

## **Group Society Meeting - 2.1.2022**

**\*The board had this meeting transcribed. Any errors or omissions in black text would be from the transcription service. All board and administrative responses are in red.**

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**0:00:03.6 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Hi, Good evening. Thank you all for coming. My name is Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen. I am the Vice President of school board this year. We're gonna open with a quick devotions and a prayer. Psalm 8. O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands, you put everything under his feet: All flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, and birds in the air and fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Let us pray.

**0:01:04.6 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** God in heaven, maker of creations, sustainer of all life, we thank you that you have brought us together here tonight. I thank you for this time where we can share and care about our Christian school, I ask that you would guide our words and our thoughts and desires of our hearts. I ask that you would give wisdom and discernment to the board, that you would strengthen and encourage the teachers and staff. That you would help all the kids and... We pray over this evening and for your blessing on the families of our school and our community. We pray for our country and our world Lord that you would rule and over rule. I think that you have called us all to this time and this place and that you enable us to bring glory to your name. In Jesus name, amen.

**0:01:52.1 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Thank you again for coming. We are hereby asked by a group of society members to call a meeting of the full society, so people could have an opportunity to share thoughts and concerns about the school and the Board. And these meetings are the board's response to that request. So by way of quick review, Article Two of the constitution, sets forth the basis for who society members are. So Article two states the basis of our society is the infallible word of God, as interpreted by the reformed standards. The society is governed by the following guiding principles. That all things have been created to the end that the triune of God may be glorified in and through them. That God by His wise covenant arrangement has appointed parents to be responsible for the training of the child to the end that God and His glory shall be central and supreme to [0:02:40.5] \_\_\_\_\_. But the training of the child shall be continued and the parents responsible supervision in the school that carries out the basic God honoring, God centered programs begin at home.

**0:02:52.5 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** So, all who are in agreement with Article two of the constitution are at least 18 years of age, who contribute time, treasure or tuition are eligible for membership in the society. Additionally, all employees are eligible to be society members and membership includes the privilege of voting at the meetings of the society as well as readiness to participate in activities on behalf of the school. So the board felt that smaller meeting would be more productive and give more people an opportunity to share their thoughts. Also we thought that logistically, it's easier to host small groups and we hope that more people feel more comfortable sharing in a smaller setting. Members of the board tonight are here to listen, although not all board members could make it, but I think we got a pretty good showing. I guess stand up and introduce yourself. Let me start with Derek who is just sitting right in front of me. Introduce yourself. We're going to start with Derek 'cause he's sitting right in front of me.

**0:03:37.9 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Introduce yourself.

**0:03:38.2 Derek DeKoster:** I am Derek.

**0:03:41.1 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Derek DeKoster, if you didn't catch that.

**0:03:44.6 Dan Gibson:** Dan Gibson.

**0:03:45.1 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Dan Gibson and Becky Bos

**0:03:46.9 Becky Bos:** Becky Bos.

**0:03:50.4 Lori TeVelde:** Lori TeVelde.

**0:03:55.6 Lisa Kramer:** Lisa Kramer.

**0:03:57.4 Mike Smit:** Mike Smit

**0:04:00.7 TJ Mellema:** TJ Mellema

**0:04:05.9 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** So the board isn't planning to answer any questions that are posed in tonight's meeting, at the meeting. We're just simply here to listen and to gain a better understanding of the concerns or the celebrations that you have about the school. So, we've already had many conversations on some of the topics that have been brought forward that we'll be working to give a fair representation of all the key questions that have been posed through out the meetings. But we wanna make sure that we're correct in some areas of misinformation, so please give us some time to be thorough in our response. Some of the questions and comments we received in the past two meetings have already been addressed by the board, in previous communications. So we know that not everyone doesn't prefer to our communication styles, but the board is working to communicate to society through updating the Q and A document on the LC website.

**0:04:52.7 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Just a note from the board and just a reminder that our annual society meeting is going to be held by March 8. We're very excited to share with society our five-year plan at that time. We'll form the 2022 nomination committee, and we'll review and vote on the budget, and we'll have other business that will be taken care of at that meeting as well. So please join us on the 8th for the annual board meeting for the annual society meeting. What have we been focused on in the last few months as the board, we've been focused on giving students in school learning face-to-face with their teachers, trying to preserve, protect, promote and advance the 112-year legacy of Living Christian School. Trying to represent all of society, clarify policy encourage and support our staff administrators and working on long-term strategies to make Living Christian sustainable, provide leadership for intentional direction, looking forward to the next generation of families in our community.

**0:05:48.9 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** So, a few housekeeping items to get started. For clarity, we are running a timer, Lisa's going to be timing tonight to give everybody who have signed up an equal chance to speak. They will be expected to end your comments around the two and a half minute mark. Last week, we were a little bit more lax in the length of comments, but tonight we're going to sound the timer at two and a half minutes and then we'll let you know when you've hit the

3 minute mark. So we have a full slate of 33 people who would like to talk tonight. So if you could please keep your remarks around two and a half minutes in respect of everybody who signed up we'd really appreciate it. We'll call everyone by name who registered to speak. So when it's your turn please introduce yourself, and if you could also add how you're involved or related to Living Christian School, we would appreciate it.

**0:06:36.3 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Please don't interrupt the speaker, even with cheers or applause. Please don't call out specific teachers or staff, and out of respect for everyone and their thoughts and to keep us on our tight time schedule, please don't clap after each person finishes speaking. We'll just thank them and call the next person. Great. We'll now open the floor to those who had requested to address the Board in tonight's meeting. Again, we're here to listen from you and we want to accurately address your concerns as we move forward. All right. Oh, yeah, and after the meeting, Board members will be around. If you wanna have one-on-one conversation with anybody or if you have follow-up questions, we'll be around. All right. Our first speaker tonight is Don Van Maanen.

**0:07:20.6 Don Van Maanen:** Hey, don't start the timer yet, okay. [chuckle] I just wanted to tell you that the mask mandate is really good for a 62-year-old guy because it becomes my belt, so over here, so when I'm eating stuff falls in here, okay. And also. Timer? We're looking at buying... Getting a new elementary building so if I go over time, I'll start throwing you cash, okay? I'm gonna read this really quick. My name is Don Van Maanen. I've been involved in Christian education since I was five years old. I've been working at Living Christian School for 30 years, 14 years as a fifth grade teacher, nine years as a development director, and seven years as the elementary principal. As I prepared for this speech, two words kept coming up in my mind: Dedication and gratitude. On March 13, 2020, we were informed that we needed to shelter in place because of Covid-19. As a result, all the students were sent home. The following week of Monday morning, the staff of Living Christian got together to pray and worship our Lord and Savior.

**0:08:44.5 Don Van Maanen::** We then worked that whole week diligently to do our best to provide online education for our students. We were hoping to only do online for a short period but it turned out to be the rest of the school year. Flipping your classroom and putting it online takes a considerable amount of time and dedication. We did not do it perfectly but I felt the staff at LCS did their best. During the summer of 2020, the School Board and the admin team decided it was best to provide in-person education for our students, even if the Health Department strongly recommended online education. Here again, the staff at LC worked endless hours to get the school ready for our students with all the additional health protocols. This again took hard work and dedication. All across our nation, many teachers refused to work because of Covid. However, I'm happy to report that every staff member said, "Yes, we want our students back on campus because that's what is best for them." Dedication. That day, we felt strong gratitude from our parents and constituents, and that gratitude energized us and kept us going.

**0:10:04.7 Don Van Maanen::** The school board and admin team were considered strong leaders because we successfully held school. This current school year, we're all longing for a more typical year, but as you know, most state health protocols did not change. There were still mandates to wear masks. The decision by the school board and admin team to follow these health protocols mandates ruffled quite a few feathers. Social media became alive with put-downs and many times false statements. Since we needed to follow these mandates, some people now said the school board and admin team were weaklings with a lack of good leadership. The school board and admin team

struggled with how to best follow these rules. We tried to loosen the health rules which led to the closure of our school for two weeks. This closure led to more criticism and dissension. This school year has been one of my most challenging years in 40 years of being involved and active in Christian education. Some of the commitments, actions and posting on social media have saddened my heart. I continue to pray for unity within the Christian community.

**0:11:20.7 Don Van Maanen::** On the positive side, each day the 580 children in the elementary building bring me joy and happiness. Since I've been working with elementary students, I truly understand the words of Jesus in Matthew 18: 2-4; "Jesus invited the little children to stand among them. 'Truly, I tell you,' he said, 'unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.'" In closing, I wanna emphasize the word "gratitude" because as I said earlier, the gratitude we have received from many of our parents, grandparents and friends, has kept us energized during difficult times. 1 Thessalonians, 15: 16-18: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God In Christ Jesus for you."

**0:12:17.0 Don Van Maanen::** So I wanna thank our school board members for their hard work and dedication to Living Christian School. They have worked endless hours to address the conflicts within our society. I also wanna thank the nurses and wellness committee. They have taken a lot of unfair criticism and rude remarks. They did not sign up for these Covid years, but they have stayed dedicated to Living Christian. Finally, I'd like to thank Paul Bootsma for his hard work and dedication. I've been blessed to work with him over the past seven years. Unfortunately, he has also received much unfair criticism and rude remarks, but what amazes me is that through it all he has stayed strong and focused on the mission of Living Christian School. Every day in the elementary school, I emphasize the word "Shalom" with my students. When I visited Israel years ago, I was taught the rich meaning of this word, and since that day, my goal has been to live by that word. "Shalom" is the Hebrew word for peace, wholeness, health, and blessing. Shalom is a harmony God intends for the world how God wants things to be.

**0:13:19.1 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Time is up.

**0:13:19.1 DM:** Shalom is peace with yourself and your neighbor. Sorry. I continue. Please continue to spread shalom. Thank you.

**0:13:36.6 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Scott Vanderleest.

**0:13:42.3 Scott VanderLeest:** Good evening. Thanks for the opportunity. My name is Scott VanderLeest. I have five kids here at LC. First, let me say thank you for the members of the LC Board for hosting these public sessions and for serving during these extraordinary times. Having observed my wife serve on the board a few years ago, I know the stresses of this position in normal times. I would also like to acknowledge the courage it took, on behalf of the Board, the Superintendent, principals, teachers and others, to get LC open for in-person learning last school year. I thanked God for you then and I thank God for you now.

**0:14:21.6 Scott VanderLeest:** Second, I'm grateful to this community that invests in my five kids, even as Shauna and I invest in yours. This community is why we choose to live, worship and raise our kids here, but I also want to call out that some of our behavior has not been exemplary; in fact, quite the opposite. I heard that Dr. Emily Gibson at previous sessions such as this reported that after

years of working at Western Washington University, a setting we might consider to quote one of my college professors a bastion of atheism, that Dr. Gibson would state that she has never been treated so poorly as she was during her brief tenure at Living Christian. That's quite an indictment.

