

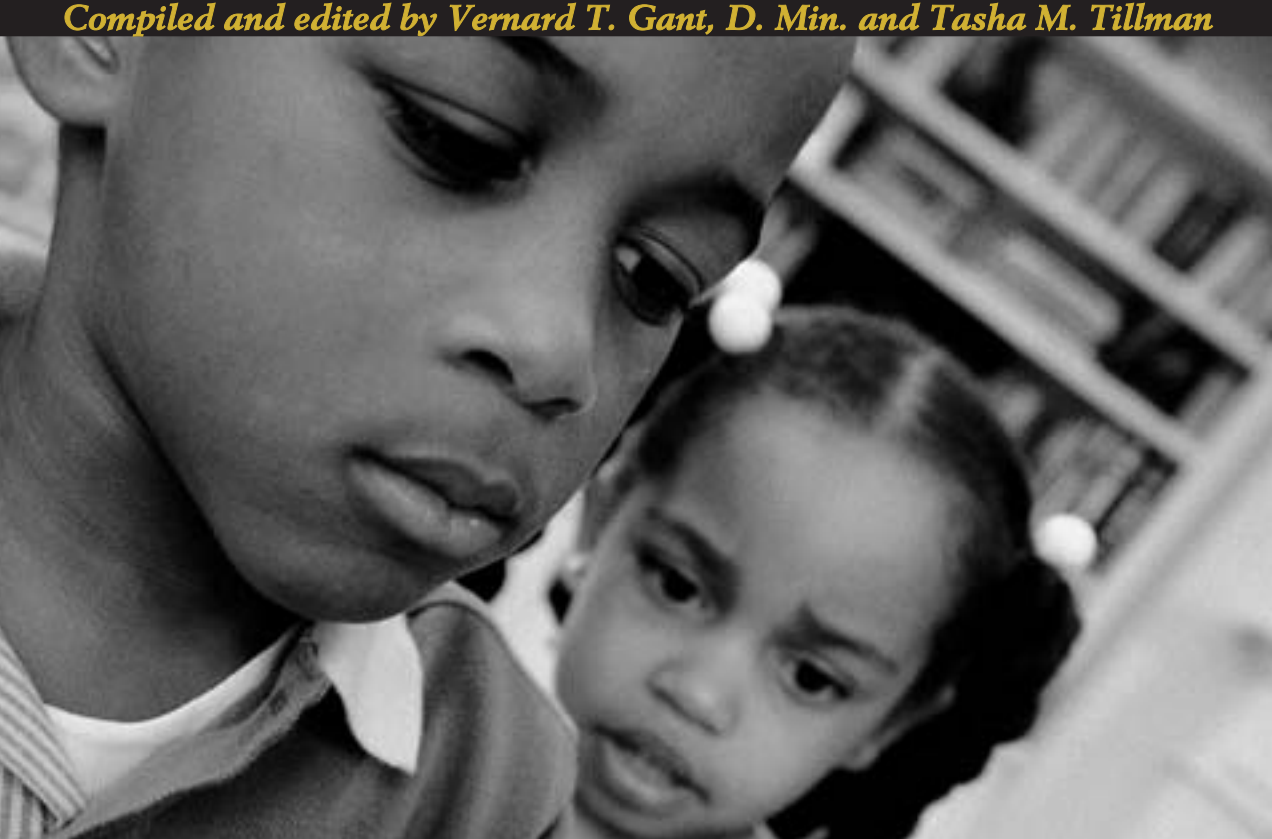


Association of Christian Schools International



HOW TO START AN URBAN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Compiled and edited by Vernard T. Gant, D. Min. and Tasha M. Tillman





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To enable Christian educators and schools worldwide to effectively prepare students for life

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As an organization, ACSI is committed to the ministry of Christian school education, to enable Christian educators and schools worldwide to effectively prepare students for life. As a publisher of books, textbooks, and other resources, ACSI endeavors to produce biblically sound materials that reflect Christian scholarship and stewardship and that address the identified needs of Christian schools around the world.

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1

Getting Started

Dear Prospective School Developer:

First, we would like to commend you for taking the first step in changing the lives of the children around you. By establishing a new Christ-centered school, you are making a loud statement to these children that you care. Starting a school is a major undertaking, and the Association of Christian Schools International is committed to assisting you every step of the way.

The success of your school depends largely on good planning. To start a program that not only appears excellent but actually is excellent in curriculum, instruction, and delivery requires months and months of planning. The ACSI Urban School Services Department's new school program is an eight-step process that will assist you in effectively planning the start-up of your school. The amount of time it takes to complete the process is totally dependent on you.

During this time you will have one-on-one consulting with the staff of the Urban School Services Department (USSD) by phone and in person. We can offer guidance on everything from how to organize your board of directors to devising a fund-raising and development plan. We can even network you with other individuals and organizations in your area that have started schools or are in the process of doing so.

This is just a short list of the services we offer. Please visit our website at www.acsi.org to find out all the services ACSI offers to member schools. Our goal is to help make quality Christian education available and accessible for all children. We believe that a Christ-centered education prepares children to succeed in their present lives and for all eternity.

We have put together a checklist of items to ensure that your school will have a successful beginning. What is not included is information on the issues specific to your school, and we can work on those together. If you find you need the assistance of Urban School Services, please don't hesitate to call, write, or email us. We are here for you. We are looking forward to co-laboring with you to make your school a success!

The Vision

In beginning a Christian school, it is essential to realize first the greatness of the task that lies ahead. It is vital to understand that God is presenting a challenge and an exciting opportunity to share Christ with parents and their children. Those who wish to start a Christian school should begin with the first step, prayer. Prayer must guide the operation, for it alone will bring God's blessing.

Most Christian schools are started because of the vision of one person or a small group of people. It is the enthusiasm and dedication of an individual (or small group) that will see the vision become a reality.

One of the next important actions is to appoint a study committee of responsible people who will thoroughly research the possibility of starting a school. This group should include people who have special experience and background that can be helpful in the formation of the school. They could include an educator, someone schooled in finance, someone with governmental contacts, someone with contacts in the Christian community, and someone with contacts in the business community.

To begin a school without study and careful planning will eventually lead to frustration and possible failure. As 2 Peter 2:21 points out, it is better for a person never to have known the truth than to know the truth and depart from it. Likewise, it is better never to have started a school at all than to start a school halfheartedly and fail. The study committee can lay important groundwork for building a strong Christian school. Areas that will need careful study include finance, facilities, legal requirements, local interest in Christian education, and a possible number of students.

After a thorough study, a plan can be developed. It will then be possible to set goals for the school and to begin selection of an administrator who can work with the committee to eventually begin the selection of a faculty.

It will be important to attract the interest and support of parents and children for the prospective school. Good communication with local churches will be necessary. When the committee has gathered enough information so it can begin to project a

possible number of students, more detailed planning can take place, and a survey of costs can be developed to project the amount of needed income. It is wise to start small enough to avoid making the school too difficult to manage and going beyond its practical capacity. It is wiser to start small and add one or more grades each year than to start with too many grades or too many students and do a poor job the first year.

It is the purpose of this manual to provide basic information that a planning committee can use to begin organizing a school. Not all the questions will be asked and answered, but there is enough information here for a group to make an effective plan and get a school started. There will be areas of information that will be different for each school setting, and the committee will need to investigate the local needs and requirements. The checklists should be helpful as the committee continues its work.

Basic Principles to Keep in Mind

- A. Jesus is the central figure in the Christian school. If a school is to be Christian, Christ must be at the center. Parents, board members, teachers, and staff must strive to carry out the basic principles of Scripture as they work together to provide a Christian education for children and young people.
- B. God has given parents the responsibility of educating children.
 - 1. The school is accountable to the parents and must work with the family as a team.
 - 2. The Christian school must provide as much information as possible for parents. The parents must know what is going on in the school.
 - 3. Meeting with the parents is essential.
 - a. There must be a time of orientation when the director and the teachers share with the parents the goals and procedures of the school.
 - b. After school has been in session for a month or so, a parent/guardian-teacher conference should be held. At this time the teacher can share with the guardian or parents how their student is doing and allow them to share any concerns or needs.

- C. The school must nurture students. Matthew 18:1–6 provides a challenge to nurture children and not cause them to stumble.
- D. Every child is an honored, gifted child. It is important for Christian school directors and teachers to see the child from God's point of view. He has created each person with special abilities and gifts. The Christian school should help the child find and develop those gifts. Dr. Howard Gardner has done some important research in the area of multiple intelligences. He describes seven different kinds of intellectual gifts:
1. Linguistic: ability to use words
 2. Logical-Mathematical: ability to reason well
 3. Musical: having a keen ear and sense of rhythm
 4. Spatial: ability to perceive the visual world accurately
 5. Kinesthetic: having physical grace or agility
 6. Interpersonal: gifted at understanding others
 7. Intrapersonal: having deep insight into oneself

Those who minister in Christian education must work hard to recognize and appreciate the strengths of individual students. It is helpful to have a quarterly award system for recognizing how students are making use of their giftedness and how they are developing positive character traits. Some schools even have a regular newspaper that highlights student accomplishment.

- E. The staff of the Christian school must live out biblical teaching. They must help students see that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Besides modeling this biblical principle, teachers can develop projects that help students minister to each other and to those around them in their community, country, and the world.

**Note**

The school must communicate regularly with the home. Schools with young children might wish to institute an information envelope that is sent home once a week with all the student's work enclosed and any notes from the school or teacher. The parents are responsible to review the information and return the envelope the next day. Schools with older students may send a monthly newsletter and communicate with parents when there is a specific need. Parents appreciate knowing about any difficulty their child is having at school. Teachers need to communicate regularly with parents no matter what the age of the student.

A Vision for the Future

One of the most exciting things the Holy Spirit is causing to happen in the body of Christ today is the rapid rise of Bible-centered elementary and secondary schools. Perhaps the Lord is leading you to establish a Christian school as part of the ministry of your church or perhaps as an independent school. Our association has guided the development of hundreds of Christian schools over the past twenty years. Allow us to suggest several basic steps:

Step One: **Pray**

A Christian school is usually born in the heart of one person. From that point on, the idea should be nurtured in prayer. The academic education and spiritual welfare of young lives is a serious responsibility and should be entered into only after definite direction by the Lord. Prayer and complete dependence on the Lord are important throughout the entire endeavor.

Step Two: **Study Committee**

Appoint a study committee of five to seven responsible persons. They should be of such caliber that they could become the members of the first school board after the school gets under way. The study committee should visit at least three other established Christian schools. Contact your ACSI regional office for the names of Christian schools in your area. Make an appointment with the principals of the schools to be visited. During the visit be sure to ask for published materials and information about student enrollment procedures, finances, curriculum guides and supplies, purchasing sources, and general office procedures.

Step Three: Legalities

Be sure that all necessary legal steps are taken. If yours is to be a church-sponsored school, present the idea to your church board and church body. If they approve, an amendment to the church bylaws is necessary.

**Note**

It is necessary to obtain approval from building, health, fire, and safety people in your community in order to establish a Christian school ministry in your church. Know the legal requirements in your community before starting a Christian school. Questions of this nature can be answered by contacting your ACSI Regional Director or other Christian schools in your area.

Step Four: Philosophy

A clear statement of the school's philosophy, a statement of faith, and a mission statement should be prepared at the outset. If possible, you should review the statements of other Christian schools. (Sample statements are included in this chapter for your review.) The board and director should develop a statement of their Christian philosophy of education and make it a part of the policy manual. Each employee and parent should understand the school's philosophy. It is the basis for all the school does—all the learning and activities.

- A. Philosophy of Education
- B. Statement of Faith
- C. Mission Statement

Step Five: Administrator

After the sponsoring group has approved the idea and plan for your school, you are ready to take several important steps. Begin by selecting your principal and faculty. Your Christian school, like any other institution, will be a credit to the cause of Christ and Christian education in direct proportion to the quality of people you bring together as your principal and teachers. It will be helpful if you select a principal with a wide range of administrative abilities, one who is also a strong spiritual leader, competent in finance, knowledgeable about school curriculum, proficient in advertising and public relations, and a wise counselor to teachers, parents, and students. All these and more are characteristics of the kind of principal you need to make your Christian school a success.

**Note**

*The administrator and teachers you select should be outstanding Christian people, professionals who understand the spiritual needs of children, be true scholars, and have enough personal charisma to inspire learning. They should be people who can inspire the confidence of parents and can work well with their fellow staff members. I urge you to carefully check as many references as possible regarding all applicants who are being considered for positions in your school. (For information on the availability of Christian school administrators and teachers, see ACSI's *Christian Employment Opportunities*, or CEO.)*

Step Six: Location

Analyze your options for school facilities. Many schools are established in church educational buildings. One reason the Christian school movement has flourished so rapidly is that in developing their Sunday schools, churches have built excellent educational buildings. Usually, with a few changes, school classrooms can be easily provided. The parking lot or other property often serves well as a playground area.

Step Seven: Advertising

Begin promoting your school approximately nine months before the opening day. As you begin your enrollment campaign, prepare a brochure that describes your school ministry, a school calendar of events for the first year, a parent and student handbook, and a registration form. You can acquire samples of these from ACSI's manual *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School*.

**Note**

Do not be overzealous about building a large student enrollment your first year. Be more concerned about bringing together a quality group of parents, students, and teachers who will help your school establish a positive, Christ-honoring reputation in your community. If you develop a bad reputation your first year, it will take years to recoup your losses. It is better to enjoy a modest success than to experience a colossal failure.

Step Eight: Finances

Follow sound financial policies. Simply stated, your income must be commensurate with your expenses. Be realistic regarding the amount of tuition you charge and the number of persons you employ.

The momentum of a new school is greatly impaired if a large deficit is incurred the first year. The school board should monitor carefully the monthly financial reports

to evaluate the school's financial progress. As a rule of thumb, your school should have a minimum of twenty students per teacher. Check with other Christian schools in your area regarding the typical rates for student tuition, or contact your ACSI regional office for the latest tuition and salary survey for your region. Set the date of your school's opening, prepare your facilities, and meet the legal requirements, being constant in prayer.

We pray God's blessing on you as you consider this vital ministry.

Common Sense

- A. Don't attempt to do too much too fast. For example, it might be best to start with a K-3 school and add one grade a year.
- B. Don't launch an expensive building program/lease agreement until you've been in operation for a few years unless you are fortunate enough to be funded by a generous donor.
- C. It's a mistake to start your high school too soon. Wait a few years. When you start it's better to "grow your own" high school students by adding high school grades one at a time.
- D. Operating a Christian school will require adequate resources. You can't run a school without charging tuition/fees. Don't spend money you don't have. You must solicit donations and actively raise funds.
- E. Don't promise financial aid to students unless you know for certain it is going to be available.
- F. For the first year or two, depending on how fast you grow, a head teacher can also serve as principal.
- G. Don't be discouraged by the lack of pastor/church enthusiasm and support for your Christian school. Not all Christians have caught the vision.

✓ **Checklist: Starting a Christian School**

- ✓ Pray about the new Christian school and depend completely on the Lord.
- ✓ Be sure that all necessary legal steps are taken.
- ✓ Focus on bringing together a quality group of parents, students, administrator(s), and teachers to help you establish a positive Christ-honoring reputation in the community.



2

Determining the Possibility

When a planning committee is attempting to determine the possibility of a Christian school, it is important it gathers useful information and statistics. The following list should be helpful in this task:

1. Statistics:
 1. Number of members in interested church congregations.
 2. Estimated number of members five years from now.
 3. Number of school-age children represented in the interested churches or the Christian community. List the numbers of children by grade level.
 4. Total number of school-age children in the Christian community.
 5. Estimated number of children who would enroll in the Christian school.
2. How strong is the interest in a Christian school in the local churches and community?
3. Are the church people adequately informed about Christian education? If not, what can be done to begin educating them?
4. What problems, if any, do local church people have concerning Christian school education?

5. What benefits could students and families derive from a Christian school?
6. What means could be used to interest local Christians and others in a school?
7. What present facilities could be used for a school?
8. What additional facilities might be required—activity areas, play areas, athletic areas, science facilities? Perhaps not all of these would be necessary in order to open a school. The planning committee will need to determine the basic needs.
9. Where could a school be most advantageously located?
10. What would the school cost? (In the planning stages, this information will consist of educated guesses.)
 - Buildings and facilities
 - Annual operation
11. How could the necessary funds be secured?
12. What legal matters would be involved in the establishment of a school?

*Adapted from William A. Kramer,
Planning a Lutheran School
St. Louis, Missouri: The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*

Christian School Survey—Example

What Is a Christian School?

The Christian school has as its mission the education of young people from a Christian perspective derived from shared biblical values mutually held by churches and Christian families, teaching biblical truth as centered in the Lord Jesus and applicable in all areas of life. It is important that the school present this Christian point of view as exemplified by a dedicated, professional faculty and evidenced in all facets of learning and growth. When this dynamic reaches fruition, it yields students who know how to learn, live, and work as faithful citizens of the kingdom of God.

Consider the following as a feasibility study to determine whether a Christian school is needed in your community:

A special planning committee has been organized to investigate that possibility. Will you please complete the following survey and return it to your local church so that the committee can use the information in its planning? We appreciate your cooperation.

1. Would you like to see a Christian school in your community? Yes No
2. Would you consider sending your children to a Christian school? Yes No
3. Would you be willing to assist in starting a Christian school? Yes No
4. Will you pray for the Christian school? Yes No
5. Would you be willing to support the Christian school financially? Yes No

If you have school-age children, it would be helpful if you would provide the following information:

Name	Age
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

Additional Comments:

**Note**

The Planning Committee can add additional questions to provide any necessary information.

✓ Checklist: Determining the Possibility

- ✓ Following the investigative work, extensive planning needs to be done.
- ✓ Organize a school board (see chapter 6). The sponsoring group or Planning Committee will need to form the school board.
- ✓ Look for leadership. A director will be needed to lead the school and to work closely with the board in planning, hiring, financial matters, accepting students, and supervision.
- ✓ Begin detailed planning. The following chapters provide basic information, goals, and checklists for developing a Christian school.



3

Applying a Christian Philosophy

The following Q&A section provides information about how the Christian school lives out the principles contained in its statements of faith, philosophy, and mission.

How does the teacher apply the Christian concept of truth?

1. Seek intellectual satisfaction in the fear of God and under His guidance.
2. Accept by faith the reliability of the Bible and the existence of the supernatural.
3. When teaching science, social studies, and other areas that touch philosophical issues, solidly affirm the absolutes of God's Word.
4. Solidly affirm that truth is eternal, not subject to experience, and true for everyone.
5. Direct students logically from right assumptions to right conclusions. Avoid relativistic thinking that begins with a doubt and ends with a search.
6. Base the teaching about creation on faith in God's Word, recognizing that scientific evidence supports the Word but is not a substitute for it.
7. Treat cultural, traditional, or political biases as simply biases, not as truth.
8. Teach that our standard for right and wrong must not be consensus but the Word of God and authority based on His Word.

How do we give God glory and students a proper self-image?

1. Do not place undue emphasis on academic achievement. Use the evaluation system to make students, teachers, and parents aware of student progress.
2. Place the correct value on the individual mind. Separate matters of taste and preference from matters of principle. Leave no room for controversy in matters on which authority has taken a position.
3. Be careful about giving undue attention to famous people and their accomplishments.
4. Do not allow any implication of disdain for anyone because of race, religion, customs, or ability.
5. Recognize that knowledge and character are different, and that knowledge does not give a person greater worth.
6. Teach your students that to honor God and be honored by God, we must humble ourselves.
7. Give students the proper concept of God and His love for them.
8. Give God all due credit in the study of origins, avoiding such terms as “mother nature.”

