

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mr. Pete Adams

As you may be aware, Eastside students take the AIMSweb probes (tests) three times a year which give us a snapshot of how well the students are doing in the basic skills of reading and mathematics. The scores are intended for us to be able to take a pulse of the students' progress, and to note especially any deficiencies. There is a button in the program to enable a comparison of the scores of our school taken as a whole with totals of schools across the nation. I can't help but hit that button sometimes and invariably Eastside comes out looking very positive in this ranking. Hmm. What to make of that?

Well, the first thing that pops into my head is what a great teacher and principal I am. But then sane consideration takes over and causes me to reflect on and appreciate more the skilled and diligent labors of our staff of teachers and volunteers. Beyond that however, and even more of a factor are the homes out of which our students come. This ought to be the case, since it is the parents who are given the responsibility and ability to train and develop the children that the Lord has given them. The inculcating of respect for authority and discipline to do the work that is set before them is essential for success in school. These and other traits needed for that success are best when they are home-grown. Fathers and mothers, you are doing a good job. When I first started teaching, it soon became evident to me that I was limited in what I could do with a student. To use the language that the Apostle used in I Corinthians, a teacher needs to develop a positive working environment (part of the planting and watering) but it is God, primarily working through parents, Who gives the increase.

But to go a little further, in that same chapter Paul notes how the Lord has not, in general, called those of great outward abilities or status to be His people. He will be glorified through the weak and lowly things of this world. So how is it that we stack up pretty well (more than slightly above average) in these academic matters? Why are Reformed Christian homes good soil that the Lord can use? I think a key area is entertainment, or perhaps better said, the lack thereof. When I hear of the number of hours a day the average American spends on TV viewing and the like, it is no wonder that young people are numbed to the process of reading and doing calculations. Also, I trust that in our homes we keep in mind that a stated Protestant Reformed life-style practice is to avoid drama. If we subtract the negative numbing effect of our culture's entertainment on our children and add the subsequent time to spend on studies and other wholesome activities, our children will have inherent advantages when it comes to school performance.

What about the "Protestant work ethic"? We should not believe, as many cultures believe, that the ideal in life is not having to work. In neither Paradise the first nor the second is idleness upheld, nor is work itself part of the curse of the Fall. Our children are to be busy and apply themselves to the labors that the Lord has placed before them as workmen who need not to be ashamed. They work not for good grades per se, but as in everything else, for God's glory. This is another key factor in the performance of our school.

God gives the increase for our school. That comes in the way of confessing our utter need for His work in our lives and our students' lives. Petitions follow for His blessing and enabling us to build the walls of Zion. So let us be thankful for past blessings, and let us be encouraged to press on in the good work that all of us have been given to do.

FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Tim Hop

With another year already half over, I invite you to pause and give thanks. Thanks that we can still openly educate our children in His ways! Thanks that we have at Eastside Christian a wonderful school available to assist us in the training of our children. Thanks that we have a staff dedicated to the same. Thanks that we have supporters who have helped us to meet nearly 80% of our fund drive so far. Thanks that our merciful Father in heaven provides for us in love. Provision that goes way beyond what we even know we need.

After giving thanks pray with confidence that our Father continue this provision and give us thankful hearts ready to do the work necessary to be wise stewards of what we have been given.

REFLECTIONS ON EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Bruce Miedema | Board President

Ten years ago I was finishing a term on the Eastside board. At that time all four of my children were grade school age and attending Eastside. Some of the older families then actively involved with our school have moved their children on to high school, college and are now seeing their children return to Eastside as parents. This kind of change is very healthy for the school community. This indicates that the school is a product of the organic life of the community it serves. This changing community is reflected in the Board too, and it is natural and healthy as families raise their children through the school to be represented on the Board.

The school community of Eastside provides its pool of Board members including the “newer guys” who are qualified, dedicated, filled with good ideas and energetic. This community has many capable older members too who are qualified and they bring experience which blends nicely with the younger members. I am confident the vital role of Board member will be ably and willingly filled for many years to come because these men and their families understand personal sacrifice.

