

# RCS - Town Hall Meeting

February 29, 2024

# Our “Together” Vision

- Strengthen Christian education in our community
- Develop a regional Christian High School fed by healthy and Christ-centered elementary and middle school campuses.
- To see 100 students graduate every year, rooted in Christ, and equipped to change the world!

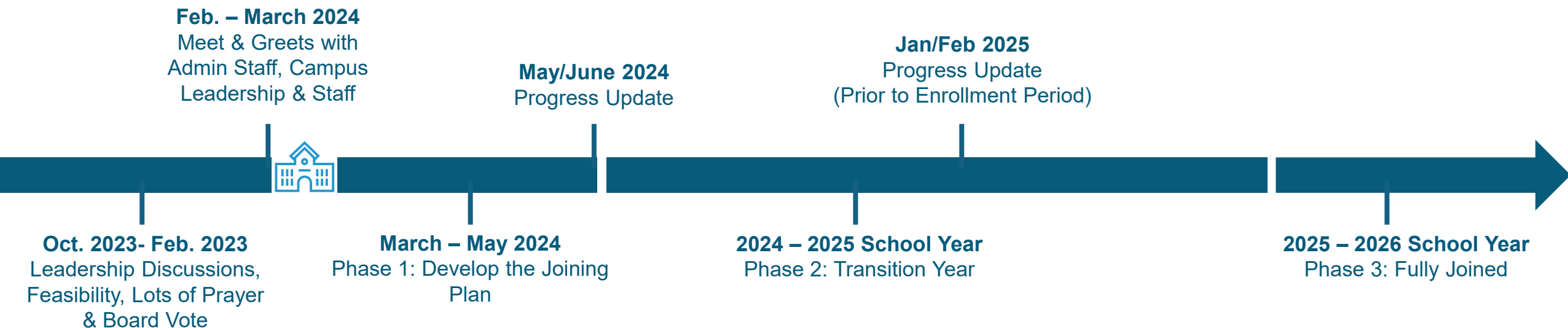
# Our Guiding Values

- **Guided by God** – Our school is God’s school. Our mission is His calling. We are committed to listening to His voice and seeking His direction through every step and every decision.
- **Christ-Centered** – Our school will remain centered on Jesus Christ. We will continue to integrate Biblical values and principles into each subject. We will continue to inspire and instill a Biblical Worldview into each student. We will keep the main thing the main thing.
- **Honor People** – We are committed to honoring every person throughout this process, every team member, every parent, and every student. We will honor the rich history and legacy of both schools. We will honor the investment and sacrifice that countless families and leaders have made to develop our schools into what they are today.

# Our Guiding Values

- **Clear Communication** – We are committed to clearly communicating with everyone throughout this process. We are at the beginning of this process not the end. We will consistently celebrate progress along the way.
- **Rigorous Academics and Programing** – We are committed to helping each student excel academically through individualized instruction and intentional resources. We will continue to provide well-rounded programs and activities to provide academic, athletic, and spiritual enrichment.

# RCS/RCS Joining Timeline



 We Are Here - Town Hall, February 29th

# Our Heritage & Shared Vision

- Both schools have over 100 years of rich history serving students and families in South King County with a Christ-centered, well-rounded, and rigorous education.
- For years, the families and leadership of both schools have had a vision for a vibrant, full scale, Christian high school campus to serve our students. We believe God is uniquely and providentially bringing us together to accomplish this shared vision.
- We believe together we can develop a regional Christian High School fed by healthy and Christ-centered elementary and middle school campuses.
- We trust God is bringing us together for this moment to accomplish this greater vision together. We are humbled by the dream God has collectively entrusted to us.
- We believe the best days for our school are ahead!

# Q & A

(Received via email)

# Identity/Values

**Q** As with any merger, loss of identity is a great concern. How are you working together to preserve the identity of each school?

