**THE HEADMASTER**

Visionary – Head Teacher – CEO

Rodney Marshall

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**Abstract**

I am planning multiple articles on each of the three characteristics of the effective Christian school Headmaster as visionary, head teacher, and CEO. These articles will culminate in a book, or manual suitable for a major seminar or semester course for aspiring Christian school headmasters. The developing table of contents will include at least the following articles.

**The Headmaster**

**Visionary – Head Teacher – CEO**

A work in progress updated September 2012

I am planning multiple articles on each of the three characteristics of the effective school Headmaster as 1) visionary, 2) head teacher, and 3) CEO. These articles will culminate in a book, or manual suitable for mentoring, a major seminar or college level course for aspiring and developing school headmasters. The conspicuous absence of works on this subject, a great desire to develop the next generation of idea and organizational leaders, and a long and successful career as a headmaster fire my drive to embark on this project. Consider that the average stay of a headmaster at an independent school is less than four years, a time far to short to establish effective leadership. Effective educational leadership is so important that I would like to contribute to its improvement with the intention of improving schools. Hopefully sharing both ideas and real life examples from my own experience will make this a valuable tool that is also interesting to read.

**Introduction**

The effective Headmaster will provide thought, and organizational leadership in three primary arenas, each of equal importance: 1) as visionary leader, 2) as head teacher, and 3) as chief executive officer. As visionary because the organizational leader needs to see where the academy is going to lead toward achievement of its highest ends. As head teacher because he (or she can be assumed throughout) runs an academy where teaching and learning great ideas is the paramount purpose, and head master by definition means head teacher, or the leader of the college of faculty. As chief executive officer, because the Headmaster is the sole report of the board of trustees responsible to fulfill academy ends, mission, or vision while assuring organizational integrity. The job description is a broad and exciting one because the Headmaster is leading an organization that changes the lives that will influence the future, and everything rises and falls on leadership.

This work called The Headmaster does not presume to be the only view one could take of this calling in the world of education. It happens that I have spent much of my career in this role and intend to share some of my ideas on the requisite characteristics needed for success and its importance to the qualitative, and quantitative development of American education. Nor do I claim to fill up all the requirements. I doubt anyone will fill the requirements fully because no individual leader can be all things to all people. Rather someone aspiring to or already laboring as a headmaster needs to develop in each of the three major categories, while recognizing personal strengths and weaknesses.

“Rodney,

Your idea about the model headmaster theory (one which a headmaster strives toward but may not achieve because no one is perfect) reminds me of two ideas in Cicero. In De Oratore, his masterpiece on the perfect orator, Cicero explains all the qualities of the active, civic orator. And in De Republica, he outlines the perfect politician. Both theories are about the 'perfect' person, not because Cicero thinks we all can be perfect, but the model of any theory must be perfect so we have the highest goal in view, (this allows us to measure our progress as well!). I now think of Browning: Ah..but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?”

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The wise leader will then surround himself (or herself) with others that fill in the weaknesses to release the greatest effectiveness for all. As the last academy I founded grew from 0 to 1,000 students in about ten years, I looked for people who were better than me at the various parts of The Headmaster’s comprehensive job. Some leaders fear to retain people more talented than themselves in some arenas. I love it because developing other leaders will contribute to a better future and working myself out of a job and moving on has always been part of the joy of life for me. I primarily looked for those that liked to operate the schools, and perform day-to-day business administration, since I thrive in the visionary, great ideas, and entrepreneurial aspects of the role and wilt when performing day-to-day functions as my primary duty. That said I know outstanding Headmasters that flourish as day-to-day leaders that have adopted the vision of an already functioning school. For that person, with different proclivities delegation would take a different form.

**Overcoming Objections**

Allow me to overcome a few objections about The Headmaster’s role before introducing thoughts about each category.

Some will object that the trustees are the visionaries; and visionaries they should be applied as trustees of the organization’s mission or ends. However, The Headmaster is the visible leader, and primary proponent of the organizational vision, and therefore must see far ahead with the board to lead the school to success. Some would prefer a functionary as Headmaster; someone to care take or make sure every one is happy, and that the business operation is solvent. In this way complaints, are minimized, and no one experiences financial anxiety over the operation. While people like the trustees should not need to field complaints, or experience financial anxiety, unlike a caretaker, the Headmaster as visionary leader will run an organization of excellence that maximizes achievement of the vision, and therefore maximizes satisfaction of all the various constituencies, while assuring solid business administration and organizational integrity. The key difference is that The Headmaster is first a leader then a manager. A leader can learn to manage but a manager that lacks the spark of leadership may never develop into a leader.

Recent publications imply that the role of the Headmaster has migrated toward CEO in the larger school, while head teacher duties are delegated to an academic dean. Some say the Headmaster is wasting valuable time when teaching or developing curriculum because there are CEO duties only he can perform. Certainly, in the larger school, delegation of responsibility is a necessary part of leadership, and staff development. Yet the excellent Headmaster will never allow himself to be relegated to managing from behind a desk. He must be out there leading from the front, promoting the organizational mission, while encouraging each constituency, and leading the way intellectually by grappling with the great ideas, in conversation with students, faculty, parents and beyond.

