



Dear Friends of Rockway,

It has been a privilege for me to get to know many of you over the past number of years in my initial role as Rockway's vice-principal. Now, as principal, I want to take the opportunity to properly introduce myself to you by sharing a little about my leadership journey and how it led me to Rockway.

Before coming to Rockway, I spent 17 years in the Waterloo Region District School Board, most recently at Cameron Heights Collegiate as the Music Department Head. In my final few years at Cameron, I began to feel a pull into organizational leadership. As I started to discern what was next for me, I began to wonder if there was a place where my rootedness in my faith, as well as my passion for peace, justice and reconciliation, could come together in my work. I began to look more closely at Rockway and immediately noticed many points of resonance between Rockway's mission, vision and values, and my own. I was ready to move to an organization that was smaller and more agile, and where I could live out my faith; not only as an active component of my job, but as an outward part of my vocation.



Josh Hill, Principal

My experience at Rockway has been one of learning and joy, and with a deep sense of purpose.

I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the community as I have taken on the role of principal, and am very humbled to be given the opportunity to lead Rockway into the next phase of the school's journey. I come to the role not with the mindset of needing to bring significant change, but rather to build on the amazing legacy that already exists at Rockway. There has been considerable work done these past few years to launch new courses and programs like the Land-Based Leadership course and the Youth Leading Change: *Community Peacebuilding Certificate* program, to name a few. We have worked to implement a new timetable and develop plans for environmental sustainability (e.g. the 875 solar panel installation this Fall). These initiatives, although new, are deeply rooted in our calling to live out our Anabaptist, Mennonite values of peace and justice in the world.



The Land-Based Leadership class spent time both in the classroom and on the land developing understanding of Indigenous People in the local, provincial and national context.

Rockway has been privileged to maintain solid leadership throughout recent years of transitions in administration and our current team is no exception. My bias aside, the admin team is a talented group of leaders who are not only uniquely skilled in their respective areas, but also deeply passionate about Rockway's mission, vision and values. The team is incredibly productive and hardworking, yet there is also a great deal of joy and laughter as we go about our work. This leadership stability, alongside the high value placed on collaboration, will be essential as we push towards living into the vision for the future of the school.



Rockway's Admin Team (left to right): Josh Hill, Sheri Wideman, Steph Oliverio, Steven Reesor Rempel, Chris Ainsworth.

This leads nicely into the question: *Where is Rockway headed?* Although I do not have the space to list all the amazing things that are underway, I do want to share a few thoughts about our direction, characterized in the following way: *Reaching Outside, Nurturing Inside and Building for the Future.*

As we look forward, our current admin team is committed to increasing Rockway's brand recognition in the community. We want the entire Waterloo Region to know about the unique and amazing work that happens here at Rockway. Through a concerted effort to network with alumni, donors and community partners, I know this is possible. We believe that *Reaching Outside* into the broader community will enrich student life and learning while increasing Rockway's profile and influence. Simultaneously, we will *Nurture Inside* as we continue to foster the culture at Rockway that is rooted in our Anabaptist heritage. This means we will continue to work alongside local Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) churches to collaborate with, and focus on, youth faith formation. At the same time, Rockway is still committed to fostering a school culture where youth from all faith perspectives can find a place of belonging. We will continue to nurture the connection to our mission, vision and values that will ensure that, as we reach out, we are mindful of not losing the central components of our identity. Finally, as we begin *Building for the Future*, we need to address an aging school building that is hampering our ability to increase enrollment and live into our identity in the 21st century. As such, the planning for some major capital projects is underway and we are looking forward to being able to share more details with you in the coming months. **The future is bright for Rockway, but we will need all of our stakeholders to help us *Reach Outside, Nurture Inside and Build for the Future.***



Rockway's THINK float, which challenges people to consider their use of single-use plastics, appeared in the Kitchener-Waterloo Thanksgiving Day Parade for a second year this fall.

What does it look like for you and your family to help realize this future?

The answer is multifaceted. You can support by, encouraging families to consider enrollment for their children at Rockway, inviting your personal connections to get involved through supporting Rockway programs in and out of the classroom (e.g. Robotics program), contributing your time and expertise through volunteering at the school, and, perhaps most significantly, by giving financially! *We want to be bold and unapologetic about inviting you to give generously to Rockway.* Rockway does not receive any government funding and tuition does not fully cover the life-changing opportunities for students. We rely on your generous donations so that students can attend Rockway and benefit from the Rockway experience. These donations help fund innovative programs, support infrastructure improvement, increase the Tuition Assistance Fund, and much, much more. As previously mentioned, we will be embarking on a major capital project that will need your financial support to make happen. *We look forward to unveiling this capital project during our Founders' Day celebration on February 14.* Whether you give generously to Rockway as a monthly donor or as a one-time donation, ***you are investing in the future of our young people and the broader community.***



On behalf of my colleagues, I want to express in advance our gratitude for your generosity. We look forward to sharing more about the many exciting things that are happening at Rockway, both now and as we plan our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Josh Hill'.

Josh Hill
Principal