**A** With over 100 years of rich history between both schools, there are generations of parents, teachers, and leaders who have sacrificed and invested into the schools we enjoy today. Our shared intent is to keep the stories of each school alive as we go forward. Our organizational DNA is often seen in the founding values of the past. Honoring the significant investment of those currently on the team and those who served before will help celebrate our rich heritage.



# Identity/Values

- Q** How will you ensure Rainier Christian's current school values will remain in place this coming year and when we are fully merged? We love all that this current school stands for and [that it is] truly is God Focused vs God and political belief.
- A** Both schools are founded and centered on Jesus. We want each student to develop a personal relationship with Christ and develop a Biblical worldview. We want to inspire each student to have Godly Wisdom, Christ-like Character, and express God's love to one another. We also believe teachers are our secret sauce! When teachers are fully equipped and resourced it benefits everything. We highly value community and the parent/school partnership. We are more aligned than different in our values.

# Collaborative Leadership

**Q** What role will Rainier have in the decision-making process and ongoing leadership of Renton Executive Leadership Team of New Life?

**A** The leadership teams from both schools are committed to collaboratively joining together.

Over the next 12 – 18 months all stakeholders will be engaged in developing our aligned school.

# Leadership

**Q** As the schools become larger in the years to come, will it have its own committed oversight?

**A** Accountability is very important. Renton Christian has multiple layers of accountability to ensure its success.

The Head of School reports to the Lead Pastor of New Life Church. Randy McMillan is also accountable to the Northwest Ministry Network.

The school board and New Life Elder Council provide oversight and wisdom, especially in finance and theology.

ACSI and ECFA accreditation provide best practice guidance and annual reporting.

Accountability to and collaboration with all these groups build a high structure of oversight and protection.

# Governance

**Q** How many Renton students/families attend New Life? Rainier has families from many church backgrounds.

**A** Similarly, so does Renton Christian!

## FAITH DIVERSITY

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**127**

CHURCHES  
ATTENDED BY  
RCS FAMILIES



**39%** OF STUDENTS  
ATTEND:

- NEW LIFE CHURCH
- NEW COMMUNITY
- HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY
- CHURCHHOME
- NW LIFE CHURCH

# Governance

**Q** Does Renton present a doctrinal conflict?

**A** Renton Christian teaches from a non-denominational or inter-denominational approach. We focus on the core tenants of Christianity, not on the nuance of doctrine that led to the denominational variety.

There is no doctrinal conflict with our school's statement of faith. In fact, our statements of faith are same.

# Finances

**Q** It is possible to look up Rainier's 990's and cannot find anything about Renton's finances online. Rainier's 990 shows a healthy balance sheet with +\$6M net assets. This implies a leverage going into the combined schools rather than a rescue. Is this correct?

**A** We are not looking at this as a financial rescue. Instead, we will be stronger together. During our due diligence period we examined the finances of each other's school.

Rainier Christian has a strong balance sheet and Renton Christian and their parent organization, New Life Church, has both a strong balance sheet and strong operational cash flow.

Renton Christian & NL are accredited with ECFA (Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability) and has an independent financial audit annually.

# Shared Personnel, Facilities/Services

**Q** How will you meet the challenges of four campuses compared to one?

**A** Rainier Christian is experienced in the multi-campus model.

New Life has multiple church campuses and a well-developed shared services model. Randy was integral in developing these systems while he was an Executive Pastor at New Life.

We will build on the current district office team from Rainier Christian to fully resource each campus. Each campus will have a fully empowered leader with strong supporting systems and a collaborative school-wide leadership team.

# Continuity

**Q** Will volunteer hours still be required? Any idea on how many hours?

**A** Parent involvement helps students to reach their full potential in who God made them to be. Currently 15 hours are suggested per parent at Renton Christian and 15 hours per family at Rainier Christian. We will continue to invite parents to be involved with their student's educational experience.

Specifics will be collaboratively aligned over the next 12-18 months.



