

## **OCT 23 BBC EVENING MEETING - WSCA/HCS DUE DILIGENCE REPORT (Slide 1)**

### **Introduction: (Slide 2)**

Good evening. I'm Lynette Tress. I want to welcome members of the BBC Congregation, the WSCA Community, and the CSAGH Community. Tonight we are going to look at the educational and spiritual growth programs of HCS, hear from three alumni parents of HCS concerning their experience at HCS, and allow time for questions.

I was asked by Pastor Ron to lead the process in conducting the due diligence of Harrisburg Christian School's educational and spiritual growth programs. I was joined in this process by my colleague and friend Evelyn Kalbfleisch. Together we have over 68 years of Christian School experience. I served 8 years as a teacher at Bible Baptist School, 10 years as the Director of Student Support and 11 years as Lower School Principal of Bible Baptist School and then WSCA. Evelyn, or Miss K, as she is known by the HCS Community, has served as an Elementary and Middle School teacher and also their Director of Student Support at South Shore Christian School in NY for 16 years before becoming their Elementary School Principal for 9 years. Evelyn moved to Mechanicsburg in 2002 to become HCS's Elementary School Principal. She stepped down from the position in 2013 to take care of her handicapped mom full time but continued at the school in an advisory capacity until she returned to work full time at HCS in the Fall of 2016.

### **(Slide 3)**

Over the past several months, we have spent hundreds of hours reviewing documents, as listed on the screen), conducting tours and observations, and interviewing administrators, faculty, staff and parents. We did not approach our effort with the intent to be overly critical of the Lord's work. Rather, we approached our task with a desire to recognize and appreciate the faithfulness God has displayed to both our schools over the combined 108 years of Christian School Ministry. We looked for both the similarities and the differences, as well as potential challenges in any consolidation effort. We wanted to make a true

assessment of the compatibility of our programs as we explored the future of Christian education for our students.

Tonight, Evelyn and I will present what we found concerning HCS and WSCA. We are pleased to be joined by Phil Puleo, Head of School of HCS, and Clint Davis and Terri White, Secondary and Elementary Principals of HCS. Steve Bechtel, AD of HCS and Matt DeLong, IT Director of HCS. From WSCA, we are joined by Joe Diminick and Christina Moser, the Upper and Lower School Principals of WSCA. Jen Cornetto, AD of WSCA and Jason Shugart, IT Director of WSCA. All played a vital role in our due diligence process. I also want to welcome the BBC Elders and Pastoral staff as well as both the WSCA Board of Trustees and the CSAGH Board members who are in attendance. Thank you for your leadership through this process.

To begin our evening, I've invited Josh Outlar, HCS Secondary Bible Teacher to open our time in prayer.

#### **Location and Facilities (Slide 4)**

I've known of HCS as long as I've been in the area. I only recently took the time to see more than just their soccer fields and it was much more than I had ever imagined the facilities to be. It is a monument to God's faithfulness and provision. Here's a pictorial tour. (Slide 5)

#### **Mission, Vision, and Purpose: (Slide 6)**

The mission and vision of HCS and WSCA are very similar. (Slide 7) HCS derives its mission from Psalm 127 which likens children to arrows that contend with those who oppose God in the public square. They articulate their mission as (Slide 8) "Hearts straightened through faith in Jesus Christ" (their spiritual objective); "Minds sharpened through academic challenge" (their academic objective), and "lives aimed at God's purpose" (their vocational objective). (Slide 9) Their vision and purpose is to help young people Explore their God given design, Excel in life and learning, and Engage their world for Christ.

**(Slide 10)** HCS also encourages parents to be involved in this mission and vision. HCS believes parents are the primary educators of their children, the church is the families' primary faith community, and the Christian School is the community of educators that both assist the families and their churches in helping young people to develop a Biblical worldview. HCS parents are a part of the Christian School Association of Greater Harrisburg which is responsible for selecting Board members and serving on school committees. Parents participate in a variety of ways from governance, to advisory committees, to field trips, coaching, chaperoning, etc.

**Academics: (Slide 11)**

I was impressed with what Harrisburg Christian School offers its students by way of academic opportunities. They are committed to offering quality Christian education to a diverse group of students. **(Slide 12)** They hire Christian teachers with degrees in their field that are certified by the State of PA, the Association of Christian School Association, or both. They use an assortment of Christian and secular text to carry out their curricular objectives, not unlike WSCA. **(Slide 13)** Their dual enrollment program offers students up to 30 credits on campus through visiting college professors or HCS faculty who are approved by colleges to offer college courses. Their dual credit courses are with colleges such as Lancaster Bible College, Messiah College, Cairn University, and Harrisburg Area Community College. Last year, their graduating class of 12 students (one of their smaller classes) graduated with a total of 72 dual enrollment credits and earned \$237,300 in scholarship dollars.

**(Slide 14)** As for colleges, since graduating their first Senior Class, their students have attended as wide a range of colleges as WSCA has.

**(Slide 15)** SAT scores are one way we as educators evaluate a student's progress and ability to perform at the collegial level. HCSs' SAT scores are traditionally above the state and national average. With that said, it is important to note that HCS educates a diverse community of students coming from different social-economic, geographic, and ethnic backgrounds. **(Slide 16)** Three of the four most drawn upon school districts are in the lower half of PA State Ranking of Public

Schools with two of them falling in the lower quartile. What does that mean? Students coming to HCS after Kindergarten have had a below average educational experience compared to other schools in the State of PA. You can see on the slide that HCS's top 50% of students do extremely well. I believe that shows that HCS's commitment to educating a wide range of students, does impact its overall average. In speaking with their leadership team, they are willing to accept that criticism for the sake of making a difference in the lives of students who desperately need and desire a quality Christian Education.