In any innovative idea oriented industry, the CEO should be the most prominent leader. A quintessential example in the technology industry for a few decades has been Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple. While some tech companies sell equipment, software and services, Mr. Jobs has a loftier vision as illustrated by a comment he made in persuading [John Sculley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Sculley), then President of PepsiCo, to become Apple's CEO years ago. “Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?” The parallel is obvious. The Headmaster behind a desk may provide for a smoothly run operation, and happy constituencies, but changing the world for the better with great ideas takes visionary leadership.

Some desire a headmaster that serves as a kindly social administrator collaborating with all constituencies, and even evaluated based on how much these various constituencies like him. While the Headmaster must be winsome, his chief responsibility is leadership, and a leader is not liked all the time because he makes decisions for the long term benefit of fulfilling organizational ends, not short term decisions to placate someone’s particular desire. A leader makes difficult and sometimes-unpopular decisions for the greater good of striving to achieve organizational success by changing lives with great ideas.

The developing table of contents will include at least the following articles. Underlined articles are already written and included.

**Table of Contents**

Introduction

1. The Headmaster as Visionary
   1. Introducing the Headmaster as Visionary
   2. Mission, vision or ends
   3. A Strategic Plan to Start, Grow and Multiply Schools for Regional Influence
   4. The Headmaster and Cycles of Improvement
   5. Leader vs. manager
   6. Strategic thinker and strategic actor
2. The Headmaster as Head Teacher
   1. Introducing The Headmaster as Head Teacher
      1. Chief exponent of Academy mission as stated in 1.b.
      2. Chief exponent of a Christian world and life view
      3. Chief exponent of classical education
      4. Developing a Vibrant Faculty Culture
      5. Model of great classroom instruction
   2. Who is a Head Teacher – what kind of a person
      1. A charactered thinker and speaker
      2. An apt classroom teacher
      3. An engaging public speaker
   3. Who does he teach? He teaches all academy constituencies.
      1. Board
      2. Administrators
      3. College of Faculty
      4. Staff
      5. Parents
      6. Students
      7. Prospective families
      8. Local religious community
      9. Local civic community
      10. Collegial community
   4. What does he teach
      1. A positive vision of the future made possible by training youth
      2. Great ideas, and practical management
      3. Curriculum development
3. CEO
   1. Introducing The Headmaster as Chief Executive Officer
   2. The Board – Headmaster Relationship based on Governance Policies
   3. School Organizational Structure
   4. Strategic Academy Assessment and Action Planning Cycle
   5. Chief Financial Officer – Business Manager
      1. Financial Stability Indicators
      2. Accounting, finance, budgeting, receivables, payables etc.
      3. Purchasing
      4. Facility development and management
      5. Human resources
      6. Legal compliance
   6. Chief Operations Officer
      1. Oversees all school operations
      2. Faculty and staff hiring, supervision and assessment
      3. Daily schedule and annual cycle
      4. Student recruitment and admission
   7. Chief Advancement Officer
      1. Marketing and brand development
         1. Marketing Outside the Box
      2. Public relations
      3. Charitable development - fundraising
4. Preparation of The Headmaster
   1. Calling
   2. Education – formal and informal education in the following arenas
      1. A liberal arts education
      2. Pedagogical and practical training of a teacher
      3. Business administration applied to the world of school management
         1. Strategic planning
         2. Strategic financial planning
         3. Accounting for the non-profit private school
         4. Finance
         5. Risk management
         6. Human resource management
         7. Payroll and benefits
         8. Plant and equipment
   3. Experience
      1. Teacher
      2. Intern or work various staff positions representative of the departments he will supervise
      3. Assistant Headmaster
      4. Finally appointment as a Headmaster
   4. Endurance
      1. The Headmaster can use a good advisor
      2. How to last
      3. Managing up by working effectively with the Board of Trustees
      4. How to grow while lasting
      5. Mentoring protégés
      6. Planning for succession
   5. Evaluation of the Headmaster
      1. Evaluation based on organizational success consistent with the policy governance approach
5. Conclusion
6. Appendix
   1. The Headmaster and the first 90 Days
   2. The Headmaster Search Process
   3. The Great Conversation Meets the Digital Age
   4. Questions a prospective head should ask of an institution while interviewing
   5. How to start a school
   6. Resources
   7. Study Guide right down to preparation of a budget
   8. Multimedia presentation
7. **The Headmaster as Visionary: Mission, vision or ends**
   1. **Introducing The Headmaster as Visionary**

The Headmaster as visionary acts as the ardent proponent of the Academy’s stated mission, and one that reads well the signs of the times to deftly lead the academy to achieve its unchanging mission in the midst of a changing world. He thinks and leads strategically. While managers care for the day to day activities of the school operation, a visionary leader, prays, reads, and thinks years into the future in order to lead today. The leader thinks strategically about what could be, or what the academy should become, and how it should influence people. The visionary leader can also sense the obstacles to success that need to be overcome