

Herald



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TOP 10? MR. BRIAN KUIPER

Recently, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) completed a 7 month study investigating ways to make Michigan a top 10 educational state in the next 10 years. The result of that study is a rather lengthy document with goals and strategies intended to make progress towards this Top 10 ranking. The following quote is from the MDE when they presented the goals publicly for the first time.

“The set of strategies unveiled Tuesday is designed to

- construct a solid and sustainable P-20 system to educate all children for success;
- meet and support the learning needs of ALL children;
- meet and support the professional needs of ALL educators;
- design systems to overcome the disparities experienced by children and schools;
- empower parents and families to actively participate in their child’s education;
- partner with employers to develop a strong, educated, and highly-skilled workforce; and
- lead and lift Michigan education through greater service from Lansing.”

My gut feeling is that these 7 strategies to attain the goal could have been formulated over a 10 minute cup of coffee. In fact, there are former MDE Board members and superintendents of education that are insulted right now as these strategies have likely been in place for some time. These are not new ideas. They were the driving factors of education in Michigan for many years gone by.

I think that the MDE has set lofty goals, and is trying to please many people while also attracting people to move to Michigan. I also think that they could have boiled this list down to ONE strategy. **Parental involvement!** That is what is necessary for success in education. When children know that their parents are interested in their education, they normally are better at attending to instruction, doing their work, and seeking advice and input from teachers. When parents help their children set goals, ask thoughtful questions about education (not simply, “How was school today?”), and attend school conferences with teachers students understand that dad and mom value education. Parental involvement sets up students for educational success.

I am thankful to work at Heritage Christian School and to be able to witness firsthand this parental care for education. It warms my heart to see parents involved because this shows our children that

education matters. Parents, grandparents, and supporters – continue to have this approach to covenantal, Christian education. Be involved more than just financially. Pray for Heritage and the students. Help your child see that education is important to you. Help them set goals that will advance them intellectually, spiritually, and, even, physically.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the one goal that is absent in a glaring way. This is a goal that MDE will never write in their list, but it will ensure success. Allow God to be front and center in every

classroom, subject area, and school day. This will allow instruction and learning to be done properly and successfully. This will ensure that education reaches the heart, not just the mind. This will demonstrate obedience to the command of our Lord regarding the instruction of His children. “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Building Committee is thankful to be able to report that our new facility is serving our needs very well. Much planning and prayer was necessary. Much faith and trust was granted. The work of renovating a building this size in 9 months, moving from one facility to another, and getting things up and running was no small task. Thanks again to all who helped in any way.

Greater detail will be available at the society meeting in April, but here is an update on some of the building renovations. Insulation upgrades to the building were substantial. The boilers in the elementary end were removed. A high efficiency boiler was installed in the middle school section, and both ends were tied together by underground piping. Technology upgrades in many areas, but especially the installation of wireless hubs have made mobile computing the norm. Security upgrades by installing cameras and a “buzz-in” door lock system have increased the security of staff and students – sometimes at the expense of convenience. Significant parts of the building were painted, and several rooms and hallways received new carpet. Nearly 40% of the roof was re-shingled. These improvements, and many others, were completed at a cost very close to the \$713,500 approved at Heritage Christian School society meetings.

Are we finished? No. A building that is 78,000 sq. ft. needs constant maintenance and upkeep. More painting, shingling, and carpeting will need to be done. The Building Committee is creating a schedule that will allow us to spread these needed improvements over a time period that will combine feasibility and cost in the best way. Another added benefit is the fact that our facility manager is able to perform some of the repairs himself, and can keep a close eye on necessary repairs in a more proactive way than the building committee was able to in the past.

Many are asking about the music room. Plans are complete and bids are being collected. A schedule will be created and progress will soon be visible. The hole has been dug and prepared so that when spring weather arrives, and concrete can be poured, we are ready. We are excited about the benefits of having a dedicated music room, and anticipate that we will be able to occupy it shortly after the 2016-2017 school year begins.

We ask you to remember in prayer Building Committee Chairman Jeff Scholten and his family as they await answers to the questions that God has set before them. Jeff desires to be involved in his Board work, but his priority for now must be his health. We pray that God will guide the doctors as they seek answers.

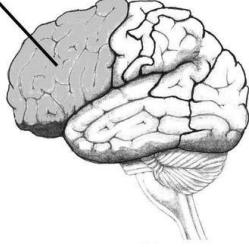
INSURANCE COMMITTEE REPORT ~ MR. JOEL ENGELSMA

The insurance committee has been meeting with the agencies that carry insurance for Heritage Christian School from the transition from HCS on 40th to HCS on Autumn Dr. The committee has met concerning the insurance on the building; getting proper coverage (full replacement), having alarms tied to the local law enforcement in order to receive quicker responses, putting in new locks with swipe cards, and video surveillance systems. All of these resulted in credits given against the premiums, and keeps the safety of the students and staff in mind.

