

June 13, 2025

COMMUNIQUE

Summer

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

10:00am - 2:00pm

Closed June 30 - July 4

THIS EDITION

- ♦ "Thankful for Service"
- ♦ Enrollment
- ♦ Staff Needs for 25-26
- ♦ Important Reminders
- ♦ Student Sponsorship
- ♦ Patriot Highlights
- ♦ Thanksgiving Pages
- ♦ Community Service
- ♦ Meetings
- ♦ Work Days
- ♦ 25-26 Calendar



"Inspiring students to impact the world for Jesus Christ through an excellent educational experience from a Biblical worldview."

ADMINISTRATION

THANKFUL FOR SERVICE

June 4th, the staff gathered one final time to share a lunch together before leaving for the summer, leaving for what's next in their lives. At the end of the day I was talking with our office staff about the day and one of them mentioned there being lots of tears this afternoon, mentioning as well that some left early to avoid shedding their own tears. I responded with 'Why would anyone be crying?' In short, I was not aware of the emotional energy that was in the building or the significance of the moment for many that this is the last time they will be GCS Staff.

I mention all of this to remind you just as I need to be reminded that every Grace Christian staff person pours their heart into this ministry. This is far more than a job. In the free market, a job competes for great employees by paying them well. When you consider the benefits packages available at public schools, our staff chooses to be here for 50% of the free market. Why would they do that? It is not because there are no other jobs. It is not because they are incompetent and we'll take whatever is left. We had 3 staff evaluated by the public school because of the Shared-Time program and they scored very high; Watervliet would be pleased to have them among their staff.

Our teachers are on mission. They give sacrificially every day to be here to minister to our students because they love the ministry and they love making an eternal difference for the kingdom. We have staff leaving that have been with us many years or just one. It is important to recognize that every single year a person works at Grace is a love offering to God. I think it is important to recognize those who give to the kingdom and who have given to our school families. Please pray a prayer of thanksgiving and well being for these who have given so much for us.

Benjamin Williamson
Administrator



We exist by God's Grace and His provision of servants these 51 years.





Family Portal

Welcome
to GC-MI

[Change district](#)

Username

Password

[Forgot password?](#)

LOG IN

[Create new account](#)

REENROLL TODAY!

It's ready! An email from info@gcspatriots.com was sent to you on June 5th, giving you the ability to reenroll your students for the 2025-26 school year, using our new Student Information System, FACTS Management. Please follow the instructions in the email to create your Family Portal Login and begin the enrollment process today! If you have any questions, please let us know and we will be happy to assist you. Thank you!

NOTE FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE

When you reenroll, you are going to be required to enter your banking information for an automatic debit of your account monthly, on the day you choose. If you use your debit/credit card, you are going to incur an additional fee. If you use your checking account and routing number, there is no additional fee. If you are planning to participate in the Thrift Store Scholarship and/or Student Sponsorship, you will be required to apply for Grant & Aid. Please watch your email inbox for a link to apply. If you have any questions, please call the Business Office.



STAFF NEEDS

Please help us spread the word about our available positions for the 2025-26 school year:

- A music director to teach our early elementary music and high school band students. State certification is desired.
- A Preschool Director, qualified by the State

9-12TH GRADE PARENT REMINDER

We are planning for our new high school programming and need your information. If you have not filled out the short survey indicating curriculum, PE, and band preferences for your student, please do so ASAP. If you need a new form, it is located on Page 12.



MISSION TRIP NEWS: Classes of 2026 & 2027



If you plan to go on next year's mission trip I need to hear from you! Please email lcolford@gcspatriots.com letting me know whether or not you plan to be part of the team. Make sure you have viewed the video and attachments sent out on May 27. Planning starts now and there is work to be done over the summer! If you have questions I'm happy to answer them; just reach out! -Mrs. Colford

STUDENT SPONSORSHIP NEEDS

We are thankful for many who have contributed to sponsor a student or family this last year. We have new opportunities for you to build the Kingdom of God. Below are the families that need financial help for the coming school year. Would you consider helping in whole or in part?

