



Panache Playmakers' presentation of "Cinderella" opened to delighted audiences last week.



THE NEWSLETTER OF  
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

# QUID NOVI

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## INTENTIONAL INSTRUCTION. MEASURABLE GROWTH.

by Bridges Spiva, Grammar School Principal

The Spalding Method is widely recognized for excellence in teaching spelling and reading and has served as the primary instructional approach in New Covenant's Grammar School since its founding. Developed in 1930, its structured, multisensory approach remains consistent: integrated handwriting and phonics instruction that transitions to systematic spelling dictation and rule analysis, an approach that, in most cases, results in students naturally learning to read during first grade. The program is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association and the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council and has received the highest

Tier 4 rating under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Although all Grammar School faculty have received formal training in the Spalding Method, we determined that a refresher would be beneficial to ensure our instructional practices remain fully aligned with the program's fidelity.

Last summer, our Center for Paideia Director Ameer Newsome and I completed eight weeks of online Spalding training, including a one-week intensive in-person session with a Certified Spalding Instructor in San Antonio, Texas. This training affirmed the strong practices already in place, helped us refine a few areas where practices had

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### WHAT'S NEW?

#### Full Faculty Position 2026-27 Academic Year (Fall 2026)

Currently accepting applications for a **full-time Kindergarten instructor** in the Grammar School through March 20, 2026, with selected interviews to follow.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education or a related field;
- Demonstrated experience teaching multiple

subject areas at the elementary level;

- Ability to implement a range of age-appropriate classroom management strategies, exercised with Christian grace and consistency.

The position is compensated competitively based upon level of experience and demonstrated classroom

success. Questions related to the position can be directed to the Grammar School Principal, **Bridges Spiva** at [bspiva@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:bspiva@newcovenantschools.org). Interested candidates should submit an application and resume by choosing the "Join Our Team" button on the school website.

# H O N O R A R I A

## HEADMASTER HEATON ANNOUNCED AS LEGACY AWARD WINNER



Lynchburg Business magazine has honored Headmaster **John Heaton** with one of their inaugural Legacy Awards.

This award is given to professionals across the city who are seasoned and have made contributions to our city in both professional and community areas. Our headmaster was chosen as one of the recipients and is

featured with a bio and photo in the magazine along with the other winners. You can read his comments on page 24 of the publication.

<https://lynchburgbusinessmag.com/category/current-issue/>

He will be honored at a reception next week hosted by Lynchburg Business. Congratulations to Headmaster Heaton. We are thankful for the years of service and love you have given to our school and wider community.



## BREAKFAST WITH THE HEADMASTER

You are cordially invited to join Headmaster **John Heaton** for breakfast along with other parents from New Covenant at the home of **Naomi and JoeDee Hostetler** on **Wednesday, March 11** at 8:45am. Please check your schedule and let us know you are coming here: [bit.ly/HHbreakfast26](http://bit.ly/HHbreakfast26). Headmaster Heaton looks forward to visiting with each of you, answering questions, and sharing ways to support your child and participate in our school community.



| FUNDRAISING REPORT     |           |   |
|------------------------|-----------|---|
|                        | GOAL      | RECEIVED                                      |
| Annual Fund            | \$300,000 | \$312,700                                     |
| General Scholarship    | \$10,000  | \$53,070                                      |
| Scholarship Foundation | \$300,000 | Pledged<br>Received<br>\$463,700<br>\$440,511 |

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.

# E T C E T E R A

## EVERYONE

### LUNCH ORDERING

Fourth-quarter lunch and milk ordering is now open! Deadline to order lunch and milk for the remainder of this school year is **Monday, March 9**. Be sure to utilize the "once and done" option if ordering the same item each week (includes a discount). Questions? Refer to the Lunch Times article [HERE](#), or contact **Debbie Williamson** at [dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org).

### ONLINE ENROLLMENT PACKET REVIEW

This week be looking for an email from **Eliza Olson** with instructions to review students' Online Enrollment Information Review Packet, which can be found on FACTS under Apply/Enroll or on the App under Online Enrollment Information Review. This review packet is required to be completed for all students. Please reach out to Eliza at [eolson@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:eolson@newcovenantschools.org) with any questions.

### END OF QUARTER

The third quarter will end on **Friday, March 13**. Report cards will be emailed to parents on **Wednesday, April 1**.

### GENERATIONS DAY

Generations Day will be held on **Friday, March 13**. Grandparents and other special guests are invited to join students in class for the morning. **There will be an 11:00am dismissal on this day.**

### SPRING BREAK

Spring Break will begin on **Monday, March 16** and continue through **Friday, March 20**. Students will return to school on **Monday, March 23**.

### LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found bins are purged at the end of each quarter. Be sure to check for any lost items before **Friday, March 13**.

### NATIONAL LATIN EXAMS

The National Latin Exam will be proctored during the school day to all Latin classes in grades 7-12 next **Wednesday, March 11**. The NLE is given on six different levels to match the Latin experience at each grade level. We will receive notice of honors earned by students later in the spring and awards will be presented at end-of-year assemblies.

### PANACHE PRESENTS

The School of Rhetoric is proud to present *Cinderella*. Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online at <https://www.newcovenantschools.org/ncs-tickets> or on the App under Forms. See Etc. insert [HERE](#) for show dates and times and a special invitation for students to dress in their best royal attire to meet Cinderella, Prince Charming and other cast members at select shows!