The committee continues to monitor and look at viable options for health insurance as well. The committee meets with the agency that carries our health insurance, gets updates on changes that are being discussed and implemented, and receives quotes from other agencies. Offering a health insurance to the staff at HCS that is sufficient is important, while keeping the costs associated with the insurance as low as is possible.

“THE CEO” ~ MRS. SARAH DECKER

Frontal Lobe



Executive Functioning (EF) is a term used to describe a set of mental processes within the frontal lobe of the brain. The frontal lobe is considered the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the brain because it regulates decision-making, decision-making

judgments, reasoning, and social behavior. It is also useful in the activities of planning, organizing, strategizing, paying attention, and remembering details.

Executive Functioning is at work behind the scenes, helping the learner accomplish his/her desired learning goals effectively and strategically. Executive Functioning supports the following operations:

- ❖ Working Memory - holding information in memory while performing other tasks
- ❖ Planning/Prioritization - the ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal
- ❖ Organization - creating and maintaining systems to keep track of information and materials
- ❖ Response Inhibition - thinking before acting
- ❖ Affect Regulation - controlling emotional responses in order to complete tasks
- ❖ Task Initiation - beginning tasks in a timely manner
- ❖ Cognitive Flexibility - revising plans and adapting to changing conditions
- ❖ Goal-Directed Persistence - following through on task until completion despite distractions
- ❖ Time Management - estimating how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits
- ❖ Metacognition - self-monitoring and self-evaluating
- ❖ Sustained Attention - maintaining attention to a situation or task in spite of distractions, fatigue, boredom

WOW! the frontal lobe does all this? Yes, therefore, as parents, you would want to do what you can to help your child develop his/her executive functioning skills. The development of EF starts at birth and continues through young adulthood, still developing up to age 25. Parents, you can help develop EF by verbalizing how you reason, self-evaluate, manage time, and make decisions. Talk out all the steps in arriving to a decision. You need to be their “frontal lobe” (until age 25!), and with them by your side, show and model good executive functioning. When your child reaches middle school, make sure that your child is ready for less support before you remove all of your scaffolding. Decrease your

support a little at a time and check their independence. If you drop all support and your child is not ready, kids become frustrated, anxious, and overwhelmed. Junior high students and high school students will not have and shouldn't be expected to have fully working executive functioning – they will still need your help in making judgments, decisions, organization and planning.

At a conference this past fall, I was introduced by Dr. Jeffrey O’Koon to the following list of EF tasks, sorted by grade expectations. If children don’t exercise their frontal lobe, it becomes lazy and independency falters. Parents and teachers, you might find this list helpful in setting goals to practice these skills with your children.

❖ EF Tasks: Preschool

- Follow 1 step directions
- Perform simple chores with some assistance/reminders
- Inhibit simple behaviors (hitting/biting, touching hot stove)

❖ EF Tasks: Kindergarten

- Follow 2-3 step directions
- Inhibit more complex behaviors with reminders (e.g., look both ways before crossing a street)

❖ EF Tasks: 1st and 2nd Grade

- Tidy bedroom/playroom without assistance
- Bring papers to/from school
- Complete 20 minute homework assignments with minimal assistance
- Decide how to spend money (saving allowance) with assistance
- Inhibit behaviors: follow safety rules, don't swear, raise hand before speaking in class, etc.

❖ Grades 3 through 5

- Plan simple school project (select book, read book, write report)
- Complete 1 hour of homework with minimal assistance
- Keep track of changing daily schedule (different activities after school)
- Plan how to earn money and save it for desired objects
- Complete tasks after time delay
- Keep track of belongings when away from home
- More complex behavioral inhibition: continue to behave when teacher leaves room, don't make rude comments, inhibition of temper tantrums

❖ Grades 6 through 8

- Complete regular chores around house along with occasional tasks (e.g., raking leaves) for 60-90 minutes
- Babysit younger siblings

- Independently use system for organizing schoolwork, including assignment notebook
- Follow more complex school schedule
- Plan & carry out long-term schedules for projects, including tasks to accomplish and timeline
- Manage time, including afterschool activities, homework, and chores, by estimating time needed to complete each task and making adjustments along the way
- Inhibit rule-breaking behavior in the absence of visible authority figure

❖ High School

- Establish and refine a long-term goal and make plans for meeting that goal
- Effectively manage schoolwork on a day-to-day basis
- Carry out the college application process
- Manage participation in extracurricular activities
- Obtain employment and/or pursue recreational activities during the summer
- Inhibit reckless and dangerous behaviors (e.g., use of illegal substances, sexual promiscuity, shoplifting, vandalism, etc.)

“THEY’RE GETTING IT” ~ MRS. BRENDA PASTOOR

It seems every year when we come back to school after Christmas Break, the Kindergartners are changing! Many of them are suddenly reading! Others can tell time and do addition and subtraction in their minds. But most exciting of all, perhaps, is when they start recalling talks we’ve had about how to treat each other, or lessons we’ve learned from past Bible stories and devotions in class. I think you can probably see my mouth actually fall open when one of these little lambs relates a truth from one Bible story to another or to a situation we are talking about at the time! Another thing that warms my soul is when one of my students brings up a verse from the Word of God when we are discussing a situation or event. This verse is often quoted, and must be learned at Church, applied at home and reinforced at school! “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Matthew 22:37 – 39)

Having celebrated Valentine’s Day recently, a day on which we still find it acceptable to show our Christian love for each other at school by making and/or giving little tokens of friendship to each other, my class had a talk about love in a broader sense. We started with a writing exercise entitled “What do you LOVE?” I’ll share some of those answers later.