Please pray that God would remember us and our need. Please pray that the needs of our coming year would be met. God is sovereign and He is able; pray that those He chooses to use will be willing.

Family #1

- Single parent
- Family of three
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$13,900

Need: \$3600

Family #2

- Family of six
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$13,900

Need: \$4100

Family #3

- Family of six
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$12,900

Need: \$2400

Family #4

- Family of six
- 3 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$20,850

Need: \$7100

Family #5

- Family of five
- 1 elementary student
- Total tuition: \$6950

Need: \$2150

Family #6

- Family of three
- 1 secondary student
- Total tuition: \$7450

Need: \$1000

Family #7

- Grandparents
- Family of five
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$13,900

Need: \$3600

Family #8

- Family of five
- 3 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$20,850

Need: \$4400

Family #9

- Single parent
- Family of two
- 1 secondary student
- Total tuition: \$7450

Need: \$1500

Family #10

- Family of four
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition \$12,900

Need: \$2100

MIDDLE SCHOOL HOUSE WINNERS



Standout Student
(earned the most House points)

April: ABELLA BLASKIE

May: ABELLA BLASKIE



Teacher on Fire
(for awarding the most House points)

April: ROBIN MCBRIDE

May: SARAH ERICKSON



HONORARY PATRIOT AWARDS

Each year Grace Christian School recognizes the volunteers who contribute countless hours to making a positive difference in the lives of our staff, students and the entire GCS community. The following have already received this honor in the past and continue to bless this ministry:

Rebecca Dill, Kendra Stanbro & Barb VanLente.

Newly awarded Honorary Patriot Award winners for the 2024-25 school year are:

Joe Behr, John Broyles, Jeremy Galvin, "Aunt Becky" Schemenauer & Stephane Wilkerson

Thank you all for your service!



2025 CLASSIC CRUISE-IN

Even in spite of a lengthy rain shower, the Classic Cruise-in was a well-attended event! Thank you to the Student Council and the secondary student body for your hard work. Congratulations to the trophy winners: Tim Edmonds for the Student Choice Award and Scott & Irene Hanson for the Staff Choice Award! If you would like to have an official 2025 Cruise-In shirt, we still have shirts available in sizes Youth S-M and Adult L-3XL. Now only \$15 each! Available for purchase at GCS and the Reclaimed By Grace Thrift Store.



Thanksgiving Page

- ◆ Our amazing PTF provided our staff with breakfast and lunch for Teacher Appreciation Week!
- ◆ We had several people come and donate 21 units of blood on May 5th.
- ◆ Thank you to the many who donated to the auction!
- ◆ A 2002 20' Proline boat with cuddy cabin has been donated to the school for resale.
- ◆ Thank you Anchor Signs for updating our school banner! We really appreciate your support!
- ◆ Positive feedback to State of the School letter.
- ◆ Sewer repairs made by volunteers that love GCS.
- ◆ \$40,000 and \$5,000 year end gift!
- ◆ UPDATE: The furnaces have been purchased and will be picked up this week.
A donation of \$30,000 was given to the school for the purchase of 3 new furnaces.
- ◆ Efforts made by students, staff and guests working together to set up and tear down for the Christmas concert were a huge blessing!
- ◆ GCS received \$1,234 in grant money from the 2024 Nonpublic School Reimbursement Section 152b state grant.
- ◆ GCS has been awarded the Filter First grant for \$10,298 that will help us meet new state water filtering and testing requirements.
- ◆ The Chapel sent a work group that painted the elementary hallway.
- ◆ Patriots-In-Action raised \$10,871 for our school
- ◆ In October, we were able to hire a PE teacher with Watervliet through the Shared Time* program.
- ◆ \$4,000 (half of the amount needed) was donated toward replacement gym doors. The \$4,000 given was intended to inspire a matching gift. Would you consider helping us get this significant need met?
- ◆ Title money was obtained to enable our teachers to benefit from professional development training last week at the Michigan Association of Christian Schools (MACS) Conference.
- ◆ An anonymous donor covered the fee for GCS student athletes to participate in Twin City Sharks football.
- ◆ In August, we were able to contract two teachers with Watervliet through the Shared Time* program.
- ◆ Heart of Cook Grant \$5,000 for the purchase of a new commercial refrigerator.
- ◆ Anonymous donor gave \$2,000 toward student sponsorship.
- ◆ Mr. Clean's Cleaning and Restoration cleaned our carpets to prepare for the school year.