How can we apply our knowledge of our fallen nature?

1. Supervise the conduct of children in both formal and informal learning situations.
2. Protect children from influences that feed the fallen nature: indiscreet expression, explicit sex education, drugs, etc.
3. Teach truth through godly precept and example.
4. Continuously hold forth and exalt the Person and redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How can we give children right understandings of God?

1. Teach with authority. Use experiments to illustrate truth, not to prove it.

2. Teach in an orderly classroom.
3. Encourage respect for established values.
4. Use time-proven teaching methods (lecture, recitation, memorization, discussion, questions-and-answer).
5. Concentrate on basic skills and knowledge in the academic disciplines.
6. Employ correct disciplinary procedures.
7. Emphasize hearing, understanding, knowing, and obeying.

What are some qualifications of educators?

1. Spiritual qualifications include loyalty and faithfulness to Scripture and involvement in a local church.
2. Academic qualifications are knowledge of course content and skill in teaching it.
3. Ability to maintain rapport and cooperation with both staff and parents.
4. Sufficient and correct responses to the school's in-service training, including supervision by administrators/experienced teachers and workshops or courses for additional training.

How can we know whether our school is serving society well?

The final test of our school is shown in the students we produce. Our school should produce people who have learned to do the following:

1. Read with good comprehension.
2. Write legibly and express ideas clearly.
3. Use mathematical facts proficiently enough to be self-reliant.
4. Think logically from correct premise to conclusion.
5. Relate concepts of history, geography, and science to real life.

6. Demonstrate social adjustment.
7. Respect and appreciate authority.
8. Embrace godly values.
9. Have a working knowledge, appreciation, and love for Bible truth.
10. Recognize their individual accountability to God.
11. Love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.
12. Demonstrate an ability to express truth that can be used to serve the Lord as pastor, teacher, missionary, or well-informed and dedicated layperson.

What biblical values should be taught in the Christian school?

It is an important part of a Christian education to teach children biblical principles that show how people should live. There are examples of biblical character throughout Scripture. One challenge that is often repeated in the New Testament is to “be like Jesus Christ.”

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6).

“To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you . . .” (Galatians 4:19).

The chart on page 18 entitled “Teaching Biblical Values in the Christian School” lists important values taught in the Bible. The Christian school teacher can begin to help students understand and practice these values in their daily lives.

Note that the values (or qualities of character) have been organized under six (6) main themes:

Respectful	Responsible	Resourceful
Resolute	Receptive	Responsive

The important values that expand each main heading are listed on the right side of the chart. Making this chart a part of each group's experience can be helpful in teaching these values.

Following the chart that lists the values and qualities is a checklist that the teacher can use to note when students demonstrate these values and qualities. The checklist reinforces the values and helps students to look for these qualities in themselves and each other. Keeping track of how students successfully live out these values also provides the teacher with positive input to share with parents.

These values or qualities can be useful in handling specific discipline situations. When students are having difficulty in relationships or in obedience, the teacher can refer to these qualities and help students see how they need to change and what attitudes they need to correct.

Teaching Biblical Values in the Christian School

Respectful Ephesians 4:2 1 Corinthians 13:4–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courteous: considerate of others • Obedient: obeying or willing to obey • Polite: well-mannered and gracious • Submissive: humble and dutiful • Tolerant: making allowances for others' differences
Responsible 2 John 4 1 Corinthians 13:6–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert: watchful and vigilant • Honest: conscientious, ethical, and truthful • Industrious: hard-working and steady • Reliable: dependable and trustworthy • Self-disciplined: self-controlled and dutiful
Resourceful Proverbs 16:21 Ephesians 5:15–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious: having initiative and drive • Creative: imaginative and productive • Discerning: perceptive and discriminating • Successful: capable and fruitful • Wise: showing good judgment
Resolute Matthew 25:21 Hebrews 12:2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined: firmly purposed • Diligent: active and earnest in effort • Enduring: not giving up, persisting • Faithful: loyal and unwavering • Persevering: continuing in spite of difficulty
Receptive Hebrews 5:8 Proverbs 2:1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentive: paying attention • Cooperative: accommodating and helpful • Fair: reasonable and objective • Flexible: agreeable and adaptable • Humble: modest and obliging
Responsive 1 Peter 3:8 John 13:34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassionate: caring and kind • Considerate: understanding, sensitive, and tactful • Forgiving: showing mercy • Friendly: being a friend • Loving: expressing love without reservation

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Teaching Biblical Values in the Christian School (cont.)

1. Respectful		3. Resourceful		5. Receptive	
2. Responsible		4. Resolute		6. Responsive	
Name	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	<div>1 2 3</div> <div>4 5 6</div>	<div>1 2 3</div> <div>4 5 6</div>	<div>1 2 3</div> <div>4 5 6</div>	<div>1 2 3</div> <div>4 5 6</div>	<div>1 2 3</div> <div>4 5 6</div>
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4

Faith, Philosophy, and Mission

A statement of faith and a clear statement of the school's philosophy should be prepared at the outset. If possible, you should review the philosophy statements of other Christian schools. A sample statement is included in this chapter for your review. The board and director should develop a statement of their Christian philosophy of education and make it a part of the policy manual. Each employee and parent should understand the school's philosophy. It is the basis for all the school does—all learning and activities.

1. Statement of Faith

Very often people will ask what the school believes, what is taught, and what is the school's spiritual background; and the answers you give cannot be vague. To help answer these questions, it is good to take some time to write a concise statement of faith in advance. You will want to include it in information provided for parents and have the parents sign it, indicating that they have read it and agree to have their children taught according to the beliefs contained in it. (A sample statement of faith for a Christian school is included at the end of this chapter.)

2. Philosophy of Education

It is important to develop a simply stated Christian philosophy of education that can be shared with local churches and parents. This statement should define what you believe about Christian education. Write down the basic philosophical principles that you feel will apply to your school. This document will be a great help when you give interviews to Christian leaders and when you are recruiting staff. It should state clearly how the school views the child, the teacher, the family, the curriculum, and the foundations of Christian

education. This document needs the complete unity of the planning committee and the formal approval of the board. (A sample philosophy statement for a Christian school is included at the end of this chapter.)

3. Purposes and Scope of the School

This document will set the structure for the school. You will need to answer such questions as:

- Will you have entrance requirements academically? spiritually? behaviorally?
- Will you have an entrance exam? If yes, will it be pass/fail or grade placement?
- Will your school be primarily tuition based or contributions based?
- Will your school accept students with special needs?
- Will the religious or nonreligious beliefs of the family and children be a consideration?

There are no completely right answers that can be provided for the basic purposes and scope of the Christian school. The Planning Committee and members of the Christian community will have opinions regarding how the school should be structured. The important thing is to have a definite plan for the school with the basic purposes and the scope of the school decided upon.

4. Mission Statement

Each school should have a clear mission statement that describes its purpose. Your mission statement should identify what will be completed in order to facilitate the vision. Without such a statement, the mission of the Christian school can change over the years from what was originally envisioned. A school maintains its viability as an institution when its mission and purposes are clearly understood and supported by its constituency. A Christian school that forgets or ignores its mission statement can soon make serious procedural errors in its policies and practices. Policies, if they exist, become policies *de facto*: i.e., what is, and not the policies that were originally established to support the mission statement.

Two areas that are especially affected by the lack of a clearly understood and supported mission statement are admissions and personnel. The individual character and distinctiveness of a Christian school can change in a short time when the school's purpose has not been firmly established. It is tragic to witness the closing of Christian schools when an observer can note that the

school drifted from its mission statement, or never had one in the first place. The three sample mission statements at the end of this chapter provide the reader a variety to consider.

5. Accreditation

The school should acquire a copy of ACSI's *School Accreditation Manual*. The criteria in the accreditation process can be extremely helpful as the school is developed. After the school has been in existence for a number of years, it is possible to apply for candidate status and go through the accrediting process. (See chapter 12, "Accreditation.")

6. Vision Statement

The desired outcomes of the people/organizations in the target audience.

7. Core Values

The principles that guide the practice in fulfilling the school's mission.

Samples



Note

The following samples have been provided merely as a guide and may not reflect the views of ACSI in every detail.

Sample Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30).
3. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), in His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), and in His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).

4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith are we saved (John 3:16–21; John 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:5).
5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: the saved to the resurrection of life and the lost to the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28–29).
6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, Galatians 3:26–28).
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13–14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18).

**Note**

Local churches supporting the school usually have a statement of faith for their church. These could be used as samples for the development of the school's statement of faith. If the school is sponsored by a local church, it is common to use the local church's statement of faith.

Sample Philosophy

The philosophy of ABC Christian School is based on a God-centered view that all truth is God's truth, and that the Bible is the inspired and the only infallible, authoritative Word of God that contains this truth. God created all things and sustains all things. Therefore, the universe and man are dynamically related to God and have the purpose of glorifying Him. Because man is a sinner by nature and choice, he cannot glorify or know God. He can do this only by choosing God's free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, thereby committing his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Our aim socially is to provide a Christian perspective on life and the world from which will come a balanced personality and a proper understanding and acceptance of a person's role in life at home, at work, at play, and at worship—all grounded in the Christian concept of love.

This philosophy channels our energies to promoting high academic standards while helping students to achieve skills in creative and critical thinking using the best

integrated curriculum available. The objective of our instructional program is to enable the student to pursue the post-secondary education of his choosing, whether in college, university, or vocational training.

Our responsibility for the student encompasses the spiritual, mental, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional areas. These are inseparable, and through them all runs the thread of the spiritual. Therefore, it must be our aim to shun the tendency to teach the Bible compartmentally or on the intellectual level alone—the scarlet thread must be woven throughout the total curriculum.

It is apparent, then, that the types of activities we employ or permit in the classroom or school program will either facilitate or militate against our basic philosophy. The spiritual must permeate all areas—or else we become textbook oriented rather than student centered.

This philosophy dictates that we cooperate closely with parents in every phase of the student's development, always offering assistance in understanding the purposes of the Christian school.

**Note**

This is only a sample. Write your school philosophy carefully. Please do not merely copy this statement.

Sample Mission Statements

Model Christian School was established to provide quality education based on a firm foundation of God's Word. A basic responsibility of Christian parents is to "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Model Christian School is an extension of the Christian home, established to train each student in the knowledge of God and the Christian way of life. The staff of the school is dedicated to the responsibility of providing a high standard of education. *Model Christian School is fully accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International.*

*Meadow Creek Christian School Mission Statement
Used by permission*

The mission of Model Christian School is to educate and develop the whole person for the glory of God. The school adheres to biblical principles included in its published doctrinal statement.

Model Christian School desires to provide its students with a college-preparatory education set in the framework of Christian instruction and example. The

school offers boys and girls rigorous academic instruction, challenging athletic and recreational activities, and creative expression in the fine arts.

Model Christian School addresses educational practices from a Christian perspective by allowing our students the opportunity to begin to understand themselves and the world around them from a Christian worldview. Some of this education will be formal (chapel, Bible classes and studies, counseling), and some will simply happen as the faculty and students interact in the normal flow of school activity. The goal is to facilitate the development of the child academically, physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. The school employs faculty and leaders who serve as role models in their Christian walk, and who are maturing in both their professional life and their Christian faith.

*Trinity Christian Academy Mission Statement
Used by permission*

The purpose of Model Christian School is to provide a sound academic education integrated with the Christian view of God and the world based on the authoritative and inerrant Word of God. This educational program is designed for children whose parents are committed to a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is specific in stating the principles that underlie Christian education. The apostle Paul presented a comprehensive principle when he wrote of Christ, "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth . . . And He is before all things and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16,17). The Gospel of John states, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3).

Functioning as an extension of the Christian home, the school supports parents who seek to obey the biblical instruction that gives them ultimate responsibility for the education of their children (Deuteronomy 6:7–8). Because the Christian approach to learning differs significantly from the secular viewpoint, the school offers a curriculum rooted in a God-centered view of life. This view holds that God's truth is the standard for all truth. The curriculum, taught by a qualified Christian faculty, allows parents to provide their children with academic instruction consistent with the Christ-centered teaching received at home and at the church.

*Delaware County Christian School Mission Statement
Used by permission*



5

Structure, Organization, and Procedure

It is important to organize the school well at the very beginning. The director and board need to plan and document their plans. The school board needs to form committees or groups to assist the director in accomplishing the necessary tasks.

Job Description of the School Board

In any structure where people have authority, there must be a clear understanding of each person's assignment and a definition of the goals, functions, and limits of everyone's authority. Certainly this principle applies to the school board. Here are some questions that will need answering before board members can begin to work together:

- After seeking the Lord, will the board make decisions only when the members reach unanimity, or will a majority or a certain percentage be sufficient to make decisions?
- What types of decisions (policies) does the board need to make?
- What types of decisions (policies) does the board not need to make?
- What are the requirements for serving on the board?
- Who is going to be the legal representative (chairman) and for how long?
- Is being on the board considered a calling from the Lord?
- What are the obligations of board members for meetings, work groups, committees, etc.?
- What is the financial responsibility and commitment of the board?

As these questions are answered, record the answers, agree on them, and ask God to help you be faithful in their application. As planning continues, other questions may arise. The board can make decisions regarding the scope of its responsibilities.

All policies should be written in a special POLICY MANUAL. These policies will become the foundational principles for the operation of the school. Policies should be reviewed annually. As the board creates new policies and revises old ones, the POLICY MANUAL needs to be revised accordingly.

Job Description of the Director

The school director cannot be given responsibility without authority. If the director is to function effectively, the scope of responsibility, limits on authority, and ways of working with the board must be made clear. It is suggested that the director be a part of the board, as a voting or nonvoting member, present for all board meetings. Because the board will hold the director accountable, he or she must be able to share opinions and take part in the decision-making process. Listed below are some items that will need clarification in the director's job description:

- What types of decisions can the director make?
- What types of decisions should the director not make?
- What are the specific areas of the director's responsibility?
- What specific tasks will the director be expected to accomplish?

Spiritual Covering and Accountability

The Christian school needs to have some kind of spiritual covering and support. There will be times when the school will need specific prayer support, counsel, and advice from someone outside the board itself. The director and board should decide on a person (or persons) to provide this assistance. If possible, this should be a pastor (or pastors) or another spiritual leader who is fully behind the vision of the school in whom the director and board will feel confident and to whom they can be spiritually accountable.

Working Groups

It is not possible for one person to start or run a Christian school single-handedly. There are many responsibilities and needs. A group of people are needed to assist in accomplishing the task. The best way to work is to organize the board into groups that are responsible for different areas and have specific goals. The checklist below suggests areas.

The working groups should include as many members of the school board as possible. Belonging to a specific group will give them a sense of ownership and involvement as well as responsibility. The group should not have the final authority for the

work they have been assigned. Rather, their responsibilities will be to brainstorm, bring ideas, and present a well-defined proposal to the whole school board. These group activities will be a tremendous opportunity to work on relationship building and character. Be committed to listen to each other and work in unity. Prayer needs to be a constant element in the working groups.

✓ **Checklist: Structure**

- ✓ Write a job description for the school board.
- ✓ Write a job description for the director.
- ✓ Agree on spiritual covering and accountability.
- ✓ Create working groups (committees) for:
 - ✓ Finances, budget
 - ✓ Curriculum
 - ✓ Staff recruiting and public relations
 - ✓ Equipment and furniture orders
 - ✓ Facilities and renovation
 - ✓ Policies, rules, and regulations
 - ✓ Philosophy, purposes, scope, and mission statement of the school
 - ✓ Prayer
 - ✓ Other

Patterns of Organization and Procedure

The following information, approved by the ACSI executive board, is intended to review basic patterns of organization and procedures that will assist most Christian schools regardless of their size and years of ministry.

The following questions and answers are submitted with full knowledge that each school's particular setting requires different guidelines applicable to the local situation. Therefore, these comments are to be considered only as a point of reference and are not necessarily the final authority.

1. Who is ultimately responsible for the ministry of the school?

The corporate body that regards the school as its ministry and has officially affirmed that fact in its bylaws has the ultimate responsibility.

2. What corporate structures are most common among Christian schools?

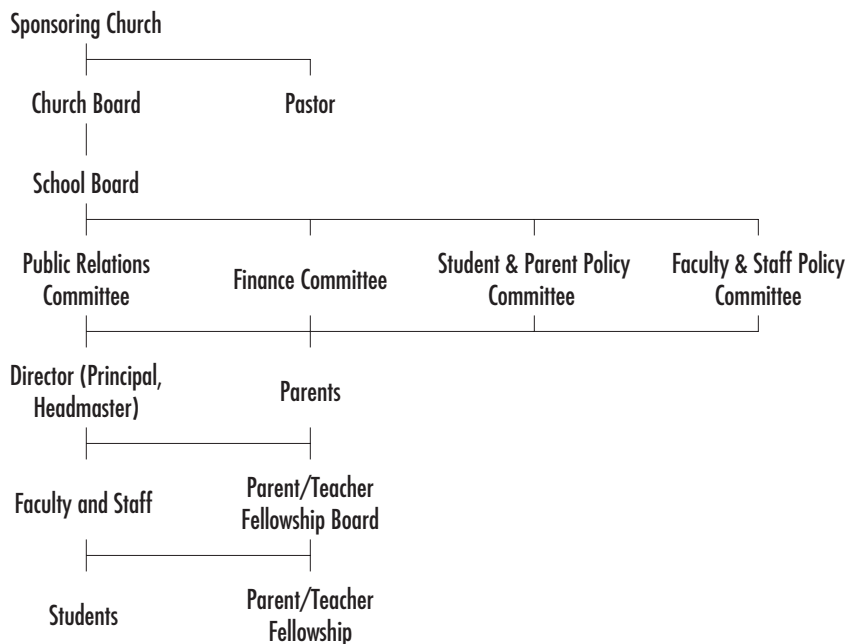
Local congregations sponsor many Christian schools. A smaller number of schools are board-sponsored schools or parent-society schools. A parent-

society school is a group of evangelical Christian parents who have formed a school corporation and elected from among themselves a school board to represent them.

3. What would a typical organizational chart look like?

Organizational structures differ in many ways. This sample organizational chart shows the structure of a typical church-sponsored school. This structure can be modified as needed to fit the local needs and organizational structure.

Sample: Church-Sponsored School



Note

Board committees may be organized differently than the above chart. These committees are usually considered necessary, but others can be added as needed.



6

Organizing a School Board

Most Christian schools have a board to develop policy and to be legally responsible for the school. There are different types of boards, depending on the way the Christian school is organized.

1. Church School

A board elected by the church congregation is responsible for making policy, hiring the director, and reviewing the financial reports of the school.

2. Board-Sponsored School

A board is appointed or elected, and they establish the school and are in charge of making policy, hiring, and making sure the school's financial needs are met. These boards can either be self-perpetuating (with new members elected by the board) or rotating with new members elected on a regular basis to serve a three-year term and others elected to take their place after they have served one or two terms.

3. Parent-Society School

A number of parents can organize as a group, elect a board from their own membership, and organize a school. The board is usually a rotating board; that is, members serve a three-year term, and others are elected to take their place after they have served one or two terms.

Any of the above schools can have a variety of purposes. Your school board should have fund-raising as a primary purpose.

It is important to keep in mind the purpose of the school. The board should develop a philosophy for the school with goals and objectives. These should determine how the school is organized. Some schools look upon themselves as an outreach to the community and seek to win the students and their families to Christ. Others feel they are to serve the Christian family and support Christian parents. Urban schools should do both.