In talking about love we also talked about God’s love for us, our love for each other, and how we show our love for God and our thankfulness for God’s love. Some of the answers reflect the Bible stories we’ve studied, some of them the devotionals we’ve read and discussed, and some just show their sweet hearts! Enjoy!

“How does God show His love for us?”

- He made us alive so we could move.
- He gave us a family and a house.
- He made the rainbow and sunshine!
- He gave us parents.
- He created the world.
- He did miracles!
- He gave us Jesus to die on the cross!

- He made the beautiful ocean and animals and everything else.
- He washed away our sins!
- He chose us for His sheep!

“How do we show our thankfulness and love for God’s love?” (I promise I did not give them any examples or prompts! Amazing, isn’t it?)

- We go to His house.
- We read the Bible and listen to His Word.
- We learn our memory verse.
- We pray!
- We sing to Him!
- We praise God at Church.
- We praise God at school.
- We praise God at home.
- We obey His law!
- We don’t follow Satan.
- We give thanks to Him.

“How can we show love to each other?”

- We can clean up for each other. (Love her! She knows how Mrs. Pastoor loves cleanliness!)
- Play with your friends.
- Be kind!
- Color someone a picture.
- Be friends.
- Be NICE!
- We can help each other.
- We can make new friends.
- SHARE!
- We can give each other (Valentine) cards.
- Take turns!

I hope that reading the above comments shows you why I love my job so much! What a testimony to God’s grace and the blessing of covenant homes! Now, because I know how you all love to see what these little minds are thinking, I’ll share some of their writings. (Check out the many references to *family!*)

What do you LOVE?

Elijah Horvat
I love to eat **pancakes**.
I love to play with **Dad**.

I love it when my mom **plays with me**.
I love to **wrestle** with my dad.
I love to **play with my little brother**.
I really love **coloring!**

Cole Visser

I love to eat **pizza**.
I love to play with **dump trucks**.
I love it when my mom **cooks cookies**.
I love to **play hopscotch** with my dad.
I love to **do everything!**
I really love **to play with my sister, Megan!**

Kimberly Korhorn

I love to eat **mashed potatoes**.
I love to play with **my cousin Lanie**.
I love it when mom **cooks mashed potatoes**.
I loved to **rake leaves with my dad and jump in the piles**.
I love to **hold Lanie**.
I really love **Rachel!**

Breydan Doezeema

I love to eat **pizza**.
I love to play with **my sister Alivia**.
I love it when my mom **bakes**.
I love to play **monsters** with my dad.
I love to **play Go Noodle**.
I really love **my sister Alivia!**

Sydney Brummel

I love to eat **pizza**.
I love to play with **my friend Taylor**.
I love it when my mom **makes cookies**.
I love to **wrestle** with my dad.
I love to **play Minnies with my mom**.
I really love **Taylor!**

Morgan Karsemeyer

I love to eat **cupcakes**.
I love to play with **Leah**.
I love it when my mom **makes cakes with me**.
I love to **play Battleship** with my dad.
I love to **play with my sister Madalyn**.
I really love **Leah!**

Gavin Heyboer

I love to eat **cookies**.
I love to play with **my brother Liam**.
I love it when my mom **plays games with me**.
I love to **make cookies** with my dad.
I love to **play hopscotch**.
I really love **cake!**

Olivia Bleyenberberg

I love to eat **a peach**.
I love to play with **my sisters**.
I love it when my mom **takes a walk with me**.
I love **to get picked up from school** with my dad.
I love to **play outside**.
I really love **my dad!**

Josie Brummel

I love to eat **bananas**.

I love to play with **Kimberly**.
I love when my mom **comes to hot lunch**.
I love to **play** with my dad.
I love to **color**.
I really love **my dad!**

Jayson Hanemaayer

I love to eat **peanut butter and jelly**.
I love to play with **Bryce**.
I love it when my mom **vacuums**.
I love to **do work** with my dad.
I love to **drive trucks**.
I really love **mom!**

Isaac Kamps

I love to eat **cake**.
I love to play with **(my brother) Westin**.
I love it when my mom **lets me play computer**.
I love to **read books** with my dad.
I love to **eat candy**.
I really love **my mom!**

Bryce Schipper

I love to eat **pizza**.
I love to play with **Nolan**.
I love it when my mom **makes cupcakes**.
I love to **play soccer ball** with my dad.
I love to **sort out my Pokemon cards**.
I really love **playing with my friends!**

Ella Van Overloop

I love to eat **apples**.
I love to play with **Jayson**.
I love it when my mom **makes M&M bars**.
I love to **play** with my dad.
I love to **bake**.
I really love **to read books!**

