

# Livingston County Christian High School Feasibility Committee Report

---

## 1. **Background/ Purpose:**

Local parents are confronted with making a High School choice in Livingston County. Their options include:

- Public school (including Charter schools)
- Home school
- Livingston Christian School (LCS)
- Catholic High School (out of county)
- Christian High School (out of the county)

While there are pros and cons to each of these alternatives, there is a gap in a local Christian educational option that allow the student to be involved in programming that includes competitive sports and the arts.

A group of individuals interested in systematically exploring the feasibility of a viable Christian High School in Livingston County was assembled. This committee has been exploring a number of questions aimed at the heart of determining what is essential for a Christian High School to be viable and sustainable in Livingston County.

## 2. **Underlying Presuppositions for Christian Education:**

### a. **Prayerful dependence upon God's sovereign leading and guidance:**

- *"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Psalms 127:1).*
- *"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16: 18).*
- *"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money ...Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (James 4:13-15).*

### b. **Biblical mandates to educate our children about Christ and equip them to live Godly lives in a fallen world:**

- "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children." (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).
- "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." (Deuteronomy 4:9).
- "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4).
- "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6).
- "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14).
- "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all

things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

### 3. **Feasibility Committee Participants:**

**Rocky Ellens**, Chairman

Sr. Analyst, RWD, a Division of General Physics Corp  
Retired Colonel, US Army Reserves  
Board Chairman, Cornerstone Christian School (CCS)

**Nick Hinkle-DeGroot**

Computer Systems Administrator, University of Michigan  
Parent CCS

**Art Hunt**

Associate Pastor, Cornerstone Evangelical Presbyterian Church (CEPC)  
Head of School, CCS

**Stephen Mahan**

Attorney, Cichosz and Cichosz PLLC  
Past Board Chair, CCS

**Mark Milatz**

Sr. Pastor, Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church and School

**Dick Streetman**

Contract Manager, Temporary School Staffing, Inc.  
Retired School Administrator, Troy School District

**Andy Warner**

Director of Personnel and Policy, CEPC  
Retired Finance Executive, Ford Motor Co.  
Board Member, CCS

### 4. **Meetings:**

The Feasibility Committee has been meeting since December 2010. Each meeting begins with a devotional time and a period of prayer. This document is the work product of their meetings.

In addition to the Feasibility Committee meetings, administrators from several existing high schools and potential feeder schools were interviewed. These schools include:

- Livingston Christian School – PreK-12
- Ann Arbor Christian School – PreK-8
- Franklin Road Christian Academy – K-12
- Southfield Christian School – PreK-12
- Cornerstone Christian School - PreK-8

5. **Issues Discussed:**

In addition to the initial broad reaching questions identified in

a. **Is a Christian high school needed in Livingston County?**

The current Christian School options for parents within a 45 minute commute distance are provided in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Christian schools within 45 Minute Commute**

Figure 2 provides a closer look at the available Christian School options within Livingston County.

**Figure 2 - Christian schools within Livingston County**

Table 1 portrays high schools attended by students after attending a local Christian School. In many cases, the transition is made to public schools prior to high school because the parents want their child to transition to a more robust curriculum prior to high school.

Table 1 - Historical Follow On Choices

School	Grades	Number	Transferred To <sup>1</sup>
<b>Ann Arbor Christian School (Washtenaw)</b>	Prek-8	147	Public School – 87 Catholic School – 7 Christian School – 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livingston Christian (1)</li> <li>• Lutheran High Westland (1)</li> <li>• Plymouth Christian(1)</li> <li>• Southfield Christian(1)</li> <li>• Washtenaw Christian(6)</li> </ul> Moved out of Area – 4
<b>Cornerstone Christian School (Brighton)</b>	PreK-8	171	Public School – 12 Catholic School – 4 Christian School – 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Franklin Rd Christian (1)</li> <li>• Lansing Christian (1)</li> <li>• West Highland (1)</li> <li>• Westside Christian (1)</li> </ul> Moved out of Area – 1 Charter School – 4 Mission Field - 1
<b>Fowlerville Christian Academy (Fowlerville)</b>	1-12	46	
<b>Livingston Christian School (Pinckney)</b>	PreK-12	169	
<b>Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran School (Hartland)</b>	PreK-8		
<b>Sheppard of the Lakes (Brighton)</b>	PreK-5	122	NOT A HIGH SCHOOL FEEDER AT THIS TIME
<b>West Highland Christian Academy (Milford)</b>	K-12	76	
<b>Area Catholic Schools</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Transferred To</b>
<b>St. Patrick School (Brighton)</b>	K-8	273	
<b>St. Joseph School (Howell)</b>	PreK-8	459	
<b>St. Mary Catholic School (Pinckney)</b>	PreK-8	273	

b. **Will the County demographics and forecasts support a Christian high school?**

Demographic data was extracted from the SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) 2035 Forecast Population by Age Group by School district report dated Jan 2009. Unfortunately, the SEMCOG Report lumps data for age 5-17 together and does not provide any further refinement. The data forecasts:

<sup>1</sup> Transfer to data reflects graduate transfers for the historical time period that records were kept at each school.

