Michael J. Yurk has served as principal of St. Paul Lutheran School for nine years. Under his stewardship, St. Paul was one of five schools to receive the National Lutheran School Exemplary Status in 2015-2016 as part of the school’s accreditation process. Yurk sees education as a partnership between teachers, parents, congregation, and community. Viewing each community member as part of his extended family, he constantly works to ensure that students and families feel welcomed and supported. Yurk promotes intergenerational connections between students and the larger community, such as partnering with a local retirement home, where students interview and write residents’ life stories, and Interest Day, where local professionals present lessons on their jobs and hobbies to spark student interest. The implementation of research-based programs and the expansion of the school’s Center for Academic Resources and Enrichment has sustained high performance at St. Paul. Innovative ideas like Tail Waggin’ Readers, where struggling readers get a chance to practice reading aloud to certified service dogs, have boosted student confidence and performance. Yurk has been successful in building financial stability and fundraising capacity for St. Paul, resulting in high stakeholder retention and ever-increasing interest from prospective student families. Yurk is a Fellowship Graduate of the Van Lunen Fellowship Program at Calvin College and holds a B.A. in Secondary Education and an M.A. in School Leadership from Concordia University.