

State of the School Address

Susie Golbiw
President of the Board of Trustees
October 16, 2019

Greetings to you, our Japhet family. My name is Susie Golbiw and I have the distinct honor of serving as President of the Japhet Board of Trustees. This is my 14th year as a Japhet parent and my 8th as a Trustee. On behalf of our Vice-President Sheila Chaps, Treasurer Jay Schmitt, and Secretary Bruce Kasl, as well as our entire Trustee Board, I want to thank you all for being a part of the Japhet family. We truly believe that our school can help make the world a better place, and we hope the Japhet experience is as rewarding for you as it was, and is, for all of us.

To give you a little background on what the Board of Trustees does, as an Independent School Japhet is governed by the Board, who holds the mission of the school in trust, defines and maintains the philosophical policy, provides financial resources, and hires the Head of School. We are so pleased with the last year's transition of leadership to our new Head, Kerri Vizena, and her team, and we are excited to see the seamless transition of two new talented teachers welcomed this summer. Kerri has hit the ground running, and has proven strong compassionate leadership now in her second year.

We are pleased to let you know that the state of the school is strong. In the seventh year in our own building, we are attracting new students, working on filling classrooms, and continuing to bring excellence in leadership, academics, and character. We will work tirelessly to prepare and graduate our young student leaders for the high schools of their choice. All classrooms have room to grow, so we encourage you to help us share and spread the Japhet story whenever you can. Word of mouth is the best way for us to bring the Japhet difference to as many young people as possible.

I am proud to report that we just concluded a financially successful year, with a balanced budget. Although this is not unusual, it is never something we take for granted. You may already be aware that tuition only covers about 70% to 75% of the costs required to educate your children. We are extremely fortunate that Japhet has made such a difference in people's lives that we receive support from current and former parents, alumni, business people, and others who have gotten to know the children and the story of Japhet, inspiring them to help continue to make Japhet possible. We also could not be happier that last year, after only five years in our own building, we eliminated our mortgage -- a debt that was more than \$1 million -- allowing more financial flexibility than at any time in our past. Donations directed toward our capital campaign will work to eliminate the bridge loan that remains.

This summer, after much initiative and dedication by Kerri and her staff, Japhet was awarded a \$145,000 grant from the Joseph and Mary Cacioppo Foundation. This is the largest grant ever received by Japhet School and its funds were awarded to fund our outdoor play facilities, expanding classroom technology resources, and scholarship. Japhet students are daily enjoying the benefits of this grant and we are so grateful to Kerri, her team, and the Cacioppo Foundation for forwarding Japhet's mission.

Japhet School is an accredited school through ISACS, the Independent Schools Association of the Central States. Accreditation is a seven-year cycle, and we are nearing our next accreditation review. The preparations have been extensive, involving a written self-reflection and hosting a visiting team. In the 2018/2019 school year, our faculty and staff did an in-depth self-assessment of all areas of Japhet School evaluation noting strengths, challenges, and priorities, and this is called our Self-Study. This Self-Study was recently sent to ISACS, and in November we will host an Accreditation Visiting Team from ISACS who will read our self-study, meet with faculty, staff, and trustees, visit classrooms, look for our mission in action, and write a Visiting Team Report. We look forward to welcoming our visitors, and we expect full re-accreditation.

We are so delighted you have chosen to be a part of the Japhet family. And you should never feel pressured to do anything more than pay for the tuition you signed up for. But please be aware of what will also be communicated to you in full disclosure of what needs to happen for us to meet our budget goals. We augment tuition income through events like the 18 Reasons for Hope lunch coming up on Wednesday, October 23rd. This is a great opportunity to spread the Japhet story. There is no cost or obligation to attend and it only takes an hour out of your day. I've seen firsthand that a family member, friend, financial advisor, insurance agent, or colleague invited just one time can become a multi-year donor when they find out about this special place and the people who make it what it is. We can assign you and your guests to a table with an opening, or you are welcome to fill a table of your own as a Table Captain.

It is only through the efforts of all stakeholders that we can make Japhet truly successful. As can be seen by the closure of some of the other small private schools in the area in the recent past, this is not an easy task. But Japhet is financially sound, your faculty and staff are dedicated, talented and energized towards the mission to provide your children with the best character, academic and leadership education available anywhere at any price.

Thank you for sharing your exceptional children with us on this incomparable journey building confident, intelligent, strong young people, ready to face the increasing challenges today's world throws at them. I've seen firsthand the difference Japhet has made for my children but also what other families have experienced in just one year here. I'm so excited you've joined us on this path. We, the Board of Trustees, will be constantly working to make this unique school the best it can be. And we will try to make ourselves as available as possible to you, as we are all in this together. Thank you.