**0:15:01.8 Scott VanderLeest:** And we've heard of teachers, nurses and administrators whom have had the desire to quit their jobs or seek counselling due to the abuse they have taken from our community as they merely sought to work within the constructs laid out by Washington State. And shame on me for not being more supportive in public or in private for these servants of our school. Let me say it now: Thank you for your efforts. My third and final point is that I've grown concerned over the efforts to restrict or micro-manage what our teachers teach our kids. Of course, there are age-appropriate considerations we must take, but by the time my child is an 18-year-old senior in high school, when they may in fact be receiving the last of their formal education, they should be exposed to ideas even, and perhaps especially, controversial ones.

**0:15:46.9 Scott VanderLeest:** Would I rather they hear it at LC from teachers whom I share values with and who attended the same high schools and universities that I did, or sit next to me at church on Sundays, or from secular sources? So the first time they critically engage one of these topics such as CRT in a university class at UW or WSU, perhaps in the pages of Time magazine or the Bellingham Herald. No, I would choose it now in this setting. These years allow me to have the dinner table conversations with them if they have questions. I would encourage the school board and LC Society to follow long-standing processes previously laid out for hiring teachers, setting curriculum, overseeing the instruction...

**0:16:30.3 Lisa Kramer:** Thirty seconds.

**0:16:30.9 Scott VanderLeest:** And taking input from parents. And let us continue that rich reform tradition of creating students to be transforming influences in all aspects of God's glorious, albeit fallen, creation. Thank you.

**0:16:46.6 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Christine Aiello Wydur? Jon Van Hulzen?

**0:17:01.9 Jon Van Hulzen:** Jon Van Hulzen. I've been teaching Bible here at the high school for 24 years. How are we doing tonight? [chuckle] Old as I am... I just hit 50... So the glasses have to come on. Okay, I have three quick words for the board. It's a word of gratitude, a word of concern, and a word of hope. First, thank you for your commitment and to doing everything necessary to keep our kids in school, including your leadership in abiding by the mandates placed before us. In doing so, you've not only preserved our ability to carry out our school's mission, but you've also reflected a Christ-like concern for the health and wellbeing of our neighbors. And from one teacher's perspective, I want you to know that I have found myself still fully able, even while wearing a mask, to deliver the Christ-centered curriculum that you have entrusted to me. Yes, it's not ideal, but few things in life are. This obstacle is not the first I've faced as a teacher and it won't be my last. But together, my students and I have learned, although not always perfectly, to deal with it, and we've done it for greater causes beyond ourselves, most notably out of love and care for the least among us, and that I believe is a worthy lesson to learn, whether young or old.

**0:18:24.5 Jon Van Hulzen:** Second, a word of concern. Philippians 2:4 reminds us to, "Look not to our own interests, but to the interests of others." What a great reminder tonight of what should always be our central focus, both in the ways we talk to each other and in the ways we talk about

each other, especially those with whom we disagree. And sadly, we cannot look to our contemporary culture to be our model moving forward with its polarizing cable news programs, social media feeds that all too quickly become echo chambers of our own biases. And recently, I've seen a shift taking place even here at LC that saddens me, one that too often mirrors our culture at large, a culture that peddles in fear, cheap soundbites, weaponized labels, half truths, untruths, and even slander.

**0:19:10.7 Jon Van Hulzen:** But I also have hope for this school, and I still believe in it. Both myself, my wife and my children are proud products of Living Christian. It was here where a reformed world and life first started to take hold in my own life, and it was all taught from an incredibly diverse staff of teachers. Some of you remember that time. From Republicans to Democrats to independents, and this diversity of thought wasn't just accepted, it was celebrated as one of our great strengths. And it's my prayer for this school that we continue to be committed to that legacy and that we guard against any movement that would drift us towards a more narrow and intolerant fundamentalism because that's not who we are. The last I looked, we're a school made up of families that represents over 75 church denominations with political and social views that span the entire spectrum of Christian thought...

**0:20:01.8 Lisa Kramer:** Thirty seconds.

**0:20:02.6 Jon Van Hulzen:** And our curriculum must honor all of those families. And when we do that well, when we are willing to explore the complexities and nuances of difficult questions, and recognize the legitimacy of diverse Christian responses to any number of hot button topics of our day, that's when we enable our children to not only be more careful and mature in their own thinking, but we also better equip them to engage the world for Christ and his Kingdom.

**0:20:31.2 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Harold Terpstra.

**0:21:00.4 Harold Terpstra:** Harold Terpstra. I'm not employed here, but I was once. And I've been part of the school for a long time. I wanna thank the board, especially for the invitation for all of us to comment. Especially for us, a little older who have been long time supporters of LC, been such a part of our lives. My wife and I are privileged to have been educated at Living Christian from first grade through high school. Our four children, and now our grandchildren, are equally blessed to attend and receive a nice set of education here at LC, and I would like to support them. Issues of criticism have been unraveled at the school, I do not claim to know all of the content of each one, but I know a lot of it. And it's sad, it saddens me. I do know that personal attacks on people and on social media is not the formula for constructive Christian interaction, it is the opposite. Rather issues should be aired in an atmosphere that is thoughtful, respectful, and conducive to allowing pertinent explanations to be given and to receive, to be understood by both sides. I am so grateful, and I mean, so grateful to the school board and their leadership for the many hours they spent in dealing with school policy.

**0:22:25.0 Harold Terpstra:** I was on the board once and I understand how much time it takes and what issues you deal with, it is not an easy job. Thank you for the time and energy you have each given to guide this school to the best of your ability, and in my opinion, you have done a wonderful job. Thank you so much. Thank you to Superintendent Paul and your entire administrative group, fine bunch of people and to the staff and the volunteers, the teachers who have for two years dealt with a significant covid related issue on a daily basis. I remember two years ago, when this idea of

Covid came. I did not dream it would last two years, this is absolutely incredible. Thanks to each of you for staying the course. The administrative people, you each deserve our deepest, deepest respect. Finally, I would like to suggest that we all substitute the time we spend on criticism with an increased time of prayer and encouragement, as we seek to understand and show love to each other, despite differences we may have. I pray that God will bless Living Christian just incredibly. The students, the board, and each person who works in the halls at LC, to make our school the best it can be. I just wanna say thank you for hearing me and thank you for the people who have dealt with this Covid thing and all the other issues...

**0:24:00.7 Lisa Kramer:** Thirty seconds.

**0:24:03.1 Harold Terpstra:** You are appreciated to no end. Thank you.

**0:24:06.0 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Karen Rast?

**0:24:28.7 Karen Rast:** I had Mrs. Postma so I memorized my speech, but I realize now I better just read it. [laughter] So my name is Karen Rast, my dad is an alumni, and I'm an alumnae, both my parents taught here. I'm currently the elementary librarian, my husband is the high school vice-principal and we have three kids here, two in the middle school and one in the high school. So all it is to say, I am deeply committed to the mission of Living Christian. And I don't mean to be Captain Obvious here, we have a huge problem and it's us. Remember in the Captain America Civil War, the antagonist could never beat the Avengers. Many before had tried and failed. But he's smart, he knows he doesn't have to beat them to destroy them, he just has to get them to turn on each other and they will destroy themselves. He said the Empire toppled by his enemy could rise again, but one which crumbles from within, that's dead forever. Maybe that's the devil's plan, maybe we are too strong to be beat as team Lynden Christian so he's trying to turn us against each other. Stir up the stress, stir up political ambitions, stir up disrespect, lies, entitlement, arrogance. Arrogance and pride. And post it, gossip it, email it, tweet it, text it, Facebook it, scream it. If that's his plan, it's kinda working.

**0:25:34.7 Karen Rast:** Why has it been that there's an increasing teacher shortage and decreasing involvement in teacher preparation programs nationwide? Because teachers have poor wages, especially in Christian schools. And also because of high stress not managing workloads. If you've ever been on a hiring committee here, you know that for a longtime now, we get at best, only a few applicants for any open position. And then Covid hit. I could spend all night talking about how hard it is teaching in a pandemic. But I... Well, we're doing it. Because my colleagues are rock stars. Because we are using our advanced degrees, our years of experience, our ongoing training to teach our students, to love our students, to come along side with them and support their emotional and mental needs, even while we are still struggling ourselves.

**0:26:23.2 Karen Rast:** Which is why it hurt so much and some of our community partners are sending us angry and threatening emails, those seems arise from social media, sometimes by name. Blasting about us in the community, twisting our words, taking curriculum out of context, and refusing to acknowledge how much teachers, administrators and board members have tried to work alongside peers to remedy past mistakes and clarify misconceptions and issues about our school, it is absolutely demoralizing. Which is why I have many colleagues who are hurting so much, that they have... Cannot speak for themselves at meeting, they can't even be in this room right now. Perhaps some of us are starting to response to my words, we're saying, "If this too hard for teachers,



then leave." And that is my point exactly. Too many of my incredible, talented colleagues are considering leaving, because they know that they don't have to work in his toxic environment and that's how we're gonna have a hard time with this. So my message to all of you is this...

**0:27:20.5 Lisa Kramer:** Last thirty.

**0:27:21.9 Karen Rast:** The strength and quality of our children's Christian education depends on the strength experience of our staff. And we have many on our staff, that are suffering under this division and disrespect, and we'd be far better our putting our passion, time, and energy into supporting our school, and administration, and board, and working together as one team with one mission. The greatest threat to our school isn't Covid, it isn't masks, it isn't mandates, it isn't CRT, it is us. The very foundation of our mission, the very strength of our team depends on us stopping this infighting... Demoralization of our staff, 'cause if we don't stop it, who if anyone in this room, will still be standing?

**0:28:09.4 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Shauna Vander Liest? Melissa Timmer.

**0:28:25.4 Melissa Timmer:** Okay, I and my husband are both graduates of LC, and we have two who have graduated and two who are currently in high school right now. So I just first of all wanna thank the board and the admin, staff, teachers for all of the work that has been done so that our kids can be in school for the last year and a half. I feel like that major accomplishment has kind of been lost a little bit in all of the noise, but that's been a major thing and a blessing, and we are so privileged, and thank you for that. So I feel like as a parent that our LC community has lost sight of the main thing and become really distracted by a lot of lesser and inferior things. I feel like I hear a lot more about what we as a community are against instead of what we are actually for. And I feel as Christians, we're called to be salt and light in all the places that God has placed us, and instead it feels like we've become a place of such division and distrust that that's been lost, and time is wasted, and effort and energy is wasted. It doesn't match our calling as a Christian, God-honoring community. Which is sad and it's wrong and there's nothing Biblical about that environment that we've become.

**0:29:37.5 Melissa Timmer:** As parents, we may have some different ideas on some of the current issues in our culture and that's okay. There has to be room for that within a God-loving community to have some different thoughts and talk about those in peaceable ways. The mission at LC is to raise up young people to be transforming influences in the world. We need to keep that as our main thing, and trust God to accomplish that. He's big enough for that, and sovereign in that. I believe that God has called and equipped our leadership and our teachers to do that hard work, and certainly it is hard work but God can be trusted to accomplish that, and that our leadership, our admin, our teachers, they need our support and our prayers, not the constant criticism, suspicion and accusations of everything that they're doing.

