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Fruitful Work - Mr. B. Kuiper, Administrator

*“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
Matthew 7:18-20*

A substantial piece of the School Board's work this year has been looking at the policies and procedures of the school and updating them where needed. The reason for this started with recent court decisions which corrupted the God-ordained definition of marriage and perhaps could have a future impact on Christian school enrollment. As a means to protect the school, policies have been put in place that will oversee enrollment in a more stringent way.

Another result of the policy study has been an update to our “Student Code of Conduct” Policy. That policy is published following this article, but a few things bear special mention.

First of all, this policy in the majority of its substance and content has been the policy and practice at Heritage Christian School for quite some time. One of the biggest additions to the policy is the positive expectations that we have for students of Heritage. Although normally policy language is written to deter certain practices or behaviors, good policy language will often set forth the positive requirements as well. This the Board set out to do, and the list is worth sharing with children on a regular basis. These are the *fruits* or evidences that show to parents and teachers that our children are walking in His ways.

Another major upgrade to the policy is the clear language that sets forth what to do if you or your child become aware of behavior that is unbecoming of a Christian student at Heritage. Classroom teachers need to be made aware of the sin. Ideally this will happen when students approach teachers immediately. For that purpose, there are teachers on supervision at all recess times and before and after school. Teach and encourage your child to talk to teachers when sin happens. If they report it to you, speak with their teacher about it in a timely manner.

Third of all, the policy created a more in-depth reporting system that ensures that repeated sins, those of an egregious nature, or those especially directed at one person or group of people be written in a report by the teacher or the administrator, and stored electronically by the administrator. This will help us to better keep track of patterns of behavior from year to year. It is not our intent to report in written form EVERY instance of unkindness and sin. To do so would be overwhelming and time consuming. Yet, the bigger instances will be more carefully recorded for future purposes.

Finally, in this matter as always, we are thankful that God changes the heart. He uses means – teachers and parents and classmates - to accomplish His work of polishing young or old hearts and minds for His glory and honor. He gives the increase when we work in His service (I Corinthians 3:6-7). To Him be the praise when our efforts show success.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HERITAGE CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

The environment of a Christian school ought to reflect the moral standards taught throughout inspired Scripture. These standards encompass all behaviors expected of students with regards to how they show love for God and their neighbor. The positive requirements of these standards include—though are not limited to—the following list:

1. *Respect for the name of God through speech and attitude*
2. *Respect for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of other students*
3. *Respect for property that belongs to the school or others*
4. *Submission to structures of authority in and outside of school environs*
5. *Honesty and integrity in all interactions with staff members and other students*
6. *Decency and moderation in dress, physical behavior and speech*

As a community of Reformed believers, we recognize the natural tendency of all people to commit sins against God and the neighbor. In instances where sins are committed by students, an immediate resolution that involves private repentance and forgiveness between individuals should be the goal of teachers, administrator and parents. We recognize that complete forgiveness through Christ is given to sinners when they sincerely ask for it in true faith, and that reconciliation between children of God is always possible through the work of the Spirit.

Sins of an especially serious nature, or those that fail to be resolved after repeated attention from staff members will result in further discipline by the administrator and/or board. The following acts of misconduct are examples of those that will result in discipline:

1. *Deliberate misuse of God's name in word (swearing) or deed*
2. *Willful insubordination to any person in authority, inside or out of the classroom*
3. *Immoral conduct or indecency in dress, word or in gesture*
4. *Intimidation, bullying or abuse of any other person by physical, verbal, written or electronic means*
5. *Theft of property or money*
6. *Deliberate destruction of school property or the property of another on the premises of HCS*
7. *Cheating or lying for academic advantage*
8. *Possession or use of tobacco products, alcohol or illegal drugs*

Heritage Christian School will always be careful to weigh its concern for the privacy of individuals with its concern for how violations of conduct impact the school community. The process of discipline that seeks to preserve the soul of a sinning student is addressed in the student discipline policy. In instances where a separate policy spells out handling of discipline, that policy will take precedence over the general discipline policy.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

Violations of the student Code of Conduct should be reported first to the classroom teacher of the student(s) involved. The classroom teacher will function as mediator for initially dealing with any reports from students or parents, and will determine whether and how a violation of the code will be handled in relationship to the formal procedure outlined below.

Parents may refer to the administrator or assistant administrator regarding incidents of discipline if they believe that further action is warranted, but only having first discussed the incident with the teacher(s) initially involved. At his discretion, the administrator will investigate and ensure that a written report has been made on such incidents in coordination with teachers or other staff members.

The administration of discipline by the staff of Heritage Christian School includes but is not limited to the following:

1. *A sincere time of discussion or counseling with the child regarding the sin.*
2. *Depriving the child of certain privileges or assigning appropriate work so the child can reflect on the sin and the need for a proper walk in the future.*
 - (a) *If an after school detention (2:40-3:20 pm) is assigned, the staff member assigning the detention must contact the parents and inform them of the details relative to this punishment. During communication between the staff member and the parent, a decision will be made whether the detention will be served on the day of the offense or the following day.*
 - (b) *Incident reports from teachers will be compiled by the administrator and kept in a secure filing system for the duration of a student's enrollment at HCS.*
3. *Discussion with parent(s) regarding the sin, its resolution and possible future consequences.*
4. *Serious and/or repeated sins will be referred to the administrator or assistant administrator at the discretion of teachers involved in disciplinary action.*
5. *With the advice of the administrator, a student may be suspended from a class, any school sponsored activity, or the entire school atmosphere for a time.*
6. *Temporary suspension will be effective immediately for a student found possessing alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes at school or a school sponsored activity. A conference will be scheduled with the parents and the student to determine further action and discipline.*

7. *Upon approval of the Education Committee, the child may be suspended for a longer time or expelled from school.*

While we realize that only the Lord changes the heart, we labor diligently to be his tools in this process. By His grace, the children of Heritage Christian School will grow up to be faithful, loyal kingdom servants who respect God, others, and themselves and demonstrate this love and respect by their daily living.

As is traditionally the case, we take this opportunity to thank those families whose youngest child is graduating. These include Bob and Shelly Cammenga (Blake), Ken and Anita Cook (Cierra), Dave and Joan Hanko (Will),

Mike and Heidi Haveman (Darcie), Doug and Tammy Kaptein (Corie), Dave and Sharon Kraker (Austin), Phil and Janell Maas (Sable), Scott and Susan Moelker (Andrew), Tom and Brenda Pastoor (Megan), and Vicki Zolen (Sydney). Our prayer is that the Lord used Heritage Christian School to help you fulfill the vows you made at baptism. Our hope is that He will continue to bless you.

We pray that He blesses each family and staff member with summer rest and family time. May we together be refreshed in mind and body to renew our labors in late August.

Salary Committee Report – Mr. Jared Dykstra

As you may already know or will be reading elsewhere in this *Herald*, all of our teaching positions have been filled. While all of our returning teachers have signed their contracts back in March, we were also able to add two new classes for next year. We are adding an extra 4th grade and 6th grade class due to the number of students. To fill those positions we are happy to welcome back Liz VanDrunen for the 4th grade position and have hired Brad Gritters for the 6th grade position.

Contracts were handed out in the beginning of March. Salary increases were 2% for those with 13 years or more. The committee used the Christian School International Report as a guide to help make the decision of what increase our teachers would receive this coming year. Teachers with experience less than 13 years were given increases based on years of service. The Board is thankful for the teachers we have who

have taken the calling of teaching our covenant youth here at Heritage Christian School.

The Salary Committee would like to remind our families that it is important for the school tuition to be paid in a timely manner. The school budget is established such that the revenue equals the expenses, so there isn't a surplus of cash to pay expenses when the revenue and specifically tuition doesn't come in as required. The board asks that you pay your tuition in a timely manner enabling the board to see to it that all the bills and salaries of the teachers are paid.

The salary committee is thankful and we praise God that He has provided for us very willing and extremely capable teachers to train our covenant youth. We pray that God continues to bless our teachers during the remainder of this school year and as they begin the 2017/2018 school year.

Annual Secretary's Report to the Society – Mr. Curt Gritters

[The following is adapted slightly from the Board Secretary's report delivered at the Annual Society Meeting on April 24, 2017.]

Our Administrator Brian Kuiper began one of his recent reports to the Board with Psalm 16:5-6: "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly Heritage." He went on to comment: "Although we have never had an official school theme song, the Psalter number set to the words of this Psalm has been used as an unofficial theme song for quite some time. The younger students sing with great enthusiasm, and I'm certain a few of them have sung the word *heritage* thinking it referred to the name of their school. The older students, singing with more knowledge, are often struck by the double meaning that presents itself. We have a good school, named Heritage, that has received the blessing of God for a long time."