Christian School Board Function

The board's principal function is to fulfill the wishes of the corporate body it represents. The board does this by establishing board policies on behalf of the corporation within the confines of the school's bylaws given to the board by the corporate body. The board then entrusts the implementation of its established policies and the day-to-day administrative decisions to its chief executive officer, the director (principal, superintendent, headmaster, administrator). One of the principal responsibilities of the school board is to employ a director in whom it has complete confidence to carry out the school's Christian mission and the basic board policies it has established. An urban Christian school board's responsibilities also include fund-raising and development.

The following questions, and the subsequent answers, are submitted in full recognition that each school's particular setting requires different guidelines applicable to the local situation and how and why the school is organized. Therefore, the comments are to be considered only as a point of reference and are not the final authority. You may have to develop your own approach to some of these questions on the basis of your local experience and demands.

1. What is the relationship of the director to the school board?

The director is the on-the-job administrative officer of the board and is delegated to carry out the policies and directives established by the board. The board's predominant attitude toward the director should be one of respect and confidence. If this attitude is lost, there is little hope for continued progress. Mutual respect and confidence are necessary basic commodities among all persons at all levels of the school operation for an effective school program.

The director's authority as the school's chief executive officer must be commensurate (no more, no less) with the responsibility entrusted to him or her by the school board. Behind every successful director is a board that upholds

him or her in prayer and gives him or her complete support publicly and privately.

2. What specific items contained in the school's bylaws will serve as a guide to the school board?

A set of bylaws is a statement of broad parameters for the board to follow in carrying out its mission. If the school is church sponsored, the school's bylaws should be established by the church board. The board of an independent Christian school will form its own bylaws since it has no higher authority base. The parents of a parent-society school, in a duly called meeting, will establish bylaws for the school's elected board to follow. The bylaws of a church-sponsored school that is incorporated separately from its church should be formed jointly by the school board and the board of the sponsoring church. The church board will concern itself only with the overall spiritual standards of the school.

School bylaws, regardless of a school's structure or purpose, should contain the following:

- a. The school's name
 - b. The school's spiritual objectives and statement of faith that each board and staff member must sign
 - c. The school's educational objectives
 - d. The corporate pattern of the school showing the lines of authority
 - e. A description of the selection or election process for board members, including a brief job description for each position on the board, and a procedure for the dismissal of board members
 - f. Employment and dismissal procedures for staff members
 - g. A procedure for amending the school's bylaws
3. What key things should a prospective board member look for when considering service on a Christian school board?

Before a prospective board member accepts a board position, he or she should be fully aware of the school's mission, its organizational structure, its

history, the legal and fiscal responsibilities of board members, the time commitment, and the administrative style of the school's chief executive officer (director).

4. What is generally expected of a Christian school board member?

If board members are to serve effectively, each should have a clear understanding of his or her responsibilities. All members should:

- a. Pray often for the spiritual and academic mission of the school.
- b. Attend and wholeheartedly participate in the school's board meetings. The board should set a limit on member absences.
- c. Have a certain level of social capital in the Christian and business communities.
- d. Attend at least two school functions per year, other than board meetings, to stay in touch with the life of the school.
- e. Stay in touch with the general Christian school movement by attending conferences or conventions that may be available in the area or country.
- f. Keep board information confidential.
- g. Serve actively on assigned committees.
- h. Give consideration and thought to board issues.
- i. Actively promote the school within the community.
- j. Voice opinions at board meetings kindly but clearly.
- k. Give and urge others to give as God enables.
- l. Keep board issues confidential.
- m. Willingly serve in leadership capacities.

5. What are the qualifications of board members, and how long should they serve?

Board members should be born-again believers who meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1–10. If the school is a local congregation church school, the church will be likely to require its school board members to be active members in the congregation. At least one member of the board should be a parent. Other school corporate structures often allow for considerable latitude in church representation on the board. Board members definitely should not be staff members of the school, and preferably not the spouse of a staff member. Employees of the church and school should serve only in an ex officio capacity—as nonvoting members of the board.

As valuable as many board members are, some schools feel it is advisable to insist that no board member can serve more than two three-year terms without taking one year off. This guideline provides a graceful way of maintaining new life on the board.

6. What procedures should a board member follow if he or she questions some phase of the director's work?

He or she should immediately take the matter to the director. Like everyone else, the director is not beyond the realm of human error. He or she is neither all-wise nor infallible! Constructive criticism offered in the spirit of being informative and helpful is always welcome. A person-to-person talk with the director will possibly add a further dimension of understanding not previously known to the board member, and vice versa. Most matters of concern can end at the person-to-person level.

If, however, the director's response does not solve the problem, the board member should take the matter to the board chairman. The chairman of the board, the board member, and the director should meet for further discussion. If the matter is not then resolved, the problem should be discussed by the board as a whole. The director should be present at the meeting, and all phases of the problem should be discussed freely. This follows the biblical principle given in Matthew 18.

7. What is the board member's responsibility when a parent comes to him or her with a complaint about one of the teachers?

If a parent complains to a board member about a teacher, the board member should urge the parent to follow the Matthew 18 pattern of resolving

problems at the lowest level possible—involving the fewest people. The Matthew 18 principle requires that parents talk to teachers about student problems before they talk to the director. If unresolved at the two-person level, the matter is prayerfully and in an orderly fashion moved upward in the school's organizational structure. This order is the Lord's way of solving person-to-person problems or misunderstandings.

8. Who prepares the agenda for the school board meeting?

Technically, it is the responsibility of the board chairman to prepare the board meeting agenda. However, the chairman usually delegates the mechanical responsibility to the director, with the understanding that the director will obtain the chairman's approval of the agenda before it is duplicated for the board meeting. Most directors keep a running list of agenda items that come up during the month (or between board meetings). Before the board meeting, the director will contact the board chairman to see whether there are other items that should be added. At the board meeting, the first matter of business will be to approve the agenda.

9. What form is acceptable for a good board meeting agenda?

The following form is suggested for use as the board agenda. Local school boards can adopt their own style. This is only one possible approach.

Model Christian School School Board Meeting

Date

AGENDA

- 1 Scripture and prayer
- 2 Approve the agenda
- 3 Reading of the minutes from the previous meeting
- 4 Treasurer's report
- 5 Director's progress report
- 6 Old business (any report needed to bring the board up-to-date on previously reported activities)
- 7 New business (any items of new business to be presented to the board for discussion and/or decision)
- 8 Adjournment: set time and place for next meeting

The name of the person who will present a particular agenda item can be listed following the item on the agenda.

10. What are some key points of ethics that Christian school board members should follow in dealing with school matters?
 - a. The board should not hold meetings without the director being present. The director is the board's main resource person. He or she knows more about the school's operation and all the people connected with it than any other person. The director can add a broad dimension of understanding to almost any subject discussed at the board meeting. However, on those occasions when the board may choose to discuss the director's salary or some other matter with which the director is personally concerned, the board may go into executive session without the director for that specific purpose.
 - b. The board should give fair warning in writing to the director if he or she is not measuring up to his or her responsibilities. The director should be given an opportunity to improve. If the director's

performance improves, he or she should be commended. If the work continues to be substandard to the point the director's ministry is not effective, he or she should be given notice no later than three months prior to the close of the school year to allow him or her to seek other employment. Do not hire the director's replacement before the director knows he or she is being released.

- c. Individual board members should not give directives to the director or to the teachers or staff members. Board members do not have administrative authority. They work through their chief executive officer—the director.
- d. In dealing with serious student or staff discipline matters, the board should show Christian compassion and understanding. The very manner in which the board establishes corrective measures is critical to spiritual restoration. Even when the outcome is expulsion or dismissal, ideally the offender, after some time for reflection, will agree that the board and director were just and acted with fairness and compassion.
- e. The board should be certain that school funds are being used for school purposes. It is unethical to use school funds for anything other than their intended purpose.
- f. The board should do the work of the school God's way. The Christian school is not a secular business. It is a ministry of faith carried out by God's people in the strong name of Jesus Christ.

Finally, Ephesians 4:1–3 challenges us to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

*Developed from an article by:
Dr. Paul A. Kienel*

Executive Session Policy

The board recognizes that periodically during its scheduled meetings it will encounter matters of a highly sensitive nature. These may include, but are not limited to, such things as personnel matters, student problems, and parent complaints. At such times the board may be called into executive session.

Executive sessions shall have in attendance all board members present at said meeting, the director of the school, and any other persons who are specifically asked by the board chairman to attend. When the executive session is for the purpose of evaluating the director or discussing the director's salary and benefits, the director may be asked not to attend.

Any board member can call for an executive session. No official business shall be transacted in the session. Rather, the time shall be used to discuss the sensitive matter at hand. When the board reconvenes following the executive session, the decision(s) shall be made and stated officially to allow the board secretary to record them in the official minutes.

School Board Committees

Most school boards do much of their planning and work through standing committees. Some boards allow only board members to serve on committees. Other schools encourage the expansion of committees to include people outside the board. The committee members must meet the spiritual requirements of board members but are not elected to the board. A board member must be the chairman of each committee.

Committees may include, but are not limited to, the following. (Smaller schools usually have fewer committees, and committees may handle more than one area.)

1. Education
2. Finance
3. Facilities
4. Development and Public Relations
5. Long-Range Planning
6. Transportation
7. Student Activities Committee
8. Student Aid
9. Admissions

Each committee is to meet independently and report to the board at the regular meetings through a written report submitted by the committee chairman. Non-board member committee members do not usually attend board meetings unless they are invited.

Qualifications for Board Committee Members

1. All committees must be chaired by a board member.
2. All regular committee members must be born-again Christians.
3. Membership on a committee is for a period to be determined by the board.
4. Committee members may be selected from any persons interested in the school.
5. All committee members must be approved by the board before they are asked to serve.
6. The Education Committee shall consist of school board members only.

Code of Ethics for the Board

It is extremely important for school board members to be directed by a code of ethics. Within the policies and procedures of any school, it is possible for a board member to be in compliance but to respond in an unethical manner. We need to move beyond “what I did was legal” to include ethical behavior as well.

A board member is expected to:

1. Be faithful in attendance at all board meetings. If unable to attend, he or she is responsible for notifying the board secretary or chairman in advance so that materials may be mailed to the absent board members.
2. Prepare for each board meeting by reviewing the agenda, the minutes of the last meeting, and other materials as necessary.
3. Be willing to give of his or her time and talent with a joyous spirit and to pray faithfully for the school.
4. Direct appropriate inquiries and complaints regarding school matters to the school director.

5. Commend the staff continually.
6. Refrain from inappropriate discussion of school board business at any non-business functions or gatherings.
7. Use God-given discretion in deciding what matters can be shared with his or her spouse so as to cultivate and maintain important partnership relationship with the spouse. Matters pertaining to personnel and other matters of a sensitive nature should not be shared outside the meeting.
8. Place a high priority on attending as many school functions as possible.
9. Refrain from reprimanding a teacher directly. Even when dealing with their own child's teacher, board members must seek to speak the truth in a kind way so as to avoid intimidation.
10. Abstain from entering into the day-to-day operation of the school.
11. Understand that individual board members have no authority apart from functioning with the total board. Decisions can be made only by the committee of the whole (unless otherwise stipulated in the bylaws).
12. Always call board meetings with the knowledge of the director.
13. Always deal with employees on the basis of Matthew 5:22–24, 18:15–20, and other passages that teach Christlike attitudes and dealings with Christian brothers and sisters.

Duties and Responsibilities of the School Board

To be spiritual leaders in the school, to seek God's will and direction for the school, and to take responsibility for preservation and restoration of right relations, primarily its relations with God (Galatians 6:1, 2; James 5:12, 20), the school board must:

1. Establish the policies of the school, adding to them and amending them when necessary.
2. Be actively involved in fund-raising and development.
3. Make and amend bylaws as necessary to carry out the objectives and purposes of the school.

4. Set the salary schedule for the director, faculty, and staff.
5. Hire a qualified director, faculty, and staff for the school.
6. Nominate candidates for the board and present such candidates to the (church, society, association).
7. Approve the annual budget.
8. Monitor income and expenditures against the budget and take corrective action if needed.
9. Maintain open communication with the church, society, faculty, parents, alumni, and friends.
10. Maintain proper relationships with any necessary government agencies.
11. Have a vision for the future of the school. Establish a long-range plan for the school.
12. Monitor all school activities on behalf of the (church, society, association).
13. In summary, exercise final authority in the school in all matters directed by the charter and bylaws.

School Board Officer Job Descriptions

The following are suggested job descriptions for the officers of the board. These can be adjusted as necessary to fit the local organization's structure and bylaws, and the policies of the school.

The Board Chairman

1. Lead all school board meetings.
2. Confer with the director regarding preparation of the agenda for each board meeting.
3. Appoint subcommittees of the board in the following areas: Facilities, Public Relations/Development, Finance, Education, Long-range Planning.
4. Act as an ex officio member of all committees.

5. Assign responsibilities to various working committees and coordinate the efforts of each committee so as not to duplicate or overlap responsibilities.
6. Follow up on all unfinished items of business to ensure their completion.
7. Formulate orientation sessions for new board members.
8. Sign contracts for the director, faculty, and staff members.
9. Appoint a nominating committee for the election of new board members.

The Vice Chairman

1. Act for the chairman when the president is not available, including ex officio member of committees.
2. Assist the chairman in his or her functions and responsibilities.
3. Complete special assignments given by the chairman.
4. Be particularly sensitive to the interpretation of biblical principles in curriculum and extracurricular activities.
5. Maintain the policy manual and bring to the attention of the board any revisions necessary to bring the manual into conformity with board action.

Secretary

1. Take minutes of all meetings of the board and record official action. Make certain that minutes are available for board meetings.
2. Keep the board handbook up-to-date.
3. Record all policies and policy changes in the policy manual, and help the vice chairman keep the manual up-to-date.
4. Handle all correspondence required for the effective operation of the board.
5. Serve as parliamentarian for all board (society) meetings.
6. Be certain the board does not unknowingly overturn prior board action.
7. Secure board members' annual affirmation of the statement of faith and any other necessary documents.

8. Attend all board meetings.

Treasurer

1. Oversee the financial records of the school.
2. Keep close watch on the school's cash position.
3. Be careful that the expenditures are in line with the budget. Be certain the school's books are properly maintained.
4. Recommend auditors to the board and work with the auditors regarding the annual audit.
5. Present and explain financial reports to the board.
6. Work closely with the financial institutions with which the school is involved.
7. Serve as a member of the Finance Committee.
8. Work with the Finance Committee to prepare and present the budget to the board (church, society, association).
9. Act as chairman of the Finance Committee.

Some schools give authority for some situations to the Executive Committee, which is made up of the chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer.

The Executive Committee shall have the authority and power to:

1. Act in the place of full board of directors on policy issues of a minor nature.
2. Handle serious discipline problems, working with the director.
3. Handle appeals from parents, working with the director.
4. Hire teacher(s) in an emergency situation, such as, but not limited to:
 - a. a vacancy immediately prior to the opening of school.
 - b. any immediate vacancy.

Checklist for the Board

Christian school board membership is an honor that provides an unusual opportunity to serve God. Board members must understand their responsibilities and perform them well for the school to be good. Attention to the items in this checklist will help the board get a good start, which is essential for a strong school.

Several things will become apparent from a study of this list: (1) not all items are of equal importance, (2) many items must be done concurrently, (3) some items take longer to accomplish than others, (4) completing the items requires the prayer, cooperation, and the hard work of several people, and (5) items unique to the local community may not appear on the list and should be added under "Other."

The checklist is simply that. It lists items that must be completed but does not tell how to do them. ACSI personnel may be able to help with suggestions on how some items can be accomplished in your setting. Some items may not apply.

by Dr. Roy W. Lowrie, Jr.

✓ **Checklist: Board**

General

Each board member should be:

- ✓ A Christian with a clear testimony.
- ✓ Qualified for spiritual leadership according to the standards in 1 Timothy 3.
- ✓ In agreement with the school's statement of faith.
- ✓ Convinced that it is God's will to establish the school.
- ✓ In harmony with the philosophy and objectives of the school.
- ✓ Praying for God's wisdom and leading in all school matters.
- ✓ Reading Scripture and applying it to board work.
- ✓ Individualistic but still subject to the entire board.
- ✓ Actively maintaining the unity of the Spirit.
- ✓ Faithful in attending board meetings.
- ✓ Conscientious in fulfilling responsibilities and assignments.
- ✓ Well connected in the local community.
- ✓ Other.

Legal

Each board member should be assured that:

- ✓ The constitution, bylaws, and statement of faith are in order.
- ✓ If the school is organized independently of a church, the incorporation papers have been completed.
- ✓ The church constitution has been revised to permit the establishment of a school.
- ✓ If the school is independently organized from a church, the requirements for securing tax exemption status need to be understood and followed.
- ✓ Any governmental educational requirements have been studied and are being met.
- ✓ Board members have been properly elected or appointed.
- ✓ If necessary, a checking account has been opened in the school's name.
- ✓ Procedures have been established for gifts to the school to be receipted and acknowledged promptly.
- ✓ A schedule of regular board meetings has been adopted, and meetings are called properly.
- ✓ Careful minutes of the meetings are kept in a central location, and copies are mailed to members prior to the next meeting.
- ✓ Board policies are recorded in a separate manual of board policies.
- ✓ The buildings to be used have been approved for school use (if necessary) by the proper governmental authorities.
- ✓ The school is properly insured in all areas.
- ✓ Other.

Faculty and Staff

Each board member should know that:

- ✓ The right person has been hired to be the director (principal, headmaster, administrator).
- ✓ Teachers have been carefully selected by the director and approved by the board.
- ✓ Staff members have been carefully selected by the director.
- ✓ Salary schedules have been adopted for director, faculty, and staff.
- ✓ The salary schedules are adhered to strictly.
- ✓ There is a plan for adding fringe benefits prudently.
- ✓ Faculty and staff application forms have been developed.
- ✓ A sound contract has been developed that protects the school and the individual as well. Overly binding contracts are not recommended.
- ✓ Job definitions have been developed for the director and staff members.
- ✓ Other.

Financial

Each board member should be assured that:

- ✓ All money is accounted for very carefully.
- ✓ Accounting categories have been established consistent with the budget.
- ✓ Regular financial statements are presented to the entire board.
- ✓ A projected annual budget has been carefully prepared and adopted.
- ✓ Budgeting is realistic.
- ✓ Procedures for purchasing and for payment of bills have been established and are followed carefully.
- ✓ The budget is not exceeded without the approval of the board. A general policy has been adopted that expenses do not exceed income. However, increased enrollment may require increased expenditures within the limit of funds available. (The budget may be adjusted when actual income figures become clear.)
- ✓ Tuition charges (if any) have been established.
- ✓ Policies have been set for payment of tuition (if any).
- ✓ Policies have been set to handle delinquent tuition accounts.
- ✓ Other.

Admissions

Each board member should be sure that:

- ✓ Admissions policies and procedures have been clearly defined and are in writing.
- ✓ Admission forms have been developed.
- ✓ Interviews with prospective students and their parents are required. (This may not be possible in some situations.)
- ✓ No exceptions are made to admissions policies without board approval.
- ✓ Admission tests are provided if required.
- ✓ The school accepts only those students whom it is qualified to educate.
- ✓ Other.