**0:30:25.2 Melissa Timmer:** My hope is that we as a community can still come together, even at this point, to lay aside our opinions and our ideas and our pride in humility and focus on that big picture. This is our opportunity as a Christian community to demonstrate our faith in real time and our time. This is our legacy of faith, to practice in the faith and grace and patience and perseverance. It's our witness to the world. We are each and every one of us accountable for our words and our actions in these times. God is certainly more interested in our character and how we treat each other than our opinions. I wanna encourage the board just to press on and to protect and

preserve that mission and that heart of the future of Living Christian School.

**0:31:12.8 Kathryn:** Daniel Vander Kooi.

**0:31:37.7 Daniel Vander Kooi:** My name is Daniel Vander Kooi. I have three kids here, seventh grade, fourth grade and first grade, and I've taught here for 25 years. I've coached high school baseball the last six years. A lot of people have talked about March 13, 2020. It was a different experience for me, calling my kids off the field and coming in and saying, "Hey, we're gonna have two weeks to stop practice." And then walking alongside of that, one of the most talented groups probably in Living Christian baseball history and not having the opportunity to continue on because of mandates and government control. We've struggled a lot with people thinking that we're anti-mandates or anti-mask, anti-vaccines, things like that. I think the thing that we've struggled with as a family is that we're concerned about the future for our kids, because once you give something up, you don't get it back. And for us to see this continue to go on, and we're in year two, and to see what's in front of Congress right now and what they're gonna be voting on, Dr. Bootsma thank you for sending out that email on Saturday 'cause that gives us an opportunity to get involved with that and voice our opinions.

**0:32:49.8 Daniel Vander Kooi:** I think the biggest thing for our family is we wanna know exactly what that line in the sand is. Thank you to the board for putting questions and answers on the website. That's been huge. I took time today again to read through all the summaries, all the questions and answers. In the August summary, it talked about the whole board was united on no vaccinations for Lynden Christian schools. That wouldn't be required. However, in the... I just... This would be great clarity for people. On Saturday, the email said that you were still coming up with your policy and your procedure on how you were gonna attack that. Now, that could just be for the recent things, that would be great, but I think a point of clarity should be made on that. Our biggest thing is we wanna make sure that our kids can continue to have the experience of athletics, of musicals, of drama without interference and overreach.

The State of Washington currently requires proof of vaccination for 11 diseases for children to attend school; there are standard rules in place for these vaccines (see chapter [246-105](#) of the WAC). If Covid vaccinations are added to this list, Lynden Christian will accept exemptions as we do for other vaccines. Here's the link to the exemption form: [Certificate of Exemption Personal/Religious \(wa.gov\)](#) This is a well-established process at Lynden Christian. If you have general questions on this process, you can contact our school nurse, Hannah Faber.

We do not believe that a strict vaccine requirement without exemptions is acceptable.

**0:33:43.3 Daniel Vander Kooi:** And I think for a lot of people, people would like to know what the process is, whether it be curriculum, what are the thought processes behind whether we're gonna stand up to things or whether we're not, what we can give in a little bit, and what we can't. And sometimes that's hard to disclose at board meetings. I'd love the opportunity to just hear the process of what people think. This is extremely healthy. I have very different views than a lot of people in this room maybe, but it's healthy and it helps my heart to understand where you're coming from, and hopefully that can be reciprocal. But I think we have to constantly continue to love one another and just assume that loving one another doesn't mean just going along with what the government is telling us either, because my concern is for my kids when they have kids, and what has been accepted and what has been allowed to come into our schools. That's all I got.

The process varies based on the decision and the content. Curriculum is managed by departments; departments and grades are responsible to the Education Committee. Our Director of Learning oversees curriculum school-wide. The DOL reports to the superintendent; the superintendent reports to the board.

For other discussions, board decisions are made like any group makes decisions: through much prayer, debate, and discussion. Each person brings different insight to the discussion and votes their own conscience.

**0:34:41.2 Kathryn:** Terrel Weg.

**0:34:41.2 Terrel Weg:** Hi everybody I'm Tyrrel Wade and I'm a graduate of Living Christian High School, and I also send all three of my kids to Living Christian, and I brought my grandpa here with me this evening. He is the first graduating high school class at Living Christian, 90 years old. Yes, he's amazing.

[applause]

**0:35:13.1 Terrel Weg:** Anyways, I just wanted to come up here and publicly say thank you, our board, for the countless hours you guys have put in, and I know that it has been a really stressful last two years and you guys have gone above and beyond the call of duty, and we are just so lucky to have you. And I too am very concerned about mandates, and I think that as a community, we have to figure out where we stand on that. I agree, I don't think that it's up to Living Christian schools to see where we stand. I don't want my school involved in any kind of politics. That's not why I send my kids here. I also just wanted to talk about a recommendation to the board on a code of conduct that would be implemented for all of us to sign next year, because seeing the slander and gossip on social media is absolutely embarrassing, and to have people out of state and all over town talking and laughing about what a spectacle our school has made of itself is just so sad. You guys, we are losing the mission, we're losing our purpose, we're losing our credibility as a Christian institution. So that's my challenge to the board. I would ask that you would look into that.

**0:36:31.8 Terrel Weg:** And then last but not least, I just wanted to thank Paul Bootsma for all he's done in this last two years, the endless hours he's put in in our administration alongside of him. I think that he's the man for the job here, and we're lucky to have him as our superintendent. Goodness knows, superintendents are resigning left and right. They're not easy to come by, so again, just appreciate everything, appreciate the support that Paul supplies to the board, and we all know that the board actually is running the school and Paul works for them. That's how it works. So anyway, that's all I have to say, thank you.

**0:37:18.2 Kathryn:** Michelle Wright.

**0:37:26.1 Michelle Wright:** My name is Michelle Wright. I am a graduate, attended from kinder through high school, and I have four children, sophomore, eighth, sixth and fourth, so I have kids everywhere. [chuckle] The educational standard at LC over the past 10 years has slipped into a recession. There's been little to no focus on professional development based on student data and performance. Most of the curriculum is outdated and only meets the needs of one type of student.

Our approach to the teaching of reading, meeting student needs through grow groups, and some math instruction decisions have been based on data from the Aims Web scores. Some of this analysis has also been done for determining curriculum at grade level. We have not been robust in offering Pro D or creating learning plans for our teachers to be more equipped in best practices and inclusive practices in the classroom. Nor have we been robust in determining curriculum scope and sequence according to standards. However, in the middle and elementary schools there have been changes that have been fostered by the inclusion specialist. Pulling students out who are 2 or more years behind for individual instruction is helpful; it is best for them to be outside the classroom as their least restrictive learning environment. Other students are best served by having interventions in the classroom where a para may be there to assist the teacher in facilitating that. This is different from offering and instituting accommodations in the classroom, which can be done by the teacher and is being done that way with the support of the inclusion specialist and the principal. Accommodations attend to a student's learning needs and does not address the lagging skills. All accommodations are appropriately done in the classroom and/or teacher directed.

Some areas of our curriculum are outdated. However, we are making progress and know that we need to focus on this. It is part of our strategic plan. We are certainly starting to close the gap with changing some of our teaching practices. We see the need for a full-time director of learning who can guide best teaching practices, curriculum choices, and create a better scope and sequence in all subject areas instead of that being the responsibility of the principals and or department heads.

The school's website claims that LC has smaller class sizes in order to give individual attention. In reality, the class sizes in the elementary building are appalling. While other private schools stayed committed to enrolment procedures and maintained their educational value through the pandemic, our school now has classes with three or more students compared to those of the public school. The SAS program is inequitable from intervention and time served to cost. From our own experiences, the bulk of the responsibility to comply and administer interventions is placed on the teacher who is already trying to meet the needs of all the other students.

Supplemental instruction has never been expected of the teacher. Teachers are responsible for curricular instruction. Our inclusion specialists determine where the interventions need to take place and by whom. Interventions are for those students who have 2 or more years of lagging skills and need supplemental instruction. Accommodations to support the students' learning styles are usually done in the classroom, the teacher manages those. The inclusion specialist in every building collaborates with the teacher to know these accommodations and finds out what the teacher can do and what the teacher needs support for. Modifications are different; they are curricular goals for the subject/grade level that are changed for a student. The inclusion specialist creates the modification plan with the teacher and then a decision is made whether the modifications can occur in the classroom or not. We have very few students that have modifications. These are generally reserved for the students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Class sizes at Lynden Christian are comparable or even a bit lower to those Christian Schools in our network. Many of these schools, however, do not have the para support that our school does. Class sizes are a delicate balance. The board must balance the rate of tuition increase along with the cost of teachers and other support services, such as para educators and learning partners. Our goal is always for class sizes that allow individual attention for students while balancing the overall cost of Christian education for families.

**0:38:28.6 Michelle Wright:** What educational standards are you following to ensure students are per the school website being challenged, cherished, and changed? What steps are taken to manage and evaluate these standards? The academic standards at LC are elusive. I've asked multiple people in leadership. Administration and even board members, what academic standards does LC follow? Is it Common Core, the EILERS, the GLEES, Power standards, SHAPE, NGSS? No one seems to know. This is extremely worrisome as an educator myself that people cannot articulate any document that specifies the benchmark students need to move up between grade levels. Some buildings even allow teachers to write and teach their own unit plans that have no connection to standards or school mission philosophy before getting approval from the Board or the Education Committee. What academic standards per grade level and by subject does LC follow, and where does the accountability lie?

Curriculum is managed by departments; departments and grades are responsible to the Education Committee. Our Director of Learning oversees curriculum school-wide. The DOL reports to the superintendent; the superintendent reports to the board.

LC aligns their curriculum standards predominantly with Washington State's Learning standards, which define what all students need to know and be able to do at each grade level. We use these standards as a guide to grade level instruction and alignment K-12. These standards are the guide for academic content while teachers integrate the Christian faith in the instruction and student learning.

Lynden Christian also uses services, like AIMS Web testing, to understand how many of our students are excelling at grade level or at risk of falling behind. These scores are reviewed by the board. The scores of Lynden Christian students continue to surpass many schools.

**0:39:22.4 Michelle Wright:** The Biblical standards at LC is tolerable at times. As a culture, we have come to embrace tolerance over truth. Tolerance is something that divides and destroys our moral code, Christian values, generational traditions, foundations and even our families. As a society, we have become passive in our churches, passive in our parenting, and passive in our school. Our recent board policies were sent to the Society were copied from a list of Christian institutions. Not one was the Bible. A simple search will show that institutions follow tolerance by their acceptance of ideas and values that contradict God's word. Is this where the board has found their truth? The foundation and legacy has begun to crumble and it will continue to do so if something doesn't change. Therefore is LC willing to follow truth over tolerance? Thank you.

Both our Critical Theory statement and our Human Life statement reference the Bible. This comment seems to be specifically referring to the Human Sexuality and Gender Identity statement that was adopted by the board in 2018. The human sexuality and gender identity statement has biblical principles and texts supporting the key principles.

As far as policies are concerned, the Lynden Christian Policy manual references the Bible many times as the basis for our society, our school, and our education.