Evan Bleyenberberg

I love to eat **muskmellon**.
I love to play with **Nolan**.
I love it when my mom **cooks**.
I love to **play** with my dad.
I love to **play**.
I really love **pizza!**

Micah Vink

I love to eat **vegetables**.
I love to play with **dad**.
I love it when my mom **cooks**.
I love to **work** with my dad.
I love to **swing**.
I really love **lighthouses (because my dad saw one in California!)**

Olivia Wigger

I love to eat **popsicles**.
I love to play with **my sister, Nadia**.
I love it when my mom **has a birthday**. (©)
I love to play **hospital** with my dad.
I love to **make stuff**.
I really love **my family!**

Emma DeVries

I love to eat **celery**.
I love to play with **my brother**.
I love it when my mom **cooks**.
I love to **play** with my dad.
I love to **help my brother**.
I really love **my family!**

Nolan Corson

I love to eat **pizza**.
I love to play with **Dad**.
I love it when my mom **cooks potatoes**.
I love to **work** with my dad.

I love to **play with my brother**.
I really love **to play!**

Peter Van der Schaaf

I love to eat **Italian Wedding Soup**.
I love to play with **(my brother) Lincoln**.
I love it when my mom **makes popcorn. (It's really good!)**
I love to **go fishing** with my dad.
I love to **go on vacation**.
I really love **Lincoln!**

“ORGANIZATIONAL TIPS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS” ~ MRS. JANE WOUDEBERG

If you could go back in time, and peek into my student desk and locker when I was a 4th grader, you would find clutter, trash, assignments I never handed in, and even the occasional uneaten, shriveled apple. Perhaps it's because of my own struggles in this area that I know the frustrations of disorganization.

Student organizational problems take various forms, including: forgetting to bring necessary materials to class, losing papers, using time inefficiently, not completing seatwork, and forgetting when work is due. Even such simple tasks as bringing a pencil to class can elude the disorganized student. Fortunately, organizational skills can be learned. If your child struggles with organization, please consider the following guidelines:

Develop some organization strategies with your child. I think it's important that the organizational tools you supply are age appropriate and user friendly. If the strategy is too complicated it won't get used. The younger the child, the more daily help will be needed on the part of parents and teachers.

Organizing the Folder/Trapper Keeper

- ▶ Check the trapper regularly to see if the correct work is being stored there.
- ▶ When work is to be stored, help your child to decide which subject folder to put it in.
- ▶ When it's time to study for a test, make sure that the correct information is in the folder.

Organizing and Study Skills

- ▶ Students won't study if they can't find their materials.
- ▶ Check to ensure that your child keeps worksheets and study guides organized.
- ▶ Consider a *Quizlet* account (it's free). *Quizlet.com* makes it fun and easy to study for tests. I've organized all my Bible, Science, and Social Studies units into *Quizlet*, then show my students how to use the site to study for tests.

Assignment Books

- ▶ HCS supplies 4th - 8th grade students with assignment books. The assignment book is a

great tool for communicating with parents about what is due when.

- ▶ It's especially helpful to use the assignment book to remind students of work that they should be making progress on, but not necessarily completing that day.
- ▶ Look at each child's assignment book to see that they are filling it out and getting their work done. Students may just say, "Mom, can you sign my assignment book." If parents don't look at the homework, then signing the assignment book is pointless.

The cluttered desk, folder...

- ▶ Encourage your child to toss old papers, tiny pencils, broken supplies, and used tissues.
- ▶ If you have a child who tends to collect detritus [waste or debris of any kind], encourage them to pick a day of the week to do through the desk and trapper.

Student Lockers:

- ▶ Get rid of anything that doesn't belong in the locker (garbage or whatever is not useful).
- ▶ Have the students decide how to group textbooks, notebooks, and workbooks.
- ▶ Assign specific areas in the locker to specific belongings.
- ▶ Attach a student class schedule to the inside of the locker door. Install a hook (with permission) to hold a gym bag.
- ▶ Add extra shelves if necessary (with permission), to make the space more efficient.
- ▶ Decide on maintenance. This may be a weekly straightening-up or a semi-annual purge, depending on the student.

I know that parents don't have control over what happens to their child's desk and locker at school, but parents are able to influence this aspect of their child's school life. I believe that most teachers would gladly partner to help students get and stay organized. I know personally how frustrating it can be to struggle with this issue, but this is something that you can get on top of!

“THE LIFELONG LEARNER” ~ MR. DAN VANDYKE

Remember that teacher – the one whose idea of instruction was to answer every question with the same words; “Look it up”? Hopefully, that teacher is still around today. Hopefully, that teacher is your child’s. Maybe his or her words have switched to “Just Google it,” but the response is still a good one – in fact, it’s getting better and better as time goes by. Remember the days when you had to learn how to use a card catalog or the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*, or even the conventions for doing Boolean searches online. But things are so much different now. Never has it been easier for information and ideas to be accessed quickly and efficiently. Now we can speak our searches into our phones. More and more people are embracing the reality that you can learn almost anything almost anytime from almost anywhere. And the better news is that this sort of self-motivated research and genuine learning will actually improve your very ability to know and understand more of God’s world deeply.

