



# Whitefish Christian Academy

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Strategic Plan  
2023-2026





# Welcome

In 1979, a small group of parents seeking a distinctly Christian education gathered to create a vision that would enrich Whitefish for decades to come. The following year, a small Christian elementary school then named Cross Currents Christian School was incorporated and welcomed its first students, setting forth a path for Christian educational excellence.

From the seeds of that first vision Whitefish Christian Academy has continued to grow. Three events best embody that growth:

- In 1996 WCA built its current campus on Ashar Avenue to accommodate its burgeoning student body;
- In 2005 our Academy officially adopted the classical and Christian educational model, which has been the hallmark of the Academy education to this day;
- And in 2022, WCA earned accreditation from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), a confirmation that, forty-four years since that small group of parents first met, our Academy remains committed to enduring, Christ-centered excellence.

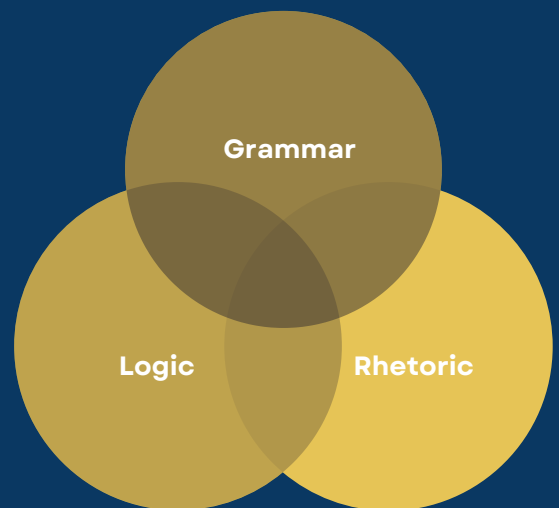
## Classical & Christian

At the heart of a Classical Christian education is this goal: To form wise and virtuous young men and women.

To arrive at that goal, an Academy education seeks to instill the following within its students:

- A comprehensive biblical worldview;
- Habits that reflect the Seven Christian Virtues;
- An aptitude for sound reasoning and articulate speech, cultivated through the Trivium (The Stages of Learning);
- And a robust literacy in the historical Great Books and Art.

An attainment of those goals fulfills the **Mission & Vision** of our Academy.



# Mission

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Whitefish Christian Academy, grounded in Christian excellence, is dedicated to assisting parents in the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical development of their children for the purpose of sending out Christian thinkers and doers of the Word to engage and transform our culture for Christ.

# Vision

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Whitefish Christian Academy endeavors to graduate students who embody the following qualities:

- A mature and ever-growing faith in Christ
- A lifelong love of learning, and a love, too, for all things good, true and beautiful
- Critical thinking skills through in-depth Socratic dialogue
- Habits grounded in the Seven Christian Virtues that result in a well-ordered and productive life
- Strong foundations for advanced mathematics and science
- Polished rhetoric in public and private settings
- Compassion and a readiness to serve in his or her local and global communities
- An appreciation for and aptitude in the fine arts

To accomplish that vision, the Academy commits itself to the following principles:

- A time-tested classical & Christian educational approach
- The hiring of godly, wise and virtuous teachers
- A small student-teacher ratio
- A thoughtful and close-knit partnership with our students' parents and families
- Successful operation as a thriving 501c-3 Non-profit
- Devoted, intentional service within our Flathead Valley community



## A Message From

# The Board of Directors

DEDICATED TO CONTINUED SUCCESS & GROWTH

We are pleased to present the Whitefish Christian Academy Strategic Plan for 2023 - 2026, approved by the Board of Directors on January 31, 2023. Rooted in the school's Mission and Vision, this Strategic Plan has been developed in concert with our families, faculty and staff, and in reliance on best-practice guidance from ACSI, our accreditation partners.

The intent of this Plan is to outline in broad terms the short and long-term goals of our school. It is very much a starting point. With that in mind, you'll find that this is a living document, for it contains strategies already determined, as well as strategies yet to be determined. Important, too, is that these strategies will be steered chiefly by our Head of School and our Faculty & Staff, who have invested so much on behalf of our children.

This Plan pairs with the WCA Capital Campaign, which outlines both our fundraising targets and methods for the coming years. There are two primary targets highlighted both there and in this Plan: A WCA Endowment, intended to fund the growth of our teacher salaries, and what we call Classroom Expansion, our long-term goal to increase enrollment by having two classes per grade, starting in Pre-K.

We've framed the Strategic Plan in eight principal categories, outlined on a separate page. In each category we are committed to both the preservation of the true, good and beautiful already established at our Academy, as well as the furtherance of our school's reach and impact here in the Flathead Valley. Ultimately, through this document we wish to wisely shepherd our Academy's past, present and future. Thank you for joining us on that journey.