Personal sacrifice by every family allows the Eastside community to provide Biblical education. That this tradition continues generation after generation is nothing less than the power of God in the hearts of committed parents. Pray for the Board as it serves Eastside and its community.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Education Committee is responsible for overseeing the educational activities of the school. This can involve staffing, curriculum and a number of other matters relating to the instruction of our children. Following is a summary of some of the things on which the Education Committee has been working over the past six months:

* A committee comprised of Pete Adams, Kristi Thompson, Dave Mahtani and Mary Kortz has been reviewing and updating the language arts portion of our curriculum guide. It has been a number of years since the curriculum guide was developed, and we have since made a significant change in our reading program. This update allows us to look closely at our curriculum and document the scope, sequence, content, etc. of this important part of the curriculum. We intend to update other parts of the curriculum in following years.

* Latin instruction has been part of our curriculum from the early years of the school. We are not able to allocate enough time in our class schedules to foreign language instruction to enable students to become fluent in a foreign language. However, since Latin is a foundational language for many other languages, including a significant part of the English language, we have always included some Latin instruction in the junior high grades. We would like to expand on that and incorporate grades 4-6 into the Latin program as well. Pete Adams and Dave Mahtani are exploring ways to make that happen.

* One of our goals is to graduate students prepared for the academic requirements of high school. Since semester exams are an important part of high school expectations, we want our graduates to be able to study for and take semester exams. We have re-evaluated our junior high semester exam requirements in order to provide students relevant and meaningful exam experiences.

* Several years ago, we made the decision to begin using AIMSweb for periodic student evaluation. Previously, we used the Iowa Basics assessments, which were lengthy tests covering a number of subject areas that were taken every two years. By contrast, AIMSweb tests are shorter, focus only on reading and math, and are done three times per year. With AIMSweb, teachers are able to get frequent results, allowing them to assess student performance more regularly and quickly identify areas which may need more attention. AIMSweb is used nationally as well as by area Christian schools; this allows us to benchmark our students' performance relative to different norms. Teachers and parents have expressed appreciation for this tool and we plan to continue its use.

* We are thankful for our talented, dedicated teachers, each of whom clearly shows their love for the Lord and their students. The Education Committee recently had opportunity to meet individually with each of the teachers to encourage and support them in their work and to provide them opportunity to address any concerns or needs they might have. These were valuable meetings and we had some useful discussions. Continue to encourage our teachers and thank them for their work!

FROM THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

There have been a few projects that the committee has been working on lately:

- We found a sizable area where there was heat loss, and insulated the attic in that area
- We cleaned out the soffet vents, which were plugged
- We replaced the hot water heater

FUTURE PROJECT: We will be investigating the gym attic in the near future for adequacy of insulation.

We are thankful for the volunteers who helped with these projects!

ORCHESTRA NEWS

Mr. Eric Phelps | Orchestra Director

It has been a year since Eastside has begun its orchestra program. The orchestra students have come a long way since our first day in January of 2014. We have had a good school year so far. The students enjoy playing their instruments, and have been known to offer to play for extra programs at their churches and in our school chapels.

In early December the students of the Eastside Orchestra had the opportunity to go downtown to DeVos Hall, home of the Grand Rapids Symphony, for a special 'Nooks and Crannies' backstage tour of the facilities. This private educational tour included a careful walk through the very expensive recording and lighting booth as well as a chance to sit on stage where the musicians sit when they perform. We also learned just how much work it takes the musicians to perform at such a high level. Thank you to Mr. Dave Mahtani for arranging this outing, and to Mr. Adams for joining us with the upper grades of the orchestra.