We experience that blessing in many physical and spiritual ways. In the last couple of years, there was much to report in terms of facilities. This year, we are pleased to report little in that category, and thus share the typical updates of the school and give you a closer look at the work of the Board.

Let's start with some quotes from staff, giving a glimpse into routine life at Heritage:

- "On the way to gym class, Mr. Randy Kuiper's second grade class walks past the elementary office door and each student greets the office staff with "Hello" in many different languages. "Hola, Guten Tag, Bonjour, and Ciao" ring out as the students proudly use their new words."
- Another reflects: "My favorite part of the day is listening to the younger students singing their hearts out as they begin their day! It really warms the heart to hear them sing praises to God. So thankful for Heritage!!"

- Another reflected on the love shown when, after Jordan Pettit's mom was diagnosed with cancer, her class and the other fourth grade class, girls and boys alike, all showed up wearing pink!
- And, when occasionally a junior high student is not feeling well, this is observed: "Her friends will skip intramurals to sit with her (a monumental thing)! It's simply team here. The students emulate what they see their parents doing at church— the communion of saints begins here already. It's a blessed thing that at such a young age it has become natural for them to reflect the grace and mercy of God."

This year 227 families have 516 students at Heritage—that's over twice the size it was when I attended kindergarten here in 1986, but even more striking is that this is already 20% growth since the 9th grade moved to Covenant in 2012. To serve this large and growing student body, we have 28 teachers and 25 additional staff working under Mr. Brian Kuiper's capable administration. This year we added a third 3rd grade class. Next year, the Lord willing, we plan to add the same for the 4th and 6th grades. All current teachers plan to return next year. Liz VanDrunen has been hired back to teach the additional 4th grade class. She taught 4th grade at Heritage before taking the last year to serve Grace Foster Home in Vellore, India. Brad Gritters, brother of teacher Emily and son of Loren and Nancy from Hull, Iowa, has been hired to teach the additional 6th grade class. Brad is graduating this spring from Dordt College with a degree in secondary education. As you have been reading in recent *Standard Bearers*, we hire these teachers to stand in our place. Let's not cease to pray for them as they carry this weighty responsibility.

Here is a sampling of Board activities to give the Society a glimpse of this year's work:

- Hudsonville Little League and a U14 travel baseball team are granted permission to use our field in exchange for maintenance.
- In response to a request, the Education Committee revisited five-day kindergarten and concluded there is insufficient educational benefit to warrant it.
- An elementary playground is purchased from a disbanding Holland school and installed with volunteer labor.
- The new music room, built through an anonymous donation, opens for students in October.
- Thirty additional Chromebooks are purchased with support from Penny Wars and the 2016 Class Gift. An outside IT contractor is hired for technology support.
- The Long Range Planning Committee is reconstituted now that school is settled into 6340 Autumn Drive. The LRPC came to the Board with their first report in March; the Board will be processing their recommendations over the coming months and will keep the Society apprised.
- Facility Rental Policy and Rates are approved.

- A thorough and benchmarked review of our school's security features and protocols is conducted in coordination with local authorities.
- Heritage's grading scale is aligned with Covenant's for consistency.
- Genesis Christian Preschool is no longer able to meet in Trinity PRC, and a decision is made to allow them use of a Heritage kindergarten room for the last few months of the 2016-'17 school year. Heritage and Genesis are in conversation about what extended collocation could look like.
- Health insurance provider changes were made to allow for matching benefits at reduced premiums.
- With legal counsel and in response to national changes in the definition of marriage, our documents are being clarified to reflect our beliefs consistent with the Bible that marriage is between one man and one woman.
- The Board is also working to update three handbooks which address the roles and expectations for teachers, Board members, and families. To the Parent/Student Handbook which will be distributed next school year was added a new student "Code of Conduct." This code outlines the expectations for all students at Heritage, and describes the types of behaviors that would lead to disciplinary action. We seek reconciliation between each other and with God when sins are committed. This is a unique responsibility in a Christian school that the Board and staff take very seriously as your representatives.
- A Parent Satisfaction Survey of teacher performance is approved. Heritage is a parental school. Parents have elected a Board to represent them, and the work of the Board can be furthered with the direct input of parents. Near the end of the school year, parents will receive a 14-question survey covering teaching effectiveness, communication, and classroom environment. Parents can use this opportunity to promote teachers' strengths and identify opportunities for improvement. The Board will identify themes and share those themes with each teacher in routine feedback conversations. A goal of the Board is to promote communication between parents and teachers, and to continuously improve the quality of Christ-centered education. If this survey promotes that end, it may be used annually.

As a Society, we should have high expectations of our teachers, Administrator, and Board. Having had front-row seats for the last three years, I can report to you they've met my *high* expectations. Thanks to the Board for taking their role very seriously and representing this Society's interests. Thanks to retiring Board members Jeff Scholten, Ron Schut, and Kurt VanOverloop [and to this article writer, Curt Gritters] and their wives and families for their dedication over the last three years. Thanks to our team of Godly, committed teachers who help us fulfil our baptismal vows. Thanks to Doug Kooienga and Ruth Kraker who are retiring from bus-

driving and office work respectively. Thanks also to our Administrator Mr. Brian Kuiper for his dedication, composure, and leadership. Not many of us lead a team of more than 50, have 1,000 customers amongst our church family, and deal with such a high-stakes product as Christian education. We appreciate Brian's giving it his all and then some.

Your presence at this Society meeting shows you're serious about Christian education. Don't ever stop being serious about it. Thank you, grandparents and other elders, for recognizing your critical role on this team after

your last child has graduated. Together, this Society invests thousands of volunteer hours in classrooms, board rooms, and back rooms; this Society invests thousands of dollars to Fundraisers, Fall Drives, and Foundations. For every hour, for every dollar, thank you.

May our prayers be even more abundant. Praise be to God for His grace that shines through our weakness, and gives us the results we're aiming for: that our students increase in their knowledge of Him and embrace a living faith that serves God and others.

Education Committee Report – Mr. Brendan Looyenga

The Education Committee (EC) at Heritage Christian School (HCS) is broadly tasked with overseeing and implementing educational policy on behalf of the Board. In more concrete terms, this means that the EC directly oversees school curriculum, teacher training & licensing, Discovery/Resource room activities, and teacher evaluations by the administrator. They also take the lead in hiring new teachers and in contract renewal meetings, as well as recommending disciplinary actions of students or staff to the Board. All of this work is done in close cooperation with our administrator, who also serves as a member of the EC.

The rapid growth in student numbers with which God has blessed HCS in the past few years has prompted the board to work aggressively toward a plan to eventually accommodate three classes of each grade level at our Autumn Drive campus. One key part of this plan was to have the EC interview and recommend hiring of additional 4th and 6th grade teachers, who are needed to maintain reasonable class sizes in these grades. We thank God for the provision of qualified individuals for both positions as we welcome back Ms. Liz VanDrunen (4th grade) after her year-long service in India, and new teacher Mr. Brad Gritters (6th grade).

Another important initiative by the board in the past year was to respond to legal changes in the definition of marriage by the Supreme Court, which could potentially impact all Christian schools who are concerned about this change to federal law. On behalf of the board the EC drafted a new document called the "*Statement of Faith*," which reiterates the commitment to Biblical truth and the Reformed creeds found in our Constitution, but also clearly articulates the position of the Protestant Reformed Churches with regards to marriage. References to this document are now included in all HCS handbooks, staff contracts, and in the enrollment documents given to parents. These changes provide legal protection for HCS as we seek to preserve the Biblical definition of marriage among our constituency.

The handbooks mentioned in the preceding paragraph include three distinct documents that govern the specific roles of Staff, Parents & Students, and the Board itself. Along with the board secretary and other committees,

the EC has been working throughout this past year to edit and update these handbooks to reflect current practice at HCS. Some of this work has simply involved compiling disparate policies into a cohesive unit in electronic form, though considerable effort has been spent updating and streamlining language in these handbooks to make them more accessible to every member of the HCS community.

Of particular note are two key updates in the Parent & Student Handbook, which will be included in the Student Handbook each year. These include a new "*Student Code of Conduct*" and updates to the *Discipline Policy* that clarify how students and parents should report incidents that have not been directly observed by HCS staff. Though nothing in these documents should come as a surprise given our familiarity with Biblical standards of morality and concern for the neighbor, it never hurts to spell out exactly what is expected of students at HCS, as well as the potential consequences when sins are committed. The Board encourages parents to become familiar with this handbook and its contents so that when issues arise, the expectations of all parties involved are clear.

