



WESTERN CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction to the School

Western Christian High School
925 5th St.
Hull, IA 51239
www.westernchristianhs.com
Phone: 712.439.1013

Dan Barkel, Principal
dan.barkel@westernchristianhs.com
Abby De Groot, Curriculum Coordinator, Chair of
School Improvement Team
abby.degroot@westernchristianhs.com

School Mission

The mission of Western Christian High School is to provide God-centered secondary education to young men and women using the Bible and its principles as the foundation for the total curriculum.

History of the School

In 1918, the people in Sioux County who desired to have a school Christian secondary education were led by Rev. Weersing and Rev. DeLeeuw to consider their options. They proposed a secondary school run by a society, and in October of that year, the consistory of the Hull Christian Reformed Church was requested to call a meeting of all the people interested. At this meeting, the leaders prepared a constitution, which was ratified in January of 1919. This meeting also provided for a subscription of members and the election of a board. The board was instructed to plan and implement the school, Western Academy (which was to offer instruction in the ninth and tenth grades), in the fall of 1919.

In 1919, the first year of Western Academy's existence, the school operated with a budget of \$8,000 and an enrollment of forty students. The tuition was \$50 per year. Because tuition could not cover operating costs, the board began to borrow money to pay bills in 1929. After the stock market crashed during the Great Depression, the President of the Board announced that the school could no longer operate financially, and the building was sold in 1938 to meet part of the financial obligations. The society under which Western Academy had operated came to an end by court order because of bankruptcy. This matter came into sharp criticism among the school's constituency, many of whom found the bankruptcy in conflict with the teachings of the church; however, others felt that the organization of a new school justified the action.

Western Christian High was formed in 1934 and kept in operation largely because of the tireless and devoted energy of Dr. R.L. Haan. The financial integrity of the new organization was further bolstered by the work of Mr. John Ten Harmsel, who served as the treasurer of the newly organized school from 1934 to 1952. Under his care, the school regularly operated within budget.

Enrollment grew, necessitating building additions and increased staff. Although enrollment has grown and shrunk over the years as family sizes have changed and other Christian high schools have opened in the area, Western today enjoys a wonderful base of support from our families, alumni, and constituency.

Throughout the process of growing Western Christian, the society, board, and staff have continually strived to provide our students with a stellar education as they are “Learning to Serve the King.”

Key Dates and Events

- 1918: school society is formed
- 1919: constitution is ratified
- Fall, 1919: school begins at Western Christian Academy
- 1929: school borrows money for operating costs
- 1934: building is sold to Calving College, society is disbanded and is reorganized under the name Western Christian High, using the same building
- 1940: enrollment reaches 100
- 1950: an addition of classrooms and a library is added to the original building
- 1957: gym and locker space is added
- 1964: music facility and practice rooms are completed
- 1968: science addition is used for the first time
- Mid-1970s: shop and home economics areas completed
- 1979: dedication of new gymnasium addition
- 1994: 75th anniversary celebration
- 1995: major renovation of the original three-story building, including the addition of a new library and cafeteria
- 2008: addition of the new weight room and a bus barn constructed on land north of the school.
- 2012: the 1:1 laptop initiative (BYOT) begins
- 2013: teachers begin work with AIW, Authentic Intellectual Work, an ongoing professional development framework
- 2013: School begins 2:30 dismissals on Wednesdays for faculty collaboration
- 2015: Western begins its first agriculture program and forms an FFA chapter
- 2016: Completion of the Second Century of Service project, which includes updated infrastructure, remodeled science rooms, new agriculture rooms, a new event center, new office space, and new student commons area

Notable Programs

BYOT: Students purchase and bring their own laptops to school, keeping equipment costs down and allowing for family choice of devices.

AIW: Teachers are in one of three small groups that meet weekly to revise tasks and instruction for our students, based on criteria and feedback.

Faith Pack Groups: Students are in a small group of students (mixed grades 9-12) that meet regularly during chapel time to explore faith, volunteer, and support one another. These are led by teachers and National Honor Society Members

Dual Enrollment and AP Classes: Western currently offers two classes through Dordt College that give students the opportunity to earn both college and high school credit. Students can also take AP Calculus.

Extracurricular Opportunities: drama, JETS competition, Speech, FFA, book club, technology club, Envirothon competition, multiple athletic teams

School Enrollment Data

2006-2007:	343	2011-2012:	253
2007-2008:	400	2012-2013:	257
2008-2009:	338	2013-2014:	254
2009-2010:	302	2014-2015:	252
2010-2011:	298	2015-2016:	250

Racial/Social/Economic Demographics of the School Population

Hispanic		American Indian or Alaskan Native, not Hispanic Origin		Asian, not Hispanic Origin		Black, not of Hispanic Origin		Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, not of Hispanic Origin		White, not of Hispanic Origin		More Than One Race, not of Hispanic Origin	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	142	125	2	0

Community Demographics

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Hull, Iowa

City



Water tower located in the Hull (Iowa) Industrial Park just off US Highway 18.