Later that month, on December 18, we performed our Christmas Concert along with the choir directed by Mrs. Michelle Pipe. The students really rose to the occasion. **(PICTURES BELOW)**

Many of the Eastside Orchestra students have also chosen to participate in the Protestant Reformed Student Orchestra (PRSO). This group consists of students who study violin, viola or cello from all our area PR schools. Our annual concert was held on February 5 at the Grandville Middle School Auditorium. It was well attended, and a successful night for all. **(PICTURES BELOW)**

The next performance of the Eastside Orchestra and Choir will be at the All-School Program on April 24. Hope to see you there!



PERCEIVING DISTINCTIONS

Mary Kortz | Eastside Parent

My brief formal teaching career included exclusively non-standard educational experiences. I've taught in the summertime at an ESL (English as a Second Language) program, outdoors at 20 feet in the air on a high ropes course, and inside more buildings than I can remember (private, public, alternative, montessori...) as a substitute teacher. I can say conclusively that learning can take place in a broad variety of educational settings.

As followers of Christ, we are all deviating from the pack of 'standard' living, but even among the educational subgroups there is a typical norm, and Eastside diverges from this pattern in several notable ways. Given my above-mentioned experiences, the non-standard aspects of an Eastside education did not faze me; since making the choice, I have fielded a few of the same questions about Eastside's distinctions.

Your kid is the only one in their grade? Who do they play/socialize/hang out with? Eastside kids have school friends, neighborhood friends, different-school friends, cousin friends... just like most kids! One of the main differences is that a typical social gettogether might span up to 4 different grades. So do later-life friendships, so this is not an unusual occurrence in the larger scheme of life. Plus, it's really cool to stop by school and see practically the entire student body snowboarding and sledding, sporting on the soccer field, or playing one of the more-than-I-ever-knew-existed varieties of tag.

What if your kid does not get along with their (few) classmates? By 'having to' get along with whomever they are placed alongside regardless of age, gender, or personal interest, kids are called to live out a very real aspect of the Christian mandate to love. Our relationships don't suffer when they are more about honoring God and less about pleasing ourselves! God tells us to show love to all (even enemies!), and while most kids surely grow into adults who can do this just fine regardless of grade school composition, it is never too early to start.

You don't have busses? Ahhh, the daily drive. It is truly a mixed blessing. I confess, when a dear friend offered to pick up my Eastside student a few times a week as a new-baby gift, I deemed it the best gift I received. But most of the time, the drive has been a source of time maximized, not time ill-spent. It is very efficient. The kids are home quickly, so their total hours away from home are lessened. We often use the drive to school to go over Bible verses or afternoon/evening schedules. The drive home is my favorite; the 'forced' together time gives us the perfect opportunity to talk about the day.

So... sometimes distinctions that are perceived as negatives are actually positives! Eastside does have some legitimate, non-argumentative varieties of positiveness as well. Ask us about our orchestra! It's a highlight around here. We have some great field trips, if you like being on the ski slopes in winter, backstage at the symphony, at a local firehouse, or on the Grand Haven pier with your bike on a beautiful September day. The teacher-student ratio is pretty good. And speaking of teachers, we have some of the best around!

Incidentally, one of my favorite, most memorable teaching experiences was with a small group of junior high Eastside students in the basement of First Church. They were happy, helpful, and easy to work with. May we all be gratified with the experience of teaching happy, helpful, adaptable kids, whether as teachers in the trenches or as parents at home after hours. And may our similarities as people redeemed by our Savior outweigh the differences of the sum of our experiences, no matter what those experiences may be.

PIZZA NIGHT FUNDRAISER

The annual 7th-8th grade Pizza Night fundraiser was held on Valentines Day and was a great success. A mix of junior high parents and Eastside staff served pizza to all the school's supporters who braved cold temperatures and icy roads for a night of food and fun. The Covenant Christian HS Robotics team also gave a demonstration for the second year, to the delight of many of the young Eastside students.