Thank you

- ◆ Thank you to those who have brought in school supplies, paper, pencils, facial tissue and cleaning supplies for classrooms.
- ◆ School furniture was donated by a St. Joseph business man.
- ◆ The thrift store hit their first anniversary on August 12th and in this first year contributed about \$53,000 to the school scholarship fund.
- ◆ We received a \$15,000 gift to put toward student scholarships last year. This year we have many other sponsors who have picked families to support. Sponsorship for the 2024-25 school year is complete.
- ◆ Roy's Computer Repair and the Nuismer family for their generosity in helping to update our network infrastructure.
- ◆ Many hands came together to help get the building and grounds ready for students.

* *Watervliet is covering the salaries of these teachers through an elective program with the State.*

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS FOR SECONDARY

A few notes about how to get a head start on next year's hours:

- Hours completed after May 30 will be credited towards next school year.
- Students can "bank" hours for the entire school year; however, all summer hours **MUST** be turned in during the first quarter of the school year in order to count.
- **KEEP TRACK!** It isn't that difficult to log hours. Start a list on your "notes" app; snap a picture in your photo album; fill out the form and keep it on your fridge; etc. Get signatures at the time of service so you don't have to backtrack later.
- Incomplete forms will not be accepted. Please fill out both sides thoroughly before turning in.
- Reminder: Service projects are to be free of compensation, financial or otherwise, and should benefit others in need, excluding family members.



Finally, students are encouraged to get out of their comfort zones! Don't just take the easy route and write down service you would already be doing anyway (helping at your church, etc.). Some of our students are doing great things! Look for ways to make a meaningful impact with your volunteer hours! We'd like to highlight some of these throughout the school year next year - send us your pictures!

More info about Community Service requirements can be found in your Parent/Student Handbook.

ATTENTION STUDENT ATHLETES!

Schedule your sports physicals for the 25-26 school year today! Students must have a valid sports physical to be ready to play on the first day of practice for the season. The official MHSAA sport physical form for your doctor can be obtained from our website, at the school or by using [this link](#).





VOLLEYBALL CAMP

Attention All Middle and High School Girls & Boys!

Grace Christian School is hosting a summer volleyball camp.
Students from Grace and other schools are all welcome.

July 21-25 9:30 am - 12:00pm Cost: \$25

Sign up at the door on Monday, July 21st



AMBASSADORS



The next Ambassadors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 19th at noon, right here at the school. We will have the opportunity to see how everyone is doing, ask questions, and offer helpful suggestions regarding what is working for you. Everyone's input will be greatly appreciated. If you are on Facebook and not yet a member of the Ambassador Group, please let us know so that you can be invited to that page. We look forward to seeing you all there.

GCS JUNE WORK DAYS

Friday, June 20th, 11-5 & Saturday, June 21th, 9-5

We need your help!

Join us in accomplishing the following tasks:

(Priority from top to bottom)

- ⇒ **Clean the heat tube above the gym floor:** Must be done before the floor is resurfaced.
- ⇒ **Clean out the locker rooms:** Empty, Scrub, Repair from floor to ceiling.
 - * Paint the locker rooms
 - * Replace the ceiling tiles
 - * Repair the broken wall trim floor tiles or replace with mop boards.
 - * Put back and organize the items in the locker rooms
- ⇒ **Organize the attic:** specifically, organizing the sports stuff on the left side
- ⇒ **Finish painting the gym:** the white sections
- ⇒ **Clean up the paint left on the mop board in the cafeteria**
- ⇒ **Begin Woodshop Overhaul**



Reach out to Rebecca Dill at rdill@gcspatriots.com or Benjamin Williamson at

bwilliamson@gcspatriots.com if you have questions or would like to let us know you're coming. You *do not* have to sign-up in advance; it is helpful to know what to plan for. Thanks!