The last initiative that the EC would like to report on has been our development of a 14-question survey that will be distributed to parents by email in the next few weeks. The purpose of this survey is to get a better feel for how parents perceive their children's teachers to be performing in three key areas: teaching, communication, and classroom management. While this survey is *not* intended to be a parental *evaluation* of each teacher, it will help the Board and administrator to identify areas where our staff can continue to grow and improve for the sake of our children. This somewhat more subjective feedback is helpful as a complement to the objective testing (DIBELS and MAP) done each year to determine how HCS students perform academically compared to state and national standards.

The EC thanks parents and staff alike for their support of our work at HCS, and looks forward to continuing in service to this kingdom cause in the coming year.

Fundraisers Year End Report – Mrs. Kelly Looyenga, Retiring Secretary

With grateful hearts, we look back on another school year at Heritage. We have been truly blessed again with the willingness of so many mothers who volunteer their time and talents to help support Heritage Christian School. The unique gifts of each individual come together to make up a whole body that has the common goal of service to the Christian school with which we have been blessed!

The work of Fundraisers began last spring with planning and preparation for our restaurant at the Hudsonville Fair held in August. Fair week was tons of fun and once again a huge success! We are always thrilled with the number of volunteers and patrons that come out to help support the restaurant fundraiser. We also had the opportunity to open our restaurant for the Balloon Festival this past summer. We kicked off our school year with the Fall Family Supper where everyone was invited to come out and meet their children's teacher and enjoy dinner with other families from Heritage. Our annual fall and spring clothing sales were held in October and March, respectively. Grandparents Day, held in November, was well supported and enjoyed by grandparents and students alike. In March, we had our school auction. Thanks to the hard work of the various committees, the generous sponsors, and the support of so many who attended this event, our auction was a great success.

We also have many standing committees that keep us busy throughout the year. Some of these are TRIP, Hot Lunch, Key Cards, and General Mills Box Tops. A special "thanks" goes to the Kitchen Committee who keeps our kitchen clean and up to code year-round. One note of interest for Heritage supporters is that the Target and Cambell's Labels programs have phased out over the course of this school year. They have, however, been replaced with a new store rewards program called "Direct Your Dollars". This program allows us to collect Family Fare receipts and turn them in for rewards that benefit Heritage.

Much of the money raised by Fundraisers was given back to the school in response to several requests from our school board. These requests included money to offset budgetary expenses, help for replacement of a portion of the school roof, money to offset the expense of updating the fire suppression system, and support for the move of 3 classrooms for next school year. Some of the other monies were spent on a reading support program, and new tables and carts needed for our growing school.

In addition to these special requests, fundraisers also provides teachers with an allowance to get their rooms ready each year. We also give funds to support a birthday party/gift for each teacher, Teacher Appreciation Week and an end of the year luncheon for the teachers and staff to show our appreciation.

Fundraisers encourages every mother, whether from a new family or a family who has been at Heritage for years, to join us. We meet five times during the school year for regular meetings, although there are opportunities all year long to be part of Fundraisers. All of your help, comments, and suggestions are what make Fundraisers what we are! We would especially like to thank all the committee members of each of the fundraisers. Many of these women have been faithful members for years. They do an awesome job and we are very grateful.

The officers for next year are the following: President – Lanae Holstege, Vice-President – Kelly Van Overloop, Secretary – Sara Byker, Vice-Secretary – Michelle Bult, Treasurer – Kristin Korhorn, and Vice-Treasurer – Audrey Decker.

Thanks to the retiring President Jen Eriks and Treasurer Tracy Dykstra [and we add here "thanks to retiring Secretary Kelly Looyenga"] for their year of leadership and support. May God continue to bless our labors that His name may be glorified at Heritage.

Not Your Parents' Non-Fiction – Mrs. Erika Aalsma

Non-fiction, ugh! Well, at least that might be what you thought of non-fiction texts when you were a student. Today, authors and illustrators are producing high-quality, diverse non-fiction books. And the students are loving it! If I walk around the classroom during D.E.A.R. time, 80% of the students are reading non-fiction. The *You Choose series* hasn't been on the shelves since I brought them to school. These books are historical fiction and are a favorite of the 3rd Graders. You can be a passenger on the Titanic, a WWII spy, a Union or Confederate soldier in the Civil War or a villager in Colonial America. Each book has the potential to be read approximately 40 different ways as the reader

makes decisions about which path to follow through the story, sometimes reaching the lifeboat just in time, other times running back to the battle to help a fellow soldier or making a decision to desert your unit. There is usually a list 4 or 5 students long waiting to read the books.

Another favorite is the *Who was...? series*. These are interesting, engaging, easy to read biographies. Reading like a novel, *Who was Laura Ingalls Wilder? Who was Dr. Seuss? Who was Ghengis Khan?* and many more are great choices for readers at the 2nd-5th grade reading level. If your reader is younger, try these as a bedtime read aloud.

And animal books? Some of the best animal books in years are being published. Animal books are filled with beautiful, vivid photographs, interesting, unusual facts and some of the most unique creatures that God has created! Check out *Pink is for Blobfish* by Jess Keating for a fantastic animal book featuring some of creation's pink creatures.

Students enjoy non-fiction. It is true. The stories and characters that they read about are or were real people. The events actually happened. This makes the stories more intriguing. Often the students are in awe of events and people that they read about from history. But, most importantly they can see God's hand throughout this history. They can read about these people and events and discuss them in the light of Scripture. They have opportunities to analyze actions and attitudes of people throughout history through the spectacles of Scripture. They are able to engage in these types of discussions because the stories are real. The students are learning about the world that God has created. Through non-fiction they can see God's faithfulness from age to age.

So, this summer as you head to the library, load up your Amazon cart or fill your Kindle for that road trip, reconsider your book choices. Fiction is fun, but mix up your reading with some new non-fiction titles. Not sure

where to start? Check out some of my favorites from the list below!

Summer Non-Fiction Reading List

- Rags: Hero Dog of WWII* by Margot Theis Raven
Two Bobbies: A Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship and Survival by Kirby Larson
Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear by Lindsay Mattick
Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille by Jen Bryant
Pink is for Blobfish by Jess Keating (Jess also has short YouTube shows about interesting animals.)
Fins, Feathers, & Fur: Abraham Dee Bartlett and the Invention of the Modern Zoo by Cassandra Maxwell (Great read aloud before a trip to the zoo!)
Mr. Ferris and His Wheel by Kathryn Gibbs (Check this one out during Fair Week!)
Feathers, Not Just for Flying by Melissa Stewart
Life Size Zoo by Teruyuki Komiya (Also, *Life Size Farm* and *Life Size Aquarium*)
Fly Guy Presents...(variety of topics including *Bats, Weather and the White House*)
Animal Planet series (great for young readers)

HAPPY READING!

My Grade is Not Me – Mrs. Deb Bleyenbergh

Growing up, I loved school. I loved my teachers; I loved new school supplies and classrooms; I just loved learning! What I did not love was taking tests and receiving grades. Although my teachers never realized it, I was a terrible test taker, slaving hours to memorize facts, spit them out on a test, promptly forget them, and hope for the best grade possible. Though my memory is not exactly reliable (just ask my husband), I cannot recall a teacher ever specifically explaining what grades actually meant; every child just knew that an A was best and that's what parents were happiest to see.

Knowing personally how grades on papers and report cards deeply affected my self-esteem and confidence, I have become more and more sensitive to the fact that the young children I teach often equate their grades to their self-esteem too. After all, if a parent or teacher has never specifically told them what an A or B or C means *in relation to their learning*, then a child might assume that an A means, "I'm awesome at learning" and an A- must mean, "I didn't get the best grade, so I'm not very good at learning." You can see how the logical progression down the grading scale leads to teachers occasionally dealing with tears over a B+ (or eventually a loss of motivation toward learning).

All the current brain and learning research today tells educators that assessment has a huge impact on student motivation and self-esteem. In fact, some argue that all formative assessments such as papers and work leading up to a final test will only be helpful to students' learning if they are informed in words, not scores or

grades, what they have done well or poorly and how to improve. Verbal and written feedback is so powerful because it leads to student improvement and progress, whereas a grade or score tells the students that their learning is complete, and we're moving on!

