



Grammar School finalists in Poetry Recital charmed the NCS community on Friday morning in the Moomaw Center.

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

# QUID NOVI

OCTOBER 20, 2025  
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## FROM SHADOWS TO LIGHT

by Bridges Spiva, Grammar School Principal

In Book VII of *The Republic*, Plato introduces one of the most enduring metaphors in the history of education: the Allegory of the Cave. In the story, Plato paints the scene of human beings who, from childhood, have known nothing but life inside a dim, underground cave. Bound in place, they face only the wall before them, unable to turn their heads or look back. Behind them burns a fire, their only source of light, casting flickering shadows on the wall. Between the fire and the prisoners, others move about carrying artifacts of people and animals, their shapes dancing across the stone. Because the captives have no experience beyond the cave, they mistake

the shadows for reality and are convinced they are seeing the truth.

In time, one prisoner is freed and steps into the light outside the cave. The experience is overwhelming and painful, so he retreats back into the cave until someone drags him back into the sunlight. At first the prisoner is irritated at having been forced back out, but once he adjusts to the light and begins to see the true nature of reality, he is transformed.

While the story's symbolism points to several universal questions—such as reality versus perception and the source of knowledge—the

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## WHAT'S NEW?

### A Meal with the Headmaster



Throughout the fall, **Headmaster Heaton** has enjoyed meeting with groups of parents to have a meal together and become better acquainted. The time allows for good discussion and is a way to continue sharing our lives together. The meals started with breakfast at the home of **Sarah and Adam Wittcop** and continued with dinner in the Marion Patterson Library. The next dinner will be at the home of **Julie and Jon Hart** on **Thursday, October 30** followed by breakfast at the home of **Dolly and Leland Seckman** on **Wednesday, December 10**. These meals are free and are a wonderful way to get to know others in our community in a relaxed setting. All parents are invited to attend and you will be sent an invitation via email today. Please RSVP to let us know you will be attending. Mr. Heaton looks forward to getting to know each one of you better and strengthening our school community through our friendships.

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

# H O N O R A R I A

## MS HOUSE COUNCIL WINNERS

- Chloe Brophy
- Tinley Tucker
- Arden Shesko
- Landis Hoskins
- Rocco Higey
- Alex Quaranta
- Mathieu Thurston
- Nora Misiano

## GS POETRY WINNERS



(L-R) Hadley Moore, Madeleine Blais, Bree Lentz, Annie Rutledge, Bracken Nichols.

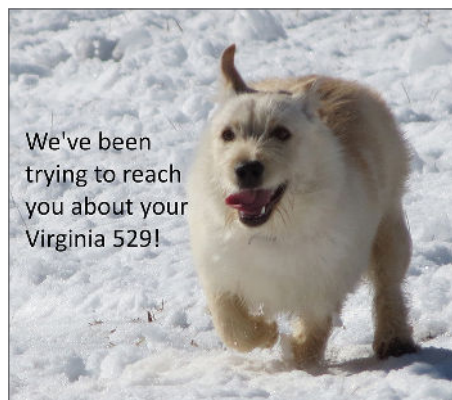
**KINDERGARTEN**  
Madeleine Blais  
(and Kindergarten Jefferson Cup winner)

**1ST GRADE**  
Hadley Moore

**2ND GRADE**  
Annie Rutledge  
(and Lower Grammar Jefferson Cup winner)

**3RD GRADE**  
Bracken Nichols

**4TH GRADE**  
Bree Lentz  
(and Upper Grammar Jefferson Cup winner)



We've been trying to reach you about your Virginia 529!

## YOU MUST HAVE BEEN BUSY ...

But there is still time to hear about a way to have a voice in where and how your state tax dollars are spent. Informational meetings are being held **each Wednesday during October at 7:45am** to discuss the VA 529 savings plan which offers above-the-line tax deductions and the scholarship foundation which gives tax credits

to donors. The meeting will last about 30 minutes and then you can get to work. Sign up here to reserve your spot: <http://bit.ly/4p4aVs8>. Please make time in your schedule to attend one of these meetings. It will not be a waste of your time!

## FUNDRAISING REPORT

	GOAL	RECEIVED
Annual Fund	\$300,000	\$185,000
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$2,580
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	<i>Pledged</i> \$188,500 <i>Received</i> \$137,675

Please consider New Covenant Schools in your giving. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent that the law provides. Donations may be given through cash, check, stock transfers, or IRA distributions. Contact **Dayna Renalds** in the Development Office for more information.