# Continuity

**Q** Renton tuition is higher than Rainier for some grades. As we merge, will the tuition increase? If so, what are the added benefits to justify the increase? i.e. Facilities, sports, academics, etc. We are interested in the overall cost/value.

**A** As we align together as one school, we will align our tuition rates. The most important value in determining tuition rates is teacher compensation. Our teachers and staff are our biggest resource and largest expense. We want to fully resource our teachers!

Additionally, as we join as one, there will be opportunities to strengthen and expand programs and student support.

# Continuity

**Q** Will Camp Casey still be used for 6th grade camp? Does Renton Christian have a similar camp?

**A** Both schools have a camp for 6th grade students.

As we align over the next 12-18 months, we will collaboratively develop a plan for these important components of our school.

# Continuity

**Q** Will 6th grade be kept in elementary school? Or bumped to middle school like surrounding school districts?

**A** Right now, we will keep all campuses consistent with the grades and families they currently serve. We will collaboratively develop a long-term plan as we fully align our school over the next 12-18 months.

We will have a major update by the end of this school year and further clarity prior to next year's enrollment season.

# Continuity

**Q** What's the plan for the existing Rainier Christian campuses?

**A** There will be no change to the campus locations for the 2024-2025 school year. Over the next few months, we will determine the location plan for the 2025-2026 school year and beyond.

We will be one school with multiple Christ-centered, fully resourced campuses.

There is no intent to sell any campus. Instead, we want to invest in them to facilitate the growth we believe God will bring our way. Note that HS campus is leased not owned.

# Continuity

**Q** How do you plan to ensure that current Rainier Christian will be welcomed into Renton Christian by a) ensuring there are no unnecessary enrollment fees. b) provide an opportunity for Rainier Christian Families to tour the school and meet staff then c) help children acclimate when the transition occurs?

**A** As we align together, all families will be considered current families regardless of the campus they currently attend. We will collaboratively develop school wide opportunities to build relationships with their local campus and the whole school.

# Continuity

**Q** How will you ensure and secure staff in the coming year given the churn we have seen thus far and what typically occurs during a merger?

**A** Our teachers and staff are the biggest resource of our school (our “secret sauce”). We will build relationships with them and partner with them through resources and support. This strong partnership will help build and retain a strong team.

The contract renewal process for next year is already in motion.

# Sports

**Q** When (and at what grade) will students from Rainier be eligible to play on Renton sports teams? Renton has basketball starting in 4th grade....will Rainier students have this in the coming year?

**A** As we align together as one school, we will align our athletic teams. Athletics is one of the many conversations we will collaboratively address over the next three months.

We will have an update on this by the end of the school year.

Our schools joining together should expand athletic opportunities not constrict them.

# Live Questions?



# Live Q&A

**Q** How viable is the Renton Christian High School plan, especially for current 8th graders? Later in the Q&A, Sigrid Jones asked what the funding plan was for the high school?

**A** Randy described where they are in the building process – for instance, the property has been purchased, and will likely even have a football field – and they are shooting for opening in Fall 2027. Garth Gill added that Renton Christian has many 8th-graders that currently go to various places for high school; now they can be guided towards the RCS high school until the new school is built. Randy shared a bit more of the high school funding plan toward the end of the Q&A.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Renton Christian has a test-in process. What is that, and will it apply to RCS students?

**A** The test-in process is done as an evaluation tool to see where students are at academically, not used as a pass/fail for entry.

**Q** Will there be a budget for RCS teacher resources, so they won't have to buy class materials themselves?

**A** Randy said that Renton Christian teachers are given a \$250 budget and anticipates that will transfer over to RCS teachers.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Will the new high school also house a middle school? Later in the Q&A, Kevin Reid said that middle school feels like it's just "tacked on," and asked how Renton Christian might help the RCS middle school integrate into Renton Christian?