### ART & SCIENCE FAIR

Plan to join us **Monday, March 9** for the Art & Science Fair. Come out and view the artistic endeavors of our students and enjoy watching them compete in various science challenges. Art viewing will begin at 5:30pm, and science challenges will start around 6:00pm. Hot dog combo meals will be available to purchase. This is an enjoyable event for the whole family and not one to miss.

### CHILDCARE TAX DOCUMENTS

Need payment details for Pre-K or Aftercare for tax purposes? Access them easily through your FACTS Family Portal (District Code: NCS-VA):

- Go to **Financial > Financial Home**
- Under **Payment Plans & Billing**, select **View Details**
- Click **View Payment Summary** and choose the tax year

Your payment summary and New Covenant's Federal Tax ID will be displayed. For assistance, contact **April Andrade** at [aandrade@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:aandrade@newcovenantschools.org).

### WINTER SPORTS AWARDS

The award ceremonies for our JV/Varsity winter sports teams and athletes will be held on **Wednesday, March 11** at **12:40pm**.

### MOMS IN PRAYER

All moms are invited to this weekly meeting for a time of prayer. Come join us in this new year as we pray for our children and our school community. We meet **Wednesdays from 2:00-3:00pm** in the Marie Macdonald Chapel.

### HANDS & HEARTS PACKETS ARRIVE TODAY!

It's easy to be a consumer. Learning to be generous, "other-oriented," and willing to serve is a much harder quality and must be cultivated. Hands & Hearts Day at New Covenant has as its mission to encourage community service and serving others. Our entire school will be leaving campus on **Wednesday, April 22** to work in various settings and complete volunteer work. It's an exciting day. We also take this opportunity to raise funds to share with these groups and our school. Hands & Hearts sponsorship packets come home today with the youngest child in your family. We ask that each family determine 20 people to whom you can mail a letter explaining our project. Follow the instructions in the packet for completing the letters and return to your child's teacher no later than **March 13**. Each returned letter earns one ticket to place in a prize bucket to win various items. You can find a list of the items to be won in your packet. Funds raised in this year's efforts will provide supplies needed to complete the tasks at each of the organizations we serve while also benefitting our school.

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become less consistent over time, and provided opportunities for targeted improvements, further strengthening our implementation of the Spalding Method this year. As a result, parents may have noticed some changes to spelling practices from previous years, while others are less apparent outside of the classroom, though both have already contributed to encouraging results in our students.

## TARGETED INSTRUCTIONAL REFINEMENTS

### Immersive Phonological Awareness

**Practice:** Students engage in daily, structured practice of essential phonemic awareness skills, including letter-sound isolation, blending, rhyming, syllable counting, and segmenting compound words.

### Streamlined Teaching Practices:

All teachers use consistent wording, call-backs, and instructional methods for phonogram practice, spelling dictation, and word analysis activities. This consistency across classes and grade levels provides students with a predictable learning experience from year to year, supporting continued skill development and academic growth.

**Increased Student Participation:** Spalding utilizes a three-phase instructional approach of modeling, coaching, and scaffolding. Following direct instruction, students independently progress through lessons with little more than teacher visual prompts, increasing cognitive engagement and independent thinking. Students confidently participate in choral responses, recalling phonogram sounds, identifying phonograms within words, and applying spelling rules. Instruction is fully interactive, with students either listening to explicit teacher instruction or actively producing sounds independently, allowing teachers to continuously assess student learning. Faculty have reaffirmed

their commitment to these practices, further strengthening consistency and instructional effectiveness across the Grammar School.

**Resources and Training:** Faculty now have access to previously underutilized Spalding word analysis activities and intervention materials that enhance instruction and support greater differentiation for diverse learners. In addition, faculty have access to a library of training videos available throughout the year to support ongoing professional development and provide instructional refreshers.

## ENHANCED LITERACY SUPPORT

In addition to refining Spalding practices, the Center for Paideia incorporated the administration of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments for students in grades K-4 up to three times per year. Similar to using a thermometer to check a child's temperature, DIBELS assessments provide teachers with valuable information about students' reading development and progress. This data works in conjunction with Spalding resources to help guide instruction that is tailored to both whole-group and individual student needs.

## STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

Recent DIBELS data reflect strong literacy gains across the Grammar School. Many students who began the year below benchmark are demonstrating significant midyear growth in foundational skills.

Decoding and word fluency scores, in particular, show substantial increases, with many students markedly improving their beginning-of-year performance and progressing toward or reaching benchmark levels. Oral reading fluency and accuracy have likewise improved, with students reading more words per minute and with greater precision.

Overall, the data demonstrates

clear upward movement in core literacy skills and meaningful progress in reading achievement across grade levels.

## WHAT ABOUT MY CHILD?

You may be wondering how your child is performing on the DIBELS assessments. These screenings are used primarily to guide instruction and ensure faculty are effectively meeting students' needs in the classroom. If a screening indicates a notable concern, your child's teacher will contact you directly. Otherwise, you can feel confident that your child is progressing in an age-appropriate manner.

At New Covenant, our faculty view themselves as lifelong learners, consistently seeking opportunities to refine their practice while remaining firmly anchored in proven, time-tested methods that align with our classical education mission. This year's Spalding renewal is one example of that intentional commitment and reflects our dedication to providing your child with an exceptional, thoughtfully-delivered education.

## QUID NOVI

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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John Heaton—Headmaster  
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### 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