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STEPHANIE PEACHEY  
Chair

NATE HALL  
Vice Chair

NICOLETTE COVEY  
Treasurer

JOE KREZOWSKI  
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Board Member

### SCHOOL SNAPSHOT

**\$1.1M**

Average annual budget

**44**

Years in business

**\$10,000**

Average annual tuition per student

**81%**

of annual budget goes to Faculty & Staff

**122**

Average number of students

**\$185K**

Avg annual tuition support or scholarship

## A Message From

# Head of School, Rachel Erickson

BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

In my time at Whitefish Christian Academy, first as an educator and now as the Head of School, I have been honored to participate in our school's steadfast commitment to teaching the whole child. In our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, I'm glad to tell you that that commitment remains the same.

As you'll see, there are eight key categories presented in our Strategic Plan. Those eight categories are interrelated. How we cultivate faith in our students will dictate the success of our curriculum; our ability to retain faculty will influence our ability to retain students; the health of our finances will open doors for future facilities expansion. Accordingly, the success of one category impacts the success of the others.

In that same way we recognize the continued success of our school is very much a communal effort. It does not rely solely on the Board. It does not rely solely on me, the Head of School. It relies on our joint efforts as a community to ensure our children - and future children - receive a Christ-centered education, one that forms truly wise and virtuous young men and women.

It's together, therefore, that we'll fulfill our **Mission & Vision** to send out Christian thinkers and doers of the Word, who can transform our culture for Christ.

Thank you for advancing classical, Christian education in Whitefish, the Flathead Valley and in Montana. Thank you for your dedication to Whitefish Christian Academy.



Rachel Erickson,  
Head of School



# WCA Strategic Plan Focus

## SHEPHERDING OUR SCHOOL'S KEY FUNDAMENTALS

### **FAITH**

Our school aims to cultivate within its students both a biblical worldview and a living faith. Students are to develop a robust biblical literacy and have ample opportunities to serve others, always with Christ as their eternal example. In and outside the classroom that commitment to the faith is modeled, too, by our faculty, staff and leadership.

### **FACULTY, STAFF & ADMINISTRATION**

Through thoughtful policies, procedures and leadership WCA desires to preserve its integrity, effectiveness and reputation as an excellent Christian institution. We strive to have an employee roster rich in talent and expertise, and to provide salaries that best reflect that same talent and expertise. Further, WCA strives to provide its employees with abundant development and growth opportunities.

### **FINANCES**

With Christ-centered governance the Board strives to further the Academy's longevity and growth. The ever-present goal is that an Academy education is financially accessible to all who seek it in our valley.

### **PARENTS & COMMUNITY**

WCA partners with its families to "train a child in the way he should go." It likewise serves its broader local community as best it can, in ways big and small. Towards those ends, WCA strives for clear, respectful, and timely communications.

### **CURRICULUM**

WCA strives to offer a distinctly classical & Christian curriculum that teaches its students to think wisely and live virtuously. A WCA student reads well, writes eloquently and speaks articulately.

### **STUDENT ENRICHMENT & RETENTION**

Through extracurriculars, athletics, after-school enrichment programs, thorough in-class support, and a robust fine arts program, WCA develops the whole child in mind, body and soul. Given its dedication to small class sizes, WCA likewise aims to offer a uniquely tailored education.

