

Iowa City Area Christian School Association (ICACSA)  
Winter Meeting (1/27/2015)  
MINUTES (Approved 5/7/2015)

On January 27th, 2015, a meeting of the Iowa City Area Christian School Association (ICACSA) was held at Heritage Christian School at 7:00 PM.

Board Members Present: Jennifer Olsen, Todd Pierce, Kristi Rotzoll, Steve Sherman, and Mark Jessop.

Board Members Absent: Steve Liu, Bob Coons

- I. Meeting was opened in prayer by Mike Annis
- II. **Approval of Minutes** – Alicia Dawson motioned for approval of minutes as amended, Jen acknowledged the motion and requested a vote, the minutes of Association were approved by unanimous decision (September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014).
- III. **Committee Updates** – Jen opened by welcoming everyone in attendance and thanking them for taking time to discuss important topics regarding Heritage Christian School. Jen proceeded to introduce herself and describe her affiliation with Heritage, before introducing Steve Sherman.
  1. **Fundraising** – Steve Sherman opened by describing himself, his family, and history with Heritage. He explained that there are three major fundraising events for Heritage Operation Good, Educating for Eternity (EFE), and the Annual Fund. He reminded the association that there is a need for additional volunteers for Operation Good. He announced that Barb Mueller would be replacing Cherrie Weih as the sponsor for Operation Good and thanked Cherie for doing an excellent job of making the event a success for several years. A question was asked regarding the number of tickets sold for EFE and Kallen announced that seventy-two, as of the date of the meeting, had been sold. Steve explained that EFE is being advertised via Facebook, email, flyers, and a radio add is in consideration. In closing, Steve reminded the association that

personal invites are the most effective method for selling tickets and challenged the group to continue to promote the event to friends and family.

2. **Marketing** – Kallen announced that we have doubled traffic through the HCS website, reached over five thousand people via Facebook video, increased site traffic by more than thirty-three percent on Iowa City Moms Blog, actively advertise via Facebook, and she is working with One Book Two Book in Iowa City to promote Heritage. Kallen then asked association members to contact her if they had suggestions regarding networking events she could attend to promote the school. When asked about methods for promoting EFE, she explained the plan to advertise via local churches. She asked association members to contact her regarding the most effective method to promote at their church. She also asked the association to spread the word about the school's open house on March 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:30pm. In closing, Kallen shared that leaving favorable reviews about Heritage on local sites would also greatly benefit the school, and asked members of the association to do so whenever possible.
3. **Faculty and Prayer** – Kristi opened by introducing herself and describing her affiliation to Heritage. **Faculty:** She explained that she had visited several classes and was impressed by each teacher's engagement and effectiveness. She shared how blessed she felt to have such excellent teachers on staff at HCS. Next, she described the Biblical World View Course taken by a few Heritage teachers, the courses effectiveness, and that all teachers will be taking the course next year. Next, she announced that results for from the November survey would be sent to parents next week and followed with an update of Strengths, Opportunities, and actions taken from last year's survey. One suggested area of improvement, from last year's survey, was to increase/improve communication and to update/better utilize the HCS website. Kristi explained that Kallen has worked hard this year to improve the HCS website's content and functionality to address this concern. Also, the addition of RenWeb has enhanced parent's access to important student information, provides easier access to faculty, and simplified communication

between parents. Another opportunity, identified through the survey, was the availability of Board Meeting minutes. Kristi explained that meeting minutes are posted on the HCS website after they have been approved, and the process has worked well this school year. The final area of improvement, based on last year's survey, was increased enrollment. Kristi explained that the school board approved the hiring of Hunter Company, to develop plans to expand the school. She further explained that the design adds four new class rooms, dedicated music and art rooms, increases parking, and improve safety of the pick-up/drop-off process. Kristi also explained the purposeful hiring of The Timothy Group to conduct a feasibility study. The Timothy Group specializes in assisting Christian nonprofit organizations, specifically Christian schools; evaluate their ability to raise funds through a capital campaign. Kristi's final topic was an update about the school newsletter and an article that highlights ACIS. **Prayer:** Kristi announced that the next prayer event will be held in the spring. Kristi then challenged the association to pray "outside of the box". She described "the box" as our close friends and relatives and that we should consider others when we pray.