Motto: Where Great Ideas Are Born




Location of Hull, Iowa
Coordinates: 🌐 [43°11'25"N 96°8'4"W](#)

Country	United States
State	Iowa
County	Sioux
Incorporated	May 15, 1886 ^[1]

Hull is a rural community in Northwest Iowa. Western students come not only from Hull, but also from surrounding communities in Sioux, Lyon, and O'Brien counties, and even from South Dakota.

The economies of these communities are largely agricultural and industrial. Median income for a family in the city of Hull is \$43,919. 92% of the population is white; 9.1% is Hispanic.

Government	
• Type	Mayor-council
• Mayor	Roger Vis
Area^[2]	
• Total	1.20 sq mi (3.11 km ²)
• Land	1.20 sq mi (3.11 km ²)
• Water	0 sq mi (0 km ²)
Elevation	1,440 ft (439 m)
Population (2010)^[3]	
• Total	2,175
• Estimate (2013 ^[4])	2,199
• Density	1,812.5/sq mi (699.8/km ²)
Time zone	
• Summer (DST)	Central (CST) (UTC-6) CDT (UTC-5)
ZIP code	51239
Area code(s)	712
FIPS code	19-37515
GNIS feature ID	0457713
Website	City of Hull

Financial Situation

Western Christian High School balance sheet currently lists \$9,189,854.72 in assets and \$3,675,000 in liabilities. The fund balance is \$5,514,854.72, and the current year's budget is \$419,000. The recently completed Second Century of Service building project is 40% funded, with pledges and donations continuing to come in.

Structure for Student Learning

Faculty Roster

[Link to faculty roster](#)

Administrative Team:

Dan Barkel, Superintendent, High School Principal

The role of the principal at Western Christian is as the chief operating officer of the school. All facets of the school fall into his/her responsibility including recruitment and supervision of staff, finances, curriculum and instruction, vision and long-term planning of the school in conjunction with the board. The principal answers to the board of directors.

Bill Harmsen, Vice Principal, Athletic Director

The role of activity director/assistant principal at Western Christian is to oversee all activities that go on as a part of curricular and extracurricular. Duties included but are not limited to scheduling, managing events, fundraising, leadership mentoring, managing facilities, purchasing, school activity calendar, etc. The role of assistant to the principal revolves around student daily attendance, minor student discipline and as advisor to the principal. The activity director/assistant principal answers to the principal.

Abby De Groot, Curriculum Coordinator

The role of the curriculum director is to plan and organize the curriculum of Western Christian. He/she also plans the professional development program for the faculty in conjunction with the principal. The curriculum director, along with the counselor and principal also analyzes assessment data and provides direction for instructional improvement. The curriculum director is the instructional strategist for the school.

Governance Structure:

The school is run by a 16-person elected board that represents the supporting churches of the school. The board is split into four committees, including education, finance, building, and transportation. The board takes major initiatives and the proposed budget to the society for voting at the annual meeting. The board consults twice monthly with the principal, who then disseminates information and data for information to others on the administrative team. Members of the administrative team also meet fairly regularly to provide input and ideas for initiatives to the board, which are then considered for policy changes and development.

Current Budget

[Link to current budget](#)

Learning Management System:

Western Christian uses JMC Online as our Learning Management System to record attendance, calculate grades, and communicate academic progress to both students and parents.

In addition to this, we have recently adopted Google Classroom as our primary way to assign work and communicate due dates to students. Every class has an online Classroom page where students can access this information at any time.

Analysis of Student Learning

School Wide Learner Goals

1. Spiritual - to model and teach spiritual principles and to encourage individuals in their personal relationship with God.
2. Academic - to challenge and stimulate young minds to excel in quality and depth of knowledge and thought.
3. Social - to model and teach principles of successful interpersonal relationships.
4. Emotional - to model and teach responsible, realistic, and balanced emotional expression and restraint.
5. Physical - to teach and challenge young people the discipline necessary to have health, strength, skill, and vitality.

How Does the School Analyze and Assess How Effective it is at Attaining these Goals?

We monitor standardized tests, surveys, teacher discussions, counselor meetings, parent teacher conferences, parent communication, discipline data, graduation rates, college acceptance data, socio-economic data, GPAs, the honor roll, National Honor Society, and extra-curricular involvement to make sure we are meeting all of our goals.

How Does the School Align its Curriculum and Instructional Programs to these Schoolwide Goals?