We all know that our world is changing at an exponential rate. We also know that the world has never been more accessible. What we might not appreciate are the benefits of pressing ourselves to continue to learn more about this world – God’s world – and yes, it is still His. There are many benefits, but two especially appeal to us as Reformed Christians: we must develop our gifts and abilities to serve our God better, and we must grow in our understanding and use of the world God has given to us.

A big temptation that all Christians face – as well as every other human – is the lure of being satisfied with a “finished” mindset. Especially when we’ve achieved a goal or three, we like to coast for a while. Before we know it, a “while” has become a lifestyle of living day to day without setting any new goals for growth. We tend to live life as it happens without purposefully planning for the next step in God’s plan for our lives. God has given us unique talents and interests, but we may not consume these for our own selfish pleasure, nor may we put them on the shelf after we’ve “accomplished” such and such a goal. We must always be searching for new ways we can use them to serve our neighbor. That means that we must develop these gifts. Businessmen today know well

the danger of staying in a familiar rut, but do Christians always understand this as well? Our children are growing up in a world in which many of us feel intimidated and overwhelmed. This is a perfect example of lifelong learning that we as parents simply must do. On the other hand, our children often feel overwhelmed by the do-it-yourself mindset that characterized our parents. And with resources at our fingertips, we can become even more skilled at an even broader variety of do-it-yourself projects that would’ve been impossible for our parents to learn about. You can learn how to garden or how to repair your car’s power steering pump or how to write computer code. “Just Google it.” And we can teach our children these same self-motivated learning skills.

As we learn anything, we are – or at least should be learning about God, His world, and the spiritual war in which we are daily involved. This learning is the type that we must most carefully model for our children. This is where the Biblical truths which never change weave throughout a world that is constantly changing. Because God’s truth never changes, again we might be tempted to feel like we’ve “accomplished” this learning. This is a great danger. Truths never change, but the use and application of these truths must continually develop. Our parents didn’t have to learn about technological threats to our own safety and that of our children. We must learn these things. To neglect this learning is to neglect our duty as parents. On the positive side, countless resources are available to improve on our spiritual growth. There are thousands of excellent books which can be downloaded instantly and read on your phone. Thousands of sermons, podcasts, and other edifying resources can be streamed or downloaded at any time. Not sure how or from where? “Just Google it.”

Examples abound, but we all have a sense of the amount and benefit of all this learning anyway. It’s an amazing time, even though it’s a scary time as well. So learn to embrace the wondrously abundant and beneficial knowledge that is available to us, but also learn to strengthen your spiritual awareness so that the dangers in this world can be met with the vestments of godly knowledge and wisdom.

“SWEET LIPS” ~ MR. JASON HOLSTEGE

No, the idea for this article did not arise from the plethora of candy hearts that invaded our home during that annual Hallmark-holiday time we’ve come to know as Valentine’s Day. Rather, recent discussions during our dinnertime devotions with our children, coupled with the completion of a really good book (*Everyday Talk*, by John Younts), reminded my wife (as a parent) and I (as a parent and teacher) that

we often forget what it means to truly communicate with our children in a Godly manner.

We all know the situation well: Junior comes home with a less-than-stellar report card, forgets to take out the trash, disturbs the peace of the home by picking on his younger siblings, or some combination of all three. Parents (and/or teachers) immediately pounce on the aforementioned offender, and give him what-

for with the severest tongue-lashing, guilt trip, when-I-was-your-age speech, or some combination of all three. And we wonder why Junior is so sullen and moody for the rest of the week.

If this is what our home or classroom sounds like (which is more often than we all might care to admit), Proverbs 16:20-24 can help sweeten the conversation a bit:

“He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he. The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. Understanding is a well spring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, and health to the bones.”

And so this profitable-for-instruction Scripture gives us a few reminders:

1. Our goal in instruction in the home and at school is to help our children see that “understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it” (v.22). This is always the main thing we want to drive home in our instruction and correction: God’s wisdom brings life, joy, and safety. “To live apart from God is death” is the memorable way that Psalter #203 puts it. That holds true for personal relationships in the home and school, as well as the material taught in the classroom.
2. Because “foolishness is bound in the heart of a child” (Prov. 22:15), children need the instruction and guidance of those less foolish –

“FIRST GRADE WISDOM” ~ MRS. MARY VANOVERLOOP

There is something everyone in the world would like. Something people strive for their whole life. Something people wish others would call them. Something I see in my students every day, but will never see in the richest, most powerful people in the world. True wisdom.

Psalms 111:10 states, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.” To fear God is to have faith and know that He is God. To trust in Him, rely upon Him, and serve Him. This is the beginning of wisdom. This is what I strive to build upon every day and in every area of my students’ lives.

