

State of the School Address

Susie Golbiw
President of the Board of Trustees
December 9, 2021

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. I am a parent of two Japhet “lifer” alums and this is my 10th year as a Trustee. On behalf of our Vice-President Susan Ellithorpe, Treasurer Joe Mohan, and Secretary Dan Commer, 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 dedicated work of our Head of School, Kerri Vizona and we are grateful that students are back in the classrooms full time with our outstanding faculty and staff. Kerri has created a safe and flexible learning environment that has assured students, parents, and faculty and staff of the value and compassion of Japhet School amid these still uncertain times. As we have just pivoted for a brief period of online learning, it is evident that Japhet has the resources, technology, acumen, and leadership to provide the Japhet education despite any circumstance. The Board cannot express its gratitude enough for this leadership as well as the confidence and trust of our families. The strength of the partnership between parents and Japhet School is felt on every level and the continuing atmosphere of trust has been the foundation of our students’ success.

We are pleased to let you know that the state of the school is strong. In the ninth year in our own building, we are continuing to bring excellence in leadership, academics, and character education. We will work tirelessly to prepare and graduate our young student leaders for the high schools of their choice. Many 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. As area schools continue to face challenges, the interest in Japhet's character and academic curriculum is stronger than ever. We hope to see an increase in admissions next fall as a result of our Japhet family sharing their experiences.

You may already be aware that tuition only covers about 70% to 75% of the costs required to educate your children and we (along with everyone else!) have been particularly challenged these last two years. 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 after only six 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. We appreciate your support of our 18 Reasons for Hope campaign and thank you for your continuing generosity.

Japhet School is an accredited school through ISACS, the Independent Schools Association of the Central States. Accreditation is a seven-year cycle, and we completed our accreditation review in 2019. We are pleased to report that we have received full re-accreditation from ISACS.

Last summer, Japhet "pivoted" again, reconfiguring classrooms and reorganizing learning levels. Our Pre-K program was strengthened and our Middle School program transitioned to a more integrated learning environment allowing for greater flexibility and a stronger academic

experience. The addition of our new STEM lab provides a hands on approach to science, technology, engineering, and math. We are confident that these adjustments will have a big impact - elevating academic opportunities and preparing students for high school and beyond.

We are so delighted you have chosen to be a part of the Japhet family. It is only through the efforts of all stakeholders that Japhet can be 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 for placing your trust in Japhet School and blessings to you and yours for a safe and joyous Holiday Season.