

This year I have had the privilege to participate in the Van Lunen Fellowship program. The Van Lunen experience has provided a tremendous opportunity for professional growth as a Christian school leader as well as key organizational gains for West Shore Christian Academy. My name is Dan Steinfield, Head of School at West Shore Christian Academy. Over the course of the 2015/2016 school year my applied school project has been Capital Planning for the Future. Our consulting partner for this project has been Crabtree and Rorhbaugh Architects (<http://cra-architects.com/>). When the journey started in the fall of 2015, I viewed this project as a “simple” capital campaign to increase and improve facilities for a growing school. As God often does, He had much greater plans and the events of the past year have been even more instrumental for the future of WSCA than any member of the school community would have ever imagined.

West Shore Christian Academy (WSCA) is a PK-12 private Christian School in the Harrisburg, PA area with 440 students currently enrolled. WSCA has a strong 42 year history of Christian Education built by many faithful servants of the Lord over the past years. The school experienced a thirteen year period of enrollment decline, falling from 630 students in 1998 to 299 students in 2012. Following a renewed commitment to the mission and 2020 vision, as well as leadership restructuring by the board in 2012/13, the school is poised to experience renewal and growth in the coming years. WSCA is uniquely positioned in the West Shore area to become the first choice among parents for Christian Education in Central PA. WSCA will be marked by its intentional Christian spiritual formation of students, rigorous as well as varied academic offerings, vibrant fine arts department, and a competitive athletic program; this vision will be actively supported by an administration that models servant leadership, excellent faculty, supportive parents, a visionary board of trustees, and an engaged alumni base. Core values which provide the foundation for the school include Christ centered education, importance of the person, leadership and character development, significance of the community, and global education.

Since 2013, West Shore Christian Academy has undergone a strategic planning process that has resulted in a re-articulated mission and vision statement as well as core values. The Leading the Way 5 Year Strategic Plan was developed with input from parents, students, faculty and staff and year two was successfully completed. Renewed vision, new administrative leadership, and innovative programming have yielded dramatic growth results over the coming years. This strategic planning process has resulted in a 34% enrollment growth in two years; a net enrollment growth of 14% (over 100 new students) in both 2014-15 and 2015-16. Current enrollment is 405 (up from 299 in July 2013); we anticipate 12% growth again for 2016-17 which will place us at 440 with expanded PK programs and three Kindergartens. In addition to new mission appropriate families, the faculty has migrated towards a stronger group of educational professionals. Further, the educational quotient and availability of scholastic options has increased dramatically. The Leading The Way Annual Fund was introduced in 2013, with an Annual Fund goal of \$250,000 each year to support strategic plan initiatives.

To accommodate the growth taking place at WSCA, the Head of School and School Board began discussions regarding a capital campaign and facility upgrades and/or additions which would allow the school to meet 21st Century educational standards as well as accommodate a student body of approximately 600-700 students. WSCA’s buildings are dated, with the Upper School having been built in 1973 and additions added in the late

'70's. The Lower School and current church sanctuary and offices were built in the 1980's. The Upper School poses several challenges, including limited classroom space, code issues such as ADA compliance and sprinkler systems. The IT infrastructure is also in need of being replaced and poses several challenges to instructional technology in the classroom. The administration estimates the current facility could accommodate growth to 500 students.

Upon acceptance to the Van Lunen program for the 2015-16 school year, my Applied School Project was to prepare a Master Site Plan for WSCA in preparation for a Capital Campaign which would raise the necessary funds to support facility upgrades and expansion to begin the spring of 2019. West Shore Christian Academy partnered with Crabtree and Rorhbaugh, an architectural and engineering team, to assess our current facilities and develop a master plan that will provide students with facilities that support their education process and core values, provide 21st Century learning environments that will engage students and encourage learning and that are cost effective to construct and operate. It is important to note the host church has concentrated over the past few years to reduce an existing mortgage on the current facilities. The timing of any capital campaign would need to coincide with the elimination of the church debt, currently on track for 2018-2019. In coordination with the school board and church leadership, I developed the following timeline for a capital campaign:

In year one (2015-16), the board and administration would work with the church leadership to establish a clear, unified vision for WSCA and BBC with a capital project timeline. A Steering Committee was developed to provide oversight and direction for the Master Site Planning process. Crabtree and Rorhbaugh completed a Facility Audit to help assess current use of available space as well as facility needs for the future. Upon completion of the Master Site Planning process, Crabtree and Rorhbaugh would present drawings and several options for a capital project. The host church also was presented with an opportunity to purchase a neighboring property, including a 3,000 square foot home and 1.25 acres, in the 2015-2016 school year which was completed in June. Finally, we opened conversations with a neighboring church to rent their facilities for our WSCA Pre-K program beginning 2017-2018. This would allow for continued expansion without significant capital expenses.