Board Organization

Each board member should be sure that:

- ✓ Clear policies have been set for the nomination, appointment or election, and re-appointment or re-election of board members.
- ✓ A board/director policy has been adopted to show that the board sets the policies, and the director is responsible for administering those policies.
- ✓ The board/director policy is followed.
- ✓ As the school grows, the board is divided into committees that work with the director in areas such as: (1) education, (2) admissions, (3) finance, (4) promotion, (5) building and grounds improvement, and (6) long-range planning.
- ✓ Non-board members are invited to serve on subcommittees but must be approved by the board before being invited.
- ✓ The chairman of each subcommittee is always a board member.
- ✓ Each board meeting begins with a portion of the Bible and prayer for God's wisdom and leading.
- ✓ Board meetings convene regularly at an established time and place. Lack of attendance beyond three meetings in succession without legitimate excuse may result in the board member being asked to resign.
- ✓ Subcommittees of the board, when appointed, meet regularly at an established time and place.
- ✓ The parent-teacher group (if any) is well organized, is coordinated with the board and the director, and is ultimately under the authority of the board.
- ✓ Other.

Selected Suggestions

Each board member should feel free to:

- ✓ Visit several established Christian schools (if possible) and ask many questions.
- ✓ Request help from Urban School Services of ACSI.
- ✓ Make a commitment to excellence in Christian education at the outset.
- ✓ Send the director, as well as personally attend, Christian school conventions, conferences, and institutes.
- ✓ Invite a Christian school consultant to meet with the board.
- ✓ Invite Christian school leaders to speak at the school, with the approval of the board and director.



7

Policies

There is no organization that can function effectively without a reasonable number of policies and regulations that are clearly understood and consistently applied. The director and board will need to begin to write policies and procedures that will govern the various areas of school life.

The board must develop and document policies and procedures for the functioning of the school and board. They will not be able to develop all of these policies before they begin the work of starting the new school, but they can decide on a few to begin with. As needs arise, the board must develop policies to govern their decisions and then document the policies and procedures so they will become a regular part of the board's function.

Discipline

The director and teachers need clear guidelines that govern how to organize and administer discipline in classes and how the director will work with the teachers in disciplining children. Here are some thoughts that the director and the teachers must keep in mind when developing discipline standards:

1. Effective discipline develops a maximum of self-direction.
2. Effective discipline helps a child to know and accept himself or herself better.
3. Effective discipline is based on justice and fairness.
4. Effective discipline should help a child to change his or her perception of a situation.

5. Effective discipline uses control judiciously.
6. Effective discipline is consistent.
7. Effective discipline develops a sense of responsibility.

(More suggestions for developing standards for discipline are included later in the chapter.)

School Rules and Regulations

Rules are not just to help in case of difficulties in relationships. Rather, rules help to keep the school running smoothly in all its activities. Rules need to be developed to protect the child from danger. Regulations governing activities on the playground, in the hallways, and during athletic events need to be clearly developed and understood, including forbidden actions such as throwing stones, pushing others down the stairs, and playing with scissors. Rules are needed to protect school property, furniture, and equipment. Some of these rules need to be stated in advance and included in the parent manual. The director must make sure that all internal rules are clearly written and understood by the teachers, parents, and students. He or she must make sure that clear rules and guidelines are established for dealing with emergency situations, such as fires. As the school grows, rules can be added, deleted, or adjusted as necessary.

Administrative Procedures

It is good to document some simple procedures regarding some of the administrative work and responsibilities. Take time to think through procedures and document them. It is important to keep a clearly written record of the director's work to allow for continuity if the director leaves the school. As administrative policies are developed, they should be recorded in an Administrative Manual. This manual will become extremely helpful to the director and board as the school continues to grow and develop. The manual should begin to outline the responsibilities of the administration on a monthly basis. If careful records are maintained during the first year of operation, this part of the manual can be developed from those records and will serve as a reminder to the administration of how to plan for upcoming events and activities. Some items to consider include:

- Hiring teachers
- Interviewing and accepting students
- Handling difficult situations with teachers, students, and/or parents

- Retention, dismissal, expulsion of students
 - Emergencies—accidents needing medical attention
 - Teacher illness, substitute needed
 - A vehicle out of order and needed for transport
 - Organizing outside activities in bad weather
 - Financial policies (a family's inability to pay the tuition or fees when due)
 - Special activities—plays, programs, musical presentations
 - Public relations—letting the community know about the school and its activities
-

Developing a Policy Manual

A BASIS FOR EFFICIENCY AND CONSISTENCY

Every school needs to develop policies that guide all aspects of school life and experience. These policies help keep the school running smoothly. The board develops policies and expects the director (administrator, headmaster, principal, superintendent) to carry them out as the chief executive officer of the board. Without clear policies the operation of the school is often inconsistent and haphazard, and unfortunate episodes may occur that give the school a poor testimony within the school community and the community at large.

Properly administering a Christian school is a most difficult task. A well-designed policy manual gives the director the protection necessary to handle efficiently the questions and problems encountered daily. It provides immediate answers, many of which cannot wait until a regularly scheduled board meeting. The well-designed policy manual becomes the director's friend. It frequently saves him or her from the need to make quick decisions that might be emotionally influenced in the absence of policies.

A policy manual helps directors follow consistently the way the school administers and manages personnel, students, finances, employee benefits, and general school procedures. A good manual provides the director with a framework of rules (policies) within which to function. It gives him or her immediate control and strengthens his or her position as the leader of the school so that answers need not be delayed until the board has had time to make decisions.

Policies are used by the director as a guide to discretionary action. Well-written policies are narrow enough to give clear guidance to the decision maker but broad

enough to allow him or her to use discretion in individual cases. Basically, policies can ensure that all persons are treated fairly. There should be no suggestion of favoritism if the policies adopted are equitably enforced. The Golden Rule, which is the measurement of fairness, says, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). Thus it is wise to approve policies well in advance of need. Planning and thinking through the ramifications of a policy before its implementation is valuable. Rational ideas can be adopted before emotions are tied to personal problems and situations involving school employees or students. It is better to work on a policy while cool heads prevail rather than in a heated board session.

The important principle to keep in mind is that the board establishes policy and the director carries it out. Policies give the director the sense of direction needed without neutralizing the professional skills for which he or she is paid. Some schools have run into difficulty simply because the roles of the board and the director were not firmly understood by both parties. Boards should not administer the school. If they do, they are exhibiting a lack of confidence in the director. Actually, the four main functions of the board are (1) to hire and fire employees, (2) to establish and maintain a budget, (3) to establish school policy, and (4) fund-raising and development.

What Is Policy?

A policy is an idea that has the full authority of the board behind it. To willfully break a policy, therefore, is to willfully commit insubordination. Policy is company law. Policy should communicate to employees, from the top down, what the board expects. A good policy manual will allow the director freedom from making routine day-in and day-out decision, leaving time for more crucial and challenging matters.

Policies should always be in written form. Verbal traditions (and that is what some schools have for policies) are open to interpretation and misunderstanding, while written policies will generally be upheld in a court as long as they are not contrary to law. It is always wise to have an attorney look over the school's policy manual (if possible) to be sure the policies are well within the law.

Procedures in Policy Writing

Effective policies and regulations must be precise and clear. They must express as succinctly as possible the board's decision about what should be done (policies) and the director's guidelines as to how, by whom, when, and where it will be done (regulations).

The language used should be formal enough for precision but not stilted or legalistic. The policies should read easily enough to be understood by students, parents, employees, and board members. Educational or legal jargon should be purposefully avoided.

Every effort should be made to maintain consistency in style and format as the policy manual is developed. It helps if one person (possibly the chief executive officer) has the responsibility for writing all policies, adopting a clear format and a readable style. The same style should be used in subsequent policy writing.

Usually policy is first developed by the director, working with school personnel. A proposed policy statement is then given to the board for their consideration. The director usually knows what policy is needed and why. Having the proposed policy written out and ready for the board does not assume that it will be adopted as presented, but it gives specific wording for the board to review. Rewriting may be necessary, but providing a sample can save much time for the board.

*Developed from an article by:
Dr. Raymond E. White and
Dr. Richard E. Wiebe*

✓ **Checklist: Policies**

- ✓ Board policies and procedures are developed and recorded.
- ✓ Discipline procedures are made clear.
- ✓ School rules and regulations are developed and shared with all who are involved.
- ✓ Administrative procedures are developed.

Discipline Policies

As a vital part of the school's policy, principles of discipline need to be clearly developed and understood. The following principles taken from Scripture may be helpful.

How Does Good Discipline Develop?

Good discipline requires specific training. Acceptable behavior for a group of children in and out of the classroom needs to be taught as one would teach any other subject. Some of the following suggestions may prove helpful in developing positive discipline:

1. Children need to be given standards to follow in their conduct, and they need many opportunities to practice acceptable conduct.
2. Children are ready for different types of learning at various stages of their development. The teacher should be familiar with the general characteristics of the age of his or her students, what they have already learned, and what they need to learn. For instance, young children have more limited control than older children. Their concepts of right and wrong, and of rules and exceptions, are not yet well defined. Older children are more capable of postponing immediate needs and accepting limitations.
3. Children learn best when their trust and affection make them want to please the person in authority.
4. Children differ in their needs and responses. Awareness of individual differences should temper the discipline to suit the child. The needs of children in general, and each child in particular, should be considered in setting standards. Children have: physical needs (such as rest and activity), social needs (contact and interaction with others), and emotional needs (affection, acceptance, achievement). Some children need more activity, more contact, and more affection than others.
5. No method of discipline is equally effective with all children. A few stern words may stop a problem with a child who is sensitive to social control but might make the problem worse for another child.

Children do not learn good behavior chiefly by being punished for their misdeeds. They learn by *example*, by *instruction*, by *practice*, and by *their mistakes*. (Children should learn from their mistakes; they should not just suffer for them.)

Suggestions to Help Discipline

1. Help the child understand what is denied. Secure the child's attention; allow for natural slowness.
2. Allow the child to use all the judgment he or she is capable of using.
3. "Obey me or else" is inadequate as the sole approach to discipline. A mutual respect and cooperation need to be developed in the classroom. Children need guidance. They are most likely to accept it if they are treated with consideration. Initiative and judgment in the child are qualities of value. Shy, cowering personalities thrive on blind obedience.

4. Expect the best from each child.
5. Encourage each child.
6. Be aware of the children's feelings.
7. Listen more.
8. Take time to be helpful.
9. Develop reasons for the classroom and school rules.
10. Develop some standards of behavior cooperatively. Good discipline is not synonymous with authoritarian control. Children can set up rules for certain activities and evaluate their conduct in terms of their rules.
11. Be consistent. But when you are not, be honest and ask forgiveness from the child or children.
12. Be firm and not apologetic. Being firm does not mean being dictatorial. Teachers should develop a "kind, loving firmness."
13. Understand that personal contact pays off: a smile, a nod of approval; a word or two of specific, honest praise; a question that calls for and secures a successful answer.
14. Be aware of small groups that form in the class, and help each child relate to the rest of the children, making a socially well-integrated class.
15. Have fun with your class.
16. Develop a good school spirit through effective academics and interesting activities.



8

Personnel

Selection of the faculty and other personnel is one of the most important tasks of the board and the director. The teachers and other staff members must be thoroughly Christian in belief and lifestyle. They are the “living curriculum” in the Christian school. The example of their lives will teach more than the subject content.

Recruiting and Hiring a Director

The selection of a director is crucial. The director will be the stable leader of the Christian school. He or she must be a gifted leader who can inspire those who are led. The person must be a well-grounded Christian with a positive lifestyle. It is important that the person be able to relate well with local pastors and parents. It is extremely helpful (but not absolutely essential) for the person to have formal training and experience in school administration.

Checklist for the Director

The director (administrator, principal, headmaster, superintendent) is the key person in the Christian school. The quality of the school is related to the spiritual gifts, personal qualities, professional competence, and diligence of the director. He or she is the person most accountable for the progress of the school.

The directorship of a Christian school is a ministry to children, teenagers, parents, teachers, staff, and other administrators. It is a professional and spiritual task. It offers a unique opportunity to serve God. If the director is strong and competent, a good school will be developed, and God’s name will be respected and honored in the community.

Several things will become obvious in the study of the checklist that follows: (1) some items are more significant than others, (2) many things have to be done at the same time, (3) prayer, study, and hard work are needed, and (4) items unique to the local community may not appear on the list, and should be added under "Other."

It is the purpose of the checklist to identify items that the director must do as the school is being planned. It also includes things that must be completed during the first year of the school to establish a good administrative base. However, an annual review of the checklist will be most productive.

The checklist identifies things that must be accomplished, but it does not tell how to do them. If additional help is needed, it is available from ACSI headquarters or from one of ACSI's regional offices.

Each of the following general items should be true about the director who is chosen to lead the school.

Dr. Roy W. Lowrie, Jr.

✓ **Checklist: Director**

The director is:

- ✓ A Christian with a clear testimony.
- ✓ Qualified for spiritual leadership according to the standards in 1 Timothy 3.
- ✓ In agreement with the school's statement of faith.
- ✓ A mature Christian.
- ✓ Gifted by God for the position.
- ✓ In possession of the personal qualities the position demands.
- ✓ If at all possible, trained as a school director.
- ✓ Able to inspire people to their best efforts.
- ✓ A leader by example, not by lording it over people.
- ✓ Deeply aware of God's call to serve Him in a Christian school.
- ✓ Knowledgeable about the Bible and able to apply its principles to school administration.
- ✓ Committed to excellence in Christian school education.
- ✓ An able soul-winner.
- ✓ Highly respected as a Christian and as an educator.
- ✓ In excellent physical and mental health.
- ✓ Courageous.
- ✓ Willing to work hard for long-distance goals.
- ✓ Able to submit to the authority of the board without chafing or murmuring.
- ✓ If at all possible, an experienced classroom teacher.
- ✓ If at all possible, an experienced school director.
- ✓ A student of the philosophy and objectives of the Christian school.
- ✓ Able to endure hardship with a high threshold of tolerance.
- ✓ Able to discipline without undue pressure or coercion.
- ✓ A constant reader of a wide variety of materials.
- ✓ A good member of a gospel-preaching church.
- ✓ Able to pray matters through to their solution.
- ✓ Representative of the demographics of the school.
- ✓ Other.

The remaining checklist items are things that the director must complete, or in some instances, plan or evaluate.

Board/Director Relationship

- ✓ This relationship is kept clear and open.
- ✓ The director respects and obeys the board.
- ✓ The director is the chief school leader and is projected to the public by the board as the head of the school.
- ✓ The director understands the organization and procedures of the board.
- ✓ The director attends all board meetings and reports at each.
- ✓ There is a good job description for the director.
- ✓ As needed, job descriptions are developed for assistant directors, department heads, development directors, and business managers.
- ✓ An administrative flowchart has been developed showing the lines of direct authority and the lines of advisory recommendations for all administrative personnel, faculty, and staff.
- ✓ A director-board policy has been defined, is clearly understood by the director, and is followed by the director.
- ✓ Other.

Personnel Administration

- ✓ Exercise spiritual and educational leadership.
- ✓ Recruit and recommend to the board a class A faculty that is demographically representative of the school population. (This is the number one job of the director.)
- ✓ Recruit and hire a class A staff.
- ✓ Keep accurate personnel records.
- ✓ Maintain a good relationship with government educational entities, making certain that the school is meeting all their requirements.
- ✓ See that the school buildings and grounds are inspected by the proper authorities (if required) with letters of approval (if required) properly displayed or filed.
- ✓ Define performance standards for the faculty and staff.
- ✓ Work out equitable, reasonable workloads for faculty and staff.
- ✓ Evaluate the performance of individual faculty and staff members.
- ✓ Handle the questions and grievances of faculty and staff.
- ✓ Apply Matthew 18:15–17 to the problems that arise.
- ✓ Line up qualified substitute teachers.
- ✓ Arrange a good program for faculty devotions to be held each morning before school starts.
- ✓ Maintain the unity of the Holy Spirit among the faculty and staff.
- ✓ Encourage the spiritual and professional growth of each faculty and staff member.
- ✓ Other.

Supervision

- ✓ Outline the general methods and procedures to be followed in the classroom.
- ✓ Begin to establish policies, and record them in the faculty manual or handbook.
- ✓ Organize the standing committees of the faculty.
- ✓ Appoint faculty members to committees or to special assignments.
- ✓ Plan the in-service program.
- ✓ Prepare for regular faculty meetings.
- ✓ Establish discipline standards, policies, and procedures.
- ✓ Establish and supervise the admissions testing/interview program.
- ✓ Establish and supervise the annual testing program.
- ✓ Schedule regular conferences with individual faculty and staff members.
- ✓ Coordinate the work of any other administrative staff.
- ✓ See that the buildings and grounds are properly maintained.
- ✓ Determine the permanent records to be kept for each student, and supervise the keeping of such records.
- ✓ Coordinate school activities with church activities (if the school is a church school, or is housed in a church).
- ✓ Other.

Research

- ✓ Define the course of study, showing the scope and sequence for each grade level.
- ✓ Identify the problems of the school.
- ✓ Plan solutions for school problems.
- ✓ Encourage the board and faculty to identify and solve their own problems.
- ✓ Keep abreast of significant educational research.
- ✓ Determine what texts, equipment, and supplies are needed and place the orders well in advance of need.
- ✓ Be a key member of the long-range planning committee.
- ✓ As the school matures, lead the school in becoming accredited with an organization qualified to accredit Christian schools, such as ACSI.
- ✓ Attempt to make accurate five-year projections on the growth of the school.
- ✓ Have a personal program of professional growth. (Attend as many Christian school conferences, conventions, and institutes as possible.)
- ✓ Help each teacher define a personal program of professional growth.
- ✓ Visit regularly with a seasoned Christian school director. If one is not near, keep in touch by mail, email, or telephone.
- ✓ Promote the school wherever possible.
- ✓ Other.

Finance

- ✓ Pray and work hard for the financial stability of the school.
- ✓ Help develop the school's budget and administer it effectively.
- ✓ Follow the board's purchasing policies.
- ✓ Get board permission before overspending the budget.
- ✓ Keep faculty members informed of all financial matters affecting them personally, or their department.
- ✓ Develop a salary computation worksheet to show each teacher how his or her salary figure was derived.
- ✓ See that faculty members understand and follow the school's procedure for ordering.
- ✓ Establish and oversee the petty cash fund.
- ✓ Set up security precautions for cash left overnight in the school building.
- ✓ Determine the procedures to be followed in handling all money that comes to the school office.
- ✓ On occasion, speak to prospective donors, or write to them, about the financial needs of the school.
- ✓ Prepare recommendations for next year's budget.
- ✓ Other.

Selected Suggestions

1. There is some wisdom in not having the spouse of the director or of a board member on the school's office staff or faculty.
2. Because a pastor's job is often very demanding, it is difficult for him to have time to serve also as the school's director. Another person is definitely needed, serving as director or teaching director depending on the size of the school.
3. Join national or regional organizations for Christian schools and directors.
4. If the director is not well trained for the job, require that he or she agree to become properly trained in Christian school administration as soon as possible.

Some additional thoughts for directors/principals:

If the school does not have a teacher job description, it is recommended that one be developed. (Please see ACSI's *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School* for sample job descriptions.) The administration can confer with teachers to receive their input, or use this suggested model, sharing it with the faculty to receive their input. Teachers need to understand that a job description provides a good basis for

evaluation. Using the job description ensures that each party understands what is expected and leaves less room for miscommunication and misunderstanding. If the director/principal asks for suggestions from the teachers, he or she should be sure to listen to them and let them know their input is valued. After working together with the faculty, the director/principal should develop a draft for the job description and present it to the board for adoption for the following school year.

A sample teacher evaluation form is included in ACSI's *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School*. The sample can be used as a basis for developing your own school's evaluation form. The director/principal should work with the faculty to evaluate the sample and develop a model that will be useful and realistic.