- 10.4% increase in the overall Livingston County population between 2010 and 2035. The majority of this forecasted growth is within.
  - 0-4 age population (Livingston County) projects a **1.9% increase** between 2010 and 2035.
  - 5-17 age population (Livingston County) projects a **2.3% increase** between 2010 and 2035.
    - Between 2010 and 2015 the 5-17 age population projects a -**7.5% (decrease)** in Livingston County.
    - Between 2015 and 2035 the 5-17 age population projects a **10.6% (increase)** in Livingston County.
  - 18-34 age population (Livingston County) projects a **-21.1% (decrease)** between 2010 and 2035.
  - 35-64 age population (Livingston County) projects a **5.1% (increase)** between 2010 and 2035.
  - 65+ population (Livingston County) projects a **131.4% increase** between 2010 and 2035.

Demographic projections vary from school district to school district (Table 2).

**Table 2 – Population Demographics**

District	2010 <sup>2</sup>	2015	% Change 2010-2015	2035	% Change 2015-2035	Overall % Change 2010-2035
Livingston Educational Services Agency (LESA) <i>Total Population</i>	167,187	170,252	<b>1.8%</b>	184,731	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
LESA <i>Total County Age 5-17 Population</i>	28,156	26,055	<b>-7.5%</b>	28,822	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
Brighton Area Schools <i>Age 5-17</i>	6,531	6,155	<b>-5.8%</b>	6,562	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Fowlerville Community Schools <i>Age 5-17</i>	2,789	2,662	<b>-4.6%</b>	2,763	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>
Hartland Consolidated Schools <i>Age 5/17</i>	4,704	4,337	<b>-7.9%</b>	4,896	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

<sup>2</sup> Forecasted data for 2010 based as published in 2009 report.

Howell Public Schools <i>Age 5-17</i>	9,592	8,675	-9.6%	9,990	15.1%	4.1%
Pinckney Community Schools <i>Age 5-17</i>	4,540	4,227	-6.9%	4,610	9.1%	1.5%

c. **Should a new Christian high school be allied with a specific church or organization?**

No recommendation yet.

Both alternatives have pros and cons.

i. **Church Aligned**

**PROS:**

- Dedicated financial support – One primary point of contact for funding issues.
- Economies of Scale for staffing – part-time staff can be shared between existing school and HS.
- Multipurpose facility usage – expanded number of classrooms offers expanded facility for larger number of church ministries
- Reduced legal and administrative costs due to covered under existing policies and procedural structure.
- Offering the full range of course activities *could* increase enrollment in CCS.

**CONS:**

- Church governs school – more restrictive control. May be more limiting in the opportunity to partner with area businesses, other local supporters, and to try new fund raising ideas.
- School tied to churches stability – If the affiliated church experiences a decline in financial stability, the life of the school is at risk.
- Increased enrollment demand in primary grades puts pressures on limited facility.
- *May* reduce access to broad feeder school base because other denominational primary grade schools may view a church-aligned high school as competition at a denominational level.

ii. **Independent**

**PROS:**

- Could promote building a more robust feeder schools network.
- Could lead to greater cooperation within area churches.
- Autonomy – school would be more flexible to try new ideas (Special’s staffing funding, Encore, etc).
- Broader financial base – spreads the financial burden across a larger population by including other interested churches.
- Possibility of partnering with businesses for funding and grants – this may be frowned on by an affiliated church.

**CONS:**

- Financial independence – more dependent on fund raising. Requires more school staff emphasis on fund raising and gathering support.
- Increased legal and administrative costs associated with paperwork that may be avoided using an associated church umbrella.
- Increased staffing risks – less flexibility to co-operation staffing with feeder school.

d. **What should be the school board’s composition, charge, and philosophy?**

e. **Should the school be ‘evangelistic’-based or ‘discipleship’-based?**

Believe it can be both. No formal recommendation yet.

f. **Should the school focus its curriculum and enrollment activities on a specific target audience (i.e. college-bound students)?**

Recommend College prep.

g. **Is there a way the school can engage or integrate the home-school community?**

Committee agrees a Christian HS should be open to home schooler participation and public school participation (under vocational education model). Committee doesn’t expect to fully flush out concept during Feasibility Study.

h. **What are the financial considerations and impacts of starting and maintaining a Christian high school?**

Such a project as this is fully dependent on God’s provisions and timing. This is the reason this committee seeks God’s leading. We are faithful that God will provide answers.