- Teachers map each of their units to essential questions that address concepts in these areas. Those questions, along with the knowledge, skills, activities, and assessments for each unit are entered into the CurriculumTrak database, which can be shared with other teachers and administration.
- In working toward goal 1, our most important task here at Western Christian, we have recently added the position of Spiritual Life Coordinator to our faculty. Mrs. Karen Christians works during one of her prep periods to improve student engagement with their faith, especially through our small group program (Faith Packs). She facilitates teacher interaction with students on the topic of faith, which is the #1 way our students have indicated that they have grown spiritually in the past. This is a major step forward in meeting goal 1.
- In our AIW professional development initiative, teachers meet weekly to analyze a task (worksheet, test, project) or a piece of student work (piece of writing, finished project, etc.). This initiative is especially aligned to goals 1-4.
 - Our faculty is divided into three teams that meet separately, and one member of each team presents each week. During the structured meetings, the team uses a rubric to score the task or student work, and then the facilitator leads a discussion of scoring rationale and asks team members for suggestions to improve the task.
 - The rubric we use during evaluation lines up with goals 1-4. It asks teachers to evaluate tasks and student work based on Construction of Knowledge (2), Elaborated Communication (2, 3), and Value Beyond School (3, 4). After scoring, teachers are asked how the task could better incorporate a Christian worldview (1).
 - Each team includes 6 or 7 teachers, and each teacher presents to his or her group one time per round of AIW. We go through four rounds a year, so teachers have the chance to present four tasks or pieces of student work for evaluation and improvement each year. They are also required to post revisions after receiving feedback from their groups.
- Goal 5, physical health, has remained important in our curriculum even after state requirements have made it less of a priority. We still offer PE as a mandatory course for freshmen and sophomores and as an elective for juniors and seniors. We also offer Health as an elective course, along with child development and life skills, which address goals 3 and 4 as well as 5.

Graduation Requirements

These can be found on page 9 of the [Parent-Student Handbook](#).

Summary of Standardized Test Results for the Past Five Years

Iowa Assessments: National Percentile Rank of Average National Student Score

Grade Level and Subject Area	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
9 th grade English/Language Arts	77				
9 th Grade Math	79				
9 th Grade Social Studies	78				
9 th Grade Science	79				
10 th Grade English/Language Arts		80	87	84	
10 th Grade Math		77	80	83	
10 th Grade Social Studies		79	84	82	
10 th Grade Science		78	78	76	
11 th Grade English/Language Arts	74	73	67	86	79
11 th Grade Math	72	78	74	81	79
11 th Grade Social Studies	74	74	70	80	75
11 th Grade Science	76	77	71	82	77

*The empty boxes reflect changes in our testing practices—moving testing from 9th to 10th grade in 2012 and deciding to only test one grade in 2015.

ACT: Average Scores

Subject Area	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
English	22.8	21.8	21.8	24	22.8
Math	22.8	21.8	21.9	24.1	22.9
Reading	24.2	22.3	22	24.9	24.5
Science	23.5	22.5	22.9	24	23.8
Composite	23.5	22.2	22.3	24.5	23.6

Current School Improvement Plan

As a school accredited under the state of Iowa, we are required to submit an annual school improvement plan. It can be found [here](#).

Stakeholder Survey Results

The stakeholder surveys were done in the fall of 2015. The links below are a summary of responses.

[Teacher Survey](#)

[Parent Survey](#)

[Student Survey](#)

Other Major Items

Second Century of Service Campaign

Western recently completed a major building project that included a new agriculture department, renovated science wing, new events center, new student lounge, new offices, and facility updates.

A wonderful description of the renovation, including pictures, can be found in [this](#) article from the *Sioux City Journal*.

We have already seen multiple benefits for student learning as a result of this project. Our agriculture program currently includes 92 students, over a third of our student population. The science program has benefitted from their new space, which makes hands-on learning and lab work much more accessible. The fine arts program has enjoyed much better acoustics and seating for performances, as has our chapel program.

Refining the School Wide Learner Goals

After the School Improvement Team discussed our current School Wide Learner Goals in light of the data we had collected and our school's mission, the members of that committee suggested updating and improving those goals to the following:

Head: Students will develop a depth of knowledge and thought in a variety of disciplines. This knowledge will grow the whole student, enhancing the development of his or her gifts through the exploration of all facets of Christ's Kingdom.

Heart: Students will grow in their personal relationship with God and others, and they will exhibit Christ-like attributes in their daily walk.

Hands: Students will demonstrate service to God's Kingdom by being active redemptive agents.

Members of the SIT presented these revisions to staff and Ed Committee members at the Fall, 2016 curriculum meeting for comments and approval.