Now, feedback certainly is very effective in helping students understand how well they are learning and how they can improve. But inevitably there needs to be a graded summative assessment such as a test or project at the end of a unit of learning. Since these are the grades that show up on report cards, it has become my goal to teach students that *report card grades tell them how they've been learning, and do NOT dictate who they are, a beloved child of God*. Here's what that looks like in our 2nd grade classroom:

The day that report cards go home, we set aside some class time to review our Pinterest-inspired poster titled "What Does My Grade Mean?" At the top of the poster, we talk about how any kind of an A grade (A+, A, A-) means: I understood what teacher taught! My work was neat and complete. I'm ready to move on. Next on the poster, a B grade means: I mostly understood what teacher taught. My work was mostly neat and complete. I could use some practice on a few things. After that, a C grade means: I understood some of what teacher taught. My work may not have been all neat or complete. I'm still learning and need to ask more questions. And at the bottom of the poster, a D grade means: I don't understand yet. I'm still learning and need to ask for help. I need a lot more practice.

After reviewing our grade poster, we also briefly remind each other what check marks mean on our report cards: A regular check (√) means that I have demonstrated a skill as it was *expected* of a 2nd grader. A check plus (√+) means I demonstrated a skill in a *commendable* way, above what was expected. A check minus (√-) does not mean we are terrible failures and bad at school, but they are actually very helpful marks that show what I can work to *improve* at.

Once the kids have a clear picture of what their grades and check marks mean in relation to their learning, they are given their report card and allowed to sit around the room to privately look it over. They are also allowed to come ask me questions about any of their grades or marks, and they often do. But instead of hearing things like, "Aw man, I got two A minuses," I hear, "Mrs. Bleyenberg, I'm really happy with my grades because

they are all As and Bs." And I will never forget the student who came over with his report card and stated so sincerely, "Mrs. Bleyenberg, I'm really disappointed that I didn't get any check minuses because I'm not really sure what I can improve on." Wow.

When our children receive their year-end report card, let's be having these valuable conversations. Our goal for these covenant children is that they labor diligently to glorify God in their learning. And when they have done so, regardless of the exact grade that is published on their report cards, they can be confident that my grade is not "me," rather, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). Indeed, our identity and self-esteem comes from knowing that we "are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

Learning for Our Heritage – Mr. Mike Noorman

Teachers and parents must stay educated in the matters that affect our children and students, so we can help them wade through the ocean of information with a Christian perspective. We are reminded in Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage from the Lord." By staying educated in the struggles that our children go through, we are showing that we are taking care of these blessings from God.

We have a big job to do. If you are not convinced of that, consider this. There are 516 students at Heritage Christian School. That means there are 516 different creations, 516 different minds, 516 different sets of abilities, and 516 different students who will struggle in some way or another. Not one child is the same as another. As teachers, we have to be ready for a variety of different students, and each year brings in a new group of growing, changing students.

I love learning, and as Christian schoolteachers we should strive to be expert teachers. Part of being an expert teacher means being really knowledgeable about teaching the unique range of students that come to our school.

I recently attended a conference by Dr. Gary Eisenberg. He is an expert in autism and ADHD and presented information at this conference about these two topics that was based on the most recent research in these respective fields. Becoming an expert takes a long time and a ton of work. We can be thankful for these experts who know much more than us about topics such as cars, learning disabilities, plumbing, teeth, psychology, etc.

With the advances in research, science, and technology, God's creation is being opened up even more fully. It can be more difficult to be a teacher or parent now-a-days because of the wealth of knowledge that we have at our disposal. Experts like these can be very helpful in making sense of these complex topics. We should be thankful for this information, and remember to take advantage of it for the good of our children. There are

many conferences available in our area throughout the year. The *Challenge of Children Conference* (for parents also) is one example held each spring at Hope College, providing a variety of expert information for parents.

I am not an expert, but I continue to learn more about the most recent research into autism and ADHD that will help me in my work at Heritage with parents and students who may struggle with these things in their lives.

A few years ago, when I began studying in the field of learning disabilities, I was disappointed when I realized that I was not going to learn how to help every child with autism, ADHD, and other learning struggles with one blueprint or plan of action. I learned that there is no "recipe" to follow in order to solve the struggles related to the disability. Every child is unique, and every child will require a different approach.

Statistics say that 1 in every 68 children has autism, but if you have met one person with autism, you have met one person with autism. This is reason to stand in awe of our great Creator. Some of our 516 students have been diagnosed with autism or ADHD, and no matter how much we know, there is not a blueprint that can give us the exact way that every child's mind works.

There is a challenge presented to every student at Heritage Christian School. This challenge is the same for every child of God. It is to learn more about God in His creation through research and reading from both modern findings and from God's Word. We can learn from the latest research and apply a biblical perspective. We need to use His Word to make sense of the latest research and keep us grounded. Information should not make us forget about God's providential hand, but should make us become even more aware of His awesomeness, creativity, grace, and more of His indisputable attributes.

I am confident that we would all agree that God is good in giving us our children, for however long they are on

the earth with us. We read in Psalm 127:3, “Lo, children are an heritage from the Lord.” Another way of reading this verse would be to say that children are a “gift” or a “blessing” from the Lord. They are also a challenge, and, at times, a source of anxiety and much stress.

Some of the educational research I recently learned could create anxiety in the heart and minds of parents and teachers. For example, if your “heritage” from the Lord falls into the statistic of 1 in every 68 children that has autism (1 in every 42 for boys, and 1 in every 189 for girls—which is less in boys because of the effect of estrogen), you would start doing some research to learn about autism.

This research may cause you to wonder why your child has autism. A little more research causes you to stumble on some of the causes related to autism. You discover that organochlorine and organophosphate pesticides, valproic acid, flame retardants (sometimes found in children’s mattress covers), mercury (also found in those new twisty LED bulbs), lead, or diesel exhaust could have been the cause of your child’s autism. You begin to wonder if you could you have prevented it.

You keep researching and find that glutathione is found in lower levels in autistic children, and maybe if you would have known earlier you could have paid closer attention to your child’s diet and maybe prevented this. In addition to that, you could have pushed the doctor to give your child a genetic test to determine if they have a particular gene deletion that increases the potential for susceptibility to mercury, arsenic, lead, pesticides, and therefore the development of autism.

If we forget that God is providential over all things and that “children are an heritage from the Lord”, this

knowledge can bring anxiety, guilt, or concern. This knowledge is good, but “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 1:7a) and will guide us to appropriately interpret this information.

Every bit of learning that we do as parents and teachers can lead us down two paths: towards God or away from God. When you read the statistics, causes, etc. about autism above, I pray that God will lead you “in a plain path” (Psalm 27:11), a path of peace. In a world that is full of criteria for comparisons, we avoid those pitfalls when we express with the Psalmist, “Lo, children are an heritage from the Lord.” A Godly parent thankfully knows in their heart that “God gave this child to me so that He will be glorified.”

We have a very supportive parental base at Heritage Christian School. Your love for your children is clearly evident in the support you provide for them and their teachers. Thank you. I encourage you to keep it up. Keep learning. Ask questions. Do research. Talk to an expert. Learning more about our children is good. Work with your child’s teacher to provide the best learning experience possible for your child.

By understanding their strengths and weaknesses, we are able to make it more possible for them to learn. For students with autism and ADHD, there are therapies, accommodations to their learning environments, and intervention plans and tools to increase their ability to learn. Most of all, continue to pray to our heavenly Father that he will give us and our children wisdom for God’s glory and for the good of the church. After all, they are our beloved Heritage.

Fifth Grade Trips – Mr. Doug DeBoer

If fifth grade is memorable - it just might be for trips we take. We leave the school building five times on various journeys. To make it easier to remember when people ask where we go I have devised the S2C3 code: Sewage, Symphony, Capital, Court, and Calvin. Sewage is for the Grand Rapids Water Treatment Plant located adjacent to the Grand River on Market Avenue. Symphony is for the decades old tradition of The Grand Rapids Symphony performing at DeVos Hall for any interested fifth grade classes in the area. Capital is for our day long excursion to Lansing for a tour through our state’s Capitol Building and the Michigan Historical Museum. Court is for the U.S. District Court of Grand Rapids to visit the court room of the Honorable Judge Jonker, and Calvin is for the opportunity to watch a chemistry demonstration designed especially for students in our grade. Yes, school is not all about books – just sometimes.

Some student input regarding these trips appears below. Hope you enjoy them. I kept them anonymous. No one chose to write about the symphony experience. If there is significance to that I will let you judge. There were

some that wrote about the other “S” but I did not include them. I just went with the three “C”s. I will let you ponder that also.

Trip to the Capitol

The Capitol Building is an interesting place to go. We started our day with a speech about how the capital is actually the third capital of Michigan. We next met our Representative, Danielle Garcia. We also went to the Representative room. The bathrooms were awesome. There was a room with a lot of Governor’s paintings. They had a room for Gerald Ford because he is the only President from Michigan. I really liked the Capitol building.

