Compass Bearing

Insight, Direction, and Connection for Reformed Schools

COMPASS
LEAGUE OF REFORMED SCHOOLS

Volume 11 - Issue 1 - March 2026

Coordinator's Connection

Reformed Schools Are Not Inevitable

Promoting Reformed Schools is Covenant Faithfulness

By: John Wynia

Recently we had the privilege of welcoming visitors from the Machebette Christian School in South Korea. They represented a community of two Kosin Presbyterian Churches that have committed to providing covenantal, Reformed education for their children in order that they might "pursue a substantive Reformed faith." They came to Ontario to see "Reformed education in action," so they visited classrooms, spoke with teachers, and asked a lot of thoughtful questions about curriculum, governance, and community involvement. Their commitment and passion for Reformed education was inspiring.

I had the privilege of discussing the work of Compass LRS with them. They had read my previous article on obstacles to the promotion of Reformed education, and they had questions: To whom was I encouraging schools to promote themselves? Why do members of our churches need to have Reformed education promoted to them?

These questions weren't skeptical. They were genuinely curious how enthusiasm for and commitment to Reformed education could wane in Reformed communities. In their context, the challenge is not indifference to Reformed education. Their challenge is construction. They've got a crystal clear sense of the "why," and they came to Ontario to figure out more of the "how" of running a Reformed school. So they wondered: Is it possible to forget the purpose of Reformed education? Can people lose sight of the reasons Reformed schools exist?

Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 28, 2026
League Learning Day

Friday, April 10, 2026
OPA Meeting

Thursday, April 30, 2026
Compass LRS Directors Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2026
Membership Meeting

Their questions exposed something important: what feels obvious, familiar, or routine to "insiders" is not always obvious at all. If we allow assumptions to replace clear articulation of our purpose, the conviction and commitment that nourishes our schools will quietly erode.

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Most readers of the *Bearing* have grown up in the context of Reformed schools. Our parents attended them. We attended them. Now our children attend them. This familiarity is a blessing. It reflects the faithfulness of God to bless the efforts of the covenant community that laboured to establish institutions. But familiarity also carries a risk. Familiarity, as the saying goes, breeds contempt. We can begin to assume that everyone understands why our schools exist and why they are worth supporting. We can lose the passion for them.

Our Korean visitors do not have the luxury of familiarity. Like all those who have started schools, they must articulate their vision clearly. They must convince others of its necessity. They must answer hard questions about cost, commitment, and distinctiveness. That is to say, they are busy doing the things our parents, grandparents, or great grandparents once did.

In a parable, G.K. Chesterton illustrated the importance of understanding why something exists. Two men find a fence across a road. One says, "This fence serves no purpose. Let's remove it." The other replies, "if you don't understand why it was put there, you shouldn't remove it." This parable is instructive for our schools: it is easier to destroy things if we forget why they exist. If we fail to communicate their purpose, they will become landmarks whose meaning has been forgotten. And landmarks with no meaning are easy to remove.

Reformed Schools Are Not Inevitable (Continued)

By: John Wynia

Promoting our schools, then, is not about competing in a marketplace. It is about ensuring that the next generation understands the theological vision and commitment that gave birth to them in the first place. It is about explaining—clearly and warmly—why covenant children benefit from being taught that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it (Ps. 24).

The Korean visitors left us with many gifts, but perhaps the most important gift was the opportunity to see our schools with fresh eyes. Reformed schools are not inevitable. They are the fruit of conviction, sacrifice, prayer, and shared responsibility. They are covenant community schools—sustained by the belief that God's promises extend from generation to generation. Promoting them is an act of gratitude. It is a testimony of God's faithfulness. It is to invite others to cherish and strengthen what He has entrusted to us.

It's not merely necessary. It's a privilege. And it is covenantal faithfulness.

Determining Salaries for Staff Members in our Schools

By: Kent Baartman on behalf of the Compensation Committee

Each year, the Compensation Committee of the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies (LCRSS) prepares a Salary Report to guide member school boards as they set staff compensation for the coming school year. A key part of this work is determining the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)—the percentage increase applied to the salary grid to help ensure that teachers' wages keep pace with economic conditions while remaining sustainable for our schools.

This work is not done lightly. The Committee understands that teacher compensation touches many lives: the families who support the schools, the teachers who serve daily in the classroom, and the children entrusted to their care. For that reason, the process is careful, deliberate, and rooted in a desire to serve the whole covenant community well.

The process begins early each fall. A draft Salary Report is typically prepared in November so that local boards can begin budget planning, and a final version is approved at the Compass LRS membership meeting in January. The Committee works under a clear mandate from the member schools: to recommend fair compensation for teachers in Ontario, to aim for "similar pay for similar work," and to base decisions on reliable and transparent economic information.

Seeking the continued flourishing of our schools under God's care.

When setting the COLA, the Committee considers several key areas.

1. Current economic conditions

The Committee reviews recent inflation data, especially the Ontario Consumer Price Index (CPI), which reflects changes in the cost of everyday necessities such as food, housing, and transportation. For the 2026–2027 school year, the Committee considered an annual CPI increase of 1.7% for Ontario. In this way, the Committee seeks to be attentive to the real costs of living that affect teachers and their families

2. Public-sector salary trends

To ensure fairness and competitiveness, the Committee also studies wage settlements in comparable public school boards. These figures provide a reference point for what similar work is paid elsewhere in the province. Recent public-sector education settlements have generally been in the range of about 2.5% to 3% per year. While Compass LRS schools are different in structure and funding, these comparisons help the Committee act responsibly and knowledgeably.

3. Ongoing review of the salary grid as a whole

Beyond a single year's increase, the Committee regularly steps back to review the entire salary grid. This includes examining starting salaries, salaries at the top end of the grid, and the differences between the various qualification categories. This broader review helps ensure that compensation remains fair across levels of experience and training, that career paths within our schools remain viable, and that school boards can realistically plan and budget. Periodically, more in-depth analyses are conducted using data from multiple public boards to confirm that the structure of the grid continues to serve both teachers and schools well over the long term.

4. The ability of school communities to sustain increases

Finally, the Committee carefully considers the financial realities faced by local school boards and families. Our schools depend on the faithful support of parents and congregations, and sudden or excessive increases can place real strain on that support. The Committee seeks a path that honours teachers with just compensation while also showing stewardship and care for the broader community.

After weighing all of these factors, the Committee recommends a COLA percentage. For 2026/2027, this resulted in a proposed increase of 2.0% - a figure intended to balance economic realities, public-sector comparisons, and the long-term health of our schools.

In the end, the COLA is more than a technical calculation. It is part of a larger effort to serve faithfully: to value the calling of teachers, to support families who sacrifice for Christian education, and to seek the continued flourishing of our schools under God's care.

Bringing Talent to the Table: The Professional Potluck

By: Trish Smith

It's exciting to gather a large group of friends, family, or a school community, but the first question is always: "How are we going to feed everyone?" It's wonderful when the answer is a big potluck! Everyone collaborates, bringing their unique talents to the table in the form of a favorite dish.

A key task for the Compass League of Reformed Schools (Compass LRS) is to organize similar collaborations. While we aren't planning any actual potluck dinners, we do help schools bring their "talents to the table" through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). For instance, Compass LRS facilitates a Tech and Trades PLC where high school tech teachers connect and learn from one another. Many educators are also connected through PLCs, such as Grade-Specific and New Teacher PLCs.

> **"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of other."**
>
> **Philippians 2: 3-4**

Recently, we have been connecting member school bookkeepers and board treasurers through a Finance PLC. After meeting (virtually) with representatives from across Ontario last year to discuss resource sharing, we are now hosting a "potluck of information"—a space for schools to share spreadsheets and documents. This allows treasurers and bookkeepers to see how different schools operate and to learn from each other.

We all enjoy a good potluck, the variety is always a nice treat; it's the same with the diverse information and talents that each school community brings to the PLC table.

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The Hallmarks of Reformed Education

Confessionally Grounded

Learning to say "I do" to all that God reveals about himself in his Word and works.

Covenantally Founded

Recognizing God's claim on children who have received his promises in baptism.

Enmity Surrounded

Equipping children for service in his Kingdom as prophets, priests, and kings.

Bound in Unity

Working with home and church to tell children the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord.

Compass League of Reformed Schools (*formerly League of Canadian Reformed School Societies*) invites applications for the position of:

COORDINATOR

Compass League of Reformed Schools is seeking a visionary leader to champion Reformed Christian education. In this pivotal role, you will coordinate the strategic work of our directors and committees, manage key projects, and provide vital support to our member school societies across Canada.

The Mission

Compass League of Reformed Schools exists to help parents equip students to employ their talents in the service of God and His kingdom. You will ensure member schools have the curriculum, policy support, and collaborative network needed to fulfill this calling in obedience to God's Word.

Key Responsibilities

- **Visionary Leadership**: Promote a Reformed view of education and foster unity among members.
- **School Support**: Collaborate with committees (CARE, SRC, GCC, ACE, PDC, CC, etc.) on curriculum development, governance, government policy, and professional development.
- **Organizational Management:** Implement policies, oversee financial planning, strategic planning, and represent Compass LRS to government bodies and school associations.
- **Operational Excellence:** Oversee office routines and manage digital communications.

Qualifications & Commitments

- **Faith**: A professing believer and active member of a Canadian or United Reformed Church.
- **Education**: Undergraduate degree (BA/BSc) and an Education degree (B.Ed. or Diploma from CCRTC).
- **Experience:** Minimum five years in educational administration within a Reformed Christian school.
- **Skills:** Strong organizational and communication skills; proficiency in Microsoft Office, Google Suite, and basic website maintenance.

Terms & Application

- **Start Date:** August 1, 2026 (later dates may be considered).
- **Application Deadline:** April 18, 2026.

For questions or to submit your application, please contact Compass League of Reformed Schools, (*formerly League of Canadian Reformed School Societies)* HR Chair; Ben Helder: hrc@lcrss.ca | 905-520-8541