



THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

JANUARY 6, 2025
VOL. 27 NO. 17 MAJORIS

BUELLER ... BUELLER ... BUELLER ...?

by Bridges Spiva, Grammar School Principal

If asked to picture a “chronically absent student” you may be flooded by nostalgic memories of the 80s movie classic, *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*. Ferris, having already earned a reputation as the patron saint of truancy, once again convinced his parents he was sick, but instead of staying home, he joined his best friend Cameron on an adversity-filled adventure throughout Chicago—in a Ferrari, of course! In one sense, you would be correct in making this analogy. Ferris did skip school—a lot; however, it is a mistake to assume that only students with frequent

deliberate absences qualify as chronically absent.

The US Department of Education assigns the term “chronic absenteeism” to students who miss 10% or more days of school for any reason. To put this in perspective, this Friday marks the end of New Covenant’s second quarter whereby school will have been in session for 85 days; therefore, any student who has missed 8.5 days or more this school year meets this criterion. Data obtained from FACTS immediately before Christmas break revealed that 6% of our student body, by definition, are considered

continued on p.4

WHAT’S NEW?

Fine Arts Video

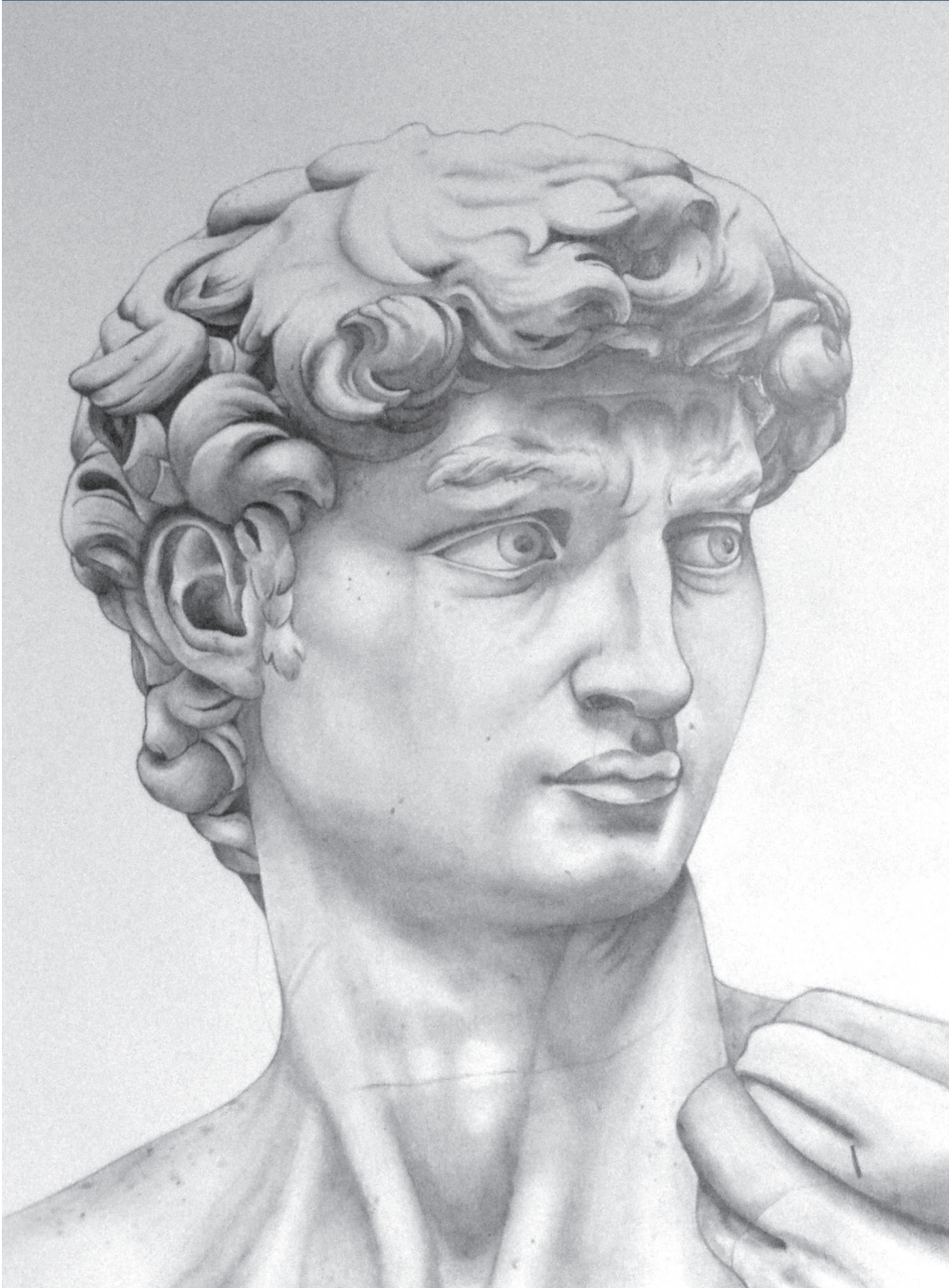
Those of you who attended Lessons and Carols or the Grammar School Christmas program were some of the first to view our newly-created video. Once again, Hello Studios led by **Adam Miller (Penny – 6th, Mia – 4th)** has created a beautiful piece to highlight our fine arts program. The orchestra, band, and choir are featured as well as the faculty of the art department. You will want to watch it again, see it for the first time, or even share it with your family and friends. Here is the link: www.newcovenantschools.org/about/video-library/. Thank you once again to Hello Studios for a job well done.