The State Capitol building is awesome. We went inside and looked around and there were words that said, “United in God”, and I thought that was cool. There were paintings of what the Capitol looked like earlier. The guide said that they tried to make the Capitol building look like the Capitol of the United States, and they did a good job because it does. There are stars on the inside of the dome that are made of gold. The Capitol was fun to see.

Going to Lansing was a fun and interesting day. First of all the ride there in Mrs. Koole's car was fun. It was also fun to see the representative on the House floor get yelled at. Representative Garcia met with just us and that was cool. Our tour guide at the Capitol Building was a happy and cheerful lady that spit when she talked. The Museum was huge, and our guide looked like Donald Trump. He had the hair, the cheeks, and everything. His name was Bobby Pearson, and he showed us a cool cannon demonstration. You can't see that every day, Donald Trump giving a cannon demonstration. All in all it was an awesome trip.

Trip to United States District Court

Our trip to Court was cool! When we walked into the building there was a metal detector we had to walk through. We listened to a case about fake credit cards people used to buy lots of things. After the case we met a U.S. Marshal that showed us some of the weapons he uses. Then we went to the judge's office and asked questions. The Court is cool.

Going to Court is a fun day. We went on a bus, and when we got there we went through a beeper to see if we had weapons. We then went to the Court room where they judge people. We listened to a case about credit cards. Next we went to the judge's room called

his chambers. We asked questions and then went back to listen to the case. It was an interesting day.

The trip to Court in Grand Rapids was very boring. I couldn't understand anything. They just talk about one subject. It was just in a room with people talking. The judge didn't even use his gavel. The people showed no expression. The Court was not a place for me.

Trip to Chemistry Demonstration

At Calvin's Chemistry show they had some exciting experiments. One of the experiments was ping-pong balls flying out of a big trash can because of liquid nitrogen in a pop bottle. We also saw bubbles lit on fire. They made blue, bright orange, green, and red fire. Calvin College was one of the best field trips ever.

The chemistry demonstration at Calvin College was awesome because they did so many cool things. First, they turned the lights off and mixed two chemicals that glowed in the dark! They also popped a balloon with oxygen in it that sounded like a gun shot. Also, they took a pop bottle and put liquid nitrogen in it. After that they took a trash can and filled it with warm water and ping-pong balls and put the pop bottle in with it. The pop bottle exploded and the ping-pong balls went shooting up in the air and touched the ceiling. The chemistry show was so cool.

What Do You Like To Read? – Mrs. Kaitlin Bylsma

Every now and then in first grade, very dramatic six-year-olds will complain that they can't find ANY good books from my bookshelf to put in their book boxes. Early on in the year, I ask those students this question: "What do you like to read?" From there, they can tell me what they're interested in, and I can recommend books to them based on their answers.

However, one of the reading skills I teach throughout the year is differentiating between the different types of stories. In first grade we focus on just fiction and non-fiction, though I know there are many, many different subcategories. You can ask any of my students and they'll tell you that fiction is a story the author made up, and non-fiction is a story that really happened. If we're feeling particularly ambitious, we branch out the fiction category into realistic fiction (a made-up story that could happen, but didn't) and unrealistic fiction (a made-up story that could never happen in real life). We also briefly make a distinction between non-fiction stories and non-fiction books that are informational and don't tell an actual story.

Because of this, a really cool thing starts happening throughout the year: I stop asking, "What do you like to read?" and start asking, "Fiction or non-fiction?" This way, we can get to the point much quicker, and I can begin giving recommendations.

We also practice writing both fiction and non-fiction in our journals. Sometimes I may have them write non-fiction with a prompt like, "Tell me about a time when you felt afraid." Other times I may ask them to write a story

about something they wish they could do or to write an unrealistic fiction story. First grade fiction stories are pretty goofy and typically turn into stories about talking animals that eat everything, kids that can fly, or dragons and fairies.

Recently for a journal prompt I asked them to write a non-fiction piece about whether they prefer to read fiction or non-fiction. The results showed many who liked fiction better, but also opened my eyes to how many students actually prefer non-fiction. The students did a particularly good job on these writings, which is what inspired me to write this article. Enjoy!

- **Sam Dykstra** - My favorite kind of book is realistic fiction. I wuns red a book ubot two boys fishing. Their hooocks got stuck and one of the boys fell in the woter.
- **Madison VanOverloop** - I like to read non-fiction. My favorite kide of non-fiction book is about rocks. You can fide them all over.
- **Carter Potjer** - My favorite kind of book is unrealistic fiction about aminles. I like Tresr Tree because there is aminles that tock.
- **Bryce Schipper** - I like non-fiction because it has the books I need! The book that I like of non-fiction is Sharks. It teaches me how big the teeth are. The biggest one is the megaladon which is extint.
- **Gavin Heyboer** - My favorite kind of book is non-fiction because I like to lern about animals, bugs, and other living things. My favorite non-fiction book is Volcanoes.

- **Paige DeBoer** - My favorite kind of book is realistic fiction. I like realistic fiction because Samantha books are that kind. I love them! They are fun. They are books about Amaran girl dolls! I like them because they teach me about Amaran girl dolls.
- **Natalie Bylsma** - I like non-fiction because its fun to read them and its fun to lern abot animos. Its rile fun. I like kittins. There my fafret animos.
- **Devin Machiele** - I like non-fiction. I like Dinosaur Days so I lern ubot dinosaurs.
- **Kimberly Korhorn** - I like realistic fiction because they could hapin but they did't. They are so mutch fun. My faverit book that I read that was realistic fiction was Arthur and the Race to Read.
- **Janelle Feenstra** - My favorite kind of book is unrealistic fiction and I like fairee books. I like to read thoos kind of books becose I like made up things.
- **Conner Gunnink** - I like non-fiction. I like it because it can teatch you abot things. Once I read a book abot sharks. In the book it said scientists have found the teeth of a creature they call the Megalodon. I lernd from that book.
- **Alexis Boverhof** - I like to read non-fiction. But when I read books I like to read books with my sisters. I like to read and read and read.
- **Jaimeson VanOverloop** - I like fiction and my favorite is unrealistic fiction. I luv There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Shell! I like it becus it is funny!
- **Sarah King** - My favorite book to read is unrealistic fiction. My favorite fiction book is Ella Has a Monster Under Her Bed. She whent to school. Then all of her frends told her that thar is no sutch thing as monsters. But she did have on under her bed.
- **Eli Brummel** - I like non-fiction books. I like them because I like lerning about anamals. I want to lern about God's creashen. I read six books about spiders, sharks, butterflies, and jagwirs.
- **Nolan Corson** - I like unrealistic fiction be cus it has dragens. I like it be cus I like dragens and they are cool. I like cheetas too. I like them be cus they make me happy.
- **Grant Dykstra** - My favorite kind of book is non-fiction. I like it becos I lern new things. I red my Revolutionary war book and I lerned a lot of things.
- **Brielle Griess** - I like unrealistic fiction because it is made up and because it is not real. I also like kitten books and made up kitten books to.
- **Olivia Bleyenbergh** - I like non-fiction beecus sumtimes they have rel pitchers. I love when they sumtimes have a koala. I love koalas beecus they are cute and fluffy.
- **Malaya Kamps** - I like unrealistic fiction. I love it! It is so much fun to read. I love to read Magic Tree House. I love when Jack and Anie went to the time with the knights and castals.
- **Josie Brummel** - My favorite kind of book is non-fiction. I like to learn about lions and about monkeys. Monkeys are my favorite kind of animals.

Keeping Me Humble – Miss Courtney Peterson

“Miss Peterson, what’s on your face?” exclaims a student pointing to my newly forming pimple.

“Oh, it’s just a pimple,” I calmly reply.

“What’s that?” she asks.

“It’s kind of like an owie, and you get them when you’re bigger,” I answer.

“It’s big!”

“Yes, thank you for noticing.”

I have a very humbling job. I work with some of the most observant students in the school, and they aren’t afraid to point out my flaws. When I first started teaching, I would try to cover up some of my imperfections to avoid questions from my students about a scratch on my arm or a pimple on my forehead. By now, however, I’ve learned to roll with the punches. If I’m having a bad or lazy hair day, I know to expect that one of my students will comment on how my hair looks a little silly. If I wear short sleeves, I know to be prepared for one of my students to wonder what all of the dots are on my arm. I use that moment to tell her that God made me with a lot of freckles, and we even can find some on her arm that God made her with. Anytime I have a bandage on, my students will be the first to notice and want to hear the whole story about how I got hurt. My all-time favorite is when one of my students asks me if I am pregnant, or

when I am going to have a baby, or if he can come visit me and my baby in the hospital. When I try to explain to the student that I’m not pregnant, he can’t believe it because, “It’s a really big belly!” I guess some days I must really wear the wrong outfit that makes me look a couple months pregnant, or maybe it’s my wake-up call to watch how many treats I’ve been eating in the lounge. My students sure know how to keep me humble with my constantly growing list of imperfections that includes my stuffy nose, funny sounding voice, peeling skin, stains on my clothes, and not writing neat enough.