When evaluating the teacher, the administrator should provide a copy of the form for the teacher to use for self-evaluation. The director/principal can then use the same form for an independent evaluation. After both evaluations are completed, the director/principal and the teacher can meet together and discuss any significant differences in the evaluations. This discussion often leads to items that should be listed for improvement. Both the teacher and the director/principal should sign the evaluation form at the close of the summary interview, and the form can be filed with the teacher's personnel records.

Conclusion

Christian school leadership is a rewarding ministry. It is not, however, an easy one. There are constant problems and continuous stresses on the Christian school director. In addition, there is satanic opposition. There is also a lack of leaders who are spiritually and academically qualified to give top performance.

The opportunities to know God, to be creative, to see God provide people and property, to work in harmony with fellow teachers and staff, to know the joys and problems of children and teenagers, to see students saved, and to work with God's people—these are what make the directorship a very happy way to fulfill the promises of commitment that a professional Christian educator has made to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

Recruiting and Hiring Teachers

Before your school starts looking for teachers, list the conditions for teaching in your school and what you have to offer in return. What can you offer in salary and

benefits? Will you offer in-service training for the teachers? Then you need to answer a few other questions. Should teachers have basic Christian training? Should they have experience in teaching, or will you hire newly trained teachers?

When these questions are answered (and perhaps others you think of), the profile of the teachers for whom you are looking and praying will be clearer. You will be able to plan your strategy more effectively and target potential teachers more precisely. Believe God for quality teachers and don't give in (under the pressure of time) to the temptation to accept someone who doesn't meet the requirements you know you should be expecting.

Advertising through local churches is often the most productive way to find interested Christian teachers. Some ways of doing this include posters on the bulletin board, announcements from the pulpit, and flyers distributed in Sunday school classes. Contacts with Christian colleges and universities can be helpful.

Application Form/Teacher Interviews

Develop an application form to be filled out by interested teachers. The form should ask for name, address, telephone, personal information, educational background, professional training, experience, motivation for wanting to teach in a Christian school, and a list of three or four people the school can contact as references. These should include a pastor, a professional person (educator if possible), and a friend.

After the application form has been completed and the director has time to review the information and contact the references, it is time for the director to schedule a personal interview with the prospective teacher. At the interview the director will want to hear the teacher's personal testimony, review his or her philosophy of education, and have the applicant describe his or her training, experience, and classroom control. The prospective teacher should be encouraged to ask any questions about the school's ministry, procedures, etc.

If after the references have been checked the director is pleased with the outcome of the interview and decides to hire the teacher, he or she should be introduced to the school board for a short interview. Board members will want to ask questions about the teacher's motivation, strong and weak points, willingness to work with a team, confidence in working in a pioneering situation, etc. The board should prepare in advance the questions they will ask. After the applicant has met the board, the director should take a few days to pray, seek the will of God, and get feedback from the board.

Teachers need to prepare for substitutes by having clear, written lesson plans, a student seating chart, and any other information that would assist them.

Staff Manual

Information and instructions for teachers should be clearly stated in a staff manual. During the first year the manual may be incomplete, but it can be added to as the year progresses and procedures are developed. Policies need to be established to govern all functions of the school. The staff manual presents these policies to the teachers and should include such information as:

- an annual calendar of events: a detailed list of all school activities as well as any meetings teachers need to attend
- school timetable and weekly class schedule
- curriculum outline and content
- the purpose and content of homework
- how to use the grading system
- Christian character development strategy
- absence procedures and preparation for the substitute
- children's evaluation techniques
- discipline principles, procedures, and practical ideas

A handbook for the administration is extremely helpful. As administrative policies are developed, they should be included in a director's manual. The manual should also include the calendar of school events. The manual's format should list responsibilities and activities by the months of the year. This will remind the director and his or her staff what needs to be prepared for during the year. Again, this manual cannot be completely developed before the first year a school is in operation. It can become a project to be worked on during the first few years of the school's existence and will eventually save a great deal of time and anxiety.

Teacher Training

It is helpful to plan a few times during the school year when teacher training is provided. This training can take place once a month or once every few months and can be scheduled for after school, Saturday morning, or an afternoon every few weeks when the school day is shortened. The director can provide some of this training in the early development of the school. All the teachers will need to be "trained" in the great responsibility of being models in the children's lives. The director will need to spend time with them to help them understand the school's vision, or mission, and the basic principles of Christian education. Good books on the

subject can be selected in advance, or the director and/or other qualified individuals can lead seminars. A Christian teacher should continually seek opportunities for growth and learning.

It is important that teacher orientation be provided in the week before school begins. A part of each day can be spent in training and sharing, and teachers can spend the balance of the day preparing their classroom and materials for the opening of school. For the school's first year it can be very helpful to take two weeks before school begins. This plan will allow more time for training, discussion, clarification of procedures, and preparation of the facilities.

Evaluating the Teacher

As the school grows, self-evaluation forms should be developed for the teachers. Filling out such forms helps teachers understand themselves and their ministry better.

The director will also want to evaluate the teachers regularly. It is helpful to use a prepared form; samples are included in ACSI's *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School*. Use the samples carefully, adapting them to your situation and making them your own.

Following self-evaluation by the teacher and formal evaluation by the director, the teacher and director should discuss the evaluations. It is wise to encourage the teacher by highlighting some of the strengths that the director has observed. Then one or two goals can be set for growth and improvement. Teachers need to know in advance that the director will help and support them in their work and ministry. (See: Faculty Evaluation form in ACSI's *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School*.)

Another important issue for the director to remember is that God has called him or her to be a leader in the school, a responsible shepherd for the people God has entrusted to him or her. It is wise for the director to take the time to listen to the teachers' personal needs and minister to them as often as needed. This approach helps to build unity into the ministry.

Personnel Form

When a person is hired, present him or her with a Personnel Form prepared specifically for your school. This record will be given to your bookkeeper for the information needed by that department and then added to the teacher's personnel file.

Types of information that can be included on this form:

- birth date
- age
- emergency contact
- next of kin
- doctor's name/number
- social security or ID number
- health insurance (if appropriate)
- tuition allowances (if appropriate)

For schools in the United States

Attach to the form a copy of the I-9 form from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Federal law now requires that this form must be completed within three (3) business days of someone's being hired to "prove" that the person is eligible for a job in the United States. To avoid discrimination charges (and possible fines), the form must be given to all new employees, not just those who may look as if they might be aliens. This form does not have to be sent to any agency but must be retained on file in the school office subject to inspection by INS agents or officials from the Department of Labor. They are supposed to give you three day's notice prior to a visit to inspect the file.

✓ Checklist: Personnel

- ✓ The board determines the type of person desired for the office of director (see information on the director).
- ✓ Director recruited, interviewed, and hired.
- ✓ Methods of recruiting teachers determined.
- ✓ Teacher application form developed.
- ✓ Teacher interview format determined.
- ✓ Teachers interviewed and presented to the school board.
- ✓ If governmental authorization for personnel is needed, it is applied for and received.
- ✓ Teacher contract developed and approved.
- ✓ Support staff advertised for (substitute teachers, cleaning person, secretary, drivers, others).
- ✓ Substitute procedures established.
- ✓ Information for staff manual gathered or developed:
 - ✓ calendar for the year
 - ✓ weekly class schedule
 - ✓ daily time schedule
 - ✓ curriculum outline for each grade level or class
 - ✓ purpose and content of homework
 - ✓ grading system and reports to parents
 - ✓ discipline philosophy and procedures
 - ✓ character development strategies
- ✓ Staff manual produced.
- ✓ Teacher in-service training planned before school begins.
- ✓ Teacher self-evaluation form developed.
- ✓ Teacher evaluation form for director's use developed.



9

Curriculum

Textbooks, workbooks, and other curriculum materials need to be selected with great care. If possible, it is good to have a basic collection of Christian materials to use in the classroom. However, if these are not available, it will be necessary to select carefully from secular publishers or government agencies materials that can be used in the Christian school. To do this, teachers must review the materials carefully to see where adaptations and additions may be needed in order to include the biblical view of creation and order. If secular texts are used, the teacher becomes an even more critical component, since he or she will need to interpret the printed materials provided for the students.

Curriculum Policies

The director and board will need to develop policies governing the purchase and use of curriculum materials, keeping some of the following questions in mind:

- What types of materials will be used—Christian, secular, both?
- Will there be any limits on cost?
- Will the school attempt to have curriculum materials donated?
- When and how will materials be ordered?
- How will the purchases be paid for?

Teacher Training for Curriculum Use

If the teachers help evaluate the textbooks and workbooks before they are purchased, they will already have an introduction to the content and the approach used in them. Training should be provided to help the teachers know best how to make use of the curriculum materials. Some publishers provide training materials.

The director should review this information carefully to make certain it is in agreement with the school's philosophy and goals. Teachers can review the materials, and seminars can be provided to help them understand the curriculum. Teachers like to work together to plan how to organize the curriculum so that they know the sequence of what is taught from grade to grade. If the publisher provides a scope and sequence, it can be helpful to the director and the teachers as they assign content to each level. Do not be afraid to adjust the publisher's scope and sequence to meet the needs of your students.

Developing Curriculum for the Christian School

This chapter is designed to help leaders in Christian schools know how to develop a curriculum plan. Curriculum development takes significant time and effort, but it is important to have a well-developed plan for the entire school population. This chapter cannot be specific about what should be contained in your school's curriculum. Because Christian schools worldwide serve many different populations, each school's curriculum plan will be unique.

The Beginning

Curriculum development will require the involvement of many people. The school's director (or curriculum person) should lead the process, and teachers and other personnel can assist as the plan is developed. A group working together can develop a better plan than one person would be able to do.

If yours is a new school, basic curriculum plans can be made to get the school started, but the curriculum development process will need to continue after the school opens so that the curriculum can be further developed and clarified. It is not possible to have a perfect curriculum plan before a new school begins. Even if the school does not yet have a director or faculty, the planning committee can begin to put together a basic curriculum. This initial process will include organizing the curriculum group (or committee) so that they can study this chapter and begin to gather the information necessary for curriculum development.

Group Leader

The leader of the curriculum group in an established school can be the new school's director or curriculum supervisor. In a developing school, the planning board may appoint the leader, who ideally will be a person with knowledge of the educational process for the age (or grade) levels in the school.

The Curriculum Committee

In an established school, the curriculum committee should include the entire faculty and administrative staff. In a developing school, the committee will be appointed by the school's Planning Committee and should include as many educators as possible.

Committee Study

All members of the curriculum committee should study this chapter so that they can begin to organize and make needed assignments for research and development of the curriculum plan.

Initial Investigation

The curriculum committee needs to accomplish a number of things as it develops the curriculum plan. In an established school the following process may be followed:

1. Because the curriculum is so broad, it is wise to focus on one (or two) subject areas at a time. Select the subject area that appears to have the greatest need for the first action of the committee. Review the present curriculum at each grade level. Investigate the texts and other materials used in the classroom, and become well acquainted with their contents.
2. The faculty can discuss any areas of strength or weakness in the current curriculum for each grade level. If the textbook has basically determined the curriculum and the teacher has had a great deal of latitude in planning, it is wise to discover first what is being taught at each grade level.
3. Your school may be acquainted with other schools that are similar to it. Those schools may be willing to share any curriculum plans they have developed. If possible, acquire copies for review.
4. Select published texts and workbooks from reliable publishers to review the course content at each grade level. It is not wise to let the textbooks form the total curriculum, but they can provide a great deal of input on what is typically taught at different grade levels. Some publishers provide a scope and sequence chart that outlines the content covered at each grade level. A scope and sequence can be helpful in identifying what your new school may wish to include in its curriculum.

**Note:**

ACSI has developed textbook series in mathematics, Bible, spelling, and character development. Textbook series in other content areas are being developed, or will be.

5. In some areas the government's curriculum must be used, and the prescribed curriculum must be followed. If this is the case for you, use the government curriculum and texts, and supplement them with other materials that help provide biblical integration and additional content. Reviewing materials from Christian publishers may help with this process, as may suggestions from other Christian schools that have met the same challenges.

In a developing Christian school the curriculum committee will do most of the research and planning outlined above. Because there may not yet be any director or faculty, members of the committee will work on items 1, 4, and 5 listed above. If experienced teachers are on the committee, they can assist in discussing areas of content at different grade levels.

Christian textbook and workbook publishers can usually provide much helpful information. Teacher guides for texts and workbooks often give a lot of detail, including a scope and sequence showing how the subject flows from grade level to grade level.

Non-Christian Texts

Secular texts and workbooks can be reviewed for content. When these are adopted, the school must prepare biblical integration plans to help the teacher present the course content from a biblical perspective.

Teachers can develop additional lessons or activities and augment the available materials in order to integrate biblical truth with course content. Math texts present the least difficulty and need the least integration. Science is difficult to integrate because many scientific theories are based on the unscriptural premise that all living things evolved from simpler forms of life. Great care must be taken with secular science texts, but they can still be used by a wise teacher who plans ahead.

1. All curriculum in the Christian school must be grounded in a Christian philosophy of education, supporting the fact that "all truth is God's truth." God created everything we can observe, test, understand, and experience. He is in control of it and in charge of its ultimate end. Christian school teachers view

all academic content from this perspective. Christian education is centered in both the living Word and the written Word.

2. Each subject should have specific goals and objectives. Goals and objectives represent where the student is going, the ultimate destination of the curriculum for each level.
3. Integration—Biblical integration is the basic ingredient that makes education Christian education. All learning must be integrated and consistent with Scripture, an important concept for each teacher to understand and practice.
4. The curriculum plan—The completed curriculum plan will contain three documents (described below) that the administration and faculty develop cooperatively after researching other curriculum plans (from Christian schools, local and otherwise) and making decisions regarding the basic content in each subject field.

If these documents are available from other schools ministering to a constituency similar to your school's, they can be invaluable. You will probably not want to use them without making adjustments, additions, and changes; but the basic information can be very helpful.



Note

The development of the following three documents takes time and effort. These cannot be developed before a school begins and probably will not be developed during its first year. Sometimes an outline can begin to be developed during the first year as teachers keep a list of what they are presenting and in what order. It is also helpful for the teachers to keep notes on how successful the sequencing and presentation was.

a. The Curriculum Outline

Outline the content (in sequence) for each subject at each grade level. It is best to work on one subject at a time. The outline will contain major ideas, skills, concepts, or principles to be taught. It can be in a formal or informal outline. The important thing is to document the curriculum content and the sequence of the instruction.

b. The Scope and Sequence

At the lower grade levels the scope and sequence usually takes the form of a chart with the classes or grade levels across the top of the chart and the outline of content listed down the side of the chart. The outline provides the sequence in which the materials are to be taught. The scope of the content can be charted by marking which ideas, skills, concepts, or principles are taught in each class or grade level. A code can be used to show whether an idea, skill, concept, or principle is being introduced, reviewed, or retained.

c. The Curriculum Guide

The curriculum guide brings all of the information from the two above documents together into a practical “how to” manual. A separate guide is prepared for each subject at each level or grade. The concepts listed in the outline and in the scope and sequence are listed in sequence, but additional information is provided for use by the teacher.

- (1) Textbooks
 - (2) Auxiliary texts or research material
 - (3) Methods
 - (4) Materials
 - (5) Audiovisuals
 - (6) Field trips
 - (7) And any other helpful information that can assist the teacher in presenting the material
5. Curriculum materials, activities, procedures, enrichments, equipment, and textbooks—Materials and aids that are needed to carry out a quality curriculum plan include the textbooks, other teaching materials, reference materials, research projects, and other items.
 6. Living curriculum—The life of the teacher, teacher/student relationships, teacher/group relationships, discipline, and discipling are all part of the curriculum plan. They are not usually worked into the written guide, but they are

perhaps the most important items in the learning process. Teachers must build relationships with their students. The process of Christian education is CHANGED LIVES CHANGING LIVES, not merely the sharing of ideas and skills. Christian education has as its goal LIFE CHANGE.



Note that biblical integration really takes place in a person. It is the person of the teacher that makes learning a whole. How the teacher presents and discusses ideas will prepare the student's mind for seeing all learning as integrated with biblical truth.

He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:39, 40, NIV).

We must always remember that God's plan in educating children is to help them become like Jesus Christ. Children learn best from modeling. Those who teach them must live the principles taught in Scripture. Students will become "like their teachers."

A Model for the Total Curriculum Plan

The model on the next page pictures the sequence used in developing curriculum and using it in the classroom. Study the model and read the explanations that follow. The model moves from the philosophical/theoretical base upward to the practical presentation of learning materials to students and the evaluation of the success of this process.

School Curriculum

A CHOICE MADE BY DEFAULT OR DESIGN

Although most of the school day involves the curriculum, decisions related to curriculum development seldom receive the time they deserve—typically, for two reasons. First, a total curriculum can be purchased, allowing the busy director time for "more important" tasks. Second, most school personnel lack a clear understanding of a biblical philosophy of curriculum development and its implementation in the school. Thus there is a reluctance to analyze potential curriculum thoroughly—for the quality of the integration in a Christian program and for possible ways of integrating biblical principles into a secular program.

What is the relationship between philosophy and curriculum?

We hear a lot of talk today about the “information highway.” Although we are not sure how this highway will affect schools in this century, we do know that the base of information and knowledge is increasing at an astronomical rate. The implication for the school’s curriculum is clear: someone will have to make a decision from an overwhelming body of knowledge about what will be included. This means that some subjects and materials will be overlooked or undertaught in favor of subjects and materials that are considered “more important.” The school’s biblical philosophy must be the basis for making such decisions.

Through the school’s curriculum, the student is introduced to each of the disciplines. In order to emphasize the “significant” in each of these disciplines, the school must identify the “nonsignificant.” In order to focus attention on certain subject areas, the school will have to reject or ignore other subjects. How the school makes these selections (or rejections) is directly related to its values (philosophy).

It should be remembered that education is never morally neutral. A definite expression of preference for certain human ends, or values, is inherent in all efforts to guide the experiences of the young. No human group would ever bother to found and maintain a system of schools were it not concerned to make of its children something other than they would become if left to themselves and their surroundings. Thus, if the school’s philosophy reflects a secular value system, its students will gravitate to the “things of this world.” However, if the school’s philosophy is founded on the Word of God, its students learn to “see the world as God sees it.”

What is the teacher’s role in the implementation of curriculum?

“A teacher affects eternity,” wrote Henry Adams. “He can never tell where his influence stops.” Long after the textbooks have been forgotten, the influence of the teacher will still be felt in the life of the student. Completing a specific grade or level in school, with all its required courses and assignments, is certainly a milestone in the student’s life. However, teachers are “living milestones.” They are a point of reference against which a child can measure his or her pace of learning. It is the responsibility of the teacher to be a road mark, reminding students that other travelers have made this same journey, some more successfully, some less so. It is the teacher’s duty to be a guide on whose experience students can rely.

The biblical philosophy, expertise, and experience of the teacher are some of the most valuable assets in the selection and implementation of the school’s curriculum. While it may be easier to rely on a publisher’s sales representative to advise you on

your curriculum decisions, this is not the most prudent approach. The teaching faculty should be an integral part of the curriculum decision-making process.

**Note:**

Not only should the teacher be involved in the curriculum selection process, but the curriculum that is chosen should not “get in the way” of the teacher/student relationship. Remember, textbooks don’t teach students—teachers do! The school’s curriculum, both textbooks and supplementary materials, provides the structure for learning. But, as the noted Christian educator Dr. James Braley once said, “The teacher is the living curriculum.” If there is any single paramount ingredient in the entire process of learning, it is the teacher.

Should secular textbooks be used in a Christian School?