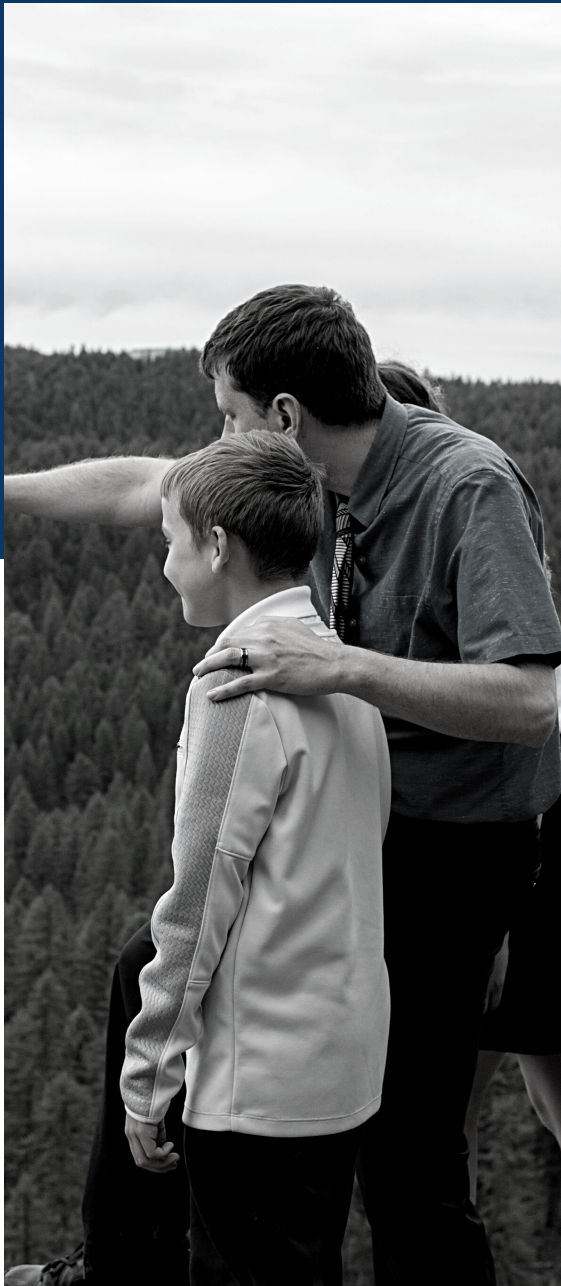
### **FACILITIES**

WCA aims to have facilities that reflect the high calling of its education. In that light, we likewise aim to ensure our building infrastructure supports the school's present and long-term plans.

### **ADVANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT**

To build on its present foundation of academic excellence, WCA will engage in thoughtful fundraising efforts to support the advancement of the school, to drive school-pride and loyalty, and to serve the community at large.

# Faith



## 5 Year Vision

That our Academy continues its reliance on the Biblically provided means of grace to instill faith in our students.

Our students cultivate their faith in these ways:

- Prayer - Individual & Communal
- Biblical Literacy
- Service to others
- Songs of Praise

The following consists of focus areas to improve in those key areas.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 **Prayer:** Our Faculty & Staff meet weekly to pray for students, families and one another. A current goal is to expand and further those prayer opportunities.

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- 02 **Biblical Literacy:** Our middle school has begun a survey of the Bible designed by Dr. Paulson; a present goal is to determine how to best build on the success of that survey in coming years.

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- 03 **Service:** Discover and engage in service opportunities locally in our Valley.

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- 04 **Songs of Praise:** Build on the 2022 Christmas choral success, to more deeply root a love for worship through song in our students.

# Curriculum



## 5 Year Vision

That WCA continues in its time-tested classical & Christian curriculum, yet has refined it in key ways. That refinement, though, will maintain the following priorities:

- The cultivation of a biblical worldview
- Habits that reflect the Seven Christian Virtues
- Sound reasoning & rhetoric
- Literacy in The Great Books and Art.

The Academy aims to build on its present foundation through the following initiatives.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 By refining our curriculum maps and scope and sequence documents to reflect our cohesive grade-to-grade curricular approach.

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- 02 Through high-level discussion with classroom teachers to obtain feedback on currently utilized instructional programs.

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- 03 By compiling and analyzing Milestone testing data to find common strengths and weaknesses across grade levels.

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- 04 By exploring professional development seminars that further expand our teachers' pedagogical expertise and bolster curricular initiatives.



# Student Enrichment & Retention



## 5 Year Vision

That our Academy offers its students and their families the valley's best in these areas:

- Extracurricular & enrichment opportunities
- Social-emotional resources
- Athletics
- In-class and out-of-class support

The following focuses aim to bolster those key categories.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 The implementation of further processes that identify a student's learning needs so that support systems can be put in place to ensure that student's success.

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- 02 The refinement of policies and procedures that address student behavior and discipline.  
  
And in the same vein: The launch of programs that safeguard a student's social-emotional well-being.

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- 03 The expansion of mentoring, discipleship, and service opportunities for our students.

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- 04 The doubling of class sizes in the lower school, which aims to one day produce greater class sizes in our middle school.

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- 05 The further development of our Art Program.

# Faculty, Staff & Leadership



## 5-YEAR VISION

That WCA retains and continues to hire the best educators in the valley, and that our educators find our school environment to be one that encourages growth and flourishing in their areas of expertise.

The following represents initiatives towards that growth and flourishing.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 The refinement of roles & responsibilities, where necessary, to ensure both that key tasks are accomplished and that staff are fulfilled.

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- 02 The establishment of more systematized performance evaluations for both employees and Board members.

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- 03 The implementation of further training opportunities, both for the Board and for our employees.

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- 04 The exploration of community development ideas to foster greater community between all those involved with our school.

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- 05 The solidification of staff succession plans.

# Finances



## 5-YEAR VISION

That we fulfill the following priorities:

- Sound financial governance based on conservative & biblical principles
- The upholding of non-profit standards
- The establishment of a Teacher Endowment designed to fund our teachers in such a way that their pay fully matches their expertise.

To realize those goals we intend to put the following into motion.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 The development of a 10-year forecast and the approval of a 3-year comprehensive financial plan.

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- 02 The completion of a financial review by an external CPA with no affiliation to WCA. That is to be done upon completion of our current accounting transition.