Ultimately the question boils down to these two questions:

- “Is this project clearly within God’s will for Livingston County right now?”  
If it is within his will, God will provide the funding to launch and sustain this school.

i. **Enrollment Targets**

ii. **Staffing**

iii. **Facility Requirements and Options**

iv. **Startup Costs**

v. **Potential Cost Offsets or Revenue Sources**

- Franklin Road has done the shared Teacher Program for the last 6 years and has not had to pay for their PE, Art, Drama, Music, or Computer teachers.
- A 20,000 sq. foot school resale store (Encore Upscale Resale) provides \$20,000 to \$30,000 net monthly for Endowment Fund!!!

i. **What is the likely lead time between a decision for a Christian High School and the first class?**

Assuming the concept of a Christian high school in Livingston County is deemed feasible *and* the decision is made to start a Christian high school, two years is the *minimum* anticipated lead time for planning, hiring, and successfully executing the plan after funding is secure if an existing facility is secured (Figure . This time will be extended for starting school in a newly built facility.

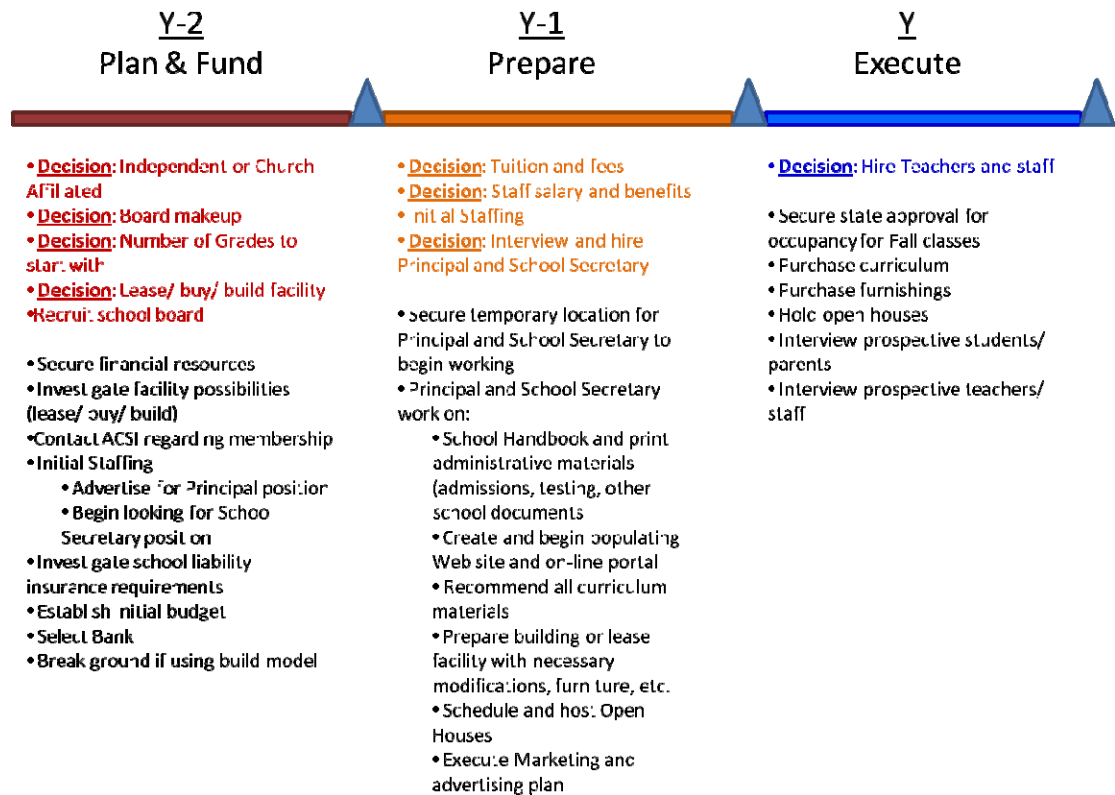


Figure 3 - Projected Timeline

6. **Documents Drafted:**

The Feasibility Committee felt it important to draft a few key documents before taking the Christian High School concept “on the road” to the community to gauge interest and commitment. This section presents those key documents.

a. **Mission Statement (Draft):**

Recognizing God’s sovereignty, [School name] offers a Christ-centered, Bible-based, academically challenging high school educational opportunity. We provide students with opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth. We partner with parents to educate their children to achieve their God-given capabilities.