**A** The current plan is for a high school-only campus. In terms of helping RCS middle school, Randy said that the Renton Christian MS has a rich tradition and his goal is for there to be a dedicated middle school campus.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Does the RCS Board plan on hiring a new President given the changes coming?

**A** The board has not yet finalized what our long-term solution will be. For now, the board is coordinating any duties not covered at the campus level. We don't see this as a long-term solution.

**Q** Renton Christian has a dress code. Will that transfer to RCS students?

**A** Randy answered that there is no plan for that to transfer a dress code to RCS in the next school year. This topic will be decided collaboratively in the future as part of the transition project.

# Live Q&A

**Q** How does Renton Christian governance work, like their Board vs. Elders? How does the Renton Christian School Board get elected?

**A** The School Board reports up through the Church Board, and that the Church has ultimate oversight. Regarding the School Board make-up, current voting members are all parents, and are usually asked to join. The RCS Board will govern RCS separately until fully merged with Renton Christian.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Are Renton Christian school board meetings open to the public like at RCS? Later in the Q&A, someone asked how parents were going to collaborate with Renton Christian if they can't do it via a school board meeting?

**A** Currently Renton Christian does not have open board meetings, instead relying on various other communication channels to disseminate information and hear concerns. Julie added that we primarily use our open board meetings to share information and that we have Executive sessions that are closed when needing to discuss issues deemed not appropriate for public dissemination. Later, Randy reiterated that Renton Christian has many avenues for allowing voices to be heard and really doesn't see it being an issue.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Will the transportation system/program change?

**A** The goal will be to have a more robust transportation system to cover all campuses, but that likely won't happen before September 2024.

**Q** What levels of security will be in place at the new high school? Will we see an increase at our own RCS campuses?

**A** Renton Christian takes security seriously and has a security guard on staff. Randy reviewed some of the security features they will have in place at the new high school. Randy also said that he will strive to increase security at all campuses, likely in some sort of phased-in approach rather than all at once.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Given the enrollment decline at RCS and the increase Renton Christian has experienced, are there some lessons-learned to share that RCS can apply?

**A** Renton Christian places a great emphasis on academic programming, making sure it is top-notch, and they like to make sure they are providing a wide-breadth of options. The added-value turns into good word-of-mouth, which leads to growth. They've grown eight years in a row, and he would imagine that when some of that programming transfers over to RCS we might see some growth too.



# Live Q&A

**Q** Will Renton Christian be open to current methods of RCS fundraising, such as the Golf Tournament?

**A** Future approaches will be examined and determined, but that for next year all athletics will remain under the RCS banner and fundraising efforts will remain in effect.

**Q** Julie asked Randy to share some of his experiences with mergers.

**A** Randy described some of his experiences, along with mentioning he has a person who has experience in doing well with real-world mergers who will take on the role of project manager.

# Live Q&A

**Q** What is the Renton Christian student/teacher ratio?

**A** Renton Christian ratios are lower than state guidelines through robust in-class teacher assistant staffing, which brings their ratio down to about 1:9 teacher/student. This helps tremendously in helping teachers build relationships with their students.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Will RCS be able to use Renton's gym next year?

**A** Randy said that if scheduling allows it, they will try to let RCS use it. But he did caution that it is often in use with various school and church activities.

**Q** Are RCS preschools safe from cuts? What about Maple Valley, since it is so close to Renton Christian?

**A** Preschools feed the whole system and keep it healthy, so they are vital to maintain. Regarding Maple Valley, Randy said that next year nothing changes, and that over time they will look at the best use for that property.

# Live Q&A

**Q** Bill Dipple asked if there would be a shop program at the new high school since he thinks it's critical as a high school program?

**A** Randy agreed and said that a Shop is part of the high school building plan.

**Q** Bill Dipple said that there are major maintenance issues that need to be addressed across several RCS campuses. Who on the RCS Board is playing the Bruce Kelly role and can sign checks and work these issues?

**A** Dan said Bill could contact him directly.