## SPORTS RESULTS



### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14

#### JV GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

New Covenant.....2  
Roanoke Catholic.....0

#### VARSITY WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

New Covenant.....3  
Roanoke Catholic.....1

#### JR GRYPHONS GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

James River Day .....2  
New Covenant.....1

#### 7/8 GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

James River Day .....2  
New Covenant.....1

#### VARSITY WOMEN'S TENNIS

New Covenant.....3  
Miller School.....6

#### VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER

New Covenant.....4  
Tandem Friends.....0

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

#### JV BOYS' SOCCER

Blue Ridge School.....6  
New Covenant.....0

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

#### VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER

New Covenant.....2  
North Cross School .....3

#### VARSITY WOMEN'S TENNIS

Eastern Mennonite.....6  
New Covenant.....3

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17

#### JV GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

New Covenant.....2  
Tandem Friends.....0



# E T C E T E R A

## EVERYONE

### PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

There will be **no school on Monday, November 3**. We will hold parent/teacher conferences that day from 12:30-6:00pm. A link will be emailed on **Monday, October 27** to sign up for a conference with your student's teachers.

### A LATTE POETRY

The Middle School will have their final poetry recital this **Friday, October 24 at 7:00pm** in the Moomaw Center. All are invited and welcome to attend. An email was sent from **Natalie Olenik** to all Middle School parents on **October 15** with additional information. Please refer to that email for instructions regarding your Middle School student and what they should wear and bring.

### PAID FOOD SERVICES POSITIONS

We have several paid positions available in our lunchroom. These involve flexible hours and would be well-suited for anyone looking for a part-time job. Grandparents are welcome to apply! For more information, please contact **Debbie Williamson** at [dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org).

### WINTER ATHLETIC REGISTRATION

Registration is now open for 5th-12th grade for the winter sports season. Students must be registered in order to participate. Click on the following link to register for winter sports: [Athletic Sign Up Form > New Covenant Schools](#). The deadline to register is **Friday, October 31**. All students participating need to have a physical form on file. Students only need one per academic year, so if they played fall sports or have one on file for the 2025-26 school year there is no

need to submit another one. The form can be found [HERE](#). Please reach out to **John Maynard** with any questions at [jmaynard@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:jmaynard@newcovenantschools.org) and see the attachment with the QUID NOVI email on **October 20** to see start dates for practices and more information.

### REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be emailed to parents on **Wednesday, October 22**.

### TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

The tuition assistance program (TAP) for 2026-27 school year will accept applications from **Saturday, November 1, 2025** until **January 15, 2026**. There is high demand for assistance, and it is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis! So do not delay! Be looking for a separate email on **Monday, October 27** with more detailed instructions.

### SCHOOL PHOTOS RETAKES

HJ Photo returns to campus on **Tuesday, October 28** for picture retakes. If your student was absent on picture day, they will automatically be rescheduled. Proofs will be emailed before retake day, and if you wish to have your student's photo retaken, please contact **Tiffany Fulcher** at [tfulcher@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:tfulcher@newcovenantschools.org).

### YEARBOOKS

Our experience proves that the majority of parents appreciate when we automatically order one yearbook per family. However, you may opt out of ordering a yearbook. **Please email April Andrade TODAY at [aandrade@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:aandrade@newcovenantschools.org) if you DO NOT want to receive a yearbook this year.**

If we do not hear from you today, your FACTS account will be charged \$50 for your family yearbook. To order EXTRA yearbooks for your family, use the Sign-

Up Genius link [here](#). Additional yearbooks cost \$35 each, if ordered through **October 31**.

### GRYPHON FAN STORE

Show your school spirit by getting something from the new Gryphon Fan Store. All purchases made are shipped directly to your home. Click this link for more > [NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS GRYPHONS STORE](#).

### MEN'S RETREAT

This year's Men's Retreat will be held on November 14-15. Details in *Etc.* 10/14/25.

## MIDDLE & GRAMMAR

### GS & MS FALL DRESS DAY:

On **Friday, October 31**, Grammar School and Middle School students are invited to wear jeans, fall-colored/themed shirts (orange, yellow, red, brown) and Friday shoes.

## SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

### BARN BASH

The School of Rhetoric Barn Bash, hosted by House Alexandria, will be held **Saturday, October 25 at 6:00pm** on the front lawn. There will be a chili contest! See House Heads **Grace Brady** or **Ian Gill** if you want to enter. Students should wear boots, flannels, or warm fall attire.