**0:40:18.6 Kathryn:** Josh Wright.

**0:40:29.4 Josh Wright:** That's my wife. We have the same kids. [chuckle] Well, I just wanna start, LC Board and leadership, I wanna thank you for setting up this meeting. This is exactly what we've

been missing from LCS over the last couple of years. Good, bad or indifferent, communication is the key to any healthy relationship and this includes the covenant of our school leadership, teachers and most importantly our parents and students. I wonder why we can't have every board meeting include 60 minutes at the beginning with two and a half minutes for parents to voice concerns and praises. This is common practice in a lot of schools across the country, and even here in our own community. LC has opted for closed door meetings for far too long.

**0:41:14.0 Josh Wright:** We heard the response, "We've always done it this way." Is not the right answer. I don't know any other professional who can look across the table at a client and say, "Sorry, we've always done it this way." We've always done... In the day and age where the world's making God smaller, it's very concerning that our board leadership can make decisions and potential changes to our policies without the inputs of our families. Why do we have substantially larger class sizes in our public than private peers? Our current caps range from 22-24 in classrooms in the elementary. I spoke to many of my clients and they have been in schools across the state and they started at 16 max of 18. This feels like we're losing value of experience, and the main reason a lot of us choose private education is for that value.

We are focused on affordable Christian education and serving the most families that want to partner with Lynden Christian in our mission. This is a constant balance between small class sizes and affordability of tuition—something the board and administration take very seriously and discuss every year. In grades K-6 at Lynden Public, the average class size is 19.5 students this year. In previous, non-COVID years, they range from 17 to 22.5 students per class. At LC, in grades K-6, the average class size is 22.5 this year. It has been less than this in previous years. In our effort to offer quality Christian education, to partner with Christian families, and to meet our budget, this is what the board and administration have chosen to do based on research, best practices, and our success with students.

**0:41:58.6 Josh Wright:** Why do we have 12 board members? This is problematic in a lot of ways. Shouldn't it be an odd number, so we can always reach a decision? What about maybe 5 or 7? It might help avoid... We've heard a lot of board members say they're usually here about 1 o'clock in the morning. Well, we don't want that for you guys. So maybe a small board might help. Whose decision was it to go from a working board to a policy board five years ago? As parents we really like to see our board members on campus, in the buildings, parent meetings and much more. We shouldn't have to rely on our superintendent to relay our meetings, that happen with the parents or with our principles to the board. Many of us believe that the board isn't hearing all of our concerns.

The Constitution determined the number of board members. It must be at least 10. 12 was determined to be easier to manage with three members serving a four-year term; more members also allow the board to represent a broad range of society. Additionally, the board president does not vote, so there is an odd number of voting board members if all board members are present. The board president only votes if there is a need to break a tie.

## **ARTICLE VI** **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors is the official governing body of all school matters to which all other school organizations are subordinate. To affect its purpose, the following provisions apply:

- (a) The Society shall choose from its membership a minimum of 10 members to act as a school board. Three-fourths of this board must be members in good standing of a Reformed Church.

The move to community governance was studied by a task force made up of board members, staff, parents, and society members, in 2017-2018, and the task force's recommendation was voted on by the board in 2018. It was seen as a better way to manage an organization of LC's size and complexity.

**0:42:39.1 Josh Wright:** Why are some of the teaching and coaching opportunities, posted and others aren't? From a professional standpoint, this is fertile soil for employment practices liability lawsuit. As a potential solution, I'd like to encourage the board leadership to hire a full-time teaching and learning director. There's no reason we should have teachers in our buildings that don't have current teaching certificates for most needed professional development. This position would also be responsible for curriculum and standards, making sure all the practice and standards my wife just mentioned are not missed, and that all our curriculum is taught from a Godly lens.

We post all positions that are open for hire, as a rule. If there is a position that is coming open, we do evaluate whether anyone on staff would be a fit for that position. There is policy that allows administration to appoint a staff member to a comparable position without opening the position to the public. For example, if a head coach in one sport has interest and ability to be a JV coach in another sport, administration could appoint that person to the JV position.

We have a part-time director of learning and are looking to expand that position to full time.

Teaching certificates:

- Number of teachers, total: 84
- Number of certificated teachers: 79
- Number not certificated: 5
  - These 5 need to renew their certificate or have exceptions to certification.

**0:43:14.4 Josh Wright:** Financial Transparency. As parents, we invest our God given treasure to fund this institution. In small business side, we would be known as shareholders. We sure appreciate knowing our school accepted Federal COVID money to now building policies, especially testing sites to validate any funds they've received. Do not be conformed to pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, maybe you will be able to test and approve God's will. His good, His pleasing and perfect will. The apostle Paul offers believers a warning, stop allowing our world to be your standard for how you live and think. Living differently is thinking differently and the truth is Gods word, LC was created to be different from the world not to conform to it. We can do so much better. We wanna help, communication and transparency is key. Thank you.

No, Lynden Christian did not accept any COVID funds that impact our independence as a school. We have applied and used funds, like PPP money or EANS funding, that could be directly applied to our expenses related to COVID (extra staff, extra spacing, extra cleaning, expanded computer services, etc).

This type of information is available every year at the annual society meeting.

**0:44:15.7 Kathryn:** Jack Veltkamp.

[pause]

**0:44:41.8 Jack Veltkamp:** Yeah. My name is Jack Veltkamp, I have about seven years of experience with LC, sent five kids here, 11 grandkids that have been here... Through here. I've spent eight years on the school board, and I know that this, while it maybe necessary, it's way beyond the call of duty of the school board. So thank you for your time, I really appreciate it. Like I said, I have some thoughts and concerns about us as a Christian School community. I'm concerned that we're losing our capacity and perhaps our desire to ask the question, what would Jesus do? Our success as God-lovers is measured by how well we reflect the fruits of the Spirit and utilize the wisdom that comes from heaven as stated in James, Chapter 3. I'm concerned that love, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control have been sacrificed on the altar of social media. I'm concerned that the deep reform principles that characterize the founding and ongoing operation of LCS are in danger of attack from those who either disagree with or fail to understand just what it means to educate from a Christian perspective.

**0:45:57.7 Jack Veltkamp:** I am concerned about attempts to stifle conversations about difficult topics and history, science and literature because they might cast a negative light on our past or our responsibility to care for God's creation. I'm concerned that the virtues of love, patience, kindness, submission and impartiality are not being very well modeled to our youth by the adults in their lives. I'm concerned about a growing disdain for the wisdom of the past and assumptions that the 2022 version of humanity is the wisest students ever been. I'm concerned that this school is perceived as an educational cafeteria where parents purchase the tasty desert as an option for their kids, and ignore or try to sweeten up the healthy or the difficult educational fruit that's available. I am concerned that the equating of Americanism and Christianity is robbing our Youth of the opportunity to develop a discernment about the difference between our culture and the counter-cultural nature of the kingdom of God. Our students need this space to make their faith their own.

**0:47:02.1 Jack Veltkamp:** I'm concerned about a community that makes health and medical decisions based on anecdotal internet information or political ideology. I'm concerned that our present form of Christianity has become a mile wide and an inch deep, a black and white, a know-it-all Christianity that ignores the difficulties of the scriptural search for truth in favor of an interpretation of the Bible, that fits one's own personal political agenda. I'm concerned about the ugliness that has been uncovered by this global pandemic and our inability to come together cooperatively to combat it. It is the primary responsibility of the board to ensure that Living Christian is following the educational course set by the mission of the school as articulated in the founding documents. I urge the board members to think deeply and consider wisely, with the wisdom that comes from heaven as you lead LC into the future, and I challenge all of us to bring to bear those fruits of the Spirit and the wisdom that comes from heaven in our speech, our decision-making and in our treatment of one another. Thank you.

**0:48:26.4 Kathryn:** Diane Veltkamp.

0:48:38.3 Diane Veltkamp: I'm Diane Veltkamp. I'm a former substitute teacher here at Educator and have been involved in a number of committees for the board, like helping to see this middle school become a reality. Jack already talked about our kids and grandkids well we've got them all. I would like to thank the school board for facilitating these listening sessions, and also I am grateful to the staff for working diligently under trying and stressful circumstances to educate our children. Living Christian was founded on the principles of a Christ-centered education based on God's word



and the Reformed Confessions. It has existed for 112 years, and it's Vitaly important that the decisions that continue to be made will accomplish our mission and be guided by our founding principles.

**0:49:36.6 Dianne Veltkamp:** The purpose of a Christian education is to develop Godly character and to think deeply and critically but guided by God's word. We are here because we are passionate about Christian education. Here are a few of my thoughts. Our teachers have been hired in good faith and must be given the opportunity to teach their subject matter in a way that allows reflective and critical thinking. I wonder if our children are best served if we are fearful of challenging topics that must be acknowledged and considered. They need to be accurately informed about the biology of immunizations, the sacredness of life, or the storied racial history of America. What better setting could exist to discuss these ideas than in a school where God was author and King over all from the nature of molecules to the way we care for our neighbor.

**0:50:39.2 Dianne Veltkamp:** Prospective parents need to be properly educated about the school's guiding principles before they enroll their children. My understanding is that they are first accepted into the school and then have a group educational session on the philosophy, goals and guiding principles of the school. Might it be wise to make sure that each individual family has an understanding and a willingness to abide by and support the philosophy of Living Christian before enrolling. It could spare some misunderstanding or misconception of the expectations for both the school and the applicants. I wonder how well we have modeled support and respect for authority as we navigate a pandemic and its polarizing politics. What have we shown our children and students by how we have supported staff and administration who have tried to maintain guidelines intended for our own good? What type of classroom culture between teachers and students has this developed.

Prospective parents are informed about the guiding principles of the school; however, the board and administration agree that this process needs to improve.

**0:51:58.1 Dianne Veltkamp:** Have we or will we surpass the number of students that we can effectively serve with our current staffing and infrastructure? We have a responsibility to care for administrators, teachers, extended staff and students by choosing how quickly and wisely we grow. And lastly is a rising cost of living making it difficult to retain and recruit teachers with growing families. We have created a system that requires most staff to hold multiple jobs. This is a recipe for burnout. There is inadequate time for their students, families, friends and church communities. Tuition assistance may be available, but should that really be the expectation for staff? Thank you very much, and may the Lord continue to give Godly wisdom as Living Christian continues.

Yes. The board recognized last fall that we are at capacity for the number of students we can effectively serve. Some grades or classes may have a limited number of extra "seats," but the board believes we are at capacity of our current structure and buildings. We do not have plans to expand.

As part of the five-year plan, we plan to dig into tuition structure to continue to make Lynden Christian affordable to as many families, including our own staff, as we can.

**0:52:53.2 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Karen Steensma.

**0:53:01.3 Karen Steensma:** I am Karen Steensma, graduate of 1976. My husband also graduated

that year. We have four children who work through the school system and I served on the board. Have been 36 years as a biology professor at Trinity Western University. This has not been an easy time for parents, for students we have never seen depression levels amongst our students at the university at the level that I've seen these last couple of years. It's terrible trying to do online. I can relate to parents, I can relate to students, I can relate to teachers. I appreciated as a biologist that Catherine chose a song that talks about the Creation.

