



CALVARY

WARRIOR REVIEW



above photo Nicaragua Missions Team

Spring Report

By: Dr. Timothy Gray - Head of School



Spring is upon us! What a year with a lot of firsts! It has flown by with graduation quickly coming! As we approach the end the school year, I am reminded of the volume of change that has occurred for Calvary in the span of a year. This year has been one of getting to know ourselves as an organization and each other.

As the first independent fiscal year with 21 new staff members, 35 new families, a newly implemented School Board, and a Finance Committee, a lot of track has been laid in these areas. Students have been given a breadth of new experiences in the realms of academic and singing competitions, out-reach to nursing homes and regional churches by our Proclaimers and handbell choirs. We hosted BJU's science ambassadors for an interactive 2-day presentation. Additionally, our athletic teams earned ACCAC league championships in MS Girls Volleyball and MS girls, Varsity Girls, and Varsity Boys Basketball, and the Varsity Boys Volley-ball team was launched. We also can't forget the recent talent show in the elementary grades that showcased new rising talent amongst their peers. We look forward to an upcoming art competition and replacement of the Scholastic book fair with a new Christian book fair in May.

In other areas we had a return of former programs such as foreign language, band, honor society and student council field trips, and onsite planetarium interactive lab. Spanish class not only introduced a language, but has also included cultural education with field trips, in-class projects, holiday celebrations and more, just in time to help prepare the high school students who went on the mission trip to Nicaragua. Now we are closing out the school year with the 50th edition of the yearbook and upcoming graduation of our 50th senior class on June 2nd, with special alumni participation.

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

- VISION
- LEADERSHIP ROLES
- PROCESS IMPROVEMENT
- ACADEMICS
- FINANCE UPDATE
- PLANNING AHEAD



I:55 BOOK FAIRS

Where Faith Matters

Calvary Baptist School inspires students to DISCOVER their purpose and to ENGAGE their Hearts,
Heads and Hands in service to Christ both locally and globally.

Our Vision Statement

Vision

God is doing a special work in Calvary. It is easy to be our own harshest critics in the desire to see the most spiritual growth. We know our own potential. In working with students and youth for over 15 years, I can clearly see that the educational process in place here at Calvary can build and equip the faith of students. This speaks to the latent youth pastor that hides within me. Knowing Calvary is an organization that strives to learn and implement better ways of doing things, it ignites the part of me that drove me to pursue and obtain my doctorate in Business Administration. My desire for Calvary is this:

I want to see God honored through Calvary growing into the fullness of an organization that reflects all its stakeholders to the fullest potential. These stakeholders include current families, alumni, staff, and donors. This means Godly men and women growing up through its ranks and meeting all the tenets of our core beliefs. Eventually, Calvary would be seen as a blessing to the entire community through the faith and equipping of our students and faculty.

Having a vision and implementing the vision are two different things. This is similar to how the school operates. The School Board has been charged with holding the vision for the school. That is the Board's role. But implementing that vision falls on the Head of School, the only employee hired directly by the School Board. The administration, faculty, and staff also help implement the vision in their own respective areas. One of the things that brings me joy in life is helping to empower and equip people to use the gifts and talents God has placed inside of them.

Governance & Leadership Roles

This is a good time to clarify the difference amongst governance, Head of School and Principal. For those of us in education, we take for granted the general understanding of these roles.

In the last issue, we discussed our new governance who is the School Board, so please visit our website or FACTS Family Portal to reference the winter issue for the role of the Board. The School Board hires one employee, and one employee only: The Head of School (HoS). HoS is another term for the CEO or the Executive Director of a school. The HoS interfaces with the School Board and is the sole employee of the Board. Primary duties for the HoS are related to the strategic operation of the school as a whole organization and the management of the school in a business sense. It is the duty of the HoS to hire the right staff and faculty to achieve the mission and vision of the Board. This is done by managing the directors. These include the Principal and administrative departments (finance, preschool & extended care, school office, athletics, facilities, and marketing). Should any of these departments need input, assistance, or help with resolution of a problem, the HoS steps in to help



From the left: Dr. Gray (Head of School), School Board Members: Peter Rall, Dale Moe, Kate Hill, Pastor Sam Wells, Phyllis Stevens, Pastor Aria Mawaji, Howard Wood, Craig Silsbee

Calvary Baptist School exists to educate students with a Biblical worldview and support families as they train up their children in truth, all to the glory of God.

