

Three Years, Two Capital Campaigns and Two Major Building Projects

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We pray that you get to do a major capital campaign and a major building project in your career. We also pray that you don't have to do two. I smiled with acknowledgement and understanding when I heard those lines from one of our leaders at the Van Lunen Center in Michigan. In the past three years, we have raised the money for and built a new middle school building and a new athletic complex. The middle school building was \$3.6 million dollars and the complex cost \$19 million. There had not been a major capital campaign at BCS in the past 15 years before this. God had prepared the school for just such a moment.

One of the first donors that I ever went out to lunch with gave me two very valuable lessons. He said, "Dan, money follows vision" and that I needed to have the vision for the school of ten years from now laid out in very clear details. Our dusty strategic plan of years and years ago called for a new middle school and a new gym. The middle school was desperately needed as enrollment had blossomed in the past few years. All of our 6th – 12th grade students were jammed into one building housing 18 classrooms. Having 6th graders housed with high school students was not an ideal situation either for the students and their teachers. I presented the vision at a parent meeting, much to the surprise of our board. The board liked the idea but didn't think it was a reality at the time. A grandparent did like the vision, though, and the money followed. She offered the first \$2.4 of the \$3.6 million needed and we were off on our first capital campaign.

We needed to change our site plan with the city to accomplish this project, which meant that our neighbors would have a chance to speak at the city council meeting where they would vote yes or no on the project. We proactively met with our neighbors first and listened to their concerns. We offered a new fence and other concessions to make the project become a reality. The project made it through nicely. We were worried because we had heard the horror stories of the big fight our neighbors put up in almost cancelling lights for our football field a few years back. Little did we know about the 90 foot light poles coming soon for our new athletic complex at the time.

We created four different seating options (Kagan-style collaborative desks where four triangular desks fit together, tables, swivel chairs, and stand up desks) to keep our students engaged throughout the day. We added lots of technology (Chromebooks for each student, WiFi access points in each room, short throw projectors, Surface tablets, etc.) in the building. Finally, we added extra wide carpeted hallways with lots of windows for natural light. The result is happy middle school students, parents and teachers.

The vision for an athletic complex followed and an amazing donor contribute \$17 million of the \$19 million needed to produce a first class complex. We are adding four classrooms, a weight room, an athletic training room, a skybox, concessions, locker rooms, a kitchen and four full basketball courts in the new gymnasium building. We are also adding artificial turf fields and lights to our baseball, football, soccer and softball fields behind the gym. The gym has a large balcony that overlooks these fields to create an amazing experience for our athletes and our spectators. There will be a new stadium as well for our football and soccer fans. We were very proactive in meeting with our neighbors before this project and were able to keep light from spilling into the neighborhood, direct noise away from homes, and offer new fences and landscaping. It is exciting to see what God does to fulfill a vision for His school.