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

2025-2026 School Year*



AUGUST

- 25 First Day of School
Quarter 1 Begins
- 29 NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.
- 3-5 SEW Retreat (Grades 9-12)
- 26 Picture Day

OCTOBER

- 2-3 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 17 Grandparents Day, Half Day,
No Aftercare
End of Quarter 1
- 20 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 21 Quarter 2 Begins

NOVEMBER

- 3 Picture Retakes
- 4 NO SCHOOL - ELEMENTARY
Parent/Teacher Conferences,
11:00 - 6:00pm
- 24-25 NO SCHOOL - Fall Break
- 26-28 NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 10 Pastor Appreciation
- 18 HALF DAY
End of Quarter 2
- 19-1/5 NO SCHOOL - Christmas Break

JANUARY

- 5 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 6 Quarter 3 Begins
- 19 NO SCHOOL - MLK Jr. Day

FEBRUARY

- 13-16 NO SCHOOL - Mid-Winter Break
- 17 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 20 Homecoming

MARCH

- 2-6 Science Fair
- 6 Kindergarten Program/Round Up
- 7 Open House, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
- 13 End of Quarter 3
- 16 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 17 Quarter 4 Begins
- 22-28 Mission Trip - Guatemala
- 30-4/6 NO SCHOOL - Spring Break

APRIL

- 6 NO SCHOOL - Spring Break

MAY

- 21 Graduation
- 22-25 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day
- 29 Moving Up Ceremony
(TK-5th), HALF DAY,
NO AFTERCARE
End of Quarter 4
Cruise-In, 5:00-8:00 pm
- 30 Golf Outing, tee-off 8:30 am

SCHOOL HOURS	
EARLY CARE	7:00 - 7:30 am
PLEDGES/PRAYER	7:50 am
SCHOOL DAY	8:00 - 3:00 pm
AFTER CARE	3:15 - 5:30 pm
OFFICE HOURS	7:30-3:30 pm

**This calendar is subject to change.*

Please visit GCSPatriots.org for current calendar.

2024-25 Business & Industry Partners

If you are interested in partnering with Grace Christian School's Business & Industry Program, please contact info@gcspatriots.com for details.



2024-25 GCEA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Whitney Tinker, President

wtinker@gcspatriots.com

Joel Layman, Vice President

jlayman@gcspatriots.com

Trever Meachum, Treasurer

tmeachum@gcspatriots.com

Holly Crouch, Secretary

hcrrouch@gcspatriots.com

Shirl Bontrager

shirlbontrager@gcspatriots.com



Marshall Downs

mdowns@gcspatriots.com

Laraine Fox

lfox@gcspatriots.com

Nathan Hutchins

nhutchins@gcspatriots.com

Ruth Malaka

rmalaka@gcspatriots.com

**THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON
MONDAY, JUNE 30 @ 6:30 PM.**

AMERIGAS

Amerigas Customers can support GCS without paying anything extra!
Simply visit [this link](#) and enter your account information and the **School ID# 680389884**
and AMERIGAS will send \$0.02 on every gallon of propane you
purchase to benefit Grace Christian School!



BUSINESS BOOSTERS

When you buy from or use the services of one of these businesses, they give a portion of your purchase as a gift to GCS (but only if the receipt is turned into the GCS office).

Featured Boosters of the Month:



Perennial Accents

Every purchase made at Perennial Accents can earn 3%. Just mention at the register that you want your purchase to go toward the Grace Christian School of Watervliet!

220 State Street
(269)983-5791



M&W Tire

Every time you make a purchase and mention Grace Christian School of Watervliet, 5% comes back to our school.