In implementing its philosophy, the Christian school must make textbook selections. In his annual report as president of Boston University, Dr. D. L. March said, “When we leave religion out of our educational program, we practically announce that life can be explained without God, which is the same thing as saying that God does not exist or is of no consequence.” The secular publisher shares neither the Christian school’s biblical philosophy nor its spiritual sensitivity. Although many Christian organizations (including ACSI, as noted above) have moved into providing textbooks and other aids specifically for the Christian school, there is still a scarcity of Christian textbooks and workbooks, especially in certain content areas. Sometimes, schools will need to make choices among available secular textbooks. There are some advantages in a Christian school’s use of the secular textbooks:

1. It provides an opportunity for the student to develop his or her critical thinking ability as biblical knowledge is applied to the content of the secular material.
2. It provides opportunities for the student to encounter ideas that seem, or actually are, opposed to a Christian worldview, and to deal with those ideas in the context of the Christian school classroom.
3. It provides the opportunity for the student to learn to be selective of the good things in this world (e.g., music, art, literature).
4. It provides the opportunity for the Christian school to broaden the alternative texts available for specific courses, especially at the secondary level.

What are the considerations for selecting the right textbooks?

Remember, the textbook typically structures much of the content of the formal curriculum in the average classroom. It influences the sequence of experiences, content emphasis, teaching methods, and classroom evaluation. Curriculum development is a perpetual process for the forward-looking school. The school's leaders should establish a plan for bringing different parts of the curriculum under study each year. This will keep the curriculum up-to-date and will prevent massive curriculum changes in any one school year.

**Note:**

Choosing Textbooks by Tim Heaton, published by ACSI, is a valuable brochure for anyone involved in selecting textbooks for use in a Christian school.

Consideration 1

Review the table of contents and/or scope and sequence. Are the content, skills, and emphases appropriate for the age level and subject area?

Consideration 2

Evaluate the philosophy of the materials. If it is published by a Christian organization, does its biblical philosophy reflect that of your school community? If it is published by a secular organization, how will your teachers address the secular value system in the classroom?

Consideration 3

Assess the professionalism of the curriculum. How were the materials developed? Have they been thoroughly field-tested? Does the teacher edition provide a variety of methodologies for classroom use? Are testing procedures suggested?

Consideration 4

Carefully review the student edition of the materials. Are the materials “pupil friendly” (e.g., appropriate in reading level, colorful and engaging in appearance, interesting, full of varied activities)?

Consideration 5

Assess the impact of the curriculum on the school's testimony. Is the curriculum current and reflective of the school community? Does the curriculum communicate “academic excellence” to parents and supporters? Does the curriculum properly

prepare students for academic assessment (e.g., standardized testing, college entrance, etc.)?

The Christian school is committed to the finest possible academic program, one that embodies a unique philosophy and goals. A strategic part of this program will include a well-developed curriculum that includes well-chosen textbooks and good teaching aids. We must be willing to take the time necessary to study this area of our school carefully. We need the Lord's guidance and wisdom if we are to build a curriculum that is truly Christian.

Dr. Ollie Gibbs

✓ **Checklist: Curriculum Beginning**

- ✓ Decide who is to lead the curriculum planning group.
- ✓ Involve the entire staff (or Planning Committee) in the process.
- ✓ Organize the group and study this chapter.
- ✓ Make specific assignments to each individual or small group.

✓ **Checklist: Curriculum Materials**

- ✓ Have all members of the curriculum committee read this chapter.
- ✓ Gather information on textbooks and workbooks from all available sources. Include the brochure *Choosing Textbooks* by Tim Heaton (ACSI).
- ✓ Evaluate available materials.
- ✓ Develop policies regarding the acquisition and use of curriculum materials.
- ✓ Provide teacher training in how to use both current materials and newly adopted materials.



10

The Library/Media Center

A VITAL COMPONENT OF THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM



Editor's note:

It is understood that the new Christian school may have limited resources for the first few years of operation. Some schools may be isolated from contact with other schools and libraries. Limited budgets can hamper the development of a library. However, as soon as possible, the Christian school needs to begin developing a library/media center to serve the teachers, students, and parents.

Libraries can begin small, but it takes effort to help them grow. Funds must be made available for the purchase of books, reference materials, and equipment. It is possible that some of these will come through direct donations. Do not be afraid to start small and then work hard to help the library grow. The library is an integral part of a successful educational institution. The following guidelines are presented to give basic information on how to start, maintain, and grow a library/media center. Keep in mind that you may not be able to get everything in the first couple of years, but you can begin to collect books and equipment, and set up the policies that will eventually govern the growth and importance of the library/media center.

Philosophy of Library Service

The library has been justified for centuries as the agency solely devoted to the preservation and dissemination of the record of human civilization. (The terms *library* and *media center* are used interchangeably throughout this section.) Media centers in a Christian school can be justified by the school's Christian philosophy of education, which is a world and life view that relates all of creation and all human affairs to the lordship of Christ. The very existence of a school is predicated on the biblical

teaching about the nature of God and humans, and the value the Bible places on teaching and learning. The Christian school library is justified as a department that helps the school meet its goals and contributes to its program.

A centralized, well-staffed, well-run, and well-stocked school library is an integral part of the school's educational program. It has a better variety of materials in greater quantity than are found in the typical classroom, and it provides all the school's students with equal access to information. Thus, it is more efficient and effective than individual classroom libraries.

The media center performs various roles in the school, some of them unique, and some of them better completed in the library than elsewhere.

Information Role

The essential role of the media center is to provide information to its patrons—the teachers and students. Information refers to the intellectual content of material expressing both discoveries about God's creation and humanity's own creative work (e.g., fiction, poetry, drama).

The total amount of information available is increasing at a phenomenal rate and comes in a variety of formats, both print and nonprint. It is the task of library personnel to make sense of this vast information world, carefully selecting and making available those materials that will best meet the information needs of the patrons.

The school library is part of an educational institution; therefore, its collections and services reflect the needs of that particular school. It does not attempt to provide information on every subject or at every reading level.

Service Role

The library provides services such as copying, producing learning materials, researching answers to questions, making audiovisual equipment accessible, and providing space for reading, research, and study.

Instructional Role

The media center is an essential and important part of the learning process. Library personnel provide help in locating information and give formal and informal instruction on how to use the library as well as guidance in reading, viewing, and listening. The librarian consults and advises other teachers, works in curriculum development, and encourages the love of books and reading.

Ingredients of a Library Program

The library is not primarily a place but a program of activities. A successful program cannot exist without proper facilities, personnel, and procedures. The most important aspect of library services is the people who run them, yet it is in personnel that schools often take shortcuts to the detriment of their program.

1. Personnel

a. Qualifications

Ideally, the librarian should be both a librarian and an educator with qualifications comparable to those of other teachers. A library background is important, but an energetic, capable teacher who is interested in library work can learn library procedures. A person qualified as a librarian who is not a teacher cannot easily understand the educational process that the school context demands. Therefore, a teacher should be chosen over a librarian if such a choice must be made.

The librarian is also a manager and should have administrative skills. He or she should have a balanced temperament that is at home with books and detailed work but should also relate well to students and teachers.

b. Time

Library work is very time-consuming. To do justice to the job, a librarian must have time to work. Librarians in small schools undoubtedly will teach part time, but they should not be expected to teach a full class load and also be a librarian.

c. Assistance

Clerical assistance must be provided in all but the smallest of schools. Parents and student volunteers are useful if paid assistance is not possible.

2. Facilities

a. Space

In one sense the size of the space available for the library is not the major issue. Miracles can be worked in a limited space. However, other things being equal, the more space, the better for the program. Estimate the space needed and then double it! In location and design, allow room for expansion.

b. Location

A central location is preferable so that all students can have easy access to the materials. Close proximity to the school office area is an asset.

c. Furniture and Equipment

If shelving can be purchased, it is wise to elect adjustable shelving for flexibility. Storage space for equipment and supplies will be necessary. The usual office furniture and equipment should be provided.

Renovations may be necessary. As much flexibility as possible should be provided. You will probably use twice as many electrical outlets as you think you will need. The area should be made as colorful and attractive as possible through the creative use of paint.

Start with up-to-date practices. For example, instead of using filing cabinets, file on open shelves, which you can build yourself. Color-coded file folders are helpful for open-shelf filing.

Centralize the organization of equipment so that no one teacher “owns” it, restricting its use. Centralization of specialized equipment (e.g., photocopiers, paper cutters, laminators, etc.) in the media center makes it available to all. The same equipment located in the school office is usually not as readily available to students.

3. Program

The media center program offers materials and instruction.

a. Provision of Materials

We think of books when we think of a library, but other types of materials are included. In addition, the Christian school will want to give proper emphasis to Christian materials. Limitations of budget, space, and time mean that you cannot get everything. So balance your collection according to the needs of the curriculum, the recreational needs of the students, and the professional reading of the teachers.

Encourage donations, but accept them on your own terms. Reserve the right to keep only those items that meet your needs, and dispose of the rest (perhaps by having a book sale). It is impossible to build an adequate collection from donations or offers of free materials. Shelves full of books look impressive, but quality may be woefully inadequate. If you inherit someone else's library, weed it carefully.

Provide a balance of materials in different formats. While reading is important, some information is better communicated in other than printed form. An information file (often called a vertical file) of clippings, pamphlets, pictures, maps, etc. is very useful for current information not necessarily found in books or magazines.

Magazines are essential for up-to-date information. They should be suitable for the age of the students, indexed (to make them useful for research), and/or popular in their appeal. Keep back issues of magazines that are indexed. Many magazines are available in microfiche format from University Microfilms International if storage becomes a problem.

Of crucial importance to any collection is accessibility. Provide access to all materials except periodicals by means of a catalog. A community resource file listing (on cards or computer printout) community resource people (writers, social workers, drug experts, etc.), community activities (plays, sports programs, etc.), and community organizations (service clubs, etc.) can be valuable.

b. Provision of Instruction

Students need to be trained in how to use the library. Although this can be completed by formal instruction, it is best accomplished by integrating the instruction into the teaching of other subjects. For example, as students need to prepare a history or geography report, instructions

can be given on the use of the catalog, the periodical indexes, etc. The students then see the library as relevant to their needs and will learn more willingly and quickly.

c. Cooperative Program Planning

In an ideal library program, the librarian consults with the other teachers in the school and cooperatively plans units of study that involve the use of library materials. A small, new school should have the flexibility to make this plan work very well.

4. Procedures

The procedures referred to in this section are those that take place behind the scenes in the library, those that make the program happen.

a. General Guidelines

Use standardized procedures; it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. This is particularly true in areas that are specific to library practice (e.g., classification and specifying subject headings for materials). This is not an area in which to experiment.

Trained and experienced librarians can make exceptions to standard practices, but others should be cautious. If the reason for various procedures is understood, valid changes can be more easily made. Buy as many services as possible even if time is donated. It can be used much more profitably in helping students than in doing clerical work.

If you decide to have a card catalog, cards for many books can be purchased at the time the books are ordered. Books may be purchased from special jobbers completely processed, needing only minor attention before they can go on the shelf. Cataloging and publication information on the back of the title page of many books provides basic information.

If the library is new, consider using new technology immediately. For example, consider a computer catalog rather than a card catalog. With the present price of computers and data storage, you may be able to start with an ideal situation.

b. Acquisition

A good selection policy allows the acquisition of books and other materials in an orderly and systematic manner. Good books already in classrooms should be collected, processed, and shelved.

Parents and other members of the community may be willing to donate books from their own collections or from lists of recommended books that you distribute, made up from some of the sources in the “Basic Library References” list.

Since materials should be related to the curriculum and the reading interests of students, teacher input is very important. Make every effort to inform teachers of what is presently available and get their suggestions concerning what they would like to see in the library.

Purchase from standard lists and if possible from Christian reviewing sources. Be prepared to purchase materials that, in spite of positive review, you find upon examination to be unsuitable for your collection. That is part of the price to be paid for quality. If possible, use a good book jobber. A local jobber may be able to give personalized service but may not have specialized services such as complete processing and cataloging.

Keep up-to-date with standard reference books. Subscriptions to year-books such as *World Almanac* should be maintained. Try to buy a new encyclopedia every five years. For schools with English-speaking students, *World Book* is excellent, but if you can afford more than one, get another title as well.

Collect and house sets of slides taken by faculty members. House outstanding models or projects made by students or teachers. Investigate cooperating with other libraries in the community and even accessing database networks (if you have a computer) for obtaining information.

As important as selection is, weeding (removing materials from the collection) is just as necessary. Guidelines for weeding can be found in library reference books. They will have to be adapted to the needs of your school.

c. Processing

Making materials ready for the patron can be a large job. Again, buy as many services as possible to cut down on time. The large book jobbers supply books complete with pocket, card, spine label, and plastic cover.

Printed catalog card sets for many books are available from jobbers. Library supplies can be ordered from various companies.

Accession lists are not necessary if your shelf list cards contain complete information on the source, date purchased, and the cost of materials.

Use standardized procedures. Put the desired information (e.g., possession stamp, call number, etc.) at the same place in each book. Plastic covers are essential for paper jackets, and they make the book look very attractive. Paperbacks need some reinforcement, but do not overdo the repairs; order replacement copies when they become too worn.

As much as possible, treat audiovisual materials like books for cataloging, processing, and storing purposes. Most materials can be shelved with books if proper containers are available.

Book repair information, which is available from some library supply companies, will provide information on how to repair books properly.

5. Specific Policies

Specific policies relate more to the direct operation of the media center than to the total program. It is best to have written policies, but what the policies say is a local decision. The following are some areas in which you should have policies:

a. Selection

Few policies are as controversial in a Christian school as the selection policy because of differences of opinion among members of the school's constituency and the sensitive nature of the issue. Make a pol-

icy that includes all print and nonprint materials in your school and not just library materials so that the school is united on the issue.

Work from a general Christian worldview rather than personal opinions. Make a policy that provides general guidelines and allows the librarian to make specific applications. Allow for review of materials and requests for reconsideration of purchased materials, but in every case the librarian should make the decision to keep, discard, etc., basing it on policy, not on personal viewpoints.

In the scope of the policy, besides moral and spiritual values, include such concerns as the literary quality of the material, its value in supporting the curriculum, the balance of the collection, and the cost of the item.

b. Access to Materials and Facilities

The answers to the following questions and others should be provided: When is the library open? To whom are the materials available besides students and teachers?

c. Circulation Policies

For how long may a book be checked out? a magazine? a reference book? Do you allow reference books to be removed from the library? for how long? What are fines for overdue materials (if any)?

Keep in mind that library materials are there for use, not storage. The more they circulate the better, provided they are not hoarded by students so that other students cannot use them.

d. Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are policies because they determine what personnel should be doing. Library personnel need to have clear descriptions of their duties so that they, the director, and the other teachers know what they do and the lines of authority are maintained.

Conclusion

The library media center provides for learning outside the classroom. No teacher can provide all the possible educational experiences for the students, nor can he or she provide the supplementary materials necessary for assisting learning outside the classroom. A centralized, well-developed, well-organized library can provide an equitable service to all the school, avoiding duplication of materials, expenses, and effort.

*Harold K. Bradley
(used with permission of the publisher)*



Facilities, Equipment, and Printed Materials

11

Facilities

Facilities are important in the Christian school plan. The facilities need not be new or outstanding in what they provide, but they do need to be functional, clean, and pleasant. As much as possible, they should meet the basic needs of the school for classroom space, a large meeting room if possible, and indoor and outdoor activity and play areas.

Classroom Requirements

It is important to check whether there are any government regulations or other requirements for classrooms and other areas of the school. For example, in some places requirements exist for the distance children sit from the chalkboard, the amount of light needed in the classroom, the maximum number of children in relation to classroom size, the number of toilets the school must have, easy access to fire exits, and play area available for recess or breaks.

If there are few or no government requirements, the director and the board still need to think through requirements and make certain the school facility is safe, pleasant, and functional. If you have a choice, do not use carpet in classrooms. Linoleum with a design or pattern is easier to keep clean. Windows may need curtains or shades if the light is too strong, especially at certain times in the school day. Think also of putting soundproofing material between classrooms and in outside walls to decrease noise.

Play and Activity Area

The school will need to have a place at or near the classrooms for leisure time or the children's recess or athletic activity. Even though you have adult supervision during the break (and this is a must), be sure to keep the facility as safe as possible. If there is no playground equipment for kindergarten or the lower grades, ask the parents to help construct some. It is important to have some rules and regulations to avoid the children being unsafe, pushing one another, and not knowing what to do. Lines can be painted on the play area for games.

Sports Hall

It can be difficult to locate a sports hall that is available for use during school hours. If the sports hall is within walking distance of the classrooms, physical education classes can be scheduled daily, or three or four times a week. If the facility is not near the classrooms, transportation will need to be arranged, and the physical education classes may need to be two 45-minute periods during a week. Facilities may be available during the winter for ice-skating; and in the spring for swimming, tennis, or other sports. The director and board may need to be extremely creative in order to provide interesting and reasonable physical education activities for the students.

✓ **Checklist: Facilities**

- ✓ If there are governmental requirements for school facilities, obtain a copy.
- ✓ Locate a facility that can be used for classroom and meeting rooms.
- ✓ Check for indoor and/or outdoor play area facilities.
- ✓ If approval is needed, have the appropriate agency provide approval.
- ✓ Make arrangements for use of facilities (lease, rent, borrow church facilities, etc.). Make sure all contracts are negotiated and signed.
- ✓ Make plans for improvements or changes that may be necessary.
- ✓ Make necessary repairs to such things as curtains, blinds, and fittings.
- ✓ Locate a gymnasium for use by the school. Make necessary arrangements.
- ✓ Make sure there is a hall, or large room, available to use for occasional meetings or rhythmic activities.
- ✓ Review the area available for play or relaxed activity, and make certain any needed equipment is available and functional.
- ✓ Begin to develop the library/media center.

Rhythmic Area

A sports hall can be expensive and may not even be available. If you have a hall or large room nearby or in the school facilities, plan on having the kindergarten do

rhythmic exercises in it. Usually this kind of facility is sufficient and not as expensive as a sports hall. For the kindergarten you need less equipment than for older children.

Library/Media Center

Facilities should be organized to allow the collection and cataloging of books, tapes, videos, magazines, etc., for use in the library/media center.

Equipment is needed throughout the school, whether in the classroom, halls, or gymnasium and play areas. Wisdom will be needed to make the right choices for the first year. Not everything can be provided, so careful choices need to be made.

Equipment

When you are starting a Christian school, try to acquire the best possible furniture. If finances allow, purchasing new furniture is an advantage. If you have to get used furniture, pick the best available, and do whatever is needed to make it look as good as possible. Make sure all equipment and furniture is clean.

Painting metal parts and sanding and refinishing wood parts can greatly improve the looks of furniture and make the school much more pleasant. Good new furniture or well-refinished used furniture may cost a little more money or time and effort, but it is an important part of the school.

Furniture and Fittings

When you purchase tables or desks, it is important to use models that can be regulated in height. Chairs should be the proper height for the tables and desks. If used furniture is a necessity, do your best to size the furniture to the children. The posture of the child is important, and regular bad posture may lead to back problems. If ordering furniture, it's a good idea to place your order well in advance of need.

Bookshelves and Cabinets

Bookshelves need not be expensive as they do not receive much wear and tear. Keep in mind the teachers' needs as well as the students'. A locked cabinet may be needed in the classroom for storing supplies, materials, and games. The library/media center will also need shelving and storage cabinets.

Hall Furniture

In the hallways, there may be a need for hooks for clothes and benches for children to sit on while changing shoes. Shoes/slippers can be stored under the benches.