A good understanding of the Lord is learned and is shown in obedience to God’s law. This learning begins at a very early age in the home. Vows are taken by parents at baptism to teach a good

that would be us, their parents and teachers. And how we word that instruction takes much thought, study, and prayer on our part. This is emphasized in the passage mentioned above when we are exhorted to “handle a matter wisely” (v.20) and to “teach our mouths” (v. 23) what to say. That’s the “everyday talk” that we have with our children about the subjects they are learning in school, the diligence they give to their work, the attitude they have towards their close or not-as-close friends.

3. Therefore our “everyday talk” should have a certain “sound” to it. The “fear of the LORD” ought to permeate our lives and talk. Our conversations ought to model for our children Godly behaviors and attitudes towards people and subjects, whether we find them personally appealing or not. And if correction must be applied, the “grievous words” that “stir up anger” of Proverbs 15:1 ought to be eschewed for the “sweet lips” (v.21) and “pleasant words” (v.24) that promote instruction. Too often we provoke our children through manipulation (“I’ll do ___, so my child will do ___.”), or negotiation and behaviorism (“If you do ___ for me, I’ll do ___ for you.”), or threatenings and angry words (“If you EVER do ___ again, I’ll REALLY ___!”) because we think it’s effective. Such words are really only effective at “cleaning the outside of the cup” (Matt. 23:25), against which Jesus warns with the strongest language.

The Biblical goal for each of our children is a heart that willingly submits to authority. And the Biblical method for accomplishing that involves “sweet lips” that use “pleasant words” to promote instruction. May God graciously grant us homes and schools that practice this for His glory.

understanding of God. Bible stories, songs, prayers, bringing children to church, teaching God’s law and obedience are strong beginnings. These foundational lessons are evident in the lives of the first graders I teach.

Our school is an extension of the home. The foundations of the home and church are built upon in our classrooms. Bible class is so important, and a favorite part of my day and of the students’ day. The students’ childlike faith and love of the Bible stories is evident in their listening and active participation. They love the excitement of the stories, but they also are awed by the power of their God. Prayer is another wonderful part of our school day. Not only praying with the students, but teaching them to pray: to the One, only God, Creator of the heaven and the earth; to give thanks for our many blessings; to bring the needs of others in prayer; to ask for forgiveness

for our sins. All parts of prayer taught in our classroom. However, if that was the end of our Christian lessons of the school day; I would be missing the importance that all knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord. That is true wisdom.

Many make the mistake of thinking a Christian school means just prayer and Bible class set the Christian school apart from the non-Christian school. Yes, these are important, but fear of the Lord encompasses our whole life. All subjects, from math to science to music to art must all be based on teaching fear of the Lord. Lose the fear of the Lord in the teaching of all knowledge, and all that remains is folly. In addition, our school day includes more than teaching of subjects. Socially, we have the body of Christ learning to work together. Encouraging one another, praying for one another, working out differences with one another, forgiving one another. We as teachers, just as parents, are used as means to impart true wisdom to young children of God.

What a responsibility! It is something that can only be completed with true wisdom on the part of the parents and teachers. Relying fully on our God and having the fear of the Lord to guide us through. Then the fruits of our labors can be seen.

How are these fruits seen daily at Heritage? Students living a life of thankfulness and praising God. Helping others through small but kinds acts. Helping pick up spilled book boxes. Praying for classmates or relatives of fellow students. Offering sympathy to hurt students. Humbly letting others be first, rather than pushing to be first. Respecting other's ideas and listening when they talk. Treating God's creation and creatures with care. Asking for forgiveness and forgiving others. The list can go on and on. Yes, we deal with sin and troubles, but the wisdom of the children I teach is greater than any adult who denies God as the creator of the earth who upholds each of us in His hands. The wisdom I see and hear from my students brings me humbly back to how to get true wisdom. All knowledge is useless if it is not founded upon the fear of the Lord. It is the prayer of Christian school teachers that they may be used as tools to develop and watch this true wisdom grow in the hearts and lives of their student.

“CHANGE” ~ MISS EMILY GRITTERS

Change is something we all experience all the time. Sometimes it is a small change; our schedule, our hair, or how we dress. Other times change is life-altering—the death of a loved one or the blessing of a new life. We all deal with change in different ways. Lately I have had to go through multiple changes in my life, both large and small.

First of all I had to sign a contract with a school, a big step in the direction of growing up. Next, I graduated college, officially ending my school-learning days (for

Beginnings of wisdom from first graders:

What would you tell your subjects if you were eight year old King Josiah?

- Make them go to church and worship God.
- Make everybody read the Bible.
- Give everyone a Bible.
- Tell them the Ten Commandments.
- Tell them to try to go to church and not miss it.
- Pray to God with them.

What do you know about God's creation?

- God created the world and He created humans. God created cats.
- God created the trees and the grass and the boulders and the land and the water and the animals.
- God created the earth. God created us. God created the trees. God created the sea. God created animals. God created the ground. God created snow.
- God made the earth and the planets. God made heaven. God made earth in 6 days. God made the animals. God made the ground and God made you.
- God created sharks. Sharks have teeth. The biggest shark is the whale shark.