I am thankful that my students are teaching me to live a life of humility. Constantly in the Bible, God is calling us to live lives of humility and humble ourselves before Him. In I Peter 5:5b, God tells us, “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” Again, in Colossians 3:12, He commands us, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering”. My students make sure to cover me in humbleness every day. They teach me not to think about myself but to focus on them and their needs. I am thankful that God uses my students to help teach me humility.

2nd Grade Bible – Miss Becca Gritters

Second grade Bible covers Old Testament History, starting with King David and working up to the return to Jerusalem. We talk about the building of the temple, the captivities of Israel and Judah, Esther, and Daniel. These are all well-known passages of the Bible that the students look forward to learning about each day.

As we made our way through the Old Testament History this year, we took time to talk about how we must learn from these lessons and look at our own lives: What is God revealing to us in His Word about Himself and about how we must worship and honor Him? We talked about the sovereignty of God and of God's providence. We also considered what God commands of us in our daily lives about how we are to think, speak, and act. The students did especially well with this when we did a short study on Proverbs and during our study of Daniel.

Here are some writing prompts that the students used to share some of what they have learned in Bible:

What does Proverbs 15:1 teach us about the words that we speak and how we treat our neighbors? ("A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.")

- **Oliver V.K.** - Nice words are better than mean words. When you are a child you learn about God, and when you are old you still learn about God.
- **Owen B.** - Speak love and kindness!
- **Austin G.**- You should always have soft answers.
- **Jared H.**- A soft answer turneth away wrath.
- **Trenton H.** - Be kind to your neighbors.
- **Brody S.** - You should be a helpful neighbor and help other people.
- **Lauryn L.** - If you say something nice and not mean it turns away wrath, but something mean stirs up wrath.

- **Tessa W.** - We must be kind to others with our whole heart.
- **Derek dH.** - We must be nice to our neighbors and not yell at them.

What did you learn about how we must act from studying Daniel?

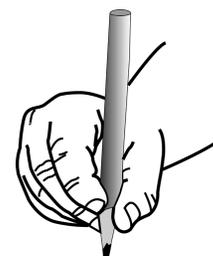
- **Graeson D.** - I learned to serve God no matter what.
- **Allison W.** - We should always trust in God.
- **Hattie K.** - It is good to learn about Daniel. We must never forget about God.
- **Levi S.**- I learned that you should trust God and that you should have faith in God.
- **Kailyn D.B.**- Daniel was God-fearing and wasn't afraid. He did not listen to the wrong thing and we shouldn't either.
- **Mason F.** - I learned to trust in God and thank Him for all he has done for us.
- **Ashtyn K.** - If someone says that they would kill you if they see you pray, keep on praying.
- **Meghan K.**- I learned that I have to keep praying and trusting in God.
- **Davis D.** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
- **Joelle C.** - We need to do what God tells us to do. We need to be kind and obey God in whatever we do.
- **Emma G.**- Learning about Daniel taught me that we must be kind to neighbors and love them, and love God.
- **Madison S.** - I learned to trust in God and to have courage in God.

Ready or Not? – Miss Joyce Holstege

At kindergarten roundup this spring, I was once again reminded of the fact that my kindergartners have grown and matured so much. When the soon-to-be kindergartners started to arrive, my first thoughts were "Oh, no, I never should have said he/she was ready for kindergarten at our screening in March." But as more and more arrived, I realized "Ah, they're all that size!" It always takes me by surprise how little they are when they start kindergarten. I'm also always humbled to think that these babies will be released from your care to mine in the next year. I know many of you mothers are concerned about how you can make this transition easier for you and for your child. Here are a few things that you can do to help to make the beginning of the school year easier for you and your child. Some of these may seem obvious to you and are probably things that you already do. (If you're not a kindergarten mom, there are still tidbits in here for you too.)

Physical Needs

- Teach your child to use "school tools": pencils, scissors, erasers, and glue sticks. You might think that teachers are really picky about that pencil grip, but in order for a child to write fluently, they need to be holding the pencil in a "pinched" grip. That fistful pencil grip might work well for now, but eventually it's going to have to change to make your child's writing more efficient. It's much easier to break the habit sooner than later. The pincer grasp that your child used to pick up cheerios at 18 months is the first step to a proper pencil grip. (see diagram)
- You can strengthen fine motor skills by playing with playdoh, stringing beads, using Perler beads,



playing with Legos, and anything that forces that pincer grasp. You can make these activities into academic activities by making letters or numbers with playdoh, counting and making patterns with beads, and following a printed pattern to make something with Perler beads.

- You can strengthen gross motor skills by getting outside and running, hopping, skipping, jumping, throwing, and climbing. Add a little academic learning by having your child count the steps as they go up the slide, throw a stone or ball to a letter or number written with sidewalk chalk on the driveway, and read the numbers on mailboxes as you take a walk.
- Teach your child to take care of personal needs. Your child will be at school for about 7 hours. It is inevitable that they will need to go to the bathroom during that time. Teach your child how to use a public restroom and let them be in a stall by themselves. Many children spend the first few days or weeks of school afraid to go into the bathroom alone. Mothers of boys: let dad take them into a public bathroom to teach what all those extra “sinks/drinking fountains” are for. #itsaurinal (...and no, that’s not soap in there.)

Emotional/Social Needs

- Help your child to learn self-control. In fact, all of the Fruits of the Spirit will help your child so much with the social and emotional adjustment of kindergarten. These fruits are listed in Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Your child will be making an adjustment from sharing mom’s attention with siblings to sharing teacher’s attention with 20+ other children. Learning patience, taking turns, listening to others, and how to entertain one’s self will help your child so much.
- If your child has not already done so, arrange for a few play dates so that he gets used to playing with other children. If possible, let him stay there on his own so that he also gets used to listening to and following the rules of another adult. Sunday school, preschool, and library story times are also valuable for this.
- Teach your child to take care of their own toys, tools, and clothing. Make him responsible for cleaning up after himself. Have him hang up his own coat, put away his own shoes or boots.
- Encourage problem solving. Children love to ask questions. Instead of answering every question and solving every problem, turn the question back on them. Why is that boy crying? -> Why do YOU think that boy is crying? I can’t find my shoe. -> Where do you think it could be?

- Give your child 2-3 step directions and make sure he takes them to completion. This could be as simple as take off your clothes and put them in the hamper, or put on your helmet and get your bike.
- Increase your child’s attention span by having them stay with a task. By the age of 4, a child should be able to sit at the table and color or draw for 10-15 minutes. If your child just likes to run and play, have him start working on a task for 1-2 minutes, gradually increase this time every day. (This is also one strategy that can be used with children with ADHD to build sustained attention to a task.) Activities for this could be puzzle making, coloring, drawing, painting, matching games, card games, and board games.
- Read to your child every day. Reading to your child will help to build good listening skills, help them gain an understanding of the perspective of others, and develop a sustained attention span.

Cognitive Needs

- Practice counting objects by lining them up and touching each one. Encourage counting something every day: count silverware while setting the table, count the fruit chews in the package, count the steps to the basement, count the beans in the garden, etc.
- Read to your child every day. (Yes, I know, I already wrote this.) Show them letters and words in books. Use your finger to demonstrate the left -> right direction of reading. Stop in the middle of a story and have them guess what will happen next.
- Teach them to write and recognize their own name. Write their name with a marker or highlighter and have them trace it. Write it with sidewalk chalk. Use a stick or a sharp stone and write it in the dirt. Using paper plates for lunch? Write your children’s names on their plate and have them find which one is theirs.
- Teach them to recognize letters and to learn the sounds that go with the letters. Look for letters on signs, on menus, in books, etc. Play I Spy with letter sounds. We continue to do this in kindergarten, but the more they know coming into kindergarten, the more confidence they will have in his future learning.