2ND-3RD GRADE

Response to I John 4:7-12

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

Grant Hop - 2nd Grade

Dear Journal,

Love is God. God loves me and my family, so we can love each other. God loves us even when we fight. We don't always realize that what we're doing is wrong, but every once in a while my mom stops us when my brothers and I fight. She asks us why we are yelling, and then I usually explain it to her. God loves us, so we realize that fighting with my brothers is wrong. We should love each other. We can come up with compromises when we fight. We started a club in our bedroom, so we could play good together, but we had to shut it down because we kept forgetting to play it. We played with other things together instead. I'm glad we could find a compromise. I'm glad I have my family. God gave us a family so we could be cared for.

Isaac Kortz - 3rd Grade

Journal Entry: In order for us to love others, we wouldn't understand because God would have to love us first. God is love. God's love is in us, so we could love others. We should live through Jesus Christ. If God loves us, we ought to love others also. My family loves each other. Ways we show this are: obeying my mom and dad, helping each other, and loving each other. We love each other because God is in us.

Acrostic Poem:

L ove	G uides us in our lives
O bedience	O ne and only true God
V alentine	D irects us on the right path
I love God	
N ice	
G od is love	

Gabrielle Phelps - 3rd Grade

Journal Entry: In order to love my family, I have to learn how God loves me, for love is of God. I show love to my parents by: helping around the house,

comforting them if something has gone wrong, taking care of my little sister, and being obedient and happy. My parents show love to me by: teaching me about God, sending me to a Christian school, bringing me to church, taking really good care of me, and forgiving me always. We love each other because God dwells in us.

Acrostic Poem:

F aithful	G od is a giving God who gave His
A lways learning about God	O nly begotten Son who
M om and Dad love us very much	D ied on the cross for His family
I n the church family	L eaning on God
L augh together	O ne and only
Y outhful and youth - there are both in my family	V ery important
	E verlasting

Owen Hayes - 3rd Grade

Journal Entry: In order for us to love our family we have to learn love from God. God loved us first. He loved us so much He sent His only begotten son to save us and to pay for our sins. I should love my family by helping them, obeying my mom and dad, taking care of my sister and brother, and loving each other. God loves us, so we should love Him and each other.

Acrostic Poem:

Forgiving each other
Always caring
Memories
Imitating Christ
Love God
Yearn for God

Tanner VanPutten - 3rd Grade

Journal Entry: God tells us to love Him and our family. I can only do this because God loves us first. Because He loves us first, I love Him and my family.

Acrostic Poem:

G od loves me and my family.	F orgive one another
He L oves His people.	A lways help each other
D ad and Mom love us.	M om and Dad teach us about God
	I nvolve each other in play and work
L ove each other	L ove each other
G Od almighty loves me	Y ou have to love each other
V alentine	
E ternal love	

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

During the Valentine's season our class did an activity on something we love.

Eric Phelps: I love church because you learn about God.

Leah Pastoor: I love my family because they take care of me.

Zechariah Byker: I love my church because I pray.

Judah Rodenheaver: I love going to my Grandpa and Grandma's house because I play there.

Seth Kleyn: I love school because I learn.

Chase Van Putten: I love to sing because it praises God.

Tyler Tanis: I love my brother and sister because they are nice.

Drew Pols: I love my brothers because they play with me.

Jimmy Whiteley: I love Bible stories because I love to hear about the things that praise God.

Josiah Korsmo: I love my toys and candy because my Mom gave them to me.

Jacob Hop: I love Grant because he plays with me.

4TH-6TH GRADE

Writing Samples

Anna Kortz - 6th

Spring

Spring is a time when it's sunny.
It makes your insides feel funny.
In the spring the sky is bright blue.
It feels like God made the earth new.
In the spring it's very very pure.
It makes my heart feel cured.
I taste the warm air in my mouth.
I see all the birds flying back from the south.
Spring is in the air;
Everything God made looks very very fair.

Malachi Windemuller - 6th

Cookie

appetizing, attractive

ingesting, embellishing, exchanging

flour, sugar, magnificent, amazing

trimming, growing

exquisite, bristly

Tree

Dragon

colossal, fiery

amazing, soaring

awe, monsters, beauty, color

caring, flying, amazing

perfect, mythical

Unicorns

Noah Hayes - 5th

School

I hear teachers blabbing on about Social Studies
I see classmates yawning and looking at the clock
I feel wood of my bright yellow pencils
I smell stinky gym shoes in the long hallway
I taste my yummy lunch in my mouth

Volcanoes

I feel the steaming heat
I see the lava bubbles burst
I hear the lava boiling
I smell ash hanging in the air
I taste smoke because it's so thick

Church

I hear the minister speaking about Job's belief
I see the head in front of me and their dark hair
I feel the cold, wooden armrests against my skin
I taste my cold candy on my tongue
I smell cherry perfume floating in the air

Chloe Windemuller - 5th

Ocean

I can smell the salt water
I can taste the air
I can feel the water
I can see the dolphins
I can hear the waves
I LOVE THE OCEAN

Zachary Kleyn - 4th

Lonely Winter Forest

The forest is lonely
no one here but me

I am mistaken
the wolves awaken

I hear a lonely howl
maybe that's why there is no fowl

I am so cold that I shiver
my body quivers

"I want to be home" I wished
In this forest so full of mist

Braden VanPutten - 5th

My Grandpa's Cabin

Feel the cold breeze go by.
Smell the fresh air and tree bark.
Hear the songs of the birds chirping together.
Look at all the beautiful scenery around you.
Taste the fear of the bears that are going to attack you.

SEVENTH-EIGHTH GRADE WRITING

The 7th and 8th grade students were asked to reflect on the gift of language in a recent language arts test: "Think about the positive ways God wants us to use language. Write about how the lordship of Christ affects our use of language." What follows are their responses.

Madelyn Monsma

Language is a gift of God. Unfortunately, many people do not realize that. They abuse language by lying, killing with their words, or using profanity. But we as Christians should know better. God intended for us to use His gift of words to benefit each other. Galatians 5:22-26 tells of virtues such as love, joy, peace, and gentleness that we can use every day to build each other up in our words. Think how happy you can make somebody just by complimenting them! Or think how you can encourage unbelievers by witnessing to them the love of God! Without the beautiful gift of language, we wouldn't be able to experience such joy with one another, and we wouldn't even have the written Bible of God's Word! We are so blessed with these gifts, and we should appreciate language more and thank God for His kindness to us by showing that love to one another.

Hannah Windemuller

God calls us to use language in a kind and godly manner. He tells this to us because He gave it to us as a gift, and we must use it to the best of our abilities. It's good to use godly language because when we are out in public then we want to be sure that people can tell if we are Christian just by our language. Just as we are to glorify God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, so our language should reflect the same thing. With our language we must also forgive one another, and show kindness to each other. God says in Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Elizabeth Kortz

God wants us to use language in a positive way with love, joy, and peace. God wants us to use words wisely and gently with thoughts of the fruits of the spirit. He also wants us to write with charity, longing for His Word and not scribble things down to get a laugh out of people. He wants us to speak and write with a purpose. He wants us to use words to say kind things, bringing yourself down and bring God up. God wants us to use language to glorify Him. Glorify God in all that you say and do.

Connotation Poem by Hanna Windemuller - 8th Grade

GRACE

Grace is a swift movement of love and joy.
It makes you as humble as can be.
Grace sounds like a ballerina making her way across the dance floor.
Grace is like the infinity symbol because it goes round and round and round.
Grace remembers when you give people another chance. It remembers how our Father above bestows upon us grace.
Grace is a memory of salvation after Jesus died on the cross.

Antonym Poem by Madelyn Monsma - 8th Grade

Large things are beautiful: such as a shimmering dolphin gliding through the water, or a magnificent mountain, towering over the plains; rustling trees, a brilliant rainbow, the waterfalls roaring, the sun's radiant glow.	But small things are beautiful, too: a sweet, blooming flower, a gurgling, giggling baby, butterflies and caterpillars, hummingbirds darting to and fro, a candle's dancing flames, diamonds glittering on a ring, and delicate snowflakes falling.
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Connotation Poem by Elizabeth Kortz - 7th Grade

JOY

Joy is overwhelming happiness and great pleasure. There could be joy because of winning a game or because of hearing God's wonderful Word.

Joy sounds like a bird chirping a cry of happiness because of the food that his mother had hanging out of her mouth.

Joy looks like a wild snow storm, the flurries blowing everywhere.

Joy remembers Christmas when everyone was joyful because Jesus was born to save us from all of our sins.

Joy is a memory of children rejoicing about Christ's birth and rejoicing that they are saved.

FROM THE PROMOTERS

Fundraisers Overview | Dana VanPutten - Ways and Means Committee

SPRING CONCERT: In Spring 2014, Eastside hosted a concert commemorating the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The concert featured music by Eric and Crista Phelps (cello and piano), Jared Langerak (organ) and Michelle Pipe (soprano). After the concert we had a wonderful dessert reception in the basement of First Church, arranged by our generous supporters.

ONLINE AUCTION: On September 26, 2014, Eastside hosted our Third Online Auction through OrbitBidCharity.com. The committee contacted mostly local businesses and requested donations for our school that the committee then posted to the Orbit Bid website. On the day of the auction, people were able to bid on any of the items which included gift certificates, an American Girl Doll, Tupperware, handmade potholders, a handmade decorative wooden bowl and much more. The winning bidders came to school the next day to pick up and pay for their items. This auction has been a profitable fundraiser for our school.

EVERLASTING BLOOMS FLEA MARKET: On October 11-12, 2014, Kathy Holstege invited Eastside to sell baked goods and our banket at her Flea Market. Our supporters generously baked for this fundraiser to make it a wonderful success. This year we were also invited to sell a lunch of grilled hot dogs, chips and pop. We had some beautiful fall days for this venture!

BANKET: Eastside supporters got together on two separate days to make our yummy dutch treat of banket. The pastry is sold through our school at the Everlasting Blooms Flea Market and at Stop&Shop. It comes frozen unbaked (with baking instructions included) so that you can have it fresh from the oven. This year we made and sold over 600 sticks of banket!

STOP&SHOP: On November 2, 2014, Eastside hosted the 18th Annual Stop&Shop from 9-2. This year we filled fifty spaces with vendors including our vintage Eastside Table. We also had our bake sale table selling baked goods, homemade frozen soups, and baked and frozen banket. On Friday night our supporters set up for the next day, including getting the kitchen in order, pricing baked goods, and setting out the tables and chairs. In the morning, our valets helped get the vendors set up and made sure that the early morning ran smoothly. Our kitchen sold fresh cinnamon rolls in the morning and our famous chicken salad croissants, hot dogs, chili and broccoli cheese soup for lunch. Stop&Shop has been our biggest fundraiser through the years. It requires a lot of support, but has always been a very profitable and rewarding fundraiser!

PROTESTANT REFORMED SCHOOLS SMARTSHOP: This is our newest endeavor and includes all the Protestant Reformed schools in the Grand Rapids area. Dennis Kaptein has a contract with Costco to buy all their returned items at a discounted price. He then resells the items at a big markdown through the www.platinumbidauctions.com website and his Smartshop warehouse (708 O'Malley Dr Coopersville, MI). The schools provide fifteen workers altogether each day, Monday through Saturday, to cover the three positions: listers, sorters and cashiers. Eastside is participating in Smartshop for a six month trial period to determine if it fits our fundraising needs, since we would probably have to give up our other fundraisers in an effort to make this work. If Smartshop is successful, Eastside would like to arrange it as a tuition reduction fundraiser.

Thanks to all who help make these fundraisers a success for Eastside!

WINTER FUN - RECESS ACTIVITIES

Eastside students made the most of winter and spent recesses outdoors, building snow forts or sledding and snowboarding down the hill between the upper and lower parking lots.