**0:54:04.1 Karen Steensma:** I believe it was her mother and I who wrote a book in 1985 called, The History of Living Christian School, and she wasn't born yet. Maybe she was. Okay. Certainly, it was a fun task for a couple of 20-somethings to look at the history of Living Christian school. And I pulled it out now, however many years later, and looked through the timeline that we broke, and the timeline spans a number of pages, and it starts in 1910. In 1918, there was a pandemic. School was out for five weeks. Wouldn't that be nice if it had only been five weeks? There was no school. People didn't know how to homeschool. You just dealt with it somehow, and the kids went back to school, and my understanding of that pandemic was that it had four waves. By the third wave, people were really sick of it, and people were not staying home, and they were not wearing their masks. Wow. 107 years ago, and here we are again. The fourth wave came and everyone had pretty well abandoned...

**0:55:15.1 Karen Steensma:** The level of protection that they had taken on nearly a part of it, and the fourth grade would still kill a lot of people, and so this is a difficult... This is a difficult time. I would encourage all of you to show love and compassion to each other. I haven't looked at the social media things that have been a problem, but I understand from you know my daughter, who is just here now I understand some of the issues. I think that the board and the administration are doing a remarkable job of trying to work with the teachers, work with the parents. I understand that having these listening sessions was a good idea, maybe there are ways to have more transparency as a board. Which people ask for, but this is just above and beyond the call of the board, especially for what they have been doing and thank you so much.

**0:56:22.6 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Next one just says... Question mark question mark, question mark.

[laughter]

**0:56:37.4 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** All right Todd Van Mersbergen.

**0:56:40.3 Todd Van Mersbergen:** Thank you for the opportunity to come and speak tonight. My name is Todd Van Mersbergen. My wife Jessie and I have a daughter in the second grade, Spanish immersion, and a four year old son who will start pre-school next year. I graduated from LC 22 years ago, and my parents and grandparents are also LC graduates. I found that when we enrolled our daughter a few years ago, even though I've been out of the LC community for a while, it was just as welcoming and familiar, as I remembered. LC has such a great tradition of community, being around for over 100 years and I hope and pray that that community continues. That whatever trials, disagreements or accomplishments we go through as a school, we owe it to that tradition to come out stronger and more resolved to fulfill the mission of Christian education here in Waco county. So the main thing I wanna say tonight is to express my gratitude to the school board and the teachers and the administration for all the hard work that you have put in. All of you are tasked with carrying out the mission of LC day in and day out from current issues to dealing with Covid policy and

curriculum, to the school's finances of long arranged planning. So speaking for my family, to the board, administration, teachers, we trust the decisions you're making, we trust you with our kids, and we thank you.

**0:57:51.4 Todd Van Mersbergen:** I also wanna commend the school for its navigating us through this pandemic. Dealing with the government in Washington state is not easy. Being in agriculture I know this very well, having good relationships with your regulators is so important here to be able to be given the greatest level of autonomy. Now do I like it? No of course not, I just like the mass I hate the protocols, and all of it, but the goal here is to have our kids in school. The school has never been nor should it become a political vehicle that puts in-person learning at risk, especially with the studies starting to come out and now showing all the learning loss in the last couple of years, and our kids are not in those statistics so forever be thankful for that. However, I will say that after Omicron, I believe the window will open and start to relax some of this stuff, and I'm also against any vaccine mandate, so please take that into consideration going forward.

**0:58:45.0 Todd Van Mersbergen:** So last thing I wanna say, it's just a couple of positive experiences we had here, I'm really happy with the Spanish program, the teachers are amazing, and it's really incredible to watch our kid learn another language, right along with the other subjects. We're really thankful to have the opportunity to have our kids in the program. And also I've been hearing good things about the career technical program at the high school, I know that's a priority here to develop that program, so I encourage all of us to support that. Providing kids career training in egg business or trade is worth the investment. Not all kids have to go to four year college. That provides ways for a lot of us in local industries to get involved in the school and invest our time into those kids, so that's all I have got. Thank you for the time and the opportunities.

**0:59:50.8 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Laura Veldman. Kristopher Veldman.

**1:00:05.3 Adam Dow:** My wife and I have two kids here at LC. I am a transplant... I'm not from Living and I am not Dutch. [laughter] But I did go to my first Living Christian basketball game on Friday. I really appreciate the legacy in many aspects of different parts of Living. Not being from here, I had this idea who you guys all were, and worried that some of that would play out, but you guys are great, I've been here 20 years, but I still feel like it's you guys [laughter] Us moved up in here. So I don't have this history with this school, with this community, I didn't grow up around reformed churches of Christian reformed churches. So I'm a student of you guys, I'm learning what you guys are about, what we're about. [laughter]

**1:01:00.5 Adam Dow:** And so some of my worries... Recently is when I hear things about, The board has concerns how future requirements could be imposed or may challenge our families, very views, because I know some of the new things that are challenging views are also splitting apart some of these denominations that you guys grew up with. So we can have different views, and it's easy to say, let's just love and respect them, those are tearing apart 400-year-old denominations. Maybe not tearing them apart, but fracturing them. So how can we expect that that wouldn't cause fractures in a school? And then with new parents coming in, there's this expectation that we're members of a church, that we go to a church. As I've skimmed through stuff on the web, I don't know if that's the same requirements, are for the hiring practices for staff, what is the involvement with checking in with the... Checking in with their pastors? How are we serving them? How are we loving them? That's all I got.

When staff apply, there are several ways that we check their commitment to Christ: they write a personal testimony explaining their relationship with Christ, in the interview, they respond to questions about their relationship with Christ, they affirm the guiding principles and statements of faith from Lynden Christian, they affirm understanding of the three forms of unity, they also submit references which we check for competence, fit, and Christianity. The board is continually working with the administration to improve this process.

**1:02:34.2 Kathryn:** Tom Lagreid.

[pause]

**1:02:46.6 Tom Lagreid:** Hello, I'm Tom Lagreid, I got a couple of kids here. First again, thanks for the board. I've been on some, past and present. It's a thankless job, and there's a lot of decisions that need to be made that aren't fun ones, but I appreciate what you guys do. We were at Ison for five years, prior to coming here. It was a great school, had a good time. We decided to change. It was best for our family. I wouldn't go back, but I'm a little disappointed, which is hard to say, but there's just been some things that I would like some clarity on, I got some questions and I have a couple of comments. First thing, I'm curious who's in control of things here, and who determines the daily course of life here at LC. I'm not quite sure, just wondering where it sits.

The administration is in control of the day-to-day operation of the school. First, teachers are responsible for their classrooms. Teachers report to the building principals. Principals report to the superintendent. The daily course of life is the responsibility of the superintendent. The superintendent then reports to the board for direction.

**1:03:43.8 Tom Legreid:** I'm curious if the board feels that they are representing the greater society of LC. I believe that's kind of how it's supposed to be. I would just like to know if they feel it's going that way. Wondering if the board feels that the subordinates administration is then representing the will and values of the greater society they are supposed to be representing. Yeah, just questions that I'd like answered or discussed there. There's been talk tonight about slander on social media, and whatnot. Hundred percent agree, that's not the place to solve problems, never will be. If it shut off today then I'd be happy. But we invited media onto our grounds with open arms, brought them here. When a simple, no comment, have a great day, would have worked. Lastly, I'm just gonna finish here. Lastly comments from my son, he said, "Dad, I can't tell if my teachers are upset or happy when they talk."

Yes, the board sees its role as representing the full society, which includes current families as well as staff and other members of the broader society. The board does this through a Community Governance model, which is outlined below (from the policy manual).

1. The Board's first and primary responsibility is to hold in trust, protect and direct the mission of the school. The Board adopts a clear mission, and mission-focused goals regarding Christian education. The Board should review the Lynden Christian Mission statement, and its Amplification, routinely and set yearly goals that may reach down into the organization.
2. The Board's role is clear and distinct from the staff. It is critical for the Board to work through key issues such as its role, what power and authority will be delegated to the Superintendent, and how it will hold the Staff, through the Superintendent, accountable for

their responsibilities.

3. The Board has a governance focus. The Board must be careful not to micro-manage the organization. The Board must focus on setting clear policies, maintaining financial stability, directing strategic planning, and reviewing operations. The Board gives organizational oversight rather than working in the trenches.
4. Board members understand their roles. The Board speaks as one voice outside the Boardroom. Further, Board members need to know which hat they are wearing at which time:
  - Governor—when at a Board meeting fulfilling the task as a trustee and acting on the powers given them by the Constitution.
  - Volunteer—when a Board member is providing volunteer service. He/she has no authority over other volunteers unless assigned by the Board.
  - Implementer—when a Board member is given a specific task from the Board to carry out.
  - Parent/Guardian—when a Board member is fulfilling their role as parent, responsibility is limited to serving the interests of their child(ren)
5. The Board links with the parents and Lynden Christian Society\*. The Board develops creative strategies for community linkage through newsletters, formal and informal meetings, and special events. The parents and Society become moral owners\*\* and must know where the Board and leadership are directing “their” school. Board members welcome contact points with parents and Society members. The Board also seeks to sustain the vision of Christian education for future generations.
6. The Superintendent is the lone agent of the Board. Having one person provides organizational clarity. He/she gives leadership toward achieving the mission-focused goals, in collaboration with other administrators and staff. The Superintendent is expected to live within the Superintendent job description and the Board Policy Handbook.
7. Policies are organized into a Board Policy Handbook. It is vital for smooth governance that the policy handbook is kept up to date with each change being recorded promptly. Likewise, it should be reviewed regularly. Organizations may use hard copy handbooks or online versions that may make it easier for updating and accessibility.
8. The Board chair “manages” the Board. While the Superintendent can be helpful in crafting the agenda and providing resources, the chairman ensures the meetings are well planned. He/she works with committee chairs, follows up with reports, and stays tuned to the needs and desires of fellow board members.
9. A strong committee structure is vital to board effectiveness. There will be standing committees and ad hoc committees, all of which need a clear written mandate. Committees, including the Executive, do not have final decision-making ability unless it has been delegated. The Executive Committee must be careful not to claim authority for itself, thus excluding the full board. Board members chair standing committees. Committees may include non-board members who have particular skills and knowledge useful to the Board.
10. Both board and committee meetings must be well planned so as to conduct business efficiently.

The Superintendent prepares a forthright written report for the Board. The Administrative staff will likewise prepare forthright written reports for standing committees with information regarding their area of responsibility. A committee secretary will be appointed to record minutes for Board review.

11. Board members are elected and well oriented. In particular, they need to understand and commit to the mission of Lynden Christian. A standing Board Development Committee will be appointed, whose task will be to submit to the Nomination Committee names of candidates who will have the commitments needed to serve well the needs of the Society. The Committee will also propose plans for Board evaluation and professional development.
12. The Board accepts responsibility for self-improvement. The Superintendent may help in the process, but the Board takes the lead. Often it will take new board members awhile to understand their new role. A mentoring process teaming new board members with veteran members may be used. Board members should engage in discussion, reading and retreating that would build a solid cooperative and collaborative team, passionate about Lynden Christian School and their leadership role.

\*The Society consists of all parents and community members who continue to support the school as stated in the Constitution.