Chalkboards

Chalkboards are a necessary part of the classroom. Make sure they are of good quality and are placed at the correct height for the age level of the children in the classroom. Lower grade classes may need more chalkboard space than classes for older children. New boards can usually be installed by the company representative. If you make your own or install used boards, make sure they are neat, clean, and well maintained. Chalkboards usually receive heavy use. Chalkboard paint (usually black or green) is available and can be used to paint part of a wall or a large sheet of wood to make a chalkboard.

Athletic and Rhythmic Exercise Equipment

If your school has a gymnasium for physical education, check to make sure the equipment is available for the games you wish to teach. Rhythmic exercises, for example, will need items like balls, pads or mats, hoops, and ribbons.

Educational Supplies

Catalogs are available that list the needed educational supplies. Your school can usually buy paper locally. Catalogs can help you prepare a list of the supplies you'll need. If the school is able to purchase them, they should be ordered well in advance of need. Deliveries are often delayed, especially to out-of-the-way places. If materials are to be donated, the agencies involved must be contacted. A prepared list of needs will be extremely helpful.

✓ **Checklist: Equipment**

- ✓ Obtain catalogs or arrange for the donation and delivery of classroom furniture, blackboards, office furniture, athletic and play area equipment, etc.
- ✓ Make a list of furniture needed in each classroom (tables, chairs, desks, shelves, chalkboards, cabinets, teacher's desk, etc.)
- ✓ Make a list of furniture needed in the hall, office, teachers' lounge.
- ✓ Order (or arrange for the donation of) school furniture and fittings.
- ✓ Acquire chalkboards and decide where they should be installed.
- ✓ Make a floor plan for each classroom.
- ✓ Put up hooks in the hallway (or small room) for children to use to hang coats, gloves, etc.
- ✓ List educational supplies needed for each class.
- ✓ List athletic equipment needed (make arrangements for purchase or donation, delivery, and installation).
- ✓ Order (or make arrangements for donation and delivery of) educational supplies.
- ✓ Order (or make arrangements for donation and delivery of) library/ media center equipment, furniture, and supplies.

Forms and Printed Materials

Many printed forms and materials will be needed. As plans are made and the school is organized, the director and board will see the need for these items. When developing forms, think through what is needed and keep each one as simple and direct as possible. If a computer is available, forms can be created and copied. Thus you avoid the cost of purchasing them or having them printed.

Registration Form

Any forms that you submit to people outside the school should be neat and well prepared. They will reflect the care that you give to detail and the image you have of your school. If you want to present the school and staff as professionals, the printed materials must appear professional. Make a list of the needed information and prepare a form with all the necessary questions to gain the needed information. The form will usually have two sections: one for basic information and application to the school, and the other for information about the child and his or her environment, family, medical history, etc.

Payment Slips

If fees and tuition are to be charged to parents, it will be helpful to have payment slips that the parents can use to make their regular payments (usually on a monthly basis).

Admission Tests

It will be helpful if you can prepare some simple tests to evaluate the level of the children applying to your school. The records from their former school are not always accurate, and the parents' understanding is not always objective. To be sure of proper enrollment, we recommend testing the children only to determine what grade level they should be in. The test should have some basic questions and exercises based on the objectives that should have been reached by the end of the child's last school year. For example, if a child is applying for third grade, a test based on objectives for the end of second grade can be administered. A teacher or the director will give these tests, possibly without the parents present. Talking to the children and hearing them read will also help you assess them.

Other Forms

These are other forms that will need preparation and printing:

- teacher application forms and reference forms
- teacher self-evaluation forms
- evaluation forms for the director to use in a formal evaluation of the teacher

Printed Materials

It is important to take care in the quality of printed materials. Here are some of the items you will need to consider printing:

- stationery: letterhead and envelopes for your office correspondence
- brochure or flyer presenting the ministry of the school
- Parent/student handbook
- Teacher handbook

For your stationery it is important to have a quality design. If possible use a qualified graphic artist to develop a logo that will represent the school. The NAME of the school is also very important. Give careful thought to the name so that it effectively presents your ministry and communicates well. In this age of computers, it may be possible to develop a graphic design for the school's stationery and to prepare other forms without having to pay for professional assistance.

✓ Checklist: Forms and Printed Materials

- ✓ Print or produce the following:
- ✓ Student registration forms (see ACSI's *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School*)
- ✓ Payment slips (if tuition is to be charged)
- ✓ Admission tests
- ✓ Teacher application forms
- ✓ Teacher self-evaluation forms
- ✓ Teacher evaluation forms for the director
- ✓ Stationery (letterhead) and envelopes
- ✓ School flyer or brochure
- ✓ Parent manual
- ✓ Teacher manual



12

Accreditation

Christian schools should actively seek accreditation. A new or young school may delay this process for a while but will find the criteria provided in the accreditation manual extremely helpful in developing the school.

Accreditation is often misunderstood. Accreditation is designed to help schools achieve a standard of excellence and to encourage them in a continuous process of assessment and ongoing institutional development. The process of achieving and maintaining accredited status is a means of proclaiming the school's commitment to doing things well. The major benefit to a school that goes through the accreditation process is that the students will receive a better Christian education as the school intensively appraises each component of its ministry. The subsequent benefit is the status of being an accredited school. The accreditation process represents commitment to maintain and systematically improve the quality of a school's ministry to its community.

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) is an accrediting agency. New and young schools should acquire a copy of the *School Accreditation Manual* from ACSI so that they can study the criteria for each phase of the school's ministry. In this way the school can develop and grow with meeting accreditation standards in mind. More mature schools that want to consider accreditation should obtain a copy of the *School Accreditation Manual* so that they can review the criteria and apply to ACSI for candidate status.



Note

It should be noted that a joint accreditation will involve an alteration of some of the processes described in the ACSI School Accreditation Manual, especially related to

the appointment of the chairperson of the visiting committee, and the length of the accreditation period.

Accreditation is demanding but extremely rewarding. A self-study is prepared giving a report on every phase of the school's operation. The ACSI Accreditation Process is as follows:

Application—Candidacy

1. Obtain copies of the ACSI Accreditation Materials (800-367-0798 or 719-594-4621).
2. Review the ACSI standards and determine whether the school does/can meet each of them.
3. Make application for candidacy to your ACSI regional office.
4. Candidacy visit is made to the school.
5. The school is granted a three-year candidacy status.
6. ACSI appoints a school consultant.

Self Study—Visiting Committee

1. The school appoints its self-study committees.
2. The consultant and the school set dates for the ACSI visiting committee.
3. Committees conduct the self-study and complete the Evaluative Criteria section.
4. The sections are edited and approved by the school.
5. The Plans and Priorities section of the self-study is completed.
6. The self-study is compiled with the supporting data.
7. The self-study is sent to each of the visiting committee members.

ACSI Visiting Committee

1. Committee members are appointed to visit the school.
2. The visiting committee reviews each member's self-study sections.
3. The committee observes the school operation and faculty, and interviews the staff in light of the self-study.
4. The visiting committee writes a report on each self-study section and each instructional area.
5. The visiting committee compiles its findings in a composite report.
6. The committee writes a summary recommendation to the ACSI Accreditation Commission.
7. An exit interview with the school staff summarizes the general findings of the committee.
8. The committee chairperson submits the report and self-study to your ACSI regional office.

Responsibilities After Accreditation

1. The school studies the visiting committee report and its recommendations.
2. The school reprioritizes its actions in response to the visiting committee's recommendations and Section 15.0 of the self-study: Plans and Priorities.
3. The school submits an annual report to the ACSI regional office. The annual report records the school's progress on the major recommendations of the visiting committee and the major improvements needed as identified in Section 15.0: Plans and Priorities.
4. The school submits an interim report at the midpoint of its term of accreditation. The interim report records the school's progress in response to all recommendations in the visiting committee report and the major improvements as identified in Section 15.0.
5. The school begins to act on the recommendations and consider its accreditation renewal options.



13

Finances

Finances are critical to the operation of a Christian school. Careful planning needs to be completed. After the plan has been prepared and the budget developed, careful supervision is necessary.

Financial Policies

Each important area of expense needs to be thought through and a policy developed. How are salaries going to be established? What about student fees and tuition charges? In areas where parents can pay these charges, they will need to be charged in order to finance the ministry of the school. In some mission oriented areas, the school will run mainly on donations from outside agencies. However, each school should move toward financial independence as soon as possible. This should be one of the basic financial policies. Other areas needing policies include purchases of furniture, equipment, and supplies and the printing of needed documents and forms.

In order to get a better idea of the costs involved in the purchase of the above items, it is helpful to gather catalogs and price lists to assist in determining budget items.

Chart of Accounts

The chart of accounts is a listing of each area of income and expense. Someone who is trained in accounting or bookkeeping can assist in its development. As the school moves through its first year, the chart may need to be adjusted, and additional adjustments will take place as the school grows. Outside help is often needed in developing the chart of accounts.

The Budget

Before a budget is prepared, many basic questions will need to be answered about how the school is to be organized. Seek God's guidance regarding these issues:

(See: *Developing a School Budget*, page 102.)

- What are you going to pay your teachers? Which criteria will you use (full salary, partial, basic needs)? Will a salary schedule be developed, or will all teachers be paid the same amount?
- What about support staff (part-time, helpers, administration, staff, etc.)?
- Is the school going to offer transportation?
- How much should the families pay for tuition and fees? on what criteria? (Research to see what other, similar schools are doing.)
- Will the school give discounts for the second or third child in the same family? If so, how much?
- Is the school going to provide scholarships for needy families?
- Will the school be part of another ministry such as a church or mission agency, or will it be an independent ministry?
- Will the school be able to invest in new furniture and equipment, or will it get used equipment?
- Will the school need to borrow money?
- Will the school provide all school supplies for the students, or will parents be required to purchase some of them?

When these questions have been answered (along with others you may discover), estimate the number of students on which the budget will be based. It is always difficult to know how many students will really be coming to the school the first year, so it is wise to develop two or even three possible budgets: a positive, visionary "if all goes well" budget; a more conservative and very realistic budget, with projected enrollment figures in mind as a definite possibility, and one that represents a more pessimistic but possible scenario. Budgeting requires faith, but the budget should be kept as realistic as possible! God often gives us small beginnings before entrusting us with success. It is good to discuss the budget with someone who is experienced in business or accounting. A good principle to keep in mind when budgeting—estimate income low and expenses high. Do not forget to include miscellaneous/unexpected expenses (usually at least 10 percent of the total budgeted expenses).

Fundraising and Gifts

The director and the board need to consider possible ways to raise special funds outside the school family. Are there special agencies that will assist in the starting of a Christian school in your area? Are there people who would give to such a project? Can parents be asked to pledge a monthly gift amount in addition to tuition (if tuition is charged)? Can special activities be organized to raise funds for the school? Are there services the school could provide for the community for which community members would pay? Your board should be responsible for fund-raising.

**Note:**

This is a difficult area to discuss in a planning booklet such as this. It will be completely dependent upon the local school's community, the ability of local people or agencies to be of financial assistance, and the type of school planned. It is important to note, however, that the director and the board need to face this issue and do some creative thinking on it. The long-range existence of the school may depend on careful planning in this area.

Developing a School Budget

A PREREQUISITE FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY

**Editor's Note**

The following information is provided to give suggestions and help regarding the development of a school budget. Each school will have different needs. Schools are organized with different purposes, and the budgeting process will reflect those purposes. If the school charges tuition, that will probably provide a major portion of the income. If the school is a mission project and does not charge tuition, or charges very low tuition, then gift income or finances from other ministry sources will be the major income for the budget. Use the following information to assist you as you attempt to develop a realistic budget for your school. It is not intended to be used as presented here.

Introduction

By careful planning, the school can project income and expenses, and thus avoid a surprise negative cash flow. School budgeting is much like preparing a household budget. The items and dollar amounts are different, but the process is the same.

It is good stewardship to plan for reserve funds. By systematically putting aside a few dollars each month, the school can accumulate a suitable reserve. An emergency can come at any time or for any number of reasons. Proper business planning will allow even the emergency situations to be handled in an orderly manner.

There is little difference between a church school and an independent school when it comes to budget and finance. Both require good stewardship and the use of professional business practices. It is to the advantage of a church to have a separate account of school income and expenses. The intent of the following procedures is to present a systematic approach to school budgeting.

Budget Process

The first step in the budgeting process is to list all the ways you will receive school income. Of course, you need to know the approximate number of students you will enroll and the type of projects that will be income-producing.

You will probably need to estimate the number of students to be enrolled. This, at times, is most difficult for a new school. Even the “experts” miss occasionally. The number of students is multiplied by the average tuition charged. (If tuition is not charged, then the income portion of the budget will need to be based on the amount of promised or projected income from other sources.)

Tuition rates and teacher salaries are two of the most important items in the budget. If the school is a mission school and teachers raise their own support, salaries will not need to be a major portion of the expenses. Where tuition is charged and the school pays teachers a salary, these two items (tuition income and salary expense) are related, and school leaders will need to take great care to estimate these items accurately. Salaries are generally 65 to 75 percent of the total expenses.

Tuition Income

Tuition rates must be established for the upcoming school year, about six to eight months prior to the opening of school. You must establish adequate tuition rates. Do not fall into the trap of thinking the school will start with low tuition rates, and when enrollment is increased or the school is more successful, the rates can be raised. This process seldom happens. Also, start collecting tuition before school begins (usually the month before school opens), and stop before the school year ends (usually the month before the close of school). You may obtain help from other Christian schools and/or through the ACSI annual tuition and salary survey.

After establishing the rates, use the following in determining average tuition:

1. If you have a step-tuition—with separate first-child, second-child, and third-child rates—estimate the number of children in each category to determine potential tuition income.
2. If tuition aid is awarded to students, this reduction in income must be considered.
3. Further reduction in tuition income must be considered if children of faculty and staff members are given tuition aid (which is recommended).

With the above facts in hand, you may determine the total potential tuition income. Divide the total number of students into the total potential tuition income. The average tuition figure will be very helpful in future budgeting years. You may add an inflation factor to the average for projecting future increases. Because of the difficulty of forecasting an exact per-student average tuition rate, it is imperative that the above process be completed at the end of each year to determine the actual average rate.

Salaries

Salaries can be determined in a similar way to tuition. Remember to include secretaries, part-time aides, custodians, etc. You must also include the cost of fringe benefits if any are to be provided.

Computer Software

After a year or two, you will develop a pattern for establishing salaries and tuition. By using spreadsheet software on virtually any computer, you can project future budget income and expenses.

A useful tool for establishing the following school year's salaries and tuition rates is software designed to allow projections of tuition and salaries at various rates of increase. The software permits the administration and board to easily see the bottom-line effect of percentage increases in tuition and salaries. Although a third variable, the number of students, can also be used, it is less confusing for a board if the director carefully projects enrollment and uses it as a nonvariable.

The remaining budget process is fairly simple though very time consuming. You must take each line item and estimate or obtain actual costs. When you add up all

the figures, you will know the positive or negative aspects of the budget. If you have a negative cash flow, you must adjust income and expenditures accordingly. A budget must project a positive cash flow (or at least an even balance).

Textbooks and Supplies

The author, after several years of experience, has not been able to establish a per-student budget for textbooks. There are so many variables from one year to the next that one must figure individual needs at each level each year.

Of course, there are the annual costs of replacement texts, needed because of damage, wear and tear, or lost books. If you are starting a new school or making a major change in textbook selections, the problem is a little more complicated. You may want to make estimates of possible amounts per student for such items as classroom supplies, textbooks, and workbooks (higher for a new school than for an established school).

Cash Reserve

A cash reserve of five percent of the expense budget is a very conservative figure in the business community. This reserve will help to cushion the emergency expenses or miscalculations seen at the end of the school year.

Some schools have not been able to set aside this large an amount in a lump sum, so they budget a small amount each month and accumulate the five percent over three to five years.

Payroll

There is no aspect of employer-employee relations that is more sensitive than payroll. When an employee works even one hour, the employer incurs an obligation to provide a paycheck on the established payday. Morale can plummet if promises concerning payroll are not fulfilled in a highly responsible manner.

In some countries there are taxes on payrolls. Detailed, accurate records can be required and must be regularly filed, with precise deposits made at predetermined intervals. Check with your government to see what the requirements are concerning payroll (and payroll taxes, if any).

Time Schedule

It is important to start the budget process early, at least six to eight months before the opening of school. After carefully developing a budget, you can present it to the board three to four months before the beginning of the school year. In the first or second month of the school year, the budget may need to be revised to reflect actual enrollment and salaries.

If this process is followed faithfully, you can project your year-end cash position. In other words, at the end of the present school year, you should be able to project fairly accurately the approximate cash position for the same time the following year, thus allowing plenty of time to make any necessary adjustments for a positive cash flow.

Month-by-Month Charts

Many new or small schools do not take one additional and important step to assist the budgetary process. Completing month-by-month charts may make the difference between a well-prepared budget plan and a haphazard one.

After you have prepared both a budget summary and a detailed budget, you should divide the figures into 12 monthly amounts. Normally (though not always), the school year is nine months long. Income and expenses cannot be divided equally by 12; it is not that simple. Some months will have extremely high expenses, while others (perhaps the months between school years) will have very little expense. Determine the amount of the expected income and expenses for each month for every item. You may use ledger paper to record the figures. A better approach is to use an appropriate software package, which will allow you to project the expected high and low months, providing better projections and cash flow.

Once you have concluded your first year, you are ready to make month-by-month projections from data based on experience. Assign a monthly percentage of total receipts and expenditures for each account. By multiplying this percentage by the budgeted amount, you can quickly and quite accurately forecast next year's monthly receipts and disbursements. A computer greatly facilitates this project. Be careful, however, to evaluate each account for whether it is more appropriate to budget by using the percentage method or by making actual cash projections.

Accumulated Month-to-Month

If you will take the month-by-month totals and accumulate them on a month-to-month basis, you will be able to project cash surplus and cash needs for each month. This information is extremely important when operating a very tight budget.

Summary

Budgeting takes time and effort. There is a great temptation for new or small schools to say, “We do not have much money; therefore, we do not need to go through the budget process. Besides, we won’t stick to it anyway.” The statement may be partially true, but few would attempt to build a house without a plan or a blueprint. Luke 14:28 says that a man should “first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it.” This may also apply to the school year and whether sufficient funds will be available to finish the task without presuming on the future (i.e., borrowing money).

The school will save both time and money by securing the services of an accountant (if one is available). The person may act as a consultant or complete the setup of school records. It is important to start correctly!

✓ Checklist: Finances

- ✓ Director and board, working together, decide on basic financial policies:
 - ✓ Teacher and director salaries
 - ✓ Student fees and tuition charges
 - ✓ Furniture
 - ✓ Equipment
 - ✓ Supplies and materials
 - ✓ Printed materials
 - ✓ Policies for late payment of fees or tuition
 - ✓ _____
 - ✓ _____
 - ✓ _____
- ✓ Gather catalogs and price lists.
- ✓ Establish a chart of accounts.
- ✓ Director and board, working together, prepare a tentative budget with one or two alternatives.
- ✓ Open a bank account and a postal account.
- ✓ Prepare a plan for the acquisition of gifts and other funds.
- ✓ Print payment slips if parents are paying tuition.
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____



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Parents

The following items are necessary for good parent communication and training.

Calendar of Events

When planning the school year, you need to determine when it begins and ends, and what the holidays will be in the government schools or other schools in the area. In general, it is good to have a calendar similar to that of other area schools because some families may have children in more than one. Adjustments may need to be made to include Christian holidays in the Christian school calendar. Make a list of all the holidays, and add any special days and other events you want to include.

The calendar should be distributed to parents as early as possible. A parent orientation day before school begins would be the best time to distribute the school calendar. Teachers should have a copy in their manual so they can begin to plan their school year.

