

## What will you build on His foundation?



**Family gatherings are wonderful times to discover how different we all are.** Each family member may have a similar history, but has traveled along a different path; relatives may be similar in appearance, but the laugh lines and scars of life lie in different places. Family members are alike, but they are not the same – and we would not have it any other way (except, perhaps, that our parents would have placed the same restrictions on the youngest child that they had on the eldest...but I digress...)

**The League schools are like a family too.** They have similar characteristics: they mostly draw from the Canadian Reformed churches, and, where there are students and parents from other denominations, these tend to have Reformed backgrounds as well. Because of these similarities our schools build on the same foundations and hold to the same truths. In addition, at baptism parents promise that they will raise their children in the fear of the Lord to the best of their ability, a reason why our schools were founded and still exist. Theoretically we should all be able to agree on what we hope to achieve with our schools and what we are going to do to get there.

**However, schools are also like families in that they are filled with people who do not necessarily think alike.** People, as much as we need them, are as notorious for causing problems as they are for fixing them. Therefore, while **we know that it should be possible to make a universal vision statement for all League schools, we accept that it's not likely to happen—and this is likely the better way.**

Consider 1 Corinthians 3. In this chapter Paul lets the Corinthians know that they are wrong when they hold one man's work over against another's because, he says, "neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (vs. 7).

**Paul goes on to tell the Corinthians that the foundation of a building is the key for any structure and the foundation we build upon needs to be Christ (vs. 11).** What rests upon the foundation may look different depending on the quality and type of materials used (vs. 12). In the end, it is not what is used that matters, but how it survives the challenges it faces on the foundation it has been given (vs. 14).

The more I visit League schools the more I begin to see each as a living organism with independent thoughts, vivid feelings, and unique smells. Just as two brothers don't have the same strengths simply because they were born into the same house, League schools share traits which work to bind them together as a family. **To say the schools have the same dreams of what to build on the solid foundation would be unwise.**

Like families, school communities are different. One school community, for example, may have members who are mostly small business owners. These parents might have a vision for education which ensures that children develop their God-given talents so they are better prepared to run a small business than schools have in the past. In another school the parents might work mostly in larger corporations. They may have a vision for education that focuses on giving their child opportunities to excel in corporate management and executive roles. **Every school would summarize its vision differently and the school community would be wise to build a school to match the needs of that vision—while maintaining their foundations.** What we realize, with Paul, is that both visions can be excellent, but only when built on the foundation of God's word.

Our schools will face challenges as the vision and identity of the parents who support them change over the years. **We need to be ready for those challenges and we have a solid foundation with which to start—God's word.**

League  
Coordinator:

Jason Heemsker  
[jason@lcrss.ca](mailto:jason@lcrss.ca)

Jason Heemsker

# Government update



## Provincial Immunization Program

On December 11, 2015, the **Ontario Government announced a redeveloped road map for delivering vaccinations** to people who live in Ontario (<https://goo.gl/yyK1Hl>). While this legislation comes from the Ministry of Health, it has implications for schools as well.

The vision for the new strategy has been published in a document entitled, *Immunization 2020- Modernizing Ontario's publicly funded immunization program*. (It can be found on the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care website or by following this link, <http://goo.gl/iDXoo0>). **The vision works to set up an immunization program that, "will make Ontarians healthier for generations to come by reducing vaccine-preventable diseases through a high performing integrated immunization system" (Immunization 2020, p. 13).**

The reason this has an impact for our schools is that **vaccinations for certain diseases are required in the Immunization of School Pupils Act** for all children attending school between the ages of 4 and 17. These diseases include: tetanus, diphtheria, polio, mumps, meningococcal disease, whooping cough and chickenpox. Children who are not fully immunized may not be allowed to attend school.

**The act does allow for exemptions based on a 'statement of conscience of religious belief'**. There are members in our schools who, for various reasons, have availed themselves of this possibility. It should be noted that the new plan calls for making parents requesting these exemptions for nonmedical

reasons (including those of conscience and religion) participate in education sessions where the benefits (and risks?) of vaccinations would be explained before an exemption would be given.

**Currently our schools are active and willing participants** in publicly funded vaccine programs including access to hepatitis B and meningococcal vaccines which are mandatory. **The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which is optional, is different** (and, perhaps, controversial when we expect our children to live their lives according to God's laws on the one hand, even while we recognize the brokenness of our lives on the other). Most, if not all, League schools request that parents who wish their children vaccinated for HPV do so via their own health care provider.

The science behind vaccinations has been a real blessing and the use of vaccines has changed the course of many diseases in recent decades. **While there are families who make informed choices not to participate, our schools have cooperated with the Ministry of Health's vaccination program** for many years, and Lord willing we will continue to do so for many more.



## The CARE Committee

Perhaps the most well-known League committee is the **Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Educators (CARE)** Committee. This committee has been mandated by the League to 'structure curriculum development and refinement, publish results of its work, to monitor the practical suitability of its work in the classroom and to publish annually a report of its activities'. (League By-laws, Art. 8.1.1)

Practically speaking, this means that **CARE is busy with writing new, refining published, and monitoring current curriculum** used in League schools. This assists parents in ensuring that what is taught in League schools fits with the Reformed Christian worldview.

As the CARE Committee worked, its members summarized this worldview inside **four basic markers**. They are:

1. **Reformed education is covenantal:** what is taught in our schools reflects the promise the Lord has made to care for his people, and our obligation to respond out of thankfulness.
2. **Reformed Education is confessional:** what is taught in the schools resonates with the truth of scripture.

3. **Reformed education is antithetical:** our curriculum recognizes not only the brokenness of our world, but the many blessings we still have and our responsibility of thankfulness for them.
4. **Reformed Education reflects a unity of purpose** between home, church and school: the school is a responsible partner with the parents and churches and what is taught must reflect this.

In recent years the **CARE Committee has been working to fulfill their mandate by developing curriculum that is infused with these markers**. It has done this in areas such as Bible and Church History, Information and Communication Technology, and Physical Education. They have also developed a tool for schools to use when they review other published curriculum to see where the worldviews presented in these fit with, or move away from what League schools work to do.

**The work of the committee is done by people who have a vested interest in Reformed Christian education.** Committee membership includes teachers (past and present), administrators and professors who give their time, energy and expertise to further serve in His schools.

### League of Canadian Reformed Schools Committees:

Assistance for the Special Child (ASC)

Compensation Committee

Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Educators (CARE)

Government Contact Committee (GCC)

Pension Committee

Professional Development Committee (PDC)

League of Canadian Reformed Schools Executive:

**Gerald Boot,** Chair

**John Vanlperen** Vice-Chair

**Leanne Van Bostelen** Recording Secretary

**Amy Hoogstad** Treasurer