You may have noticed that the “important stuff” is at the end. Most people think that learning letters and sounds and numbers are what we are looking for at Kindergarten screening. Those things are important; but, before that, your kiddos need to be ready to learn. Working on the social, emotional, and physical needs helps them to be ready to learn. Making learning fun, praising accomplishments, and recognizing new skills that are learned will help to build a desire to learn. Have fun with your kiddos; enjoy them while they are home with you, they’re only little for a short time. ...and don’t worry, ready or not, I’m looking forward to seeing them in the fall.

Unsocial Media – Mr. Matt Kuiper

I have chosen to write a review of an article entitled Unsocial Media by Tony Reinke, from 11/6/15, found at <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/unsocial-media>. The reason I found the need to write this article is the overabundance of technology that is lambasting our students each day. Those days are about to get much longer as summer is quickly approaching! For the younger students, obviously social media is not a concern but other technology is a potential problem. For some of the junior high students and our graduating class as they move on to high school, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube and maybe Facebook among other sites will become a bigger part of their lives, if it is not already a big part. On top of social media is the gaming industry on game consoles and phones. This article will talk about the potential dangers of being unsocial with social media. I will tie the article into gaming. The article is broken into five main sections.

Technology and Isolation

Many people today post things on social media with the hope that many people will “like” the post or comment on the post. Oftentimes, self-worth is a byproduct of the amount of likes or the amount of “followers” on Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube. The author argues that isolation and the boom of technology are directly correlated and it has negative consequences. Technology is leading people away from each other. This excerpt from the article makes that point. “Street vendors give way to vending machines. Milk deliveries give way to refrigerators. Bankers give way to ATM’s. Central heating means we no longer congregate around the fireplace. And newspapers (maybe the internet or phone apps) mean we no longer gather local news at the [coffee shop].” This isolation has moved from single television sets where the whole family can enjoy a ball game together to personal screens and maybe crystal clear TV’s in every bedroom. They are much cheaper after all. Technology is bringing people apart.

iPods and Ear Buds

The author takes isolation to another level when referring to iPods. He speaks of how the local symphony was the place to socialize and hear music years ago. Then it turned into the phonograph where many people would come from around the neighborhood to listen. Then came transistor radios, “boom boxes”, and the Walkman. Each of those devices were intended to make it better but steered people toward isolating themselves. Finally, the iPod and personal headphones are the norm. If someone has ear buds or a headphone on, our first impression is to leave them alone and that might be what they want. If someone has a bluetooth speaker attached to themselves, we assume they are too busy, and we better not interrupt them. Isolation is becoming the norm. Manufacturers like it this way because they are selling to individuals instead of a single, large family. According to Reinke, “Sharing has

become an intrusion on personal space.” Leave me alone and get your own!

Losing Trust

People trust their devices more than they trust people. The main point of this section questions the ability to build healthy relationships while alone with your phone. Social media is a scary place sometimes. People are allowed to say whatever they want in an unfiltered environment. This leads to the cyber-bullying epidemic that is plaguing schools today. The author suggests that it is possible that cyber-bullying, a general lack of empathy, and interpersonal skill is due to low self-esteem and isolation among cyber natives. Proverbs 22:24-25 speaks of the dangers of making friends we don’t really know. “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.” How often do adults question the ability of people under 25 to make a proper, well thought out decision? Maybe it’s because they are learning relationships online or not at all. The author argues that social media will eventually die out because it can be such a mean place and relies on the skills it cannot furnish, building trusting relationships with face-to-face relationships.

Build Face-To-Face Trust

This is where the article becomes very important for Christians. If trust is lost online when people can say whatever they want, trust can be gained in personal relationships. We have to “be real with people God has put into our lives.” We need to be examples to the world around us of healthy relationships. Unfortunately, we might be raising kids who “don’t know how to talk with people and don’t even want to look up from their screen.” In order to build trust with people, eye to eye communication is a must. As Christians, we need to know how to talk to be able to spread the love of Christ.

Protect Aloneness

What is the purpose of aloneness? Isn’t isolation supposed to be a time to reflect or to spend time with God? What is the first thing you do in the morning? Is it to look at your phone, or spend time in morning devotions? What’s the last thing you do before going to sleep at night? Are we spending all our alone time with social media or technology? The nature of solitude is to spend time with God or relaxing the mind and solitude has become a vain thing for us. We would rather see how many followers we have or to increase that number.

Christians should cherish aloneness, but not always with technology.

How are Christian parents and students to balance technology, isolation, and face-to-face communication? I hope parents of junior high and high school students are monitoring the social media of their children. The awful things that can be found on social media and YouTube are astounding. I hope parents will look to limit the use of technology with their children in the coming months. This can be done first by leading by example and putting

the phone down occasionally. This can also be done by encouraging kids to play together this summer in the neighborhood or with other students coming over for the day. Hopefully families will have the opportunity to go on a vacation. Put away the technology and spend time together building relationships and kids who know how to speak to one another. I hope parents will encourage their children to cherish isolation properly and to use it in

the right way, with God. Let's encourage our kids to build real relationships with each other. Proverbs 13:20 is a good verse to close this article. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Let your kids be with fellow believers this summer. Let them make real friends. Let them appreciate true isolation as a good thing from God.

Dust off your golf clubs!!

Our Heritage Christian Foundation will be holding their

Heritage Foundation Golf Outing

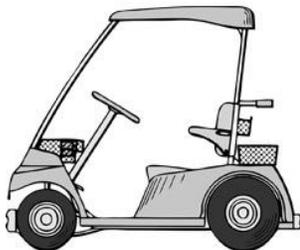
on Saturday, July 22 with a shotgun start at 7 AM.

The outing will once again be held at The Meadows in Allendale.

To reserve a spot for your team, please call Kevin Van Overloop at 616-662-4128

or Scott Koole at 616-293-1624.

Cost is \$440 per team. Please call soon!



Chess is big at Heritage – Mr. Mark Hoeksema

Those of you parents who have children who participate already know this is true. For all of you a few words of explanation are appropriate. I have been teaching and supervising chess playing for four years, and with the help of others, have developed a system for educating our students and having fun along the way.

A few facts will be helpful. We play during the noon hour, which gives us about 40 minutes, enough to play a match. We usually start in January, right after Christmas vacation, and we play each other for several weeks to learn and to practice our skills. Beginning about the first of February, we set up a double elimination tournament, for which grades four through six are eligible. This year we had 42 participants. After many hard-fought matches, congratulations to the winner, Caleb Drnek, and to the second place finisher, Ethan Deemter.

An important part of this informal program involves the third graders. They are not eligible for the tournament because they are beginners. Few know even the basics of chess, but they are willing and amazingly quick learners, and soon are quite competitive. This year I tried my best to work with the third graders, tomorrow's champions, while trying to contain their enthusiasm. At the beginning of the season, there were several times that attendance exceeded 80 youngsters. That was like trying to herd cats.

What is the value of this informal program?

First, it's fun for the young people. It's a game, and kids like games. There is nothing wrong with playing games. God allows us to have pleasures in our lives, and this is one way to use a good gift from him. However, this is not the most important reason.

Second and most importantly, chess teaches life lessons. I do not make a huge point of this to the students, but this is nevertheless my intent.

Chess teaches rules. A given piece on the board can move only in certain ways and not in others. Rules must be followed, as they must be in life.

Chess is also war, which is its origin. The object of chess is to devastate and destroy your enemy. It is amazing how quickly the students speak of "killing" their opponents. Before any of you parents get upset and chastise me for corrupting your children, allow me to remind you that this is a biblical analogy. The Christian life is a battle, and chess is a paradigm for our lives.

Chess teaches thinking, both as to one's own moves and regarding his opponent's moves. A player must always have a plan of attack or a defense mechanism in mind.

The most important aspect of chess however, and one that I constantly emphasize to the students, is that to actions there are consequences. If you make a stupid move and lose your queen, this error teaches you not to do that again. This leads the children to take their time and think the situation through, a concept that I constantly stress to the students. Is the matter of consequences not one of the most valuable lessons we can teach our covenant children?

If you are interested in becoming part of this fun and seriousness, I can use your help. Mothers who know chess (or who want to learn), fathers, retirees, and any interested people, please help next year. The program has exploded to the point that I can no longer handle it by myself with occasional help. If you are interested, please contact Pat Lanning at Heritage.



~ Items to take note of ~

Report card/enrollment packet pick up dates are June 12-15 (Mon – Thurs) here at school. Please stop in between 9 AM and 1:45 PM and grab them!

2017-2018 class lists will be emailed out the day after the *Herald* is distributed. The email will be sent to the 1st of two email addresses supplied to us on your forms at enrollment time – so make sure they are correct on the forms!!

TRIP summer dates are (from 9-10:30 AM): June 13, June 27, July 11, July 25, August 8, and August 22. TRIP will also be sold on the first day of the next school year, August 29.