The screenshot shows the New Covenant Schools website header with navigation links: ABOUT, ACADEMICS, EXPERIENCES, ADMISSIONS, CONTACT. Below the header is a video player titled "Classical Education at New Covenant Schools" with a subtitle: "So you weren't classically educated, and you're wondering what classical, Christian education is, in these short talks, our Headmaster explains the foundations of our curriculum, and how your child will thrive in our school." The video player shows two young girls sitting at a table, looking at a large sheet of paper. To the right of the video player is a list of video titles:

- The Arts | 1:58
- Learning Latin | 2:58
- Understanding Classical Education | 9:35
- Truth, Goodness and Beauty: The Transcendentals | 8:12
- From the Headmaster | 2:27

ART FAIR

PAINTING | MIXED MEDIA | SCULPTURE | PHOTOGRAPHY | FILM



Monday,
March 10

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR ART FAIR SUBMISSIONS:

- Students in K-12th grade may submit TWO PIECES of art in each of the five named categories.
- Student work grades 4-12 will be in the JUDGED art show.
- All submissions should be given directly to Miss Eshleman or Mr. Dunaway.
- Flat (2D) submissions should NOT be folded or on lined paper.
- Submissions MUST be unframed.
- All photography should be printed on photo quality paper (preferably 8 ½ x 11 or larger).
- Sculpture (3D) submissions should stand upright OR student should provide a base on which to stand the piece.
- Lego submissions will NOT be accepted.
- ALL pieces should be the CREATION of the student(s).
- Multiple students may collaborate on a single submission.

Claire Copenhaver (12th Grade), 2024 Submission

ALL submissions due Wednesday, February 12th

Parents who would like to volunteer to mat/hang work, please contact Hattie Eshleman at heshleman@newcovenantschools.org or Michael Dunaway at mdunaway@newcovenantschools.org.

E T C E T E R A

EVERYONE

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) – DEADLINE JANUARY 15

This is your last full week to apply for tuition assistance for the 2025-26 school year! Please refer to an email sent out on **October 28, 2024** for instructions.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT CONTRACT

In order to simplify reenrollment, New Covenant uses a Continuous Enrollment Contract for students, allowing them to automatically be enrolled each year until graduation without having to resign a contract. **PARENTS WILL NOT BE ASKED TO REENROLL FOR NEXT YEAR. The opt-out deadline for enrollment for the 2025-26 school year is February 1, 2025.** The Continuous Enrollment Fee of \$150 will be charged to your account in February if you do not opt out. Please contact **Linda Hackenbracht** at lhackenbracht@newcovenantschools.org if your plans for next school year have changed.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

There will be no school **Monday, January 20** in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

ACADEMIC TESTING

Students in grades 2-8 will sit for CTP-5 testing **Tuesday, January 21** through **Friday, January 24** and ninth grade will test from **Wednesday, January 22** through **Friday, January 24**. Please help your students have the best experience by bringing them to school on time, and by avoiding unnecessary appointments and absences.

LUNCH ORDERING

Lunch ordering for February is now open through **Friday, January 17**. Featured menu items in February include Mini Corn Dogs, Honey BBQ Chicken Bites, and Pancakes with Sausage, in addition to Chick-fil-A, Jersey Mike's, and Turkey Taco Salads. For those who subscribe to the school milk plan, your lunch account will be charged \$35 for the third quarter in mid-January. Please direct any questions to **Debbie Williamson** at dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org.