\*\*The moral owners are those Society members who are deeply committed to the essence of the school, its mission and both its current and long-term sustainability (see Bartlett and Campey's **Community Governance**)

We all long for the time when masks can be out of the classroom!

[pause]

**1:05:10.1 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** BJ Westra.

[pause]

**1:05:21.5 BJ Westra:** I was texting you right now, I don't know if it's... [laughter] So sorry. BJ Westra, my wife Cheryl, teaches right here. To God be the glory, love, joy, peace. That's a statement that your kids come into every day, and I think my wife does her best to reflect when she teaches them. So 30 years ago, came here, stayed here, done, my momma came here, number of other teachers. Whole plan was kind of, figure stuff out for three years, move back to Michigan, raise our family. But this is... Living Christian's my family. So my church is my family. I have family in Michigan who I love, but I'm really glad I'm here. So, but... Anyways it's cool. Board, thank you very much. Thanks for the opportunity for people to talk. I served on the board for four years, obviously, but I've been off by the grace of God not selected to be a [laughter] For this reason, to know my mother past away this past year so that's...

**1:06:45.8 BJ Westra:** It's all God's time, but this is above and beyond. Just thank you for your time, thank you for your family's time. I know the meetings, when I was on board went until midnight, one o'clock and then... This world's messed up right now. We can't focus on teacher training, we can't focus on evaluating teachers, because our board, our administrators are spending lots of time with families and with kids dealing with issues, and we just... It's hard, and we just have

to have patience with each other, and grace, and love and... I've left my notes, but... Yeah. So thank you teachers, board, administrators. I know what it's like working in the safety world and commercial, general contracting business and then big sites, it's not fun, it's not ideal. And you just press on, and... Sorry, I'm getting distracted.

**1:07:57.0 BJ Westra:** Thing here, parents... I know we're here to talk to the board, parents, our kids are watching us, and we can... You can tell me that you don't fight in front of them. You can tell me that you don't talk bad about people in front of them. But I know for sure my kid sees a lot more in me. I know that when I walk up the stairs, my kid sees me. When he comes to give me the hug, he knows that I need a hug like that. And my kid does that. My kid sees everything I'm doing at home, all right? And your kids are seeing what you're doing at home, what I'm doing at home. And with this mass disrespecting of worry here. Their teachers just want to love your kids. They just want to teach your kids they also can have a career. Okay, this is just... Yeah. This is not a high-paying job. This is a...

**1:08:53.3 BJ Westra:** They're here because they love your kids. They just want to help your kids. And they love teaching. And we're asking a lot of them. So it's going to be really interesting. I know my wife has the contract at home, and I've signed. Lord willing, she's going to sign. I'm pushing her to sign. But I know that there's been attacks on teachers, and that's affected her, right? So we've just got to support each other. Keep loving each other. I'm off my notes. Thank you for your time. And the last thing I want to say is, last two years have brought up one thing from when I was a kid. "Jesus come quickly." I never understood my grandparents or my pastor saying that. Never understood that. You know, I... One graduating kid just got married, dreaming of grandkids. But I'm great. Jesus come quickly. All right, thank you.

**1:10:01.9 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** John Rozeboom. Bethany DenHartog.

**1:10:27.1 Bethany DenHartog:** Not quite as old as VanHulzen, but I need my glasses too. My name is Bethany. My husband Calvin and I have sent two of our children to Lynden Christian High School. Our oldest is graduating in 2020 with a really fantastic graduation thanks to our staff, and our youngest is in 10th grade right now. My letter is not political. My letter has nothing to do about masks or COVID. My letter is simply because we are concerned. As parents who joined LC, believing that it was a doctrinal and confessional school, noticing repeatedly things that when the Christian that may not necessarily be in step with the Bible, as our founding document stated should be, according to the reformed confessions. Originally wrote this thinking my husband might be here, but he wasn't, so I cut it in half. Wish me luck. I've never made it under 3 minutes.

**1:11:39.6 Bethany DenHartog:** "Fallen angels had sex with human women, producing violent, warrior giants, part human, part god, who ruled ancient kingdoms with divine wisdom." Word for word from my son's Bible video. Certainly grabbed my attention and got me researching Genesis 6, real fast. Actually kind of interesting what I learned, but I can't talk about that. The more videos I overheard and eventually got to watch, the more I began to wonder, "Why is The Bible Project being used as the new Bible history curriculum?" Nothing at all like our first son had. Our Constitution states that the basis of a society is infallible word of God, as interpreted by the reformed standards, a.k.a. Our confessions. And it is important for us to regulate this instruction. Did the board oversee any of the implementation of the new Bible history curriculum to see if it is in step with the Bible as we believe it in our confessions? I posit that it is not. The videos are of highest quality, very entertaining. Animation that is fast, the dark and creepy characters depicting

devils and humans seemingly grabbing teenager attention.

**1:12:55.9 Bethany DenHartog:** There's plenty of interesting historical facts and truth in these videos. But their big picture theology does not match the theology of our confessions. Occasional statements in the videos directly contradict the Bible, like saying that "Hell isn't an actual place, but a current state of reality created by humans," even though Jesus talks more about the fire of Hell than anyone else in the Bible. I could say more, but let me just skip down to... There's a huge difference between The Bible Project's theologian Tim Mackie and the confessions when it comes to defining what Christ did do. Mackie does not believe in a God who's gross with living in sin. Is an offended, righteous judge who requires blood as a propitiation. Mr. Mackie states that the idea of God killing Jesus instead of us is a, and I quote, "distortion of the gospel."

**1:13:47.2 Bethany DenHartog:** This negates everything we're taught, both to human sacrifices and scapegoats pointing to the ultimate lamb of God who turned God's wrath away from us and toward himself. To Mackie, Jesus's atonement simply absorbed all the consequences and effects of our sins, and conquered that. Jesus's death does not change our legal status before an angry, judging God from sinners worthy of damnation to a pure bride of Christ. There's no imputation of sin. There's no legal justification required. This theology contradicts the reform standards, and makes using it seem highly questionable. I hope you can see the fact that I am a theology freak, and bringing this to you is a sign of my love for the school and the children who go here. Mackie's overall theology is soft on sin. It lessens God's sovereignty, and it lifts up man. "Why does this even matter? Shouldn't we all just love each other?"

The use of these short videos is to support our Bible curriculum at the high school level, and they are used within the context of lesson plans being guided by one of our capable teachers. None of these educational tools – whether videos or textbooks - stand alone in a vacuum as the center of our curriculum). It's the teacher who sets it all in a meaningful context.

The criticism about the “Sons of God” / “daughters of men” / Nephalim passage in Genesis is not accurate. Nowhere in that Bible Project segment does it insist that “angels” is even the proper interpretation. It is simply described as ONE of many options suggested by Biblical scholars. That passage is one of the most mysterious in the whole Bible. You can find it dealt with in the exact same way in every one of the many Bible Commentaries in our library.

Finally, regarding the atonement, we wholeheartedly affirm and teach that an essential aspect of atonement theology centers around the notion of “propitiation” (a sacrifice that turned away God’s wrath). It is true that the Bible Project does not specifically fixate on language like “appeasing God’s wrath,” but that does not mean that what it does say about the atonement is heresy. We don’t rely exclusively on The Bible Project to teach about atonement. TBP uses language like “*covering the debt that humans owe God*” and “*purification from sin*” (“Sacrifice and Atonement” video) and “*as our representative, Jesus taking upon himself all of the just consequences of sin and death*” (TBP - Romans 1-4 video).

That’s the thing about Atonement theology – it has multiple layers of meaning that make it so beautiful. Historically there are at least 6 or 7 “Atonement theories” that have been embraced by the church (Ransom, Satisfaction, Substitution, Propitiation, *Christus Victor*, etc.)

To flatten out the Atonement (by insisting it only be taught through any one of these single lenses)



diminishes its significance. For example, to just talk about it as an “appeasement of God wrath” misses key elements. John 3:16 says *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.”*

**1:14:50.6 Bethany DenHartog:** It matters because it's not biblical according to the confessions. Sin is a really big deal. Grace is crazy awesome, and our kids deserve to know what the good news really is. I'm skipping a whole bunch, but I would just like to close with the board, I hope and pray will be open to more parental and pastoral involvement in reviewing and implementing curricula taught at LC, to make sure that it is above all biblical and in step with our confessions like our constitution says. That's why we send our kids here. I pray that all of us, not just the board, will study God's word, our confessions and seek His way in prayer in every decision. God bless all of you. God bless our teachers, our board, and the students at LC. Thank you.

**1:15:57.9 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Chris Rast.

**1:16:02.4 Chris Rast:** Good evening, my name is Chris Rast. I'm currently the vice principal of the high school. Prior to that, I was a teacher at both the high school and middle school at LC. I've been here for 14 years. First to the board, thank you. You have a thankless but important job. I implore you to look closely at what has made this place special for the last 112 years, and the work God has done here. Hold strong to our foundations, tune out the culture on political narratives that are challenging our mission. Regarding the increasing challenges to our curriculum, I encourage you to continue to trust the Christ-centered staff we have in place who can discuss and teach difficult topics to our children from a Christian world view.

**1:16:52.0 Chris Rast:** When our students learn about difficult times for our country's past in controversial topics that reflect sin in the world today, they're not being harmed. They're being stretched into perceptive and hearing Christians who will have a transforming influence in the world. Second, to the LC community and parents whose activism has spawned these meetings. Many of you have experienced a loss of trust and feeling of betrayal. Because so many of you expressed feelings around COVID protocols, and the school went the other way, you feel betrayed. I believe that loss of trust has caused you to question other aspects of the school. Loss of trust is a slippery slope. I can promise you that regarding COVID protocols, there is no one here who enjoys any of this.

**1:17:33.5 Chris Rast:** Our focus, though, is the fulfillment of our mission, and we can't do that if we're closed. For those of you who argue for civil disobedience are standing up and saying, "Enough." In expressing those feelings, you're preaching to the choir. However, regarding the actions you suggest, you do not speak for everyone. Many of us would like for our doors to remain open, for our school to remain accredited, for our school to remain approved as an educational institution. That means we would like our diplomas to mean something, for colleges to accept our graduates, for teams to be able to compete. Again, in your quest for normalcy, you are not alone, but your actions are mis-targeted when aimed at the board, administration and staff at the school. Also, our children are watching and listening.

**1:18:21.6 Chris Rast:** When we degrade and minimize the school, its curricula and its staff at home, that degradation takes hold in their minds and hearts, and their attitudes and actions show it at school. We're making an investment in our children. If you're gonna purchase a product and you seek to change it to meet your satisfaction, your consumer mindset is the symptom of a larger problem. Our tuition dollars are not paying for a product, and our school should not be regarded as

such. Finally, to my colleagues. I care for you immensely, and I trust you. There is no group of people I trust more in teaching my children. No matter how my story ends, or even what the next chapter says, it is and has been an honor to serve and work alongside you. These are trying times. You're tired, you feel unsupported. Many of us are asking ourselves, "Is it worth it?" I hear you as a colleague, I thank you as a parent. So many of you have or will speak into the lives of my children. Because of you, and specifically because it is you, I take comfort in my partnership as a parent with LC.

