

Rez Church/RCS Update & Historical Context

At the end of the April 10th Family Meeting, we promised to keep you informed regarding ongoing communication with RCS. First, let me say this letter is long, but it is intended to provide accurate context for our current relationship with RCS. Below is an abbreviated bullet point history of the Rez and RCS history.

- God spoke to our former pastor in 1996 and directed him to establish a Christian school
- You can see some original documents at rez.church/documents that show that the school was to be established as a ministry extension of Rez Church/Resurrection Fellowship
- The Resurrection Fellowship Board minutes show that the flow of authority was to be the governing board of Rez over the board of the Christian school over the school's superintendent
- In 1998 the school was formed and became RCS.
- The school began to grow and flourish as part of the expressed ministry of Rez.
- Though there is no way in this document that I could list every expression of this relationship over the last 25 years, a timeline document (*at rez.church/documents*) produced by RCS gives some insight.
- Rez built over 110,000 sq ft of facilities at a cost of over \$12 million, in three phases, and then leased this space to RCS for 99 years for \$1 a year.
- For more than a decade the school board was made up entirely of Rez Church members.

- And when the vision of RCS began to drift the Lead Pastor of Rez stepped in and reestablished his vision for the school and assured that the RCS Superintendent was a Rez Church member.
- One of the clearest ways that we have observed organizational drift is the lack of shared historic memory. As staff members come and go they don't know the history or even where RCS ends and Rez begins.
- One example came when RCS did not want Rez to use their athletic fields. You see the RCS staff did not even know that the reality is, that the athletic fields are not part of the RCS 99-year lease. The Athletic fields are Rez property.
- This led to a lack of clarity regarding the limits of use. RCS began to sprawl using a significant amount of facility and land which is outside of their lease.
- This also resulted in numerous and ongoing tensions and misunderstandings.
- During this same period, the make-up of the school board moved from being made 100% Rez Members (*which was the make up for more than a decade*) to Rez Members being a minority presence. Currently, there are two Rez members to seven non-Rez members.

- This led the new Lead Pastor of Rez, Jonathan Wiggins to approach the RCS School board in 2015 asking that the organizations begin to dialog and clarify our relationship
- Would the relationship be a spiritual covering relationship with RCS being a ministry extension of Rez as it was originally intended?
- This led to a period of some tense but productive discussions where Rez asked first and foremost that the originally intended relationship be restored. Rez would provide spiritual covering and together we would address the current drift between the organizations
- Specifically, Spiritual influence was requested to be
 - 1) Rez Church members be a majority on the school board
 - 2) a Rez Church member would be the school board president, and
 - 3) that the Rez Church pastor would be a part of the hiring process of all RCS staff who have spiritual influence roles (*bible teachers, spiritual life director, etc.*) where the spiritual culture is set.
 - 4) And, of course, that RCS Superintendent would continue to be a Rez Church member.

- Rez Church was open to moving toward either relationship but wanted to know which relationship RCS wanted.
- RCS chose spiritual covering and proceeded to write and sign *(by all school board members and the superintendent)* an Oct. 11, 2017 letter to Rez Church leadership desiring and committing to the spiritual covering relationship. These commitments included the RCS Board President once again being a Rez Church member by August of 2018, Rez Church Members would once again make up the majority of the RCS school board by August of 2019, and the RCS superintendent would continually be a Rez Church member. Additionally, Rez Church would prepare a 99-year lease to subsume all facilities used by RCS but not under the terms of the current 99-year lease.
- This led to a very hopeful period between Rez and RCS. Where it appeared that the fracture and drift between Rez and RCS could be reversed.
- The vision for RCS flourishing on one campus under the spiritual covering of Rez was re-established.
- Both organizations began to work together on a master site plan. RCS had a vision to expand...build a state-of-the-art athletic complex...separate High School and more.
- Rez had the land and some prime frontage which could become commercial pad sites. These pad sites could fuel future ministry vision for Rez Church.
- Rez and RCS discussed a win-win development agreement. In this agreement, Rez would provide RCS with their requested 23 acres for an athletic complex *(without cost)* in exchange for RCS funding the development of Rez property leaving only pad-ready sites *(approximately the same cost as the 23 acres of land)*
- If Rez had sold the land to RCS and then RCS began to develop the land, RCS would not only pay for the land, but they would pay for the development. The agreement of land *(without cost)* in exchange for development was a win-win for both organizations and we move forward with a my-word-is-my-bond agreement.
- RCS requested additional time to establish plans to fund its vision. Rez agreed. Yet, we knew that we needed to move to a formal agreement on all land and facilities, not under the 99-year lease.
- RCS went through a leadership change during this same period when Jerry Eshleman became the RCS superintendent.
- The relationship remained hopeful as Dr. Eshleman made commitments to Pastor Jonathan that affirmed the 2017 letter's commitments.
- Master site planning continued.
- The RCS School made the commitment that Rez Church members would hold the majority on the school board by August 2019. August 2019 came and went without this promise being fulfilled.
- RCS school board communicate that they were committed to making this happen but needed more time. Rez graciously granted them more time.
- The RCS board solidified these commitments by adopting them into the RCS bylaws in 2021.
- Rez remained hopeful but began to notice areas of concern.
- Pastor Jonathan's video addresses this period of time in greater detail...so I would just refer you to his video from the April 10th family meeting which can be found at rez.church/documents for more detail.
- In December of 2020 Rez provide a signable lease covering RCS Preschool space as well as some additional space used by RCS which is not covered by the 99-year lease. This lease went unsigned and was rejected by RCS. Rez approached this issue again in December of 2021, this time requesting a simple verbal agreement to the requested dollar amount to be set in a lease agreement. To date, RCS has not agreed and there is no lease agreement.
- Again, Pastor Jonathan's video addresses this period where promises were made and then broken.