4. **Curriculum** – Kristi told the association that the curriculum committee is currently reviewing Math for next year and that books would be available for review in the next few weeks. Kristi shared that Mr. Annis would cover this topic in more detail during the administrator's presentation.
5. **Finance** – Mark opened by telling about himself and his affiliation with Heritage. Mark shared a detailed report regarding the school's finances (please see financial hand out). Mark went on to explain the budgeting process and that two discounts, "payment in full" and "referral", were being eliminated for the 2015/2016 school year. While some families benefited from these discounts, the cost of providing them each year had to be made up through overall tuition increases. Mark further explained that the purpose of eliminating the discounts was to assist in keeping tuition as affordable as possible for all students. Mark told the association would receive an email providing additional detail in the next few weeks. Mark closed by reminding

the association about the Family Pool Night at the North Liberty Recreation Center on January 31<sup>st</sup>, (sponsored by Heritage H.A.N.D.S), and Open Gym Night at Heritage on February 20<sup>th</sup>.

6. **Facilities** – Todd opened by telling about himself and describing his affiliation to Heritage. Todd explained that the Facilities Committee has completed a number of small projects through the first half of the year and that the volunteerism is great. He said that there will be opportunities for exterior paint work in the spring, and anyone interested in helping please contact him. Todd also announced a plan for a spring project. More information will be sent out information in February or March.

#### **IV. Administrator Report – Mike Annis.**

1. Mike opened by telling about himself and his background with Heritage. He thanked the association for support in making severe weather decisions. He also shared that God has blessed our annual fund as we have exceeded our goal by over twenty-four thousand dollars. He explained that a portion of the annual fund will be used to begin the process of updating the school’s desktop computers. Tentatively, the plan is to replace desktop computers with laptops, which creates an opportunity to begin building a mobile computer lab (this transition is planned to happen over the summer). Another significant change, Mike is exploring, is migrating away from “in-house” IT management to utilizing a company that specializes in IT system management (Erb’s in Cedar Rapids). An association member asked if the school has considered leasing computers vs. purchasing. Mike said he will talk to Steve about this option and will follow up.
2. Mike’s next topic was about reenrollment. He explained that reenrollment dates are February 2<sup>nd</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> and open enrollment beings February 17<sup>th</sup>. He further explained that the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade and pre-kindergarten classes will fill up quickly and he stressed the importance of not waiting to reenroll.
3. Next, Mike explained the hiring of the Timothy Group to coach us through the capital campaign, by conducting a feasibility study. The feasibility study will help us understand the areas we need help, before starting the solicitation

process. Upon completion of the feasibility study, the Timothy Group will make a recommended capital campaign goal. A member of the association asked, “How long before we outgrow the proposed expansion?” Mike’s hope is that the expansion supports growth as long as the current building has. He also explained that there is a fine line between building a facility that the school can “grow into” vs. sizing it to meet current demand. He also said the expansion will lay the ground work for building a High School in the future. During this portion of the Administrator’s report, Mike explained the school’s relationship with Hunter Company, a design build company from Cedar Rapids. Hunter Co. has developed a phased approach to allow time to raise money and let God provide, without overcommitting. Currently, we are in phase 1, design, of the phased approach. The primary goal of the expansion is to create organizational space. The secondary goal is to direct visitors to the front of the building. The expansion will also add parking and improve the drop off and pick up processes.

4. Mike’s next point discussed the changes happening in HCS Bylaws and Policy Manual, and the impact the changes will have on the Parent/Student Handbook. The purpose of the document is to explain, to parents and students, how the school operates. In an attempt to adapt the handbook to policy/bylaw changes, he will form a committee to help review and revise the handbook. Mike asked anyone interested in helping to talk to him after the meeting. While the hope is to eliminate unnecessary meetings, he acknowledged that there will be a great deal of work required to complete the project. He plans to complete it by June of 2015.
5. The next subject Mike discussed was the Math review. Due to the hands on approach to reviewing this important part of the Heritage Curriculum, the process has been extended to two years. Mike told the association that two texts will be available for public review over the next two weeks. There will also be a comparison between the current Math Curriculum and the text being reviewed. Mike encouraged the association to review the texts from a student’s perspective and from a parent’s perspective. He also asked that

feedback be emailed to him as soon as possible to help speed up the process. An association member asked “what should a parent look for when reviewing a textbook?” Mike explained, first, our goal is to encourage a biblical point of view. Second, evaluate the texts ability to encourage creative thinking and problem solving. Third, consider the presentation of material and whether it explains the “How’s and why’s”. Fourth, look at it as a parent that will help their children when they are doing homework. Fifth, compare the text to what we have taught in the past, and then consider where we are going. Finally, consider the way it incorporates common core concepts. Keep in mind, these texts were written before common core was created.