b. **Statement of Faith (Draft):**

[School name] is, and shall always remain, a Christian institution dedicated to bringing honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ in all of its activities. All officers, faculty members, employees and agents of [School name] shall fully subscribe to the following Statement of Faith:

A. There is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21-22; John 10:30)

B. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-23; cf. Isaiah 31:3; John 15:26; Revelation 21:22)

C. Jesus Christ is truly divine, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and is God come in the flesh. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1, 14, 18; 14:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-11)

D. The Bible in its entirety (all 66 books of the Old and New Testaments) is the inspired Word of God, inerrant in its original autographs, and the only infallible and sufficient authority for faith and Christian living. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3)

E. Man is by nature sinful and inherently in need of salvation, which is exclusively found by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ and His shed blood. (John 1:12-13; 3:16; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:10-24; 6:23; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:8-9)

F. Christ's death on our behalf provides complete satisfaction for our sins and reconciliation with God. (Romans 3:25-26; 5:6-8, 11, 19; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:1-2)

G. Jesus Christ literally rose bodily from the dead and will come to earth again in His Second Advent. (Luke 24:37-42; John 20:1-29; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 51-58; Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 23-24)

H. Satan exists as a personal, malicious being who acts as tempter and accuser, for whom Hell, the place of eternal punishment, was prepared, where all who die outside of Christ shall be confined in conscious torment for eternity. (Job 1:6-11; 2:1-3; Mark 4:15; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 12:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9; 20:1-3, 7-10)

c. **Statement of Doctrinal Neutrality (Draft):**

DRAFT VERSION 1:

[School name] is neutral on doctrinal distinctives that go beyond our Statement of Faith and are outside our Mission. [School name] does not take sides on other doctrinal matters that may separate groups of believers.

DRAFT VERSION 2:

[School name]'s Statement of Faith is intentionally inclusive of many doctrinal and denominational traditions. Many of our faculty and students are from a great variety of other church traditions. [School name] does not take sides on certain doctrinal matters that often separate such groups of believers. Our students are fully engaged in robust, informal discussions on these matters. But the High School itself is neutral on the doctrinal distinctives which go beyond the points covered in our Statement of Faith and are outside the mission of the High School. We want all students and faculty from this wide community to feel welcomed and encouraged. We particularly want parents to have the assurance that Crossroads Christian High School will not seek to undermine the traditions of their family's faith.

d. **Curriculum (Draft):**

Sequence of Courses

Table 2 illustrates our suggested sequence of courses for a standard four-year course of study at [School name]. As a college prep school, many of the course selections are part of a pre-determined curriculum designed to insure that students have a transcript that reflects the core classes needed to enhance admissions into college. The table depicts both required and elective courses for [School name]'s program.

Table 2 – Draft High-Level Curriculum

Department	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
<b>Bible</b>	Bible 9	Bible 10	OT or NT Survey & 1 Bible Elective	OT or NT Survey & 1 Bible Elective
<b>English</b>	English 9	English 10	British or American Lit. & 1 Writing Elective	2 semesters of English Electives
<b>Social Studies</b>	World Social Studies	Geography/History	American History or AP U.S. History	Government & S.S. Elective
<b>Mathematics</b>	Algebra 1 or Geometry	Geometry or Algebra 2	Algebra 2 or Pre-Calc	Pre-Calc, AP Calc, or Prob. & Statistics
<b>Science</b>	Biology	Physics	Chemistry	AP Science or Organic Chemistry
<b>World Languages</b>	Spanish 1 or Alternative Language	Spanish 2 or Alternative Language	Spanish 3 or Alternative Language	Spanish 4 or Alternative Language
<b>Technology</b>	Computer Applications	Computer Applications	Web Design, Computer Programming	Web Design, Computer Programming
<b>Health</b>	Health			
<b>Physical Education</b>	1 or 2 Semesters	1 or 2 Semesters	1 or 2 Semesters	Advanced P.E.
<b>Fine Arts</b>	Art or Music Electives	Art or Music Electives	Art or Music Electives	Art or Music Electives

In order for the Christian high school to have the maximum success in attracting and growing its student body, in addition to the solid curriculum identified in Table 2, the High School must have a robust offering of extracurricular activities such as:

- Competitive sports
- National Honors Society
- Student Council
- Jr./Sr. Banquet
- Homecoming
- School Dances
- Music Performances
- Art Showcases

Further, the high school should seek to attract an diverse student body which exposes them to a variety of ethnicities and challenges them to respond in a God centered way.

7. **Conclusion:**

TBD