Year two (2016-2017) would consist of 8-9 months of detailed planning of a capital campaign beginning in August of 2016. Research supports that 75% of the success of a Capital Campaign is based on the initial planning. The results of the Master Site planning process from Crabtree and Rorhbaugh would be presented to the WSCA community in September and a Capital Campaign Steering Committee would be established by October, 2016. A Feasibility Study would be completed by November of 2016 and would be a joint study between WSCA and Bible Baptist Church. It is currently estimated the scope of a 2019 capital project would be approximately \$3 million dollars. The Leadership phase, or quiet phase, of the campaign would be launched in April of 2017 and will consist of 8-9 months of quiet fund raising among big donors. The goal to the Leadership Phase would be to gather 60% of the capital campaign funds represented in 1-3 year commitments.

Year three (2017-2018) would include the launch of a public campaign with detailed literature and plans/drawings for the capital projects. This year would also include temporary solutions for school growth, including modular classrooms. **Year four (2018-2019)** would see the completion of the capital campaign, final planning and preparations for the capital projects, and construction to begin in May of 2019.

The goal of the Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates (CRA) master plan was to implement elements of excellence to benefit recruitment; nurture and promote the existing team atmosphere; foster and expand community partnerships – existing and new; and create a sense of equity with similar local school districts. CRA provided a collaborative process and leadership to assist West Shore Christian Academy in the discovery, analysis and definition of the needs of students, staff and community. CRA’s approach outlined sequentially the necessary steps and established a protocol for communication and decision making to ensure a comprehensive feasibility study which represented WSCA vision and goals. CRA’s “client oriented approach” and extensive experience having completed over 200 studies uniquely qualified our firm for WSCA’s Master Site Planning process.

The Master Site Planning process with CRA took place between February and June of 2016 and included the following components:

Kick-Off Meeting – We met with the key Administrative Staff, Building Committee Members to review overall project goals and proposed schedule for the Feasibility Study. We reviewed the process, clearly identifying client responsibilities, architect responsibilities and our overall communication and decision making process.

Identify Existing Use of Space – CRA reviewed the site plans and floor plans provided and conducted interviews with the administration, principals, and pastors to determine the current use of each space within each building.

Validation of Educational Specifications – CRA reviewed and validated the current educational program and documented current and future space needs. CRA worked closely with the administration to develop a detailed function and area summary for each of these spaces to develop an educational model for each of the educational facilities.

Comprehensive Communication & Engagement Plan – A key step in the successful completion of the study and design process is successful communication, information gathering, and provision of materials to the client and school community. CRA identified all key meetings and conducted Design Charrettes with Administration, Advisory Committee and Community and provided a detailed schedule of the meetings for public dissemination. CRA’s documentation of meeting minutes at each meeting allowed their team to demonstrate an understanding of the issues discussed and decisions made. CRA’s information gathering techniques included web based questionnaires and community surveys as well as several open parent meetings, meetings with faculty and staff, and meetings with church facility team members.

Physical Survey Of Existing Facilities – CRA’s architects, engineering team and WSCA’s facilities director met to discuss current operational conditions. CRA’s team conducted an on-site review and observation of all building components and systems. CRA prepared a report based on their field analysis stating the condition of the mechanical, electrical, technology and plumbing systems. CRA developed a “menu” of improvements that included recommendations for renovations, code compliance and accessibility. CRA reviewed energy consumption of each School Building using EPA / DOE Portfolio Manager Tool, as required by the PA Department of Education. The analysis included a review of all School Facilities and structures. The review also included a comprehensive Code analysis by CRA’s in house certified code reviewer.

Educational Program Development – CRA worked with the Administration and Advisory Committee to determine the requirements for each grade, space and site amenities. During this phase, the Architect provided the Advisory Committee with the information needed to determine the minimum/maximum size for each grade and determined the appropriate maximum number of students per classroom for each grade.

Educational Facilities Adequacy Analysis – CRA analyzed the school building’s capacity and identified educational space deficiencies based on the approved Educational Program. This phase evaluated efficient use of space within WSCA facilities and provided a menu of educational improvements within WSCA’s existing building which could then be included and prioritized as part of the options.

Facility Utilization Analysis - Based on the approved Educational Program, CRA evaluated the location of existing buildings, current usage, site availability and capacity to develop an optimal usage report.