Our Mission

Leadership Roles Cont'd

moderate, resolve, or mediate the problem.

We must now talk about the role of the Principal. This is an internally focused role that deals with the educational and academic needs of the K-12 parts of the school. For many years at Calvary, Dr. Nichols held both of these positions as Administrator. Some of you may not know that she was only supposed to handle those two roles together as a short term solution for at most 1-2 years. She did it for four years through one of the most disruptive events in education's history. I am thankful for the Lord's provision of grace for her to walk that difficult line as long as she did, while choosing to pursue her doctorate and leading our school through the accreditation process. In a small school, necessity often forces this leadership arrangement.

These two roles of HoS and Principal are distinctly separate. The HoS is an external oriented and macro role in comparison to the Principal role. The Principal directly manages the academic faculty and student affairs. This is why Calvary needed to separate these positions.

Servant Leadership

My personal philosophy of leadership is rooted in a servant leadership approach and decentralizing decision making into processes that bring stakeholder feedback. What does this mean in practice? It means staff are encouraged to recognize problems and be empowered to solve them. Processes exist to support staff with a framework to follow, along with advice and information from leadership. Parents are encouraged to dialogue with teachers and coaches to give feedback. Attending the Shared Action Team meetings is another channel to gain understanding into School Board and staff decisions.

Process Improvement

In all things we seek to implement software solutions to replace manual processes across our administration. This is not meant to replace people but rather to free up critical thinking and improve relational interactions. In the last year, we have begun using FACTS for tuition assistance applications and for billing. This has enabled us to enhance workflow and monitor outstanding receivables more efficiently. The same system has facilitated our lunch program as well as the re-enrollment process and centralized resource documents in the Family Portal. Therefore, FACTS has reduced paperwork and redundant data entry, while enhancing our reporting and



"The mission trip taught me to be ready for anything, to establish connections with people even when it's difficult, and to be grateful for what I have." - Genesis O.

"Connecting with new people gives me a chance to reflect." - Joel H.

"God used this missions trip to show me that gratefulness is everything; they had so little but were so grateful and kind, it really opened up my eyes." - Ayla R.

giving families direct access to centralized information.

We need to take a quick detour here to discuss one hot topic: Security. At Calvary we take security very seriously. As the Head of School, it is always on my mind, not only as the person in charge, but as a father who has his son enrolled in the school. As a matter of practice, we do not disclose the particulars of our protocols and processes. What I can tell you is that we have frequent security checks, including a monthly Security Team meeting to discuss pressing issues, and monthly drills that reinforce our response to a variety of threats (fire, weather, external, and internal).

The Security Team has members of both the school and the church sitting on it, so there are no gaps in our protocols. CBS has staff members that have gone through training for first aid, emergency response, and who are proactive in ensuring the safety of those around them. We have recently had police again review our protocols. Our Security Team members go to conferences to stay up to date on changes in regulations and responses. We are on distribution lists from industry partners. We are always discussing ways to improve the physical security of the building and grounds. If you have questions regarding safety or security, Matt Philbrick is in charge of security. It is our desire to share what we can while still protecting our protocols.

Academics

Two of Calvary's core beliefs are that we are academically excellent and individually designed. These two core beliefs are not mutually exclusive and academically excellent does mean only preparing for college. CBS has several academic tracks to help find the best fit. To assist with the proper alignment of academic tracks, we have identified a few key indicators which include dialogue with parents and students, academic achievement testing, and individualized instruction plans.

Partnering with families and their children to achieve their educational goals is a first step. We also look at performance indicators. One of these indicators is our report cards, but we also use the results of the IOWA testing (and other benchmark testing) to validate students' performance compared with national averages. Prior to 2018, we used the Stanford Achievement Tests for our achievement tests; but we switched to Iowa/CogAt tests in 2019. These tests are NOT Common Core based, and they are used by Christian schools throughout the country. This year is the first year we will have three consecutive years of testing results, allowing us to see a successive trend in student progress. These testing results will allow us to make data-informed decisions regarding academic programming and curricular adjustments.

For students who have been issued an IEP or a 504 plan from their sending school district, we create an ISP (individualized student plan) to ensure a course of action or remediation or for new instruction that is most

in line with a student's needs and the school's resources. These students are tracked only in our database, not on any public domain. By implementing our ISPs, we can challenge our students appropriately to achieve their academic goals in a way that is best suited to their learning abilities.

- Dr. Lesli Nichols, Principal



"The missions trip taught me that when we have willing spirits to do God's work, He accomplishes great things"

- Joseph F.