Through the Capital Area Intermediate Unit, both WSCA and HCS receive reading support, speech therapy, school counseling, student counseling, student online learning opportunities and teacher training.

### **Spiritual Growth (Slide 17)**

In doing our due diligence, (Slide 18) in the over 150 churches represented by our school families, listed are but a few of those that partner in the education of students at our schools.

Students in K-12 at both WSCA and HCS have daily Bible classes and weekly chapels. Both schools run a weekly Elementary/Lower School Chapel Program in K-5 featuring programs, guest speakers and pastors from South Central PA. Both K-5 programs develop a yearly theme and character development as viewed through Scripture. HCS also adds a one day a week specialized Bible traits class for their K-5 students. WSCA does a monthly character trait. Fifth graders from HCS have a specialized retreat at the beginning of the year at Spruce Lake, which is on Christian leadership.

(Slide 19) In Grades 6-12, Chapels are normally together but both schools break out the Middle School on occasion for specific topics. HCS also uses one Chapel each month for small group discussion. Local area pastors, college Bible professors, area ministries are utilized throughout the year.

Both schools utilize their student's gifts and abilities to lead in worship and also have school-wide chapels during the course of the year.

**(Slide 20)** Over the course of Grades 9-12, HCS students take part in four Spiritual Emphasis Retreats. These retreats are:

1. “On Target: Living According to Our Biblical Identity” based on Genesis 1:27-28a
2. “Jesus, The Great Treasure Hunt” based on Matthew 13:44; Luke 19:10 & Romans 10:20
3. “Conquering the Rapids of Life” based on John 16:33b
4. “Setting a Course for Life: Biblical Code of Honor” based on Ephesians 4:29 – 5:8

**(Slide 21)** HCS Seniors also participate in a Missions Trip each year to the Dominican Republic where they work with students in Christian orphanages, Christian schools, and go out into local villages bringing supplies that they have gathered during the course of the year for them.

**(Slide 22)** HCS parents rank spiritual development programs and spiritual environment as one of the most noteworthy aspects of the HCS experience.

### **Overview of Similarities and Differences: (Slide 23)**

At the heart of both schools is a desire to recognize Christ and His Word at the center of a child’s education. The Faculty, certified by either the State of PA or ACSI, serve as a living curriculum committed to both the integration of faith in the learning process and also in the development of life practices. While individual textbook choices may be slightly different, the commitment to integrate faith with learning is steadfast. The Association of Christian Schools International both recognizes and accredits both WSCA and HCS as outstanding Christian schools and among the finest Christian schools in Central PA.

Despite the overwhelming similarities on the foundational level, WSCA and HCS have some differences as those missions are carried out. For example, while the schools’ calendars are remarkably similar, there are slight differences in when marking periods end and the length of certain recesses. In addition, while both

are committed to professional development, HCS conducts two full days and a weekly session of in-service training while WSCA conducts four full days of in-service training. In the end, the time spent (and the commitment to) professional development is remarkably similar.

An additional difference worth noting is the academic schedule and the implementation of J-Term/Winterim. HCS operates on an AB Day Schedule (two rotating days) while WSCA operates on a modified block schedule (three “normal” eight period days with two “four-period” days). For J-Term/Winterim, HCS operates a one week J-Term while WSCA operates a two-week Winterim.

In conclusion, after many hours of research, document examination, and interviews, it is the conclusion of this Educational Due Diligence report that WSCA and HCS are remarkably and overwhelmingly similar on all the key foundational aspects and many of the key educational operational components. While some differences exist, as would be expected, no difference serves as an insurmountable obstacle to a potential consolidation of the schools into one single Christian School System. We are two very similar schools educating students with a Christian Worldview preparing to step out into the world ready to serve Christ.

**(Slide 24)**

**OVERWHELMING SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BOTH SCHOOLS:**

Mission, Vision and Purpose Statements

Biblical Integration

Chapel programs/schedules

Curriculum

Dual Enrollment and AP Courses

Spring Musicals

RenWeb used for Parent Portal and all academics

Very limited, if any, activities scheduled for after school on Wednesdays

**(Slide 25)**

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOTH SCHOOLS:**

Calendar/End of Semester (HCS ends before Christmas Break)

Number of In Service Days (HCS-2 vs WSCA-4)

Buildings – separate spaces (HCS) vs PE/Lunch, Band and Chorus issues (WSCA)

Retreats – purpose and mission

Scheduling – Block vs AB Days

Winterim (WSCA)/JTerm (HCS): 2 wks vs 1 wk

Fundraising Efforts – Both have Race for Education; HCS also runs an annual Auction

Full time nurse (WSCA) on site; HCS has a part time nurse supplied by CDS

HCS offers before and after care through Follow Me Christian Day Care

HCS has a strong Development Program

**(Slide 26) Alumni Parents:**

I asked Mr. Puleo to invite three Alumni Parents who can speak to their HCS experience. We have with us this evening . . . Shari Holmes, Chuck Wingate, and Dr. Angela Campbell.

After hearing from these three guests, they, along with Josh Outlar, will also be available to answer any questions you may have.

**(Slide 27) QUESTIONS**

I've asked **Don Trott** to share his recent experience over at HCS, a word of encouragement, and then close in prayer.

**(Slide 28) END OF EVENING**