**1:19:23.0 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Brian VanderWoude.

**1:19:31.9 Brian Vanderwoude:** Bryan VanderWoude. I wanna acknowledge the board to the staff and the administration. This is tough. You're caught between things like Romans 13, which is a pretty clear directive to discipline our authorities and then put in a situation where our government authorities don't act with a lot of wisdom and common sense. Throw in other authorities like the WIAA, Health Department, insurance companies, and the parents who some feel the school isn't doing enough to fight COVID, some feel the school is doing too much, so there are groups that are struggling with how to apply 1 Corinthians 6. This is an ugly place to be sometimes. I wanna say thank you to the boards, the administration, and the staff. We've been praying for you, and I know it's not just our family, it's been a lot. Whether we've agreed or not, we're thankful that you're here. We're thankful for your efforts in educating our children, and we hope and pray that we will unite not around a response to a virus, but [1:21:02.4] \_\_\_\_ gospel. So thank you again for your service, your passion, for your love for our kids and teaching them the knowledge of Glory and Majesty of our Saviour.

**1:21:17.9 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Tom Wyant.

[pause]

**1:21:27.3 Tom Wyant:** Evening. My name is Tom Wyant, two kids in LC. What's going on in this country is truly shocking: For two weeks just to flatten the curve, defund the police, COVID mandates, censorship about therapeutics, vaccines, BLM, ANTIFA, mostly peaceful protest to CRT and too very personal re-open borders and Afghanistan withdrawal pulling in the loop of the military before the civilians left no doubt in my mind, it's not incompetence by design. This was done on purpose in the United States. They may be called democratic socialists, environmentalist leftists, greens sponsors, globalist. It's all one thing, this is International Communism. Communism is used by Satan to control and enslave God's children. It's anti-god, anti-church, anti-family. It's infiltrated all aspects of American culture, news media, Hollywood, social media, universities, corporate American unions, our military, NGOs, church, public private schools, and all areas of the government. They're in complete control one of our political parties. Prince of this world never sleeps inside much of America and all Western civilization. [1:22:54.1] \_\_\_\_ against the world you and I exist. What makes us think he hasn't infiltrated Lynden Christian? What a tempting target, historic Christian School traditional town Western Washington.

**We agree; the Prince of this world is working against the mission of Lynden Christian.**

**We continue to verify employees through our hiring team and the board approves all hires. While we cannot pretend to know the hearts and minds of employees, families, or students, the board is committed to continuing the mission of Lynden Christian Schools.**

**1:23:02.2 TW:** The last meeting the overwhelming majority said, "No" to the last mandate. Many sympathize but worth When making this decision. I did not because I believed it was a simple decision, no LC will not comply with unconstitutional mandate. All eyes of the nation on Lynden Christian and we failed to take a stand. The board voted unanimously against those parents. Next Whatcom County Health Department's welcomed in, started tracing, putting stickers on kids. We have a wellness officer or COVID Political Officer. What's next? Folding on the incoming Washington School COVID vaccine mandate? We're already halfway there with this ridiculous PCR testing to participate in sports. We appease to keep the doors open. We all know our county sheriff is not going to enforce closing LC. The only thing for evil to triumph and for good men is to do nothing. We need to admit to this mistake and take the masks off our children. To protect and get the government, Whatcom County Health Department out of our school. Our foundations are God, church and family. We should never comply with those who are enemies of God, church and family. Right now, how is Lynden Christian any different from Washington State Public School? We all want Lynden Christian to be around for another 100 years, not by appeasing evil. Evil will never be satisfied, Lynden Christian will lose its soul. Thank you.

**The survey from August:**

*How much to you agree with LC following the state's requirements, with the known strengths and concerns. 0 – do not agree; 100 – fully agree*

1. 430 (54%) people gave a score of 39 or less, stating that they did not think LC should follow the state's requirements.
2. 140 people (18%) gave a score between 40 and 59, stating that they were not sure whether LC should follow the state's requirements.
3. 220 people (27%) gave a score between 60 and 100, stating that they thought LC should follow the state's requirements.

It is a long-established board policy to follow and cooperate with local government authorities as a school.

With this survey feedback, recognizing a majority (54%) of people did not think that we should follow the state's requirements, the board took a moderate approach to following the requirements because of the answers posted in question 12 above. After many meetings, much prayer and discussion, the board unanimously decided that it did not have a choice but to follow the requirements for compliance and safety reasons. The risk was too great not to follow the requirements. By late September, with the decision to close because of a pending health order, the board agreed to fully follow the DOH's COVID-19 requirements, to re-open school and to keep in-person Christian education going. The survey results impacted the board's approach to enforcing the requirements, but the board had the responsibility to ultimately make the decision to follow the requirements.

Our mission continues to set us apart from area public schools:

The mission of Lynden Christian Schools is to be an effective instrument of God. Together with Christian parents and the church, we seek to educate children and young people so that they may grow and mature into perceptive and caring Christians. Finally, our goal is to produce citizens who have a transforming influence in the world.

**1:24:53.3 Kathryn:** Vince Stremmer? Sarah Roosma.

[pause]

**1:25:09.7 Sarah Roosma:** My name is Sarah Roosma. I won't even tell you my maiden name because not from here so you can give up a Dutch bingo. Along with my husband Matt who graduate from college 2002 we have five kids. They're in preschool and kindergarten, third and fifth grade. Martin Luther King Jr. Said this, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." We're all here because we care for our kids. We desire the respect for personal choice regardless of government overreach and we want transparency and accountability in our schools curriculum choices. Because many of our concerns have already been addressed. I will emphasize the more personal topic our family can relate to. Our children were adopted making us an interracial family. The first indication that my main challenge will go beyond hair texture and whether or not to use sunscreen was shortly after our first adoption. I was watching the news after a recent police shooting and riots were taking over every major city.

**1:26:15.7 Sarah Roosma:** I sat there with tears dripping on my newborn daughter's cheeks, seamless racial tension through a different perspective than I was conditioned to as a linear mom whose children looked like me, and that moment of fear, grief and anger, and I decided that my daughters would be raised to find their identity in Christ alone. That the pain of history, their skin color, and what society said about their worth would not be isolated to physical traits. They're strong, smart, beautiful and capable, not because of racial reconciliation, reverse privilege, or any other trendy word to be gained at another expense, but because God has already redeemed them, and the culture we find ourselves currently in. Our children, white and black are made in God's image and we pray our school can to align with that approach. Promoting their value in who they are, and not what they looks like when teaching about race in our country. Our trust in the school's approach to this subject has been compromised. As we've seen and heard of the subject matter being filtered through a worldview rather than a biblical perspective. This does not mean we expected to be sheltered from the history of racism, or we've come as a country wrongly so easy to go.

Lynden Christian School board and staff believe that all people are created in the image of God. We teach from this biblical perspective, and we strive to interact with all students, families, and community members from this same perspective. We teach about racism and other sins that present people in ways that oppose God's view of his children; we do not teach that they are true.

**1:27:26.2 Sarah Roosma:** However, we will protect them from being taught through a false lens of victimization and perpetuation. Versions of BLM incorporated and CRT teachings within the classroom is very concerning, as that approach causes more hurt and division rather than healing and unity. We're asking you to protect the children and their classmates from the correct ideology, which has enabled racially targeted assignments, promoting the disruption of interracial harmony and reversing the progress our country has fought so hard to make. We love the school and staff, volunteers and families. The dedication each person has passionately brought to fight for its integrity is encouraging. Thank you for the opportunity to allow these nights of open communication and transparency. And to the board and their families, we know you didn't sign up for this, so thank you. We are praying for each and every one of you consistently, we do appreciate you. As we've experienced in this season, often times growth and change comes as a result of conflict and resolution. I pray for each of you to find wisdom, clarity and peace in the days, weeks and months ahead as you navigate these difficult times. May God bless and protect our school and

families and the relational tension we are all feeling. We can disagree and sow laughter in reflecting God in how we interact with each other, because that is how we will drive a broken world to Christ. Thank you.

**1:28:57.2 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Mike Schooneveld.

**1:29:14.2 Mike Schooneveld:** I'm Mike Schooneveld. My connection to LC is I was on the school board 20 years ago. Seems like a lot. And three daughters have graduated from LC and now a grandson in third grade. My grandson invited my wife and I, Deanne, to last week to the elementary chapel, because his class was leading it. We were told this is the first chapel in a long time that's K through four were altogether. The general's pact, the theme was the different names of Jesus. Dinah and I were so blessed to watch the worship time that took place that morning. It brought tears to our eyes to see this wonderful Christian school community we're all a part of, worshipping together. My family loves spending Living Christian School. In fact, the LC was one of the reasons we moved here 26 years ago. It pains me to see the division, the frustrations of parents and teachers, we did not create this mess. The division started in Olivia. Two years of mass fatigue, mandates, changing rules, quarantines, and very little hope of community communicated from our governor. "What is the end game?" we ask. "There is no end game. Just flatten the curve." We were told. The goal posts have moved so many times that we can't even see them.

**1:30:47.0 Mike Schooneveld::** Washington State is one of the most mandated states in the US, and our COVID numbers are no better than anybody else's. The mandates are not working, our state leaders are not uniters, they are dividers. It's called tyranny. What these mandates are doing to our kids and grandkids are shameful. Here's a solution, I'd like to see the LC board with other school boards like Mt Vernon Christian, come up with a plan and start loosing the mandates. A Christian school coalition, Mt Vernon Christian is already pursuing this line of action with other schools. My daughter's a teacher there. Let's join them. There is strength in numbers. If it becomes a legal issue down the road, don't fear. Start a legal defense fund. I believe it will not be difficult to raise funds to protect our kids, our grandkids and our wonderful Christian schools that we have. Actually, I'd be willing to help fundraise if it came to that. So lastly to the school board I say this, it's time to plan with other Christian schools, and stand up to the emergency powers of our state leadership.

The board and superintendent have been advocates personally and as Lynden Christian. We have written to and called our legislators and our Governor as well as the Board of Health. Our superintendent has shared advocacy opportunities with staff and families regarding COVID-19 requirements and student vaccine mandate research.

**1:32:12.9 Kathryn:** Jeff TenPas.

**1:32:21.5 Jeff Ten Pas:** I'm Jeff Ten Pas good news, they told me I'm toward the end, so there's only a few left, I think. So my wife and I have three kids to graduate and we are in our last semester with our son here at LC so I'm a little bit, we're optimistic. Yeah, thanks to the school board for lending this opportunity for parents to just address issues and concerns. I'm here simply to say thank you to the school board and then friends and the business partners sitting on that board over the years. I know the toil it takes. And then just looking in here, but I notice TJ Mellema is back in that corner, so thanks TJ. To the staff, administrative staff, thank you hugely for the hours working above just from running a school and the business operation of things while dealing also with all of the health issues going on continuously. And just a word to the teachers, hang in there. I know of a

few who spoke today with concern for spouses and such, just hang in there. Bear with us a little bit longer as parents, we thank you, we publicly thank you tonight for the work that you've done over the last several years in hardship and trial that you would never have dreamed of three years ago. So thank you so much for that. And again, just thank you school board especially for bearing with us in this very tough time. Thanks.