MUSIC LESSONS

Allegro Music School has partnered with New Covenant to provide on-site music lessons to our students. There are a few spots available for piano, voice, flute, cello, and guitar in the new year. Call or text **Julia Sansone** at 434-841-7374 for more info.

MIDDLE & GRAMMAR

END OF QUARTER

The end of quarter two for the Grammar and Middle School is **Friday, January 10**, and report cards will be emailed on **Wednesday, January 22**.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SPELLING BEE

Parents are invited to attend the Middle School Spelling Bee on **Friday, January 10, at 8:15am** in the Moomaw Center where 40 finalists from grades 5-8 will compete for the honor of becoming our School Bee Champion and going on to represent New Covenant in the District Bee!

SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

NO SCHOOL FOR SOR

The SOR will not have school on **Wednesday, January 15**.



Students enjoy parties on the last day of school before the Christmas break.

continued from p. 1

chronically absent.

How can this be?

In 2018, the American Education Research Journal chronicled a field experiment lead by the Harvard Graduate School of Education that aimed at identifying commonly held parental beliefs regarding regular school attendance. In particular, the study found that parents of high-absentee students:

- Underestimate the learning that occurs in classrooms and therefore undervalue daily attendance.
- Miscalculate how many days of school their child has missed especially in combination with frequent tardies or early dismissals.
- Fail to consider the cumulative effect of occasional absences on overall learning and retention.
- Fall victim to a cognitive bias wherein they believe their child to have better attendance in comparison to their classmates. Note: 50% of students at New Covenant have three or fewer absences this school year.

Why does it matter?

During the admissions process, your family was introduced to New Covenant's Portrait of the Graduate which provided a glimpse into the type of person a classical education aims to help your child become. These aspirational characteristics are cultivated over time through consistent exposure to the fundamentals, great thinkers, and great works interwoven throughout the K-12 curriculum. At school, students are expected to be active participants—to interact with and think deeply about the material. This interaction goes beyond merely completing assignments; it



Families who prioritize attendance and punctuality set students up for success by allowing them to be comfortable, confident, and ready to learn.

includes grappling with big ideas like the virtuous qualities of the children in *The Chronicles of Narnia* or standing in awe of our Creator when exploring how the laws of nature align with the precision of mathematics. No amount of make-up work, no matter how thorough, can replace the deliberate instruction and rich discussions that occur in the classroom.

Consistent school attendance also extends beyond the classroom and impacts students' sense of belonging and satisfaction with school. Face-to-face interactions with faculty and peers encourage social skills, shape emotional intelligence, and cultivate bonds of interconnectedness. *Blessing of the Animals*, *St. Nicholas Day*, and *Hands and Hearts* serve as predictable cornerstones for the student experience; however, it is often the unplanned moments that cannot be reproduced—Mr. Webb's poignant lesson in chapel, Mr. K's off-the-cuff joke, or seeing a frog jump in a teacher's shoe during recess—that

create irreplaceable shared memories and experiences.

Finally, children thrive in routine environments. Families who prioritize attendance and punctuality set students up for success by allowing them to be comfortable, confident, and ready to learn. This practice also instills in children the disciplines of promptness and reliability that carry into adulthood.

Undoubtedly, there are a myriad of justifiable reasons students miss school. Absences for significant sickness and important family commitments will and should occasionally occur. However, absences for mild ailments, vacations, and general school avoidance should be uncommon. As we begin the second semester, take time to reflect on your child's attendance patterns including tardies, early dismissals, and reasons for missing school. If necessary, recalibrate your family's stance to make prompt and daily school attendance a priority.

QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASS OF 2025 — Neil Bohnert, Leslie Moeller, Bob Price, Leland Seckman, Dan Vollmer
CLASS OF 2026 — John Gauger, Nancy Hall, Chris Misiano, Sam Mizener, Tom Rogers, Anne Umbarger | CLASS OF 2027 — Dusty Miller, Court Shipman, Davidson Morse, Warden

EX OFFICIO

John Heaton—Headmaster

OUR MISSION

New Covenant Schools is an educational community serving families of Central Virginia, providing an exceptional education in a classical curriculum within the framework of historic Christianity, furnishing the student with the tools of education and the inspiration to be a lifelong learner.

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS