



LONDON CHRISTIAN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



"Building Christian Education Together" Joint Communication
Release, May 18, 2021

The Boards of London Christian Academy, London Christian Elementary School, and London Christian High are pleased to announce that they have agreed to explore a collaborative vision for the long term future of Christian education in the greater London region.

At the heart of this exploration is a love for Jesus Christ and the gospel and their centrality in the lives of our children, our families, and our community. With God's provision and with the sacrificial commitment of supporters, each of our schools has developed a rich community and history. At the core of each school is a mission of Christ-centred, Biblically-directed education that strives to nurture and lead our students to become effective servants of Christ. While honouring the mission and history that each school community has been built upon, our intent is to enhance services and Christian educational experiences for all current and future students, while ensuring the sustainability of Christian education. As we look to the future, we envision a vibrant Christ-centered education in which our students grow in discipleship and flourish, and a Christian education system that is more visible, accessible, and sustainable to serve and impact our communities for generations to come. We believe that with God's continued leading and blessing, a more unified effort by our three schools will provide a more powerful witness for His glory.

To this end, the three Boards have appointed a joint task force to explore and recommend potential model(s) for a unified vision of Christian education which may result in further collaboration among, or even consolidation of, our three schools. The joint task force consists of Board, Community, and Administrative leaders from each of the three schools.

We are excited about the possibilities of where God may be leading our schools. We are keenly aware that the founders of our schools were people of faith and counter-cultural, entrepreneurial pioneers who discerned their times, acted upon the need for Christian education, and followed God's leading to the best of their abilities. By God's grace, we seek to stand on that foundation and we pledge to be faithful in exploring God's will for today and for the generations to come.

We look forward to engaging our school communities further in this exploration. For more information about this initiative, please take the time to read through the FAQ document attached to this joint release. Above all, we want to discern God's leading in this, and we sincerely ask for your prayers for God's direction of our joint task force and our Boards. We thank you for your support of Christian education and for your prayers for our students that future generations might come to know the Lord (Psalm 78:6).

Your's in Christ's Service;

Pascal Peloquin (chair, LCA Board of Directors)

Dwayne DeVries (chair, LCES Board of Directors)

Ralph Luimes (chair, LCH Board of Directors)

FAQ about this Project

1. Q: What is the mandate of the Task Force?

A: The mandate of our joint Task Force is to explore ways that our three schools might collaborate, including exploring leadership structures, learning visions, financial models, and even campus models, which may result in recommendations for further collaboration among, or even consolidation of, our three schools. The Task Force is also mandated to consult with all sectors of our stakeholder communities as well as outside experts, and to report regularly to our Boards. All decisions about future directions will be made by the Boards of our three schools and their wider memberships/communities as set out in the by-laws of each school.

2. Q: What is the process and timeline for making decisions about how the three schools will collaborate?

A: The process includes the following elements:

- The Task Force will provide progress reports monthly to the Boards of the three schools.
- The Task Force will provide a report and recommendations to the Boards of the three schools no later than June 30, 2022. If approved by the Boards, implementation of recommendations would occur during the following 1-3 years or as next steps become clear.
- The Task Force will recommend “progress updates” to the Boards for dissemination to their school communities every 3-6 months.
- All decisions regarding announcements (“progress updates”) and final agreements will be made by the Boards of the three schools.
- Decisions about any final agreements will be announced as soon as possible after each Board has considered the Task Force recommendations.

3. Q: What are the reasons for undertaking this conversation among the three schools?

A: There are several reasons for exploring the possibilities for our schools to work together. With the next generations in mind, and in order of priority, our reasons include but are not limited to the following:

- A Unified Vision - Most importantly, to live out and display concretely our unity in Christ and our shared vision and commitment to Christian education, and to make that Christian education more visible, widely known, and impactful in the greater London region.
- A long-term view - To position Christian education in the greater London region for financial sustainability, growth, and impact for the next generation.
- Stewardship of Resources - To pool our resources to ensure that we can provide and enhance the capacity, support, opportunities, and facilities to grow excellent Christian education in a sustainable manner. Each of our three schools, like many independent Christian schools, faces varying degrees of multi-year financial, facilities and/or resource tensions, such that working together would benefit us all.

4. *Q: Do the three schools share a common understanding of Christian faith and the purpose of Christian education?*

A: In short, yes. All three schools seek to shape and educate young people to know and love Jesus. While the three schools emerged out of different faith traditions, we all centre our education on Jesus. We believe that when we focus on Christ as our primary lens, many of the theological differences of the past are not deep divisions, but rather the beautiful diversity of God's children within the Body of Christ. Notably, all three schools are members of the Edvance network of Christian schools and share a common vision for Christian education.

5. *Q: Does this announcement mean that the three schools plan to consolidate (merge)?*

A: This has not been decided, although it is certainly a possibility. Our agreement is a commitment to explore aspects of our organizations, including governance and leadership, financing, staffing, programs, etc., to determine whether and how we might work together. Through this process, it is possible that we might agree to consolidate, but this is only one possible outcome among many. Again, first and foremost we are seeking God's guidance in this endeavour.

6. *Q: How would the quality of Christian education change if the three schools either collaborate or consolidate?*

A: The intention is that the quality of Christian education and the opportunities and experiences available right from kindergarten all the way through to grade twelve will grow and deepen with a larger pool of people and resources.

7. *Q: What impact would a possible collaboration or consolidation have on the staff teams (teaching, support staff, administrative staff, leadership staff) of each school?*

A: Our belief is that our people are our most valuable resource. Each team member each plays a critical role in the important work of our schools every day. While we haven't yet explored what collaborative or consolidation models may be recommended, we are deeply committed to each member of our staff teams and to fairness, equity, and good communication with our teams throughout this exploratory process.

8. *Q: Would collaboration or consolidation of the three schools make tuition more expensive, or more affordable or neither?*

A: Our intention is that there would be cost savings, making Christian education more sustainable and providing more value for everyone over the long-term. Some of these cost savings or efficiencies may not be fully realized right away and may take time to develop. For

context, there are many K-12 Christian school systems in North America and our early study of some of these systems suggests significant cost savings. Thus, it is the intention of this initiative to provide greater value to all current and future families for generations to come.

9. Q: Does this initiative mean that London Christian High specifically will shift its focus to the London area and no longer focus as strongly on surrounding communities such as Woodstock/Ingersoll, Aylmer, Clinton/Exeter, Strathroy, St. Thomas, Stratford, Wyoming, Sarnia, and points in between.

A: No. To be very clear, all three schools recognize and affirm the regional relationships that London Christian High has with all of its partner elementary schools. London Christian High specifically continues to deeply appreciate and value our students, supporters, and representatives from these regional communities and it is our full intention to continue to serve high school aged students from all over southwestern Ontario for generations to come with a regional focus. In fact, it is our goal to be able to serve all families even better through this initiative, particularly given projected economies of scale in our budgeting and programming.

10. Q: When will we receive news about any decisions that will be made in this process?

A: The Boards of the three schools are committed to keeping their communities informed and engaged in this process. As noted above, we expect “progress reports” to be announced every 3-6 months.

11. Q: What happens if the schools do NOT come to an agreement on how to collaborate?

A: If no agreement is reached among the three schools about how to collaborate, they will continue to operate independently as they currently do. We believe, however, that the experience of learning about and from each other will bring benefits and opportunities to collaborate informally among the three schools even if we do not formally join forces.

12. Q: Who are the Task Force members?

A: The Task Force members are:

- Pascal Peloquin (LCA Board Chair)
- Val Lover (LCA Board Vice-Chair)
- Hubert Krygsman (LCA Principal)
- Jerry Roukema (LCES Board)
- Joanne Haagsma (LCES Community Member)
- Stephen Janssen (LCES Principal)
- Alison Lise (LCES Vice-Principal)
- Ralph Luimes (LCH Board Chair)
- Steve Dozeman (LCH Board Member)
- Tim Bentum (LCH Principal)
- Marvin DeVries (Task Force Facilitator/Chair)

13. Q: How can I have a voice in this process?

A: The Boards of the three schools ask for your prayerful engagement, and want to hear from you. There are several productive ways that you can participate in this process:

- Pray for God’s Spirit to provide clear direction and discernment for the Task Force and Boards as we work through this process.

- Watch for updates as they become available, and join in any meetings held by your Board to discuss these announcements and updates.
- Participate in the membership or association meetings of your school.
- Communicate with the Principal of your school, who will forward your comments to their Board.
 - Tim Bentum (LCH Principal) (principal@lchonline.ca)
 - Stephen Janssen (LCES Principal) (principal@londonchristian.ca)
 - Hubert Krygsman (LCA Principal) (principal@londonchristianacademy.ca)