- Rez Leadership was part of numerous private discussions between Rez and RCS leadership that produced no meaningful progress toward an agreement.
- At the beginning of 2022 RCS leadership began to communicate that they did not know if it would be possible to keep their commitment to Rez Members being a majority on the school board. It was also during this time that we learned that the RCS superintendent was no longer a Rez Church member.
- Meetings between Rez and RCS leadership ranged from one on one to meetings between leadership teams. Yet, commitments and promises have gone unfulfilled.
- Matt 18 speaks of a progression in the resolution of conflict, one on one, small group of 2-3 or more, and then the church.
- On April 10th the Rez Leadership took the unfulfilled issues to the Rez Church family.
- The next day RCS leadership shared the Rez Church family meeting info with RCS families.
- Since this communication, we have had RCS families reach out not understanding why we would hold such a Rez Church Family meeting. The goal of this document is to provide greater clarity to the nearly decade-long dialog between Rez and RCS which led to this information being shared with the greatest stakeholder in this discussion, Rez Church. The church that gave birth to and has funded and provided for RCS for more than 25 years.
- Here is where we find ourselves today.
- RCS is out of compliance with its bylaws. The RCS superintendent does not legally comply with the requirements necessary to be the RCS superintendent. The RCS school board does not legally comply with the requirements of its bylaws leaving the school in effect without an administrative leader and without a board that can legally govern the affairs of RCS. The reality is they can't even fix these issues because they do not hold a legal standing to discuss, decide, or vote. All of this is a result of unfulfilled commitments.
- Some have said they do not like the tone of the communication they have experienced. This may be partially due to a lack of context around what they have heard, read or watched, or some may simply not like the chosen process. This is a discussion worth having, but I think secondary to the actual non-compliance facts before us.
- Since the April 10th Family Meeting there has emerged a growing list of concerns facing RCS.
- Rez Church leadership delivered a letter to the RCS School Board calling for them to come into compliance with their bylaws. Though they are effectually unable to resolve their non-compliance on their own, there is a path for the RCS school board to once again come into compliance that includes Rez Church, and Rez Church is willing and able to help them once again operate legally.
- As part of the letter, Rez Church leadership requested a response from the RCS Board.
- The RCS Board has responded and asked for additional time to consider their response and has asked Rez Leadership to stop interfering.
- Additionally, the RCS Board has asserted that they are in compliance with their bylaws, but have not provided any supporting documentation.
- Some may ask "Why are you doing this...calling RCS to comply with their by-laws?"
- Our response is simple, every non-profit board has a fiduciary responsibility of care, loyalty, and obedience. Because of the overlapping nature of Rez and RCS operating within Rez Facilities and upon Rez Land, what happens to RCS can greatly affect Rez.
- If Rez Leadership is aware that RCS is operating in non-compliance to their by laws and we do nothing, we are most certainly not fulfilling our obligation to Rez Church.

We love RCS and have been providing them athletic fields, common space, pre-school, and Elem classrooms, etc. without a formal agreement. We know there needs to be a formal agreement, and we are committed to getting there.

Our goal is to help RCS once again come into compliance with their by laws so that they can once again address needs of governing and operating a christian school. In light of this Rez will continue to offer space through the current school year under which there is no agreement so as to not disrupt the student activities of the current school year. Rez has not restricted or reduced any of the space RCS is using.

It is our hope that the RCS Board will take the necessary steps to come into compliance with its bylaws.

Rez Church we promised to keep you in the loop, and we ask you to continue to keep this issue lifted up in prayer. We believe that God is a redeemer and fully able to take every situation and turn it around for the good of Rez and RCS.

Rez and RCS's best days are ahead.