



Standardized Testing at GCCS

Our school ranks in the top 20 per cent of schools nationwide on the **Canadian Test of Basic Skills**.

The measure of how a Christian school is doing must consist of more than scores on a standardized test, but every school needs to answer for its academic efforts. Part of our answer at GCCS comes in the form of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) which is written every other year, in late October and early November.

The Canadian Test of Basic Skills provides us with an independent, external reference point for how our students and staff are doing academically with our program compared to students and staffs and programs across Canada. In Ontario, the government funded schools write tests provided by the **Educational Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)**. For various reasons we have chosen not to use the EQAO. There are some key differences between the CTBS and the EQAO tests used in provincial schools. We are not allowed to teach the content of the CTBS in preparation for the test, whereas teachers and parents are coached on how to prepare students for taking the EQAO. The CTBS test is standardized right across Canada, not just Ontario, in various different kinds of schools based on the results of 40 000 students. The CTBS is much more extensive because it tests in 12 different areas, not just reading, writing and math. The CTBS includes subtests for Vocabulary, Reading, Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, Grammar, Math Concepts, Math Problem Solving, Math Computation, Science, Reference Materials, and Visual Materials, like maps and diagrams.

With all standardized tests, the scores are expressed in percentiles, with the understanding that the 50th percentile is the average mark

across the nation. A percentile score of 84 indicates that on average the class performed better on the test than 84 per cent of all the classes in the same grade across Canada. We are also able to compare our school to our sister schools in the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools. Our percentile scores compared to the national average, and compared to our sister schools looked like this:

National Average Percentile	50
Christian School Average Percentile	77
GCCS Average Percentile	84

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When we receive the results of the CTBS, each child has a report that reflects his/her performance down to the level of whether or not he/she uses capitals correctly on place names! We can see strengths and weaknesses for each child, and will know if remediation is needed. We can see if there is a pattern of weakness, say on capitalization, for a whole class, and will know if a program change is necessary in earlier years, and if class-wide remediation is needed in the coming year.

Another way to look at our results is to track the results for a group of students as they write the tests in Grades 3, 5, and 7, or in Grades 4, 6, and 8.

For any one group of students, they gain a larger advantage over the national average the longer they are in the GCCS program. If the advantage remained constant, we could thank genetics; however, when the advantage increases, we

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know that the educational value of the school has made a notable contribution.

Though individuals come and go, this year's grade 8 class had a class composite of 12th grade 1st month.

- When they were in grade 6, they had a class composite of 8th grade, 6th month.
- When they were in grade 4, they had a class composite of 5th grade, 2nd month.

This year's grade 7 class had a class composite of 11th grade, 5th month.

- When they were in grade 5, they had a class composite of 7th grade, 4th month.
- When they were in grade 3, they had a class composite of 4rd year, 2nd month. Our school's

mission statement is "to nurture, educate and inspire students in Christ-centred learning and serving." An assessment of our school should evaluate how well we are nurturing, educating and inspiring our students to learn about Christ's purpose in the world today, and to serve His purpose. An assessment of our school has to be a very complex, dynamic and ongoing process. The CTBS is only one instrument that helps to assess only one dimension of our school, but it serves a purpose, and tells us that GCCS is doing well in that dimension. ▲

Grade 4 students surfing on their Chromebooks.



INTOUCH

FAMILY PROFILE

The Zevenbergen Family



The Zevenbergen family has lived in Guelph for 15 years. Shane and Dana grew up in the Owen Sound and the Sauble Beach areas, where they frequently

visit family and friends. They have two sons, Matthew who is going into Grade 8 and Joshua who is going into Grade 4. Beach. During the winter, they have fun tobogganing, skating, snowboarding and skiing.

visit family and friends. They have two sons, Matthew who is going into Grade 8 and Joshua who is going into Grade 4.

Matthew recently graduated from the Arrowsmith Program. He loves snowboarding and is learning to play acoustic guitar. Joshua enjoys playing with his friends at school and learning about reptiles. He takes great care of his gecko, Obie.

The Zevenbergens have attended First Christian Reformed Church for 15 years. The fellowship, the lessons and leadership are all qualities that they admire at First CRC. Their involvement includes teaching Sunday School and participating on various committees. A highlight for the boys is the weekly Cadet meeting during which they learn about God's will for their lives and how they can live for Him.

Shane has worked for *Wellington Plumbing and Heating* for 16 years as a Project Estimator. He enjoys playing golf and hockey with his boys. Dana is an elementary school teacher for the *Upper Grand District School* and has taught a variety of grades for 14 years. Dana's favourite pastimes are scrapbooking, reading and crafting.