Develop Options - Based on the scope of work proposed for improvements, the Architect developed options giving consideration to program, site, budget, grade alignment and sequence of construction. A baseline option to meet current construction standards was identified for each building. Multiple variables for each option were present; therefore, CRA assembled a matrix so that each option could be compared. (Currently in process)

Identification of Educational Improvements – Once the final options were established CRA worked closely to identify specifically the list of Educational Improvements provided by each of the approved Options. This listing along with the options will be included in the information provided to the public via the website and printed communications. (Currently in process)

Final Study Presentation – Upon review and approval of the Board, a summary of the findings will be presented in narrative and illustrative form and included on the Feasibility Study website. The Board may elect to select a project and authorize the architect to proceed. (To be presented to the school board and administration in August)

The Master Site Planning process with Crabtree and Rorhbaugh was a great learning experience. The opportunity to walk through the Master Site Planning process with such a reputable company provided great insight and leadership to this important step in the capital planning process. CRA’s collaborative process combined with their client-oriented approach resulted in the provision of high quality architectural design services along with personal attention and project control. Our CRA project leaders Tracy Rorhbaugh, Kelsey Leed, and Rick LaBlanc quickly became friends, exhibiting a high interest and excitement about the ministry and potential for growth at WSCA. Tracy, Kelsey, and Rick provided guidance and direction to the Master Site Planning process and facilitated many faculty, parent, and church meetings to solicit feedback from key stakeholders in the community. CRA provided great insight on the effective stewardship of WSCA/BBC’s facilities; noting where renovation could suffice and where new construction would enhance the ministry.

This project also expanded my understanding of the major components and planning necessary for a successful capital campaign. As a member of the senior leadership team at Delaware County Christian School I had the privilege to be a part of capital campaigns. However, there were many details and planning behind the scenes which I had not experienced. As WSCA continues to look to the future and use the information provided from the Master Site Plan with CRA, I know have a greater understanding of the inner workings of a capital campaign and the intricacies involved in making a campaign successful. Experts suggest 75% of the success of any capital campaign is in the research and planning of the campaign. A clear representation of the capital project, who it will impact, and why complete the project is essential to gather donor and community support for a successful capital campaign. The Master Site Planning process with CRA provided clarity, vision, and specific capital project scenarios which can be used to organize and promote the capital campaign. A full report from CRA will be presented to the school board in August 2016 and shared with the larger WSCA community in the fall of 2016.

Finally, through the Van Lunen Applied School Project I have been reminded of the power of vision in a community. Vision in a community restores hope, builds trust and confidence, and generates momentum by attracting individuals to the vision laid out. At WSCA, vision accounts for the growth and positive improvements which have taken place. Prior to 2012, there was a leadership and vision vacuum and the community was simply managing decline with only memories of past “glory days” to cling to. With fresh vision for a school of academic excellence grounded in a Biblical worldview, WSCA gained momentum, attracting faculty and families who were drawn to and excited about the vision. These community members came with ideas, programs, and resources to implement the vision. As changes took place, these members recruited more individuals to be a part of the vision. The quality of the ministry provided to families increased, strengthening the value proposition made to parents to partner with them in the stewardship of their children. In the parent meetings held with CRA, many parents testified to the positive improvements at WSCA and the power of the vision the school board had laid out. Many parents were also excited to engage with CRA and actively participate in planning for the future of the school. Despite the positive momentum and changes taking place, WSCA must continue to manage a balance of stimulating progress while preserving the core. Managing a culture with growing diversity, differing understandings of Christian education and excellence in Christian education, and engaging the secular world is essential and can create a volatile community.

Epilogue

In his book Building Below the Waterline, Gordon MacDonald writes, “Recognizing the right moment to leave is among a leader’s most difficult decisions” (pg. 240). MacDonald goes on to state,

The prophet Jonah once made a time-to-leave decision. On Tarshish-bound boat, knowing he shouldn’t be there but hoping God wouldn’t notice, the situation deteriorated.

“Throw me overboard.” Jonah cried at last.

Instead, “the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before” (Jonah 1:13). Bad decision – when the crew has to row harder than it should, a time-to-leave decision may be called for. For once, though, Jonah got it right, and when he went over the side, things on deck got better.

That raises the bothersome question: when is it time for a leader to go over the side?

During the spring of 2016, two issues also simultaneously emerged at WSCA. The first involved financial challenges as a result of increased expenses in staffing and financial aid amidst rapid school growth. Attempts to create alternative sources of revenue to support the ministry of WSCA in some cases fell short. The use of an accounting system which was not adequate for the size and complexity of a Christian School organization, a lack of emphasis on monitoring finances, and the failure to establish a working finance committee by the school board allowed these issues to compound unchecked. At the request of the Head of School and BBC Elders, an ad-hoc finance committee developed a four year financial plan and on Sunday evening, April 24, the finance committee presented the WSCA four year financial plan to Bible Baptist Church, which included a

request for a \$350,000 line of credit to the BBC congregation. The four year plan ends in 2019-2020 when the line of credit will no longer be necessary and the school will have sufficient cash reserves on hand. The BBC congregation voted to approve the line of credit in a 174-8. Many individuals spoke in support of the ministry of Christian education and our dedicated faculty and staff who pour out their lives to disciple students who will positively impact the world for Christ. While the congregation approved the line of credit, there was also understandably great concern over the financial challenges facing the school. Steps have been taken to update the financial practices of WSCA which will greatly enhance the leadership's ability to oversee school finances.