Finance Update

Now for an update on finances. One of the goals of the finance committee this year was to create a budget that gives us accurate information for the next year's budget. One of the challenges in separating the school from the church last year was the shared cost model that was used for the overall church ministry. In becoming independent, some costs needed to be estimated. The unconventional budget years preceding independence compounded this difficulty. Certain cost centers (such as Preschool and Athletics) were disproportionately impacted by COVID procedures. In some ways, these programs needed to be handled as startups. With that said, applications to the school in K-12 were strong last year, to the point where we grew. By the end of last summer we were ahead of the previous year's pace of applicants.

Income for this year is at 95% of what was projected for the year. Expenses are 101% of the projected budget. Like many of us, 7% inflation really hit our projections. This year we were able to set up a line of credit, while developing a Board-led campaign to build a cash reserve and increase our working capital. Thanks to the generous donations in our fundraising efforts, the school has only recently had to borrow on this line of credit. Meanwhile, the Finance Committee, Administration, and the Board have been able to establish good processes with appropriate standard checks and balances. Our current status is that we have good processes to handle cash flow, but as a new organization we do not have a capital reserve to fall back on.

Finances Update Cont'd

Tuition dollars alone never cover the full cost to educate students due to the financial assistance and discounts provided. In years past, the school operated as one of several ministries while under Calvary Baptist Church, allowing cost sharing of overhead and expenses. Now the entire cost to educate is carried by the school, while still offering discounts to families.

One of the ways we help to alleviate this problem is to be able to close the gap that exists between tuition assistance/discounts and the full cost of tuition. The most important program we participate in to close this gap is EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit).



Honor Society field trip to DC

Bunny Day in PK4

EITC is a Pennsylvania tax credit program with several avenues for individuals and businesses to participate in and to direct their donations to a specific school(s), receiving up to 90% back as a PA tax credit (cash refund) in the following year of their donation. The receiving school(s) then can apply these funds to offset tuition costs and assistance, making Christian education more accessible for more local families.

The most universal avenue to contribute is the EITC-SPE (Special Purpose Entity). The SPE and parent scholarship organization handles all the paperwork related to applying for the credits and will send you the tax form you need for your own filing. The SPE expects to have more tax credits than it can use in 2023-2024, and is looking for donors like you to join.



Preparing for the 'Our Town' Production



However, the program is increasingly popular, and last year was oversubscribed. It is available on a first-come-first-served basis, and the sooner you can submit your paperwork, the better if you qualify. This year, we added the Children's Tuition Fund as an additional scholarship organization option, requiring only a \$2,000 minimum donation. Whereas, the Central PA Scholarship Fund (CPSF), requires a \$3,500 minimum. We will be having EITC information sessions on Zoom made available in the coming weeks.

One way that you as parents can save money is to set up a PA529 for education. A PA529 can be funded with pretax income (avoid the income tax!) and used to pay your tuition for your student. If you are not aware of this, please contact your local bank of choice and consider opening one. Many people are unaware that (from PA's website), "You can also pay for tuition up to \$10,000 annually at K-12 public, private or religious schools."

This is useful for both your state and federal dollars. Please talk to a tax professional for more details.

For More EITC Information:

email EITC@cbschools.org
childrenstuitionfund.org

Other inquiries:

FACTS Family Portal Directory
schooloffice@cbschools.org

Planning Ahead

Save the Date!

Shared Action Team	May 11
Spring Concert (1st-12th)	May 18
Alumni-Student Baseball Game	May 28
50th Senior Class Graduation	June 2

As we approach the final months of the school year, we are already looking to plant the seeds for a successful next school year. This involves projections for class sizes, staffing, budgets, and ways to always improve our programming and offerings. We are starting to max out our footprint and some classes are closed to new enrollment. Our goal is to have a healthy pyramid shaped scalable student body with the lower grades feeding the upper grades. This helps preserve culture and relationships as students grow older. While we welcome new students through all of our grade levels, CBS does not seek sudden growth through recruitment at the upper levels. The healthiest schools have students that grow up through the grades and are able to learn from peers above and below them. No matter how we grow and who joins us, our goal is to live out our Core Values: Christ centered, Family focused, Academically excellent, and Individually inspired.

For His glory,



Dr. Timothy Gray
Head of School



Chord exploration in music class



Fashion Show in Senora Brett's high school Spanish class



Colonial Day in 2nd grade



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