Matthew and Joshua have attended Guelph Community Christian School since Kindergarten. From the very beginning, Dana and Shane have been involved at the committee level, including fundraising. Recently, they have watched God grow the school with the implementation of the Arrowsmith Program, Kindercare, and the purchase of our new school building! When asked where their children attend school, many people recognize GCCS and its accomplishments. God is definitely at work in our school!

Camping and biking are Zevenbergen family summer favourites. They love the crashing waves of Sauble

Dana and Shane know that **Guelph Community Christian School** is the best choice for their children's education. They appreciate that the teachers have the boys' best interests at heart and that they know when to challenge them. In particular, Dana and Shane note the benefits of learning Christian curriculum with its application to their boys' daily activities and faith development.▲

Mary Blydorp

was not considered an unduly large class! We used math and spelling textbooks, phonics workbooks and a reading series in which one of the main characters was Mr. Mugs, a large English sheepdog. However, for the Bible and the social studies/science programs, we had, well, the Bible, and a huge binder called "Joy in Learning" which was an integrated program intended for the primary grades. As primary teachers, we determined what to teach at each grade level. As teachers we needed to work together well; I am still thankful for these colleagues who were always willing to support me as I began my teaching career.

We now are blessed with an abundance of teacher resources. The shelves in my cupboard are filled, and then I can still go online to look for more materials. The photocopier is easier to use than our old Gestetner, and to show movies, DVDs just need to be slipped into a slot rather than showing a film which needed to be carefully threaded through a projector.

While much has changed over the years, much has also remained the same. Children are children, and need to be loved and to know that teachers care deeply for them. The classroom must be a safe environment where they will be supported as they work to overcome challenges they face whether these be academic or social. One of the

When I began teaching in 1975 in St. Catharines, I had a class of 32 grade three students. Two students were added during the year. This

beauties of our Christian school setting is that we view the students as God's children and his image bearers. It has been an honour and privilege to work with the students and allow them to grow in their understanding of their relationship to God, others and the world around them. This part of teaching remains unchanged.

In my teaching, it has been my hope to encourage students to find and develop their gifts for use in God's kingdom. I want them to know that whatever gift they bring to the class, "the body of Christ" adds to its richness and fullness. Each part is important and valued. My greatest joy is to see former students as mature adults finding their particular niche and using their gifts to serve God and others.

What is the next chapter in my story? I am not sure. I have done work with families affected by reactive attachment disorder. I have worked as a volunteer at a camp the last three summers, and hope to do that again in the fall. I'm not sure where God will lead me, but I know I may rest assured that he will guide me. ▲



Dear Mary,

Fourteen years after having you as a teacher, I had the opportunity to re-enter the halls of Calvin Memorial Christian School. I was there to help my wife, Elaine, set up her classroom for the first time. A flood of memories came back as I opened the various doors and peered into each classroom, and a whole number of emotions swept over me. Some classrooms felt very unfamiliar with new desks and different posters hanging on the wall, and other classrooms brought back memories I would rather have left buried. On the primary end of the building, I opened one particular door and stepped into the classroom. I paused. Much had changed, but something still felt so very familiar. I was struck by the feeling of safety that I felt in that space. I had spent two years in that classroom. It was yours, and you were my teacher.

My memory is not that great, and the finer details usually slip through the cracks, especially as time passes. As I look back, though, on those two years, I remember your love of stories and the tone with which you read them. I remember the way the Old Testament stories would come to life as I sat in my desk. I can even recall a few conversations that we had immediately after recess-- conversations in which you worked to resolve one or another issue that had surfaced on the playground. Most of all, though, I remember your gentleness, your consistency and your incredible gift of encouragement. I felt safe in your classroom, and that sense of safety is what matters to me so many years later. I usually cringe when people say things like, "You were my favourite teacher." At the same time, though, such a sentiment could not be any closer to the truth.

When I was in Grade 2 & 3, I could not possibly have imagined that my wife would be teaching beside you in the same classroom or that my children would have the privilege of being your students, too. Moving to Guelph so many years later opened up that possibility, and I was thrilled when it became a reality. I know how much Elaine has enjoyed working with you and how much she values your wisdom. Justin and Drew have both spoken of your gentleness, your consistency and your encouragement. Throughout all these years, you have created spaces of safety, and you have been such a blessing in the lives of your students. I want to thank you for nurturing and inspiring so many people and for using your God-given gifts so faithfully! ▲

With much love and appreciation,
Jamie

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Grade 1 preparing to send Flat Stanley around the world.



Grade 8 leaving for Ottawa.



Mrs. Pinson creating an outdoor classroom.

What's Coming Up

- Sept. 3 – First Day of Classes
- Sept. 6 – Back-to-School BBQ
- Sept. 12 – Meet the Teacher Night
- Oct. 3 – New Parent Orientation



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