

Foundations #5

Reflecting on God's provision for SWCS

While the first decade of the 21st century was marked by a renewed commitment to our partnership with Covenant Community Church and an unwavering dedication to Christian education in our community, Southwest Covenant Schools also experienced several significant milestone events.

In 2005, a group of volunteer mothers launched an initiative that would transform both our school and our community. The Patriot Project was born and has since raised millions of dollars, making a lasting impact on Southwest Covenant.

Patriot Project has also enabled the school to give hundreds of thousands of dollars to local ministries and provide invaluable service throughout our community, with a focus on projects in local parks. Led by an incredible Patriot Project Committee, this tradition continues to make a meaningful difference each year.

In 2004, through a partnership with the City of Yukon, Southwest Covenant was able to build an eight-man football field at Taylor Park. SWCS parent volunteers constructed the facility by hand, pouring countless hours of labor and expertise into providing the Patriots with their first-ever home field.

Success in the Christian school league (OCSAA) culminated in state championships in golf in 2004 and football in 2008. While volleyball, football, and basketball became established school traditions, the school also explored other athletic programs—including golf, cheer, cross country, and tennis—though these were not sustained over time. As enrollment grew, however, the school set its sights on higher levels of competition. By the end of the decade, SWCS had joined the OSSAA, opening the door to expanded opportunities in both athletics and fine arts.

Academically, the school had already established itself as one of the finest in the state. Under the leadership of Academic Coordinator Mrs. Susie Nix, and with Ron Yocum becoming the third Headmaster in 2007, Southwest Covenant continued to thrive. A string of National Merit Scholars brought statewide attention to our Christian school, demonstrating that a biblical worldview education did not diminish academic excellence—it enhanced it.

Southwest Covenant graduates were beginning to make their mark on society. I once heard a successful businessman say, “If a Southwest Covenant alumnus applies for a job here, I hire them, because I know they will have an outstanding work ethic.” From hospitals and businesses to local churches, mission fields, and even the NFL, SWCS graduates were influencing the world for Christ.

A new gym floor upgraded the secondary building (middle school) for OSSAA competition, while a west-wing addition added much-needed locker rooms and a lunchroom. SWCS had established a strong academic reputation and was gaining recognition in fine arts and athletics. Remarkably, this growth occurred despite limited facilities and no school-owned vehicles, relying heavily on parents who transported students to every game, competition, and event.

The school was beginning to flourish, but the demand for Christian education in our community was growing and a plan for expansion was needed.

In 2013, Steve Lessman became the fourth Head of School at Southwest Covenant Schools. After twenty-one years as a pastor at Covenant Community Church and as a SWCS parent and volunteer, he was charged by the school board with leading the school into its next chapter. His responsibilities included casting vision, strengthening the mission, expanding academic opportunities, increasing teacher pay, exercising financial stewardship, shepherding through tragedy, creating pathways for more students to attend, and fostering growth across the school. Serving with an incredible staff and a committed school board, Steve pursued that calling for thirteen years.