### SOR PARENT COFFEE

Join us **Thursday, November 6 at 8:00am** for a discussion about the junior and senior years at New Covenant. We'll explore the course options available to your students in 11th grade and how to choose classes that fit their interests and post-high school goals. **Sophomore families** are especially encouraged to attend.



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insights into the purpose and practice of education merit particular attention as they align with those of a classical, Christian education.

## EDUCATION IS A JOURNEY FROM IGNORANCE TO UNDERSTANDING

Much like the prisoners who see only shadows, children begin their educational journeys with limited knowledge. Their understanding of reality is narrowly shaped by a select number of concrete experiences. Over time, with purposeful instruction and encouragement, students are guided to recognize patterns, make connections, and think abstractly. They move from concrete observations to conceptual understanding, from memorization to insight, and eventually to wisdom. Education, in this sense, is not merely the accumulation of information; it is the deliberate process of broadening the child's perception, cultivating the ability to discern truth from illusion, and helping them see the world in its fuller, richer complexity. The process is gradual and cumulative: each lesson builds upon the last, and each challenge helps illuminate a slightly larger portion of the world beyond themselves.

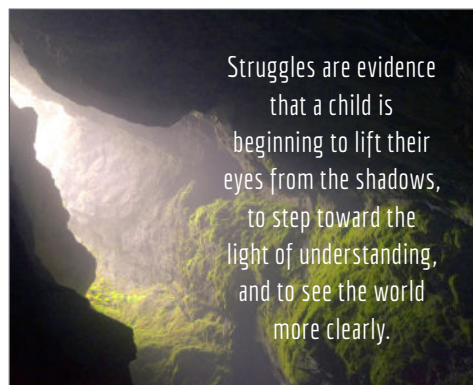
## TRUE EDUCATION REQUIRES GUIDANCE

Just as the freed prisoner cannot escape the cave without assistance, children cannot navigate the world of knowledge on their own. Teachers serve as guides, carefully leading students from familiar, comfortable ideas toward new concepts that expand their understanding. Guidance is not about imposing answers or dictating thought; it is about awakening curiosity, asking provocative questions, and providing tools for independent thinking. This means modeling inquiry, demonstrating moral discernment, and nurturing habits of reflection. Teachers help students recognize the limitations of their current understanding and encourage them to seek truth and beauty beyond immediate appearances. The goal is for children

to develop the intellectual confidence to explore, the moral clarity to choose rightly, and the spiritual sensitivity to recognize deeper realities—ultimately leading them to see the world as it truly is, rather than as it merely appears.

## GROWTH INVOLVES DISCOMFORT

The journey from the shadows to the light is not easy. Plato reminds us that the prisoner initially struggles when exposed to sunlight; similarly, children often experience discomfort when confronted with ideas, skills, or moral challenges that



disrupt their familiar ways of thinking. Struggling with a difficult text, wrestling with a new concept in mathematics, or confronting ethical or social dilemmas can provoke resistance, frustration, and even fear. Yet this discomfort is not a sign of failure; it is a sign that learning and growth are occurring. These challenges are essential for intellectual and moral development. They stretch the mind, cultivate patience, and foster resilience. Children learn to navigate uncertainty, to question assumptions, and to wrestle thoughtfully with ideas. This discomfort becomes the catalyst for transformation as students push past their initial resistance, and their capacity for understanding, empathy, and discernment expands. Struggles are evidence that a child is beginning to lift their eyes from the shadows, to step toward the light of understanding, and to see the world more clearly.

## EDUCATION SHAPES PERCEPTION AND VIRTUE

Finally, Plato emphasizes that the ultimate goal of education is not simply the accumulation of facts, but the formation of the soul. True education shapes how students perceive the world and how they respond to it. In classical, Christian education, this means cultivating character and spiritual formation alongside intellect. Children are taught not just what to know, but to recognize what is good, to love what is true, and to act with moral clarity. Education, in this sense, becomes transformative: it does not merely fill the mind but turns the heart toward truth, shaping students to live as thoughtful, virtuous, and compassionate members of society.

For many families and students, understanding the full scope and benefits of a classical Christian education can be challenging. Plato's Allegory of the Cave offers a unique perspective into the richness of the classical journey and the distinctive tradition we seek to preserve at New Covenant.

## QUID NOVI

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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John Heaton—Headmaster  
Davidson Morse—School Warden

### 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