Vision

Over the past two years, four Christian schools have been seeking ways to strengthen the impact of Christian education along the coast of Lake Michigan. While New Era Christian, Muskegon Christian, Western Michigan Christian High, and Grand Haven Christian have a long history of cooperation, the administrators have sought new models of collaboration and centralization in key areas. While Christian school mergers are often forged in the midst of failure and shrinking numbers, these schools have been healthy in recent years and hope that combining their efforts will further strengthen each individual school and the greater system as well.

While early meetings involved the administrators from each school, each board elected members to a “Visioning Committee” in the fall of 2010. This group was charged with developing key areas of collaboration and a timeframe for implementation.

Plans

In the spring of 2011 the Visioning Committee sent a summary report to each board listing their overall findings. The group outlined a three-year implementation plan. The objectives for the first year are to combine areas where cooperation will be most effective. These areas are:

1. Recruitment and Marketing: The four schools agreed to hire one marketing director and to use a unified marketing and recruiting plan for the region.

2. Curriculum: In 2011-2012 the schools would collaborate on staff development and the use of Curriculum track.

3. Advancement: The schools are developing a structure to allow the hiring of a single Advancement Officer to acquire major gifts for the schools as a system and oversee the annual fund offices of each individual school.

4. Technology and Software: Each school has historically paid for a variety of software and technology packages. The schools will purchase several systems as a package for the 2011-2012 school year and will begin the transition to a single system.

Future Targets

1. Assess the goals and objectives from the first year of implementation.
2. Strengthen the most effective areas of collaboration and adjust areas of concern.
3. Acquire accreditation as a K-12 school system over separate accreditations.
4. Clarify the board governance and leadership structure.