**1:34:14.1 Kathryn:** Michael Terbeek

**1:34:17.4 Michael Terbeek:** Hi, I'm Michael Terbeek... My wife Leah is an LC alumn, we have four kids, two of them graduated, one in high school and one middle school. So I recently served on the board. I'd like to start out by giving a big thank you to the school board, administration, and all the staff for all the hard work that you've put in over the past 18 months to keep school in person as much as possible. No, it has not been perfect. There's been missteps along the way. But I believe you really have done an amazing job with the resources you have available. Within our school society, we have different opinions on many things. This is also true when it comes to mass, vaccines, testing the rest. I don't think it's the school's job to fight the state on something that we don't even agree on amongst ourselves. Thankful that leadership is making in person learning a priority, and have decided to follow the state requirements so that schools can focus on learning instead of fighting with authorities.

**1:35:33.4 Michael Terbeek::** When it comes to making decisions, I believe that the current members of the school board are there for a reason. This is your time. You've been put there by God, I trust that they along the admin, and the staff are trying to do what is best for Living Christian, and I appreciate that they have communicated those decisions along the way. This year more than most, parents are pretty supplying you with questions. The school has provided answers. I would like to see a stop repeatedly raising the same concerns and allow the leadership to focus on education. From the Living Christian purpose statement, the purpose of our school is to educate our students so that they are equipped to have a transforming influence in the world for God. To have a transforming influence, I strongly believe that it's the school's job, especially in high school, to teach our kids to think critically.

**1:36:29.2 Michael Terbeek:** I don't think this is done by indoctrinating them into the ideology of one church, one denomination, or one political party. Instead, I think critical thinking is developed in our kids when they are show multiple sides to issues and that are multiple Christian perspectives on each issue, and how to discuss those different viewpoints with grace. My wife and I chose to partner with Living Christian to help prepare our kids to go into the world and make a difference for Christ.

[background conversation]

**1:37:22.7 Shawna VanderLeest:** Now that everything has already been said, way more eloquently than I would have done, I'm not quite sure what to cut out. So I'll start by saying I'm Shawna VanderLeest and I have five kids that are currently students at Living Christian. A few years ago, I had the hard and wonderful privilege of serving on the school board, and in my first month we started the strategic planning process, bringing groups in and asking them what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of LC are. It was an eye opener for me because I saw that what someone thought was a strength another person saw as a threat. After the first couple of sessions, I mentioned to the facilitator that I was concerned that our school was in trouble because

there were such strong conflicting concerns. And he said; "Shawna, I disagree, every seat is filled, and that means that people are engaged." It really does matter more than you could know. Whatever we find out during this time, whatever the obstacles or weaknesses end up being, you as a school have the opportunity to tackle it.

**1:38:33.8 Shawna VanderLeest:** Apathy is the greatest threat to a school. Thankfully, although we are not all in agreement here tonight, we've all shown up because we love our school, and for that I'm thankful. I'm thankful for each of the comments that have been said and shared tonight. I'm thankful to the board for giving us this opportunity. I think it's valuable that we are able to put our heads together and learn to wrestle and struggle through some of this hardship. But how does it work to respond to families coming from such extremes? How do teachers effectively meet parent's expectations when they're so different? How do we make room, us in this room? How do we make room for community and conversations when the lines feel that they are drawn? The teams feel that they're selected and the chips are stacked on the shoulders? The sad truth is I don't have the answer.

**1:39:33.4 Shawna VanderLeest::** But in Colossians 3:12-16a, Paul writes, "Therefore is God's chosen people holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other, and forgive one another. If any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive as the word forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body we are called to peace. And just be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach." From Apostle Paul's perspective, we're called to put on love, as is the more excellent way to bring people together and make our differences compatible. This is what harmony means the positive combination of things which are not exactly the same. It does not mean that we as believers all are perfect without the need to agree on everything. We need accountability, and that is okay. That's...

**1:40:49.3 Shawna VanderLeest::** The mission of our school matters, Board. Please stay focused on our mission. Thank you for your leadership. Our society clearly wants and expects engaged working board. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you for your continual effort... Continued effort to effectively communicate with us. Thank you for working to keep high standards and accountability. We appreciate it, parents and teachers, you and what you teach at home and at school matter. How you teach matters. I've wondered often, "Are we still in this together?" There is division amongst our students, and it's trickling down because of what is happening at home. We need each other, differences and all. We have the opportunity to complement each other's gifts, take the light in each other's triumphs, and bury each other's burdens. We need to push through these disappointments and this hurt that has come through COVID, and come through this struggle intact as a school. Our kids are watching.

**1:41:52.1 Shawna VanderLeest::** Is our love amongst us, even as Christians, conditional? Have you stopped talking to a friend just because they don't line up exactly with where you thought they did or where you want them to? Are we teaching our kids to be critical thinkers or to be critical of thinking? Are we willing to find room for each other's perspectives, or are we convinced that we have all the answers? Are we raising entitled kids or perceptive, caring Christians? It's up to us. Facebook just isn't working. We've got to put on love. It's our privilege, it's our calling, it's our responsibility. Despite our differences, we are one in spirit, we're one in the Lord, and I pray that our unity may one day be restored. And they'll know we are Christians by our love. We will work with each other, we will work side by side, we will guard each man's dignity and shape... Save each

man's pride, and they'll know we are Christians by our love. Thank you.

**1:42:57.1 Kathryn Van Weerdhuizen:** Yeah. She's coming.

**1:43:06.5 Danya Vander Mey:** I'm Danya Vander Mey. My husband is Tim. He's the toast master of the family, so you guys walked out... Didn't walk out, sorry. We're sorry, obviously. We could all speak proudly of the hundred plus years of Christian education that Living Christian has provided. We shouldn't be letting that pride blind us to the truth of what's happening today. What God's past faithfulness, this is the truth, it does provide us insurance for His faithfulness today and for our future. The same is not true for people prone to wander. Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. That's the reality that we're living every day. In regards to curriculum, our son has been here for a year and a semester. It is clear that the curriculum is generic, consisting of handouts, secular YouTube videos, and, if a textbook is used, it's to stay in the class and not come home for me to see. A current example of the secular curriculum that my son is receiving is Spanish 1.

Lynden Christian is focused on student learning, growth, and challenge. Our teachers use effective and diverse means to present content to students and assess their learning – yes, handouts, videos, and textbooks, but also classroom discussion, reading, writing, interviews, oral reports, labs, critical analysis, and problem-solving assignments. The curriculum drives this diversity of instruction and assessment.

**1:44:11.8 Danya Vander Mey:** Quizzing Malachi for his exam this past month, we came to the end of the list. He knew every vocab word and phrase, but I was so disappointed. He didn't know the word for God in Spanish. The biblical content... Comparing apples to apples, the Biblical content of a popular high school Spanish 1 curriculum includes numerous vocab names for God, as well as comparing and contrasting attributes of God, characters of God, with the attributes of man, and character of man. They also learn to memorize small portions of Romans working towards a faithful, basic Gospel presentation, all by the end of year one. We are created with language for the ability to read God's word, praise Him, worship Him, and tell others of Him. Biblical content should be the core of the second language at a Christian school. "Dios" is God, day one maybe.

Our Spanish 1 teacher integrates the Reformed faith into the class and the instruction. All units center around learning a language to “love our neighbors as ourselves.” (Matt 22:36-40). Utilizing Spanish in interactions within our community demonstrates love and concern for others which opens organic relationships and opportunities to witness. Learning a second language is a process. Students learn basic vocab words during the first semester and build on this knowledge in future semesters. As and aside, during second semester, students learn the Lord's Prayer in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of Spanish 1. Classroom interaction and instruction work to unfold biblical concepts, topics, and discussions found within these units.

**1:45:16.1 Danya Vander Mey:** Biology. Biology is the study of life, there is no textbook. Students are assigned to watch YouTube videos by the Amoeba Sisters. We are created to worship, but the Amoeba Sisters are never going to prompt my son to praise God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, as he studies biology. Last meeting, someone run up the Heidelberg Catechism, a faithful and useful tool to understand and teach truths of the Bible. It was clear by how he used it that he assumed that the audience in the gym, as well as Living Christian Schools and institution, was going to agree and be held accountable to the truths found in it. We don't teach the Heidelberg Catechism at LC. On the contrary, what we do teach is a class that Malachi is going be starting, which covers a Bible



project. Definitely rocked that. So I can skip a whole paragraph.

Our biology teacher uses established standards and a variety of resources to help students understand the content and build skills. These days, textbooks are simply one resource HS teachers use to teach curriculum – because all students need differentiation beyond the textbook’s capability – that is why, for some classes, we purchase classroom sets of texts for teachers to use as needed (if that is the preference of the teacher) rather than automatically issue a textbook in each class to each student. Students who desire to use a textbook to supplement instruction may talk to the teacher who will guide that student’s learning and will give access to a book to take home. The Amoeba Sisters and Edpuzzles are used to reinforce instruction and assess student learning – they are resources used by many teachers in college-level courses across the country.

Parents should seek information from teachers directly before making assumptions or public comments. Our teachers would welcome questions and give helpful feedback.

Link to the Amoeba Sisters: <https://www.youtube.com/c/AmoebaSisters>

**1:46:14.1 Danya Vander Mey:** This isn't the first time I brought this up. At the end of last year, his freshman year, I responded in a survey with these exact same concerns, different classes. Again, I just wanna say that with knowledge comes responsibility. I wanna leave you with a practical solution. Board members, I don't... I know that you did not take Christian textbooks out of the classes, but please be a force to insist on putting them back in, and do it soon. Please take the time to find out who did take biblical texts out of the classroom to protect this from happening again. Would you sign a contract with a competent and skilled contractor to build your house, only to have him pridefully refuse to look at your blueprints? The willingness or lack of willingness in current or prospective teachers to teach from an approved Christian curriculum is a great way of discerning whether or not that teacher is a good fit for LC.

**1:47:08.7 Danya Vander Mey:** Teachers manuals, in addition to student text, would provide a hedge of protection on the content of the classes, restoring the trust between parents and teachers, administration, and school board. There should be no greater goal in this school than to teach the students from a biblical perspective in order to give glory to God. And the great news is, Christian biblical curriculum is fantastic. You are going to find it plentiful, and... We're thankful for this opportunity tonight. Have fun picking new curriculum.

We have a curricular in-depth review process that researches best practices, content, textbooks, and curriculum for our grade levels and courses. We typically select the best curriculum, and that is often not the biblical curriculum referred to above. A primary responsibility for our teachers is to integrate the Christian faith throughout their teaching regardless of the presence and selection of the textbook.

**1:47:50.9 Kathryn:** That's all the speakers for tonight, so closing prayer. Having You for this time together, we thank You for parents and for students. We thank You for our teachers and our administrators. Thank You for the board members, all the grandparents, and community members that help support the school. We ask for wisdom, for clarity, and discernment, and for unity as we grow in our individual and collective knowledge and our faith in You, the supreme Jesus Name. Amen.