

# Matt Buwalda

Spouse	Amy
Employer	Gebbens Property Management LLC
Church	Hillside Community Church
Email	matt-bu@sbcglobal.net
Children	Tyler, Freshman, Grand Valley State University / Tanner, Sophomore, SCHS / Ella, 5th, DCS



Willingness to Serve	I am excited about the possibility of serving on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
Christian Education, particularly at South Christian, is important for a few reasons. 1) We live in a world that is increasingly hostile to Jesus and his followers. Training our children to see him and seek him in all areas of their lives is critical. 2) As we have seen during the COVID pandemic, South Christian has remained open and flexible to be able to meet the needs of our students. South Christian has a long history of commitment to helping assist parent in traing our children in the way they should go. 3) Having a Christian community of staff, friends, and families who support our children is something that we believe is of great value as they grow up.

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
The fact that South Christian is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world means to me that the staff is committed to upholding the beliefs as described in the Faith Statement of South Christian. It means that while there are alot of varying thoughts on interpretation of Scripture, South Christian, teaches that God is the source of all truth, his word is without error and is the authority in our lives, and that we are to transform culture. This view of Scripture and the world allows South Christian to be different because of South's beliefs of who God is and his call for us to transform the world.

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
I have worked with a variety of Boards, committees, and volunteer positions. This includes: long range planning, program restructuring, budgets, building/property maintenance and management, problem solving, personal dispute resolutions, refugee care, youth sports coaching, and worship team.

# Matt Buwalda

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.

Some of the challenges I see for Christian Education and South Christian are: 1) The bombardment of cultural beliefs and ideas - the line between the Biblical view and the World's view is getting blurred. It appears that there are differing thoughts on biblical interpretation on some of the hot topics of the day in our schools and churches. I think it is critical for a Christian School to know what they believe, their staff understands those beliefs, and clearly communicates those beliefs throughout all aspects of the school experience. I do think that it is necessary for our students to learn to think for themselves, but I don't think that there should be contradicting messages coming from the school. 2) Increased costs - I believe it is wise to continue to seek ways to make Christian Education accessible for anyone who desires to attend. As costs continue to rise in many areas of running a school, it is important to continue the ongoing efforts of good stewardship. 3) Hiring the best staff who is committed to Jesus to be able to provide the best schooling in the area - As South Christian continues to grow, I think it is necessary to not only have a good school, but strive to be a leader in West Michigan - to always be looking for ways to improve so that we can equip our kids to be ready for the next season of their lives after high school. I think this can be achieved by continually looking at where we are and assessing what is working, what needs improvement, and what needs to be let go of.

# Ron Fles



Spouse	Carla Fles
Employer	Law Office of Kenneth A. Puzycki
Church	Calvary Church GR
Email	ronfles@yahoo.com
Children	Ellie, 9th SCHS/ Josh 7th, BCCS

Willingness to Serve	I am excited about the possibility of serving on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
A Christian education sets the foundation for our children for the rest of their lives. We live in a world with the reality of two competing kingdoms - God's spiritual kingdom where our values, morals, hope, and ultimately where our future lies, versus the earthly kingdom where we live. It is our job as Christians to bring God's kingdom to our earthly reality - to show the world God's plan for their salvation and to bring God's values and morals to bear. A Christian education teaches and reinforces this dual kingdom reality, giving our children a firm foundation as they go forward.

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
The most important understanding is that we keep teaching our kids the number one foundational truth: it is Christ above all. Without Jesus in our lives, in our families, and in our community we have no hope. We need a world with more Jesus - not more policy, more reform, more programs - but more Jesus. A Reformed understanding projects the truth that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is what saves us; we cannot do anything to save us, it is by God's grace alone.

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
I have a legal background, so I bring a strong reading/writing/communication skillset. I am also personable and enjoy talking and engaging with people. I was involved with the hospitality team at Calvary Church - meeting, greeting, and answering questions for the guests at Calvary. I also participated in a leadership development program at Calvary.

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.
<p>It is hard to know what we will face in the future - in 2019 no one could foresee the challenges of Covid and lockdowns.</p> <p>But beyond the one-off events that change us forever - I think there is a growing divide in our country. The world feels it is necessary to categorize everyone: Christian/non-Christian, white/POC, young/old, rich/poor, etc. and each label cast rebukes the reality that we all are made in the image of God. But the world wishes to further divide and admonish us, which exacerbates the growing chasm and separation. I think SCHS will see and feel more community push back and will attempt to shame us in an effort that we conform to a worldly standard.</p> <p>What to do about that . . . stay engaged with the community. We are not separate from you but apart of you.</p>

# Karen Gabrielse



Spouse	Kevin Gabrielse
Employer	Wayland Union School District
Church	inSpirit Church
Email	<a href="mailto:gabrielsek@waylandunion.org">gabrielsek@waylandunion.org</a>
Children	Cierra GVSU freshmen Jordan SCHS junior

Willingness to Serve	I am excited about the possibility of serving on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
We wanted our children to have the opportunity to worship God during the week, to have devotions with Christian role models and have their lessons viewed through the spiritual lens. Kevin and I selected South Christian because we are alumni; in fact, Cierra and Jordan are the third generation to attend South Christian.

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
Having attended a CRC all my life, it was comforting to have the same doctrines taught at church, school and home. South Christian differs from others private schools in their focus on Teaching for Transformation. Although this specific terminology was not used while I was at South, I still believe it was the focus of our educators.

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
<p>I am a public school educator of 21 years and have been the science department head for over ten of those years. As a second year teacher, I was able to drum up interest in starting AP Chemistry which has been offered continuously since its inception in 2001. Throughout the years, I have worked on developing curriculums so that regardless of the teacher, the students receive the same education and have the same expectations. Throughout my tenure at Wayland, a couple of additions/renovations were completed on the high school and I was selected to be on those committees.</p> <p>Kevin and I own an orchard and donate many of our apples to a number of community food banks and to the Godfrey-Lee Bands and Moline Christian for their apple pie fund raisers.</p>

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.
Christianity in general appears to be under attack and I believe we need to focus on the Greatest Commandment: to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

# Troy Hansen

Spouse	Gail Hansen
Employer	Self
Church	FAITH COMMUNITY CRC
Email	troyhansen@comcast.net
Children	Trevor - South 12th grade Sidney - South 9th Grade



Willingness to Serve	I am willing to serve on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
To teach children to have Christian view of all aspects of their life and then take that out into the world.

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
That there would be a God centered focus to education. That we are saved by God's grace and we need to do the work of his kingdom using the talents he has given us.

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
Have been on executive committee for church council 3 different times. I own my own business and use to differing extents all of the skills and abilities that would be necessary to serve on the school board.

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.
Affordability to families who desire to send their children to Christian Education. The attack of Christian views by our world and fellow Christians. Specifically in how we show love to those in our world and community whose life choices fly in the face of traditional Christian values.

# Adam Loveless

Spouse	Michelle Loveless
Employer	GE Aviation Systems
Church	Ada Bible
Email	ADAMRL@YAHOO.COM
Children	Brooke - 9th SCHS / Alexa - 5th Cross Creek Charter / Henrik - 4th Cross Creek Charter



Willingness to Serve	I am excited about the possibility of serving on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
<p>I attended public school growing up, while my wife had a Christian education. There were many aspects of what she talked about growing up that I feel I missed out on. Strong friendships that created a true sense of a close community, classes based on the Bible, Bible class itself and then more opportunities to be involved in activities due to the smaller size of the school. Going to a larger public school system it was quite the opposite for me. I had always talked about how if we were able to I would really love the ability to provide the Christian education to my kids that I never had. I wanted to give them a chance to learn more about their faith, ask important questions and build a strong friend group that share the same values that can grow with them for life. Living on the South side of town had exposed us to South Christian via different friendships and neighbors. We quickly saw that South had that feel to it, it was highly respected and everyone spoke highly of it.</p> <p>After now having our daughter attending South I can say it was exactly what we were hoping for, even in a Pandemic related world. The conversations we have about what was discussed in class, the relationships that the teachers have formed with her and the opportunities for involvement have been critical for her development as a young adult. I have been very pleased to see the spiritual focus and how God is interwoven into every topic that is covered at school, again something I was not used to nor did I expect. The staff seems to be vested and engaged in the kids lives and that pays dividends in building that foundation for them.</p>