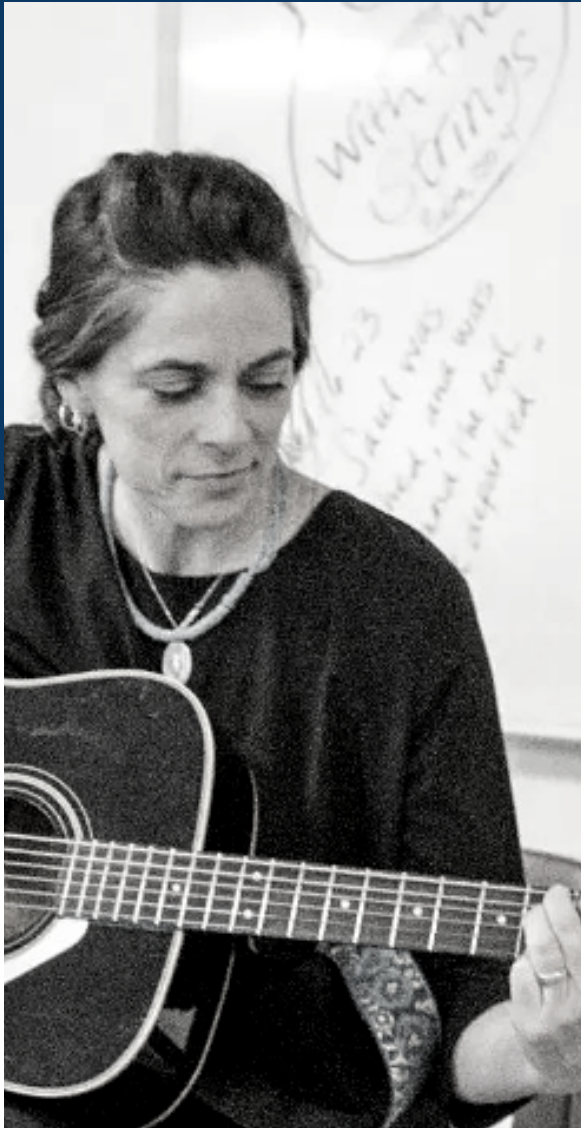
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- 03 The execution of our Full-Time-Employee target salary increase plan.

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- 04 With the increase in available finances, we aim to expand our administrative roles (e.g., Admissions, Development, Counseling, etc.) to ensure all key tasks are overseen sufficiently.

# Facilities



## 5-YEAR VISION

That our facilities mirror the high quality of our education, and to arrive at that end that we achieve the following:

- Classroom expansion to provide two classes per grade, starting in Pre-K
- Building enhancements to beautify our current location
- The identification of opportunities to provide new athletics and multi-use spaces.

To achieve those goals we have the following focuses.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 We aim to update our current facilities in adherence with permitting requirements. Those updates will both beautify our space and allow for short-term student population growth.

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- 02 Enhanced building security.

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- 03 In the finalization and execution of our short-term expansion plans, we'll explore the acquisition of acreage on Whitefish Stage, as well as building plans for a new multi-purpose room and additional lower school classrooms.

# Advancement & Development



## 5-YEAR VISION

That once our teacher endowment has been fully funded and once we've completed Phase I of the Capital Campaign, that we'll have launched Phase II of that same Capital Campaign.

To arrive at Phase II we look to accomplish the following:

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 The achievement of Phase I of the Capital Campaign (see Capital Campaign for details)

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- 02 The establishment of a Stewardship Program, which aims to cultivate further alumni engagement.

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- 03 The preparation and launch of Phases II & III of the Capital Campaign (see Capital Campaign for details).

# Parents & Community



## 5-YEAR VISION

That our reputation for providing an excellent education in the classical and Christian traditions reaches all corners of our valley, and that our parent community is further unified through a deeper, richer understanding of our classical & Christian approach.

To arrive at that twofold goal we seek to implement the following.

## 1-3 YR FOCUS

- 01 A comprehensive Communication Plan.

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- 02 An Advisory Board to help gather and disseminate key information.

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- 03 A wider, deeper understanding of our classical Christian education among parents to achieve greater school identity, unity and focus.

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- 04 Effective annual surveys to gather school-wide opinions to then improve WCA activities and events.

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- 05 An expansion of current church community outreach and networking.

# 2026 & Beyond

## YEARS 4-6

- Launch of Phase II of Capital Campaign to support growth and operation of:
  - Gymnasium
  - Campus expansion
- Expansion of second 2-5th grade classes



## YEARS 7-10

- Launch of Phase III of Capital Campaign to fund expansion plans beyond lower school
- Expansion of 6th-8th grade classes



### Contact Us

Please do not hesitate to get in touch. We're glad to assist you in any way.

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