Special thanks goes out once again to all of our 2016 - 2017 volunteers. Your willingness to help is noticed by us here at Heritage. The volunteer hours are such an important part of the students' education here, and we appreciate it immensely. Keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities in your enrollment packets. There are many, many different time slots open every year. Grandparents – we ALWAYS love our grandpa and grandma volunteers, so please call school (616-669-1773) if you are interested in helping next year!

2017-2018 School Year Calendar

August 29, 2017 – School begins
September 1 and 4, 2017 – No school (Labor Day)
September 6 and 7, 2017 – School Pictures
September 21, 2017 – Fall Family Supper
September 30, 2017 – Fall Children's Clothing and Toy Sale
October 19-20, 2017 – No school (Teachers Convention)
October 27, 2017 – Grandparents Day
November 1 and 2, 2017 – Parent Teacher Conferences
November 23-24, 2017 – Thanksgiving Break
November 30, 2017 – All school program
December 25, 2017 – January 2, 2018 – Christmas Break
January 31 and February 1, 2018 – Parent Teacher Conferences
February 16, 2018 – Mid-winter Break
February 22, 2018 – Fine Arts Night
March 30 – April 6, 2018 – Spring Break
May 18, 2018 – Kindergarten Program
May 23, 2018 – All Schools Band Concert
May 28, 2018 – No school (Memorial Day)
May 31, 2018 – Last day of school and graduation

Thank-you for volunteering your time for the Hudsonville Fair Food Fundraiser

Here's what you need to know before you come:

- Per the Health Department:
 - No open-toed shoes or sandals allowed
 - No tank-tops allowed.
 - Long hair must be tied back.
 - Kitchen help must wear a baseball cap, or if you prefer, we will provide you with a hairnet.
 - Food from home may not be stored in the restaurant kitchen. If you wish to bring in food for your break, please keep in your vehicle until break time.
- Dress code and suggestions from the committee:
 - Do not wear your Sunday best. Expect your clothing to get dirty, particularly if you are working in the kitchen. However...
 - Neat, modest, clothing is always appropriate.
 - Shorts are permitted by the Health Department, and suggested by the committee, since it is usually hot in the building.
 - Wear comfortable tennis shoes.
 - Please do not bring large purses or bags with you for your shift. We have limited shelving, so we would appreciate it if you could put your keys and phone in your pockets or in a very small bag.
- Children are not allowed to accompany parents to their shift(s) at the restaurant, or to the food prep day at school. We could be shut down by the Health Department if this rule is not followed.
- If you are working in the kitchen, expect to wear gloves for most of your shift. We will provide latex-free gloves in two sizes.
- You will be given one 15-30 minute break on your shift, at which time you may order one meal from our kitchen at half price.
- Per the Hudsonville Fair Board, workers in our restaurant are required to pay the regular gate admission fee of \$3.00 per person. We ask that you please consider this your donation to the school. However, if this is a hardship, please contact a committee member during your shift, and we will reimburse you immediately.
- If you are sick or otherwise unable to work your shift, please find a replacement and notify a committee member of this change.
- Remember, we will be representing Heritage **Christian** School to many people this week!

Please note that you should a reminder email through the Sign Up Genius system confirming the date(s) and time(s) of your shift(s). If you would like to check on your shift before you get an email, search for our schedule under heritagefairwork@gmail.com at www.signupgenius.com.

Thanks again for volunteering your time! We are looking forward to another fun and successful week at the fair!

The Fair Food Fundraiser Committee

Lisa DeBoer, Leanne Engelsma, Jenn Eriks, Lanae Holstege, Melissa Schimmel, Dee VanOverloop

2017-2018 School Supplies

Kindergarten Supplies - all labeled

Backpack
Lg size Pencil Box (> 4" high)
2 Large Erasers
2 Large Solid Glue Sticks
Medium point Washable Markers
Crayons (24 or less)
Good Quality Scissors (round-tips)
1 Sturdy Folder with Inside Pocket
Gym Shoes (Velcro or Slip-on)
Art Shirt
Small Pillow (14" or smaller)
Headphones or Earbuds
One pair socks
Green Health Form for Office
Picture of your kindergartener

1st Grade Supplies – all labeled

School Box – Large Size
10 Pencils
1 yellow highlighter
1 Large Eraser ("Pink Pearl")
3 Large Glue Sticks
Elmers White Glue
24 Crayola Crayons
Colored Pencils
12 Thick Washable Markers
4 Dry erase markers
Fiskar Scissors
1 **wide** ruled spiral notebook
Paint Shirt
Gym Shoes
2 Strong, Durable Pocket Folders

2nd Grade Supplies - all labeled

KJV Bible
Psalter
12 **Sharp** Pencils
24 Crayons
12 Colored Pencils
8-12 thick washable markers - not neon
1 Yellow Highlighter
2 Dry Erase Markers – black or blue
1 normal pink eraser
Large Plastic Pencil Box (w/ Snap Lid)
Fiskars **Sharp-Point** Scissors
3 Large Glue Sticks
1 Wide Ruled Notebook
1 Hard Covered Composition Notebook
2 Strong, durable Folders
Art Shirt
Gym Shoes & Extra Pair of Socks
\$2.00 for Classroom Supplies

3rd Grade Supplies

KJV Bible
12 - #2 Pencils
Earbuds in a small bag/pouch

3rd Grade Supplies, continued

Fiskar Scissors
2 Red Pens
4 dry-erase markers
2 Glue Sticks. 1 Glue Bottle
Art Shirt
Small Pencil Box
12" Ruler w/Inches & Centimeters
2 Blue or Black Erasable Pens
1 yellow highlighter
Small Notebook for assignments
2 Black Flair pens (Papermate brand
Fine point, non-permanent markers)
1 Black Sharpie marker
Crayons (~48)
Markers, Colored Pencils
3 Wide Ruled Spiral Notebooks
3 Single Pocket Folders – incl blue
Loose Leaf Paper –Wide Ruled
Psalter
Large Eraser
Gym Shoes

4th Grade Supplies

KJV Bible
Psalter – in Good Condition
Crayons
Red pen
2 Black Papermate brand fine point,
non-permanent markers
1 Black Sharpie marker
Thin washable markers
24 pack of colored pencils
10 sharpened #2 Pencils
2 large glue sticks
Yellow highlighter
Large Eraser
12" ruler with centimeters and inches
clearly marked
Pointed scissors
Zippered 3 Ring Binder/Trapper
Wide ruled loose Leaf Paper
Gym Shoes
1 wide ruled 1 subject spiral Notebook
6 2-Pocket PLASTIC folders (w/ holes)

5th Grade Supplies

KJV Bible and Psalter
Zippered 3-Ring Binder/Trapper
6 Folders
Colored Pencils
Markers
#2 Pencils
2 Red Pens
Blue or Black Erasable Pen
1 Yellow Highlighter
Large Eraser
Loose Leaf Notebook Paper
5 wide ruled spiral notebooks
Ruler (w/Standard & Metric)

5th Grade Supplies, continued

Pointed Scissors
Gym Shoes
Calculator
1 Large Glue Stick

6th Grade Supplies

KJV Bible and Psalter
Pencils and Eraser
Pens: Blue/Black for Work
Pens: Red for Correcting
Black Thin Tip Marker
Colored Pencils
Markers (Optional)
Highlighting Markers (optional)
6 spiral notebooks (70-100 pgs)
Calculator
Gym Shoes
Ruler with inches AND centimeters
Glue Stick
Scissors
Zippered 3-Ring Binder/Trapper
5 Folders w/Pockets
200 pg. loose-leaf paper

7th Grade Supplies

KJV Bible and Psalter
Multiple Pencils and Pens (they lose them!)
Colored Pencils
5 3-Ring Binders (1" rings) for core
courses
5 Spiral Notebooks for core courses
Spiral Bound sketch book (30+ pages)
Portable pencil sharpener
5 Folders w/Pockets
Folder for Art
Loose Leaf Notebook Paper (200 pages)
Ruler with Inches & Centimeters
Compass
Protractor
Scientific Calculator (TI-83 or 84
recommended but not required)

8th Grade Supplies

KJV Bible and Psalter
Pencils and Pens
Colored Pencils
5 3-Ring Binders (1" rings) for core
courses
5 Spiral Notebooks for core courses
1 pkg. 3x5 note cards
5 Folders w/Pockets
Folder for Art
Loose Leaf Notebook Paper (200 pages)
Ruler with Inches & Centimeters
Compass
Protractor
Calculator (TI-83 or 84 required)