What does God's law teach?

- God's law teaches me to be a Christian and be kind to friends.
- God's law teaches about kindness.
- God's law teaches not to steal. God's law teaches not to kill.
- God's law teaches the Ten Commandments. God gave them to us. We love them. We obey them. He likes when we obey them.
- God's law teaches us good things. God teaches us what to do.
- God's law teaches us about the Bible. God's law teaches us about Jesus. God's law teaches us about love. God's law teaches us about righteousness.

the time being). I was officially an adult ready to take on the real world. Summer began and I started a new shift at my old job which caused me to make the switch from waking up and staying up late to going to bed early and becoming an early riser. The summer flew by as I mentally prepared myself for what was going to be probably the biggest change in my life—moving out of my state and away from the life I had always known.

Granted, I have lived through plenty of change. It is impossible to live a life that is completely void of change. As I grew up I grew taller, I made new friends, went to new schools, bought new clothing, and accepted the change as it arrived. However, change was never something I looked forward to. I always dreaded the concept of having to change. Graduating from grade to grade, moving from grade school to high school and then on to college was extremely daunting for me to think about. I enjoyed staying in my safe little bubble of normal. I am blessed to say that I was able to live a very safe, comfortable life in my little Northwest Iowa bubble. And all at once, that bubble popped. Real life was here, and I had to accept that. I was very excited for the move, but also extremely scared. Questions began to run through my mind, most beginning with the all familiar "Why"?

Taking a look through history, we see many of God's people experiencing change. God came to Noah one day and informed him of God's plan to wipe out the world as Noah knew it with a flood. God then instructed Noah to build the ark, in order to save the church. The next time Noah would see the earth again, it would be completely changed, completely new. God also came to Abram and told Abram he had to leave his home and family to live in a strange land with strange people, later on even changing Abram's name to Abraham. Abram had to start over in a new land, Noah had to start over in a new earth. They both must have had the fear of the unknown, of change, come upon them. Both listened, and did exactly what God told them to do. How? The answer to this was something that I needed to be reminded of. They both listened, by faith. They had the faith

that God had the best plan for them. God's plan is the only plan. It is the perfect plan.

In our continuously changing world, there is one thing that never changes. God is unchanging. He loves His people and that will never change. God is our rock, our shepherd. He is always there for us. He has given us the faith to believe that He has a purpose for every one of us through the changes that He sends to us. Abraham and Noah both had to go through changes because God had a greater plan for them. They had a great faith in God. We need to be reminded of this. We do not need to be anxious or worried. Every change that happens is God shaping us, building us for His perfect plan. We need to embrace the changes, whether they seem good or bad. Praise Him for all the changes that come our way.

There is one Psalm that especially appealed to me this summer as I was preparing myself for this big change. Psalm 103 stood out to me, and I read it over and over. In this Psalm, David talks about God's power and righteousness, it reminded me that my life is nothing without God. No matter where I am, whether I am in Iowa with my immediate family and old friends or in Michigan with relatives and new friends, God is still with me and I am to continue to bless His name always.

Since moving, I have embraced my new life here in Michigan. I have been blessed with caring relatives and fantastic friends. First grade has been an adventure, but one that I am definitely enjoying. God has been with me every step of the way, and He continues to stand by me as I continue life here. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His Holy name." (Ps. 103:1)

"SPIKEBALL" ~ MISS LIZ VANDRUNEN

One net, two teams, three hits and four people. The object of Spikeball is to hit a palm-sized ball into a mini trampoline in such a way that the opposing team cannot return it. On Mondays, a group of teachers get together after school to play this thrilling sport. It has progressively become more competitive each time we play. Being the teachers we are, of course time was taken to read and memorize all the rules of the game. There is only one rule we have a hard time keeping and that is calling a fault on the opponent's serve when the ball hits the rim or bounces in an unpredicted direction off the net. I've come to the conclusion that we fail at keeping this particular rule of the game because it's not always easy to point out the mistakes of others. Which brings me to the topic of peer assessment.

Peer assessment is when one judges the quality of their peer's work, based on criteria and evidence, for the purpose of their peer's future improvement. I have enjoyed researching and learning more about

this particular topic during my current masters class, because I definitely think that this approach to assessment is applicable in so many different aspects of life.

My students are some of the most encouraging, considerate, and helpful people I know. I have the privilege of getting to see their loving words and actions on a daily basis. They help me out multiple times a day. If I leave my water bottle in the computer lab (which tends to be a regular occurrence), someone shows up to the classroom carrying it. Every time. What really means the most to me is that they are not only helpful to their teacher, but to their fellow classmates as well. When one student drops their pencil box on the floor, five classmates jump down to help them pick up the random paraphernalia a fourth graders' pencil box contains.

When I asked my students why they help others, they responded by saying: helping is the right thing to do -

it brings praise to God, it makes other people's lives easier, it sets a good example, it shows we are Christians, and the list goes on. In fourth grade, we have been applying peer assessment to stories we have recently written. This involves reading, revising, and discussing a fellow student's written work. Through this process, they help their classmate become a better writer. I have noticed several positive changes after implementing peer assessment in my classroom. Students have developed deeper relationships with their classmates, built valuable communication skills, learned from other's mistakes, and gained a deeper understanding of what quality work looks like.