These financial challenges served to exacerbate a larger issue at WSCA: an ongoing resistance to the vision and resulting changes taking place at WSCA. As Head of School, I was completing a three year contract in June of 2016 and was up for a contract renewal. As I surveyed the landscape at WSCA/BBC, there was a lack of unity among our faculty and staff, the BBC church membership, and the greater parent community of WSCA. There was a deep divide between the parent and church community regarding vision and philosophy of Christian education. My final meeting of the day on Friday May 27th was a couple representing the school and church who came to ask me to "do the right thing, be a hero, and resign to save the church." I was informed if I renew my contract I would certainly be facing the BBC congregation in a special congregational meeting to overturn my contract. There is a core group of church members, including WSCA faculty and staff, that was organized and worked together to see the Head of School not offered a contract renewal. This group had spread gossip and slander and had caused great division within the school. The threat to me regarding a congregational meeting was evidence this group would not even submit to the authority of the BBC Elders. This core group consistently communicated they wanted their "old school" back, they were tired of seeing their friends removed from staff positions, they were entitled to be at WSCA as they had served faithfully for many years, and the current leadership was causing the ministry of WSCA to be replaced by an academic agenda.

The WSCA school board and BBC elder board eventually settled on offering the Head of School a contract renewal. However as events were unfolding in May, I began to sense the Lord stirring that my time at WSCA was coming to an end. I have always viewed myself as a visionary, strategic leader. However, in this situation God saw fit to use me as a transitional leader. When my family came in July of 2013 it was clearly the Lord's call on our lives; both my wife and I were excited to see our kids graduate from WSCA. As such, it is with surprise and unexpected leading from the Lord that I discerned my ministry at WSCA was coming to an end. On May 30 I informed my school board I would not be renewing my contract as Head of School for West Shore Christian Academy in the 2016/2017 school year. I made this decision solely in the conviction that this is the Lord's leading for my family and I at this time.

I believe God is working in great ways at WSCA. I also recognized I would be a stumbling block to this future; so I chose to lead even in my leaving. A board member and I approached The Christian School Association of the Greater Harrisburg Area about a possible acquisition—one that would maintain WSCA's excellent academic programs, talented teachers and staff, competitive athletics, and current facility in Shiremanstown while offering financial stability and expanded resources that come with a well-managed, established, professional

organization like Christian School Association of the Greater Harrisburg Area. The Association currently runs the Harrisburg Christian School campus in Linglestown.

Such a partnership is the result of over a decade's worth of conversation and negotiation among Christian school leaders in central Pennsylvania and would guarantee the long-term fiscal health and sustainability of WSCA as well as provide strong board governance by a well-established school board which understands 21st Century Christian education. In this acquisition, WSCA would move from being owned by Bible Baptist Church to being a tenant in its facilities. This separation is amenable to the leadership of both the school and church and will be considered in a congregational vote in late July. There are many details to be worked out in the coming weeks; continue to pray for the WSCA and HCS communities as they respond to this God-given opportunity.

I am thankful for the three years the Lord has blessed my family to be a part of the community. I have developed many wonderful relationships and had the opportunity to learn and develop many skillsets. Many lessons have been learned with opportunities for growth. God used each of these experiences to prepare me for the next ministry assignment He had in store. In mid-May, an invitation came from the Board of Trustees of Jupiter Christian School (Jupiter, FL) to consider candidacy for the position of President of Jupiter Christian School (JCS). A friend who had been offered the position but was led elsewhere provided my name to the board president. After several weeks of candidacy and prayer with family and mentors, I clearly felt the call to Jupiter Christian School. On June 14th I officially accepted the position of President at Jupiter Christian School, effective July 1, 2016. I look forward with anticipation and excitement about how God will work in and through me as part of the JCS ministry. The skills developed while at WSCA are the very skills which made me a viable candidate and have equipped me to lead JCS forward in the next phase of their ministry.

I am so thankful for the Van Lunen experience this year. The opportunity to learn from the godly Christian school leaders who comprise the Van Lunen faculty has been an amazing experience. The program was a great support and learning experience. I am confident the Van Lunen program will leave its mark of excellence on both WSCA and Jupiter Christian School for many years to come. Thank you to the Van Lunen faculty and board of directors for this life changing experience. May the Lord continue to bless you as you have poured into the lives of so many!