2216 M-139 Benton Harbor
(269) 983-7155



Great Lakes Truck & Auto Repair (10%)

Full Truck and auto repair facility
2159 Plaza Dr., Benton Harbor
(269) 983-7155



DeWitt Computer Technologies (5%)

Computer IT services
1826 Hilltop Rd
St. Joseph
(269)983-4011

2024-25 SUPPORTING CHURCHES

We are very grateful to the churches that not only pray for us, but financially support GCS as well.

- Bright Star Tabernacle
- Decatur Bible Church
- Hartford Bible Church
- New Life Baptist Church
- New Life Christian Church
- North Wayne Mennonite Church
- Sister Lakes Community Church
- South Haven Church of Christ
- The Chapel, EFC
- Watervliet Free Methodist Church



GCS High School Parent Consent/Acknowledgment Form
School Year: 2025–2026

*Please complete and return this form to the school office no later than **July 11, 2025**. This form outlines curriculum and course decisions that require parent acknowledgment and approval.*

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____
Grade (2025–26): _____

1. Curriculum Selection

Please select one of the following curriculum options for your child:

☐ I choose for my child to use BJU Press curriculum.

☐ I choose for my child to use Ignitia curriculum.

I understand that this is a year-long commitment and cannot be changed after July 11, 2025.

2. Dual Enrollment (Grades 10–12 only)

☐ I have been informed about my child's Dual Enrollment options.

☐ My child will apply for Dual Enrollment.

☐ My child will not apply for Dual Enrollment.

If "will apply" is selected:

- I understand that it is my child's responsibility to complete the online application.
 - I understand that GCS cannot submit the application on behalf of my child.
 - I understand that all Dual Enrollment courses must be approved by the GCS Academic Advisor.
-

3. Physical Education (PE)

If your child has already met the PE graduation requirement, please indicate your preference:

☐ I do wish for my child to take PE again if it fits into their schedule.

☐ I do not wish for my child to take PE again.

4. Band Enrollment

Please indicate your preference regarding Band:

☐ I do want my child to take Band next year if it fits into their schedule.

☐ I want to prioritize Band in my child's schedule next year.

☐ I do not want my child to take Band next year.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notes:



**BERRIEN COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
better health. stronger communities.



michigan
HEARING & VISION
screening programs

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH

The Berrien County Health Department will host a Back-to-School Bash in both Benton Harbor and Niles this summer.

Each event will offer:

- School-required hearing, vision and dental screenings
- School-required immunizations
- Fun activities

Simply stop by for screenings and immunizations – no appointment needed.

Aug. 21, BENTON HARBOR

8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. at BCHD
2149 E. Napier Ave.

DETAILS TBD, NILES

Watch bchdmi.org
or Facebook for details.

Summer clinics – by appointment

Can't make it to a Back-to-School Bash? Visit one of our summer clinics for school-required hearing, vision and dental screenings. The schedule is:

COLOMA

- June 18 – Coloma
Community Schools
Administration

EAU CLAIRE

- July 29 – Lybrook Elementary

NILES

- June 9-10 – Merritt Elementary
- Aug. 5 – Northside Child Development Center

STEVENSVILLE

- June 12 – Hollywood Elementary
- June 17 – Roosevelt Elementary
- Aug. 12 – Stewart Elementary

WATERVLIET

- June 24 – South Elementary

Scan the QR code to schedule your appointment.

Questions? Call Melisa Jordan at 269.926.7121, ext. 5293.





BEAT THE RUSH

GET YOUR SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS AT
BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ATTENTION PARENTS OF

Incoming Preschoolers - Kindergarteners - 7th Graders - Out of State/Transfer Students

CALL TODAY (269)926-7121 to make an appointment

Monday/Tuesday in Benton Harbor

2149 E. Napier Ave. Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Wednesday/Thursday in Niles

1205 Front St. Niles, MI 49120

For more information visit our website at: bchdmi.org



**BERRIEN COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
better health. stronger communities.