"P.A.I.N.T." ~ MRS. KIM KUIPER

This year has been very exciting in the new building, in a new Art room. My theme this year is PAINT; I have a paint sample banner and paint cans hanging from my ceiling (very exciting to be able to reach my ceiling now!), a colorful paint splashed zebra and bright colorful bulletins boards. PAINT is also a theme in another way too, I've used it as an acronym for what a student can expect in a Christian Art class.

P – Practice Makes Perfect. As will all new tasks, we may have to try and try again. Whether it was learning to tie your shoe, learning multiplication tables, how to shoot a basketball or playing the piano, in order to get better at something you need to practice. So the more time spent using your talents, they better you will become. Art is not simply something you are born doing, some have it, others don't. This verse is on a wall in my room: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

A – Attempt & Achieve. Every day (and every art project) is an opportunity for a new personal best. That's what I ask of my students, attempts something new and achieve a new personal best. Art can be a little over whelming and scary sometimes, but I don't expect students to create a masterpiece, just something a little better than last time. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." Colossians 3:23

I – I CAN! When you are in a Christian classroom our attitudes should be positive, always doing our best and encouraging others too. A positive attitude is always uplifting and includes a smile. "I can't"

Proverbs 27:17 speaks of iron sharpening iron. A blade is sharpened with a particular purpose in mind. God calls us to lovingly help one another grow so that we can better serve and glorify his name. Peer assessment is a practical way to help our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ grow both academically and spiritually. This is something that is not always easy to do, but it is important and beneficial for all involved.

You're invited to join us on Spikeball Mondays. And come prepared, because this time around, we'll be calling your faults.

should be replaced by "I will try" because God gave us the ability to create and learn. And while talking and working, I never want to hear negative comments about their own work or a fellow classmate's. "Edify one another." I Thessalonians 5:11

N – Notice Details. Follow directions, listen to instruction and take note of small details. Art class is much different than other classes with books and worksheets and test review sheets. As I remind my students daily, my words are all you get, listen up! But also notice the details of God's creation, how every snowflake is different, how the branches of a tree give it a unique shape, the subtle differences in color on animal's fur. These are important because God made them and we should want to imitate God's creation accurately. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork." Psalm 19:1

T – Talents, Gifts & Abilities. God has given us all the ability to draw and create. These are talents which must be used to God's glory, even if you don't think drawing is your best talent. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Ecclesiastes 9:10

Our goal in Art class, and in all classes at Heritage, is to be a kingdom-minded quality producer. Art class is not to produce artists, or hone a skill that can be used in a career someday. Art class is for using all the abilities God has given us for His glory, showing ourselves to be lights in this dark world.

Congratulations!

- to **Nathan Langeland** who has qualified to compete in the state level competition of the National Geographic Bee! The Michigan State Bee will be held on Friday, April 1, 2016.
- to **Lindsey Holstege, Arianne VanUffelen, and Lily Holstege** who earned first, second, & third place awards for our school in the America and Me Essay Contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. As the top finalist, Lindsey's essay advances to a state level competition, from which the top 10 essays in MI will be selected.

Upcoming Dates for this School Year

March 12, 2016 – Spring Children’s Clothing and Toy Sale
April 1-8, 2016 – Spring Break
May 5, 2016 – Kindergarten Round-Up
May 20, 2016 – Kindergarten Program
May 30, 2016 – No School (Memorial Day)
May 31, 2016 – Graduation, last day for students (1/2 day)

2016-2017 School Year Calendar (Next year’s calendar!!!!)

August 30, 2016 – School begins
September 2 and 5, 2016 – No school (Labor Day)
October 20-21, 2016 – No school (Teachers Convention)
November 24-25, 2016 – Thanksgiving Break
December 26, 2016 – January 3, 2017 – Christmas Break
February 17, 2017 – Mid-winter Break
March 31 - April 7, 2017 – Spring Break
May 29, 2017 – No school (Memorial Day)
May 31, 2017 – Last day of school and graduation

**1, 2, 3, 4
We Declare**



Monday- Friday, April 25-29

Location: Heritage Christian School
6th-8th grade classes- jugs will be located in the lobby.
Please drop your coins and pennies off each day between 7:45-8:00am.
Your donations will help raise money for the technology department at Heritage.

Rules:

Each class (6th-8th grade) has their own jug for collecting money.

Gain points by adding pennies and bills to your class jug.

Lower other classroom totals by adding silver coins to their jugs.

Goal: Most points WINS!

We will have daily prizes for the class with the most points and a grand prize for the winning class!!!!!!

POINTS:

ADDING

Pennies +1 point
\$1 dollar +100 points
\$5 dollars +500 points
\$10 dollars +1000 points
\$20 dollars +2000 points

SUBTRACTING

Nickles 5 points
Dimes 10 points
Quarters 25 points