsibilities. Christian schools reinforce the teaching of both the Christian home and the Christian church.
- The curriculum gives priority to areas of education that parents and the church have difficulty carrying out effectively.

IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ON STUDENTS

When Christian education is properly carried out, students...

Benefit from a partnership between parents, church, and school that arises out of a deep understanding of the covenant and its implications for Christian education.

Grow in their understanding of the creative power of God the Father, the redemptive work of Christ the Son, and the renewing and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Learn that a Christian applies his/her faith in all areas of life and learning.

Discover the full impact of sin on creation and society.

Recognize that they are God's agents for reconciliation in the world.

Develop the ability to apply their faith to real-life problems and develop discernment in addressing those problems.

See the impact of Christian faith at work in the lives of teachers, administrators and other staff.

Acquire a sense of stewardship that encourages the use of time, talents, and treasure to serve God and others.

Experience a diverse, caring, Christian community that shares joys and sorrows.