Philosophy Statement and Parent Manual

As stated in the chapter on Faith, Philosophy, and Mission, it is important to have a well-prepared philosophy statement. It need not be long, but it and the mission statement should communicate the purposes and Christian mission of your school. This will be an important part of the parent manual. For the first year or two, your manual may be a simple flyer of a few pages to provide parents with the school's philosophy and mission, and the school rules. The school calendar could also become a part of this flyer. As the school grows, the parent manual will grow. More information can be added, and the manual will become a helpful document with quite a

few pages. Please see the sample parent handbook in our *Tools to Run an Urban Christian School* manual.

Newspaper or Other Communications

As the school grows, a school newspaper or parent letter will be helpful for communicating with parents and for highlighting the accomplishments of the students. This need not be long or involved. However, regular communication with parents can help maintain a positive relationship between home and school. As noted earlier, a weekly envelope (large size) that is sent home with the student's work enclosed can be helpful at the lower class levels. Notes from the teacher and other school communications can be included in the envelope each week.

The parent is responsible to return the envelope the next day.

Counseling with Parents

Very soon you will find that parents will come for advice and counsel on how to raise their children or what to do about specific problems. You may notice that a student has a special need and find it necessary to contact the parent for counseling. Often parents ignore the basic principles in child development, education, and discipline. It is helpful to establish a library of basic books that can be helpful to parents. Parents can borrow these books to gain instruction where needed. The director and teachers may find it necessary to counsel with parents in case local pastors cannot do it because of heavy workloads. Some parents may not attend a church. Whatever you do, you will often be involved in one way or another with helping and counseling parents. Prepare some materials in advance to prepare the director and the teachers. Discipline is an area in which parents often need assistance.

Parent Orientation and Training

It is wise to provide training for parents on a regular basis through the school program.

1. A parent orientation meeting should be scheduled before school begins. You can share the basic philosophy of the school and introduce parents to how the school functions and what to expect throughout the year. You can also introduce the faculty members. Keep the meeting short and to the point.
2. Regular parent meetings can be scheduled throughout the school year, and special speakers can be brought in to provide helpful information. If possible,

teachers should participate in these meetings and take the opportunity to meet the parents after the program. Parents enjoy the opportunity to say a few words to the teacher or ask questions. Keep in mind that God has given the responsibility of education to parents, and the school attempts to assist parents in their God-given tasks.

3. Parent training can also be offered. Some parents will find it difficult to follow their child's education and homework. You may be interested in offering some evening courses in math, language, or even the Christian perspective on education, what a Christian worldview is, and what it means to be a Christian family.
4. Regular reports to parents are a must. Meetings with individual parents need to be scheduled at least two times during the school year (usually fall and spring). These meetings will allow the teacher to explain what he or she has observed in the child and what positive character traits the child is practicing or needs to develop. At this point it will be important to agree on a common strategy to help the child in the areas of need. The teacher's report and the agreed strategy should be recorded and signed by the parent at the close of the conference. A form can be developed for this purpose.

A parent/school covenant should be created that will enforce the school's commitment to educating the student and the parent's commitment to supporting the student and the school in its efforts to educate the child.

✓ **Checklist: Parents**

- ✓ Calendar of events and holidays for the school year
- ✓ Philosophy and/or mission statement and parent manual
- ✓ Newspaper, letters to parents, or a way of communicating with parents on a regular basis
- ✓ Counseling with parents; parent-teacher conferences
- ✓ Parent orientation and training



15

Health

The health and safety of students is extremely important. If student insurance is available and/or required, it will be necessary to investigate and secure the best policies. The school should provide training in good health practices.

Insurance

If insurance is required and/or available in your area, a liability insurance policy is a necessary option. If the school personnel or the children cause any damage to someone or something, it will be covered. Check to see whether an accident policy is needed for the students. Sometimes this is not available or necessary because the child is covered by the family policy. However, additional insurance may be needed to cover a serious accident that might happen when the students are under school supervision.

Medical and Dental Information

It is important to require that parents provide a record of the child's health history: childhood diseases the child has had, immunizations, accidents, operations, etc. This health history should be maintained throughout the child's enrollment at the school and updated at least annually. It is important to know whether a child has any medical problems or handicaps.

In some areas medical services can be contracted through the public or state school system. Check to see whether such health checks and services are available, and then decide whether you want to use them or provide your own.

Please note that the medical file and structure for your school is not an urgent priority. You can develop this program when you are well into the school year. Also, though it might not be an obligation for you, it can be a valuable service to your school families.

It is important to have emergency and medical information available at the school, including a list of people who can pick up the child when a parent or guardian is unavailable. This information is also important for safety reasons.

Please Note:

Medication, including both over-the-counter and prescription, will be administered ONLY with an authorization to administer medication form signed both by the parent and physician (see form in Tools manual).

The form must be completed and will remain in effect for the student's activities for one school year. One copy will be in the school file at all times; the other will be taken by the teacher, advisor, coach, chaperone, daycare director, etc., on each activity in which the child participates. This form **MUST** be on file in the school office **BEFORE** the student may start school.

Teaching Health and Manners

It is wise to introduce the teaching of good health practices in the regular school curriculum. Christians are responsible to God for their own bodies, and they need to know how to care for them for maximum service. Instruction in good manners will assist the students in relating well to those around them.



Health

- ✓ Arrange for a liability insurance policy for the school.
- ✓ Check to see whether accident insurance is needed.
- ✓ Check to see whether any additional insurance coverage is necessary.
- ✓ Secure medical information from parents.
- ✓ Provide a medical form at the time the student applies.
- ✓ Set up a medical file to be maintained for each student.
- ✓ Check to see what local medical services are available.
- ✓ Include health and manners training in the curriculum.
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____



16

Transportation

Many schools require parents to provide transportation to and from school. Buses and vans are expensive to purchase, operate, and maintain. If you decide that your school ought to provide transportation, here are some items to check.

Concept

The director and the board will need to make a decision regarding student transportation. If public transportation is available in your area, it may meet the students' needs. By helping parents organize car pools, a school can sometimes avoid the expense of vans or buses. If the school chooses to provide transportation, check with the authorities to find out all the regulations that will apply. Be sure to have a written agreement with parents regarding their child's use of the school's transportation system.

Budget

Keep a separate budget record for transportation and work out the cost for each child. Usually transportation does not meet all its own expenses, so it can cause a budget deficit that will need to be covered in some way. If transportation is necessary for the school to have enough students, it becomes a real asset and a service to the school and its families.

Vehicles

Again, be certain to check with governmental authorities on any requirements for vehicles. Secondhand vans or buses may be available in your area. Make sure they

are checked by a reliable mechanic. Also, check regarding vehicle and passenger insurance.

Field Trips

It is good to teach the students the importance of public transportation whenever possible. Field trips are a good opportunity for that kind of instruction, and they are fun as well. Remember to get written permission from parents for every form of transportation you will be using with the children. If the school owns vans or buses, they can be used for field trip transportation. It is wise to have written parental permission for this form of transportation too.

School Pickup and Delivery

It is wise to have safety rules for parents who deliver their children to school and pick them up. There should be a specific place where parents pick up and deliver, and a faculty member should supervise the area both mornings and afternoons when it is in use.

✓ **Checklist: Transportation**

- ✓ Formulate written policies and make sure the board has agreed to them.
- ✓ Include costs in the budget.
- ✓ Locate vehicles and purchase them (or have them donated).
- ✓ Advertise for drivers, interview and hire one, or use volunteers.
- ✓ Organize a transportation schedule.
- ✓ Plan a vehicle maintenance schedule.
- ✓ Check for any government requirements for transportation, and meet them.
- ✓ If insurance is necessary, secure an effective policy.
- ✓ Write a vehicle use policy.
- ✓ If parents provide transportation, develop safety rules for the delivery and pickup of students at the school.
- ✓ _____



17

Advertising the School

It is important to begin advertising the school as early as possible. Use as many ways as possible to contact churches and parents. Some reference to this topic has already been made. This will be a review of those methods and practices and will bring them together into one section.

Pastors and Spiritual Leaders

When you have a team that is committed to working with you on opening a Christian school, take some time before the Lord to pray for guidance and wisdom, and to ask for His timing and direction. If you believe God is leading you to start the school in the coming year, you need to begin sharing your vision with others. It would be right to begin by honoring the pastors and spiritual leaders by sharing with them **FIRST** the vision of the school. It would be inappropriate for them to hear about this new ministry first from others. The people who have the vision should be the ones to share it with the spiritual leaders. The Planning Committee should compose a letter presenting the project and some details about their vision for the school. This will give the pastors and other spiritual leaders time to process the information. In the letter you can propose a meeting to discuss the school's plans with the pastor and/or other leaders. In the meeting you can answer their questions and get their input.

Take the time to visit personally with as many pastors and spiritual leaders as possible. These visits are valuable in building relationships and honoring spiritual leadership. Be prepared to meet with some critical opinion and pessimism. Don't try to prove your points or argue about the necessity or the appropriateness of Christian education. Be mature in your responses, receive what they have to say, and assure them that you will be thinking and praying about their thoughts and suggestions.

The key elements in this process are honoring leaders and providing information. You may not see the fruit right away, though some church leaders may want to be involved and have a part in the project. Pray carefully about this. Don't get too excited about the willingness of a spiritual leader to get involved in the project.

One way to start a Christian school is to make use of the facilities of a local church. If the school is going to be organized and controlled by one local church, the local pastor will usually want to provide a great deal of leadership, and it is important to seek his help and counsel. A school that is in a particular church facility can still minister to the Christian community at large. Perhaps an advisory board of local pastors will help bridge the gap between the local church that sponsors the school and the other churches from which the committee hopes to receive students. The existence of such a board would present your school as being nondenominational and open to students of various churches.

A School Brochure or Flyer

It is extremely helpful if a small flyer or a more elaborate brochure is prepared to provide basic information about the school. It should include:

- Basic philosophy (keep very simple)
- Grades to be offered
- Location with address and phone number (if available)
- Name of director and board members
- Whether or not transportation is offered

As the school grows, the brochure can become more detailed and can include some pictures of students and student activities. But a simple flyer is needed at the outset to encourage interest and applications.

Now that computers are more in use, a simple flyer can be developed on a computer and printed for the school. Be careful to design an attractive and informative flyer. If a copy machine is available, flyers can be made for immediate use, and the costs of professional design and printing can be avoided.

Advertise in Local Churches

Once you have a flyer or brochure, you can begin to visit local churches and advertise the school. If possible, you will also want to develop a slide presentation, a series of posters, or a PowerPoint presentation to capture the parents' attention and

interest. This step is not absolutely necessary, and it can be developed at a later date. But early contact with the local churches is needed.

- Make contact with churches to see whether the director or a board member can make an announcement in the church service.
- Visit adult Sunday school classes or Bible studies, or parents who have school-age children. Distribute flyers and response forms.
- Place a poster and/or school flyer or brochure on the church bulletin board.
- If funds are available, the flyer can be mailed to church members with a response card to enable future personal contact.
- Schedule a special meeting to inform interested people about the school.
- When you are speaking in classes, study groups, or special meetings, begin by explaining the vision and the foundational principles of the school, and then answer some common questions. A visual presentation can add color and interest to the meeting. Give people an opportunity to ask questions, and answer each one as carefully as possible. The whole meeting should not take longer than an hour or slightly longer. If possible, after your visit, write a letter to thank the pastor or group leader for the opportunity to share in his church.

Handbills

Small handbills can be developed that give a short description of the school, where it is, when it will start, what age levels it will serve, and a telephone number that readers can call to receive additional information or an application. The same brief description can be used on small posters that can be displayed in places where people will notice them.

Mailing Lists

Some churches will share their mailing list, or there may be lists available from other sources. These can be used for a mailing that advertises the school. A copy of a school flyer, brochure, or handbill can be included along with a personal letter from the school board or the director.

A Visual Presentation

Visual aids help in making a presentation to parents, pastors, and spiritual leaders. This can be completed in one or more ways:

- A slide presentation with a few well-prepared slides, or a PowerPoint presentation if a computer is available.
- A video presentation if a video camera and a television set are available.

- Posters or large pictures that present the philosophy and goals of the school—including grades to be served, location, etc.

Visuals are optional and are limited by the availability of funds and equipment. Ask creative people to assist in planning and preparing such an aid.

Remember, It Is God's School System

It is important that the Christian school not become any individual's pet project to such an extent that God is not honored and given His rightful place in the ministry. Remember that it is a Christian school, and Christ must be at the very center of everything that takes place. Because the Christian school desires to honor God and make Jesus Christ central, the following things will need to be routine:

- Pray and study God's Word.
- Trust God for His leadership and provision.
- Praise God for each provision and for His leadership and strength.
- Encourage the pastor, board, faculty, staff, students, and parents to pray and praise too.

Prayer and Bible Study

If we are doing God's work with God's families and children, it is important that we communicate with Him on a regular basis. Studying God's Word provides a way for God to lead, encourage, and correct us. Prayer is a natural communication with the Lord. It is vital, then, that the director, pastor, board members, teachers, parents, and students be encouraged to seek God's leadership and direction in Bible study and prayer. The Bible instructs believers to encourage one another. As we study and pray, we will be able to build each other up in the Lord and encourage each other as we serve Christ together in His school system.

Trust God

It is easy to begin to trust human leadership, enthusiastic people, those who give money to the ministry, or human creativity, and to forget that we must TRUST GOD in the Christian school. Everything comes from Him, and we must trust Him for leadership and supply. Of course, we will work with the strength and gifts He has provided, but we must continue to trust Him for everything. God has often said in Scripture, "I want you to trust Me," and we must encourage everyone in the Christian school to do just that.

Praise God

Sometimes it is easy to accept His provision and forget to thank Him for it. Christian school leaders, teachers, and students must praise God for all He has done to provide and sustain the Christian school. Praise must be a regular part of the classroom, the chapel, and the personal life of everyone involved in the Christian school.

“The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak” (Isaiah 40:28–29).

“I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” (Isaiah 41:13).

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer” (1 Peter 3:12).

“If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14, 15).

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom” (Psalm 145:3).

“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever” (Psalm 107:1).

✓ **Checklist: Advertising the School**

- ✓ Work through the local pastor and other pastors and spiritual leaders to generate interest in the Christian school.
- ✓ Prepare a brochure or flyer to advertise the school.
- ✓ Advertise the school in local churches.
- ✓ Distribute handbills in areas near the school or in areas the school wishes to serve. These handbills can also serve as small posters to display on bulletin boards in grocery stores and other shops.
- ✓ Send school flyers with a letter from the board or director; include a response form. (Mailing lists are sometimes available from local churches or other sources.)
- ✓ Create a slide, video, picture/poster, or power point presentation to use with churches, adult Sunday school classes, and other interested groups.



Terms Used in This Handbook

Board or School Board

A body of people duly elected by the group sponsoring the school for the purpose of giving leadership to the school and setting policies for its operation. The board is responsible for the general operation of the school and is accountable to the sponsoring organization. The board hires the director, and he or she becomes its chief executive officer.

Director

In different cultures he or she may be called the headmaster, principal, or administrator. This is the chief administrative officer of the school, professionally educated and certified as a teacher (if at all possible), as well as trained and/or experienced in giving leadership and direction to a school. The director is responsible to the board for the entire educational process. He or she gives leadership and supervision to the teachers and staff members under his jurisdiction.

Teacher

A person specifically trained to teach young students of ages five through nineteen.

Teacher's Aide

A person who assists in the education process but does not have official qualifications and credentials to be responsible for the instructional program. A teacher aide works under the supervision of a teacher to perform various technical functions and to assist students as needed.

Primary Education

An educational program for children ages 6–8, focusing on, but not limited to, the fundamentals of language and mathematics.

Elementary School

An educational program for ages 6–11, including the program of basic skills in language and mathematics, as well as an awareness of the social and physical sciences. This is the age when children begin to understand themselves and others from God's perspective, learning about God's love and the plan of salvation for humankind.

Middle School

An educational program for ages 10–15, for the consolidation of basic skills, with an emphasis on an understanding of the physical and social sciences, the development of fine arts skills, and an understanding of modern languages. As children are absorbing truths about the world, they are learning that all truth is God's truth and must be integrated with biblical knowledge and understanding.

Junior High School

For ages 12–16, with an emphasis on the understanding of social and physical sciences, the application of basic skills, skill development in fine arts and modern languages, and an understanding of personal potential and social responsibility.

Senior High School

For ages 15–18, an educational program in which the physical and social worlds are studied from an analytical as well as philosophical perspective through literature and the arts, as well as a spiritual orientation from a scriptural foundation. Communication skills in several languages are also refined, and students are generally preparing themselves for practical servanthood to God and humankind.

Discipline

Training that is expected to produce self-control as well as Christian character and behavior that evidences the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The term *discipline* implies a systematic approach to developing those qualities.

Policy

A plan or course of action adopted by the board. Policies should be based on scriptural principles and should form the basis for administrative procedures and

school rules. The board makes the policies and expects the director to carry them out.

Curriculum

A course of study offered by a school as presented in a general outline and elaborated through the activities, textbooks, workbooks, and other materials and learning experiences provided by the teacher. Curriculum sources are validated insofar as they are in agreement with the Scriptures.

Evaluation

A means of assessing what the students have learned and of ascertaining the measure of truth and quality of substance based on biblical criteria. Performances can be evaluated according to a given set of criteria; however, people are not the sole evaluators.

In-Service Training

A program of professional training for teachers initiated by the school director and focusing on areas of immediate need and priority. In-service training should be an ongoing experience for faculty members.

Parent/Teacher Association

A program providing a platform for interaction between parents and teachers, focusing specifically on the needs and development of children and the educational program involved. The parent/teacher group can provide training for parents, can help parents provide assistance for the school and the educational process, and can educate parents about the importance of Christian education.

Field Trips

An educational program that takes the students outside the classroom in order to discover or illustrate principles learned with the curriculum.



Resources for Further Reading

Books from ACSI

The following books, videos, and computer discs are available from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), PO Box 35097, Colorado Springs CO 80935-3509 USA:

Tools to Run an Urban Christian School, Vernard Gant and Tasha Tillman.

Called to Teach, Kenneth Gangel.

Classroom Discipline, Ollie Gibbs and Ruth Haddock.

The Effective Teacher, Arthur Nazigian.

Encyclopedia of Bible Truths, Ruth Haycock.

Guidelines for Christian Conciliation, Institute for Christian Conciliation.

Homework: Assignment to Assessment, Ollie Gibbs.

Letters with a Godly Seal, Arthur Nazigian.

100 Ideas That Work, Sharon Berry.

School Accreditation Manual.

School Accreditation Manual (International Edition).

Manual for Boarding Home Accreditation.

The Pattern of God's Truth, Frank Gaebelein.

Philosophy of Christian School Education, Ollie Gibbs.

Philosophy of Christian Education, Ollie Gibbs. (Video).

Serving God on the Christian School Board, Roy Lowrie.

Sowing for Excellence, Claude E. Schindler.

Still Educating for Eternity, Claude E. Schindler and Pacheco Pyle.

To Those Who Teach in Christian Schools, Roy Lowrie.

Books from Other Publishers

Effective Christian School Management, Deuink and Herbster. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press.

Guide to Successful Christian Teaching, Jacquot. American Association of Christian Schools, PO Box 1088, Fairfax, VA.

Nurturing Children in the Lord, Fennema. Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., PO Box 817, Phillipsburg, NJ.

Teaching Techniques of Jesus, Horne. Kregel Publications, PO Box 2607, Grand Rapids, MI.



Enabling Christian Educators and Schools Worldwide



Association of Christian Schools International
Post Office Box 35097 Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3509
719/528-6906 urbanservices@acsi.org