6. Mike’s final topic was about changes to the school calendar and history behind the changes happening to the 2015-16 school year. In 1985 a state law was written that prohibited schools from starting their school year before September 1<sup>st</sup>. Since the laws inception, the Department of Education approved waivers to start before September 1<sup>st</sup> upon request. Two weeks ago, the Department of Education announced that waivers would only be granted if the school met “specific” criteria. He further explained that most schools would have a difficult time meeting the criteria; therefor most schools will start after September 1<sup>st</sup>. Heritage Christian School does not meet the criteria set forth by the Department of Education and, as a result, are making changes to the school calendar. Mike outlined two options. First, HCS could follow the lead of Iowa City Schools, and align holidays and spring break. Second, count instructional time as hours vs. days. The point of contention is that the current HCS curriculum calls for 180 days of instructional time and the new format allows for 172 days. Mike proposed the association and school board adopt the second option, start school on August 31<sup>st</sup>, and extend the school day by 15 minutes. An association member asked, “How does the loss of days affect our curriculum?” Mike explained that our holidays would remain the same and that we won’t set 1080 hours as our goal. We would not ask teachers to try to “cram” in content. Another question, “what did the teachers think?” Mike felt that most were agreeable to extending the day by 15 minutes. The teacher’s

primary concerns surround a reduction in materials. Another question, “is this a one year problem?” Mike’s thoughts were to make this decision one time and be consistent following it in years to come. Another question from the association, “Have we considered finding a difference source through the Department of Education?” Mike’s said he would contact the Iowa City School District to determine who they were negotiating with, and that Heritage will try to align with the public school’s as much as possible. Since Heritage has families with children in both school systems. A member of the association asked how ACSI’s accreditation affects our decision making process. Mike explained that we are unique because our accreditation is not directly through the state, so we are viewed a little differently. Every year we wrestle with the quality of instructional time, in 1-2 years the time school gets out for the summer will become the norm. The biggest question is whether public schools will find a way to meet waiver requirements. Mike also clarified that we will not change the Thanksgiving or Christmas holiday schedules. Jen asked the association if anyone had strong opinions or questions about the calendar. Another question, “have we considered year round school?” Mike said it has not since he’s been at Heritage. Also, “have we started thinking about parts of the curriculum we could remove?” Mike explained that the calendar has always been built around 180 days and removing anything would require a monumental amount of work. A few concerns were raised regarding which school district we align with, when a decision will be made, and the communication frequency. Kallen agreed to post all decisions, throughout the process, in the HCS newsletter. Mike said that we will be as aggressive as possible and plan to make a decision by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **V. Sub-Committee Updates**

1. **Bylaws Sub-Committee** – the subcommittee has completed the process of updating the school’s bylaws. They reviewed bylaws from Grand Rapids Christian School, Heritage Christian School in Indiana, and ACSI as a basis for making changes. Jen explained that they did not change any of the super

majority bylaws; the reason for making the changes was driven by moving to governance, and to set the school up for future success. Jen further explained that she would send current and future bylaws to the association and schedule a meeting in February because any changes require association approval. She implored the association to read both documents prior to the meeting, due to the volume of material. She closed by explaining that the governance model allows the Head of School to focus on day-to-day operations of the school, so the school board can focus on strategic growth.

2. **Board Approval, Onboarding, and Training** – Kristi shared that the approval process, onboarding, and training the sub-committee developed has been approved by the board. She explained that the changes were based on ACSI guidelines, and will be used while filling two board positions in 2015.
3. **Policy Manual** – Todd thanked subcommittee volunteers for their work in reading and reviewing the current policy manual. They reviewed bylaws from Grand Rapids Christian School, Des Moines Christian, and Wheaton Academy, and compared each to the HCS policy manual. Phase 1 of this project was to create a policy manual shell to eliminate redundant information and categorize information in a way that's intuitive to most users. Phase 2 is adding substance to the manual, which will require more work. The team's goal is to create a framework that the administrator can use to create operational procedures.

**VI.** Jen wrapped up by thanking the association members for attending the meeting, Mike Annis closed the meeting in prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

- Todd Pierce