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
<p>This is critical to me and a key aspect as to why we are sending our kids to South. The principals of faith at South very much aligns with our belief which is based on the Bible. God's word is the foundation of our life and a part of our families daily walk with him. Weaving all aspects of those faith principals into the education process continues to build upon that foundation. This is the type of education you just do not receive outside of a private Christian school - in reality it is quite the opposite these days. As society seems to drift further away from the truth it makes those of us who walk in the faith long for more of it in our life, at least for our family. Having a place that shares your values and can further the education of its students based on those values is a blessing.</p>

# Adam Loveless

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.

My background is in Business Management and within my expertise I would bring multiple skillsets to the board that vary from finance, marketing, strategic planning as well as communication and leadership traits. I take pride in being able to proactively see around corners, anticipating as to where things need to be heading before problems can occur. Open communication and active dialog are things I like to foster within teams.

My current job role is as a Senior Product Leader, so I have day to day leadership responsibilities for multiple teams, programs/products and customers. Being involved in the many different aspects of leadership is challenging and rewarding for me. It is always encouraging when you can work together with a team, identify problems and work together to come up with creative solutions. You grow the most as leader when you are listening.

In the past I have volunteered with my church children's programs as a leader small group leader, in addition to leading adult small groups and participating in hospitality teams. I have also enjoyed helping out with my kids in different sports leagues by assisting with coaching.

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.

I think our environment is getting more and more difficult and demanding for kids to be able to successfully learn in. The pressures from society are causing them more stress than we realize and that pressure keeps pushing against the bedrocks of our faith. This makes it all the more important that we know who we are and what we believe as a community of believers. Christian education will not be immune to these outside influences and we need to hold firm the principles of our faith - not just acknowledge them but back them up. We have the privilege of teaching the young the way to follow, the narrow path, and we need to show them we stand behind them in this aspect. To be able to provide a solid education, based on God's truths will be more important than ever to raise up the next generation.

Reaching those who are seeking and in need of God's truth should be a goal of the entire Christian community and especially all of us at South. I would really like to help find ways to expand that outreach to bring those who may not normally consider South but because of the environments and difficulties facing public schools might just now consider us. That can be uncomfortable sometimes, but it should be our true mission - reaching beyond our doors to the world in need of what we have. Not coming from the classic Christian feeder schools into South also gives me some unique perspectives of what is difficult or in some ways not as welcoming that could help with this. I am not implying that South is not a friendly or welcoming place, quite the opposite, however fitting into the "culture" is not as easy when you don't have as much history with those who have been together for long periods of their life. We need to examine this openly and find ways to eliminate any barriers people may see in their journey to exploring South and realizing what Christian education can bring to their children.



# Michele Michmerhuizen

Spouse	Andrew
Employer	none
Church	Heritage CRC
Email	andyandmichele@sbcglobal.net
Children	Summer SCHS class of 2019 / Stephanie 10th SCHS / Savana 8th BCCS



Willingness to Serve	I am willing to serve on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
Christian education is important because all things at all times are from God. One of many reasons our kids attend South Christian is so that they too can be reminded of this over and over again. They can be reminded of this so often that as they grow, it is so ingrained, so fixed, so established in them, it is just who they are!

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
From the perspective that no one is perfect and never will be, we all recognize our need for a Savior. When we live our lives and teach our kids with the grace and love that Christ has shown to us, South Christian's light shines bright!

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
On BCCS board I served on Promotions and Education. Both wonderful experiences and committees with some wonderful people! I am involved in Kids' Hope mentoring program, GEMS at Heritage CRC, leading an in-home weekly Bible Study, organizing monthly service events at BCCS, and raising 3 teenage daughters.

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.
I know Christian education is cherished by many. I'd love to see that deeply embedded for many more generations. Although the financial cost will continue to remain, can we focus most on the everything God, everything rooted, everything intentional? How can we turn the question from "How can we send our kids to SCHS", to the question "How can we not send our kids SCHS?".



# Brent Miedema



Spouse	Kathy
Employer	Pylman Power
Church	Caledonia CRC
Email	brentm@pylmanpower.com
Children	Alaina 11th SCHS, Seth 9th SCHS, Lacy 6th MCS, Ava 4th MCS

Willingness to Serve	I am willing to serve on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
Christian Education and a Christian World view are extremely important and fit into every day of a Christ followers life. And learning how and why we apply these daily, are why we choose MCS/SCHS.

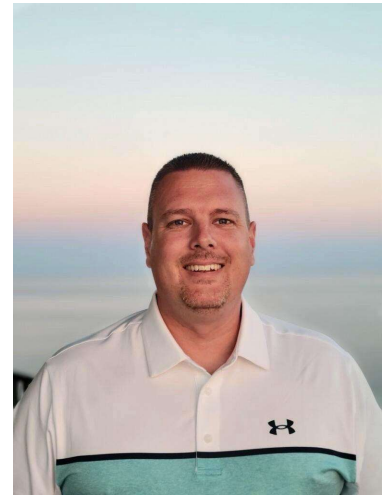
Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
"What is the faith of the next generation worth? It's worth everything" -Andy Stanley

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
Building/Facilities

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.
Giving our kids/students a firm foundation on how to define there faith and how to live out, what does love require of us?

# Jason Vander Molen

Spouse	Amber
Employer	Kent County Sheriff's Office
Church	Covenant CRC
Email	j.vandermolen80@gmail.com
Children	Alayna -11th SCHS, Ashlyn-10th West Michigan Aviation Academy, Alyssa-9th SCHS



Willingness to Serve	I am excited about the possibility of serving on the Board. (Please fill in Questionnaire)
Statement of Belief	Yes

Why do you feel Christian Education is important? Why are your children attending South Christian?
Christian education is important because it fosters growth in our children's spiritual lives. Our children are attending South Christian because it provides an education and atmosphere that is Christ centered. It continually pushes our children to grow spiritually and live out their faith in their daily lives.

Education at SCHS is based on a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the world. What does this mean to you, and how does this make SCHS different from other private or parochial high schools?
Our salvation comes from grace through faith and not by the works we do. That doesn't mean we should act anyway that we want, rather follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our actions and choices. South helps our kids to see they are children of God and called to serve him in all they do. We are all born sinners but Christ's sacrifice on the cross has washed away all our sin. South Christian pushes our kids to spread the gospel, and pushes them to love their neighbors, both near and far. South is not a school that promotes living under the authority of a church or church leaders but instead promotes living the way the Bible teaches because the Bible is the very word of God.

What specific skills or abilities do you see yourself bringing to the Board? (Examples might include education, legal, finance/budgeting/planning, building facilities, fund raising, promotion or marketing, strategic planning, interpersonal skills.) Also, identify any leadership or volunteer experiences you have been involved in.
I have background in safety, security, and emergency services. In my current role with the Kent County Sheriff's Office, I am assigned to Community Policing here in Gaines Township. My unit is responsible for offering trainings and coordinating community events. I teach active shooter response, CPR /AED, and Stop the Bleed. I was a youth group leader at church for 10 years, softball coach for both little league as well as middle school. I have also previously served on council at church.

What challenges do you see facing Christian education in general (and South Christian specifically) in the coming years? Feel free to share ideas you may have for facing these challenges.
Christian education does face some challenges in today's time. For some I think it is the financial strain it can put on families. For others it may be more of a transportation issue for families with both parents working. Christian high schools specifically can often be that awkward transition time between no bussing, finding rides, and a teen driver. Parents now also have more education options like public schools, online schools, home schools, and charter schools. While all other educational opportunities may be good schooling options, it doesn't compare with having a Christ-centered education. The world we live in now is in need of a little more Jesus. Having a Christian education along side church, and good families at home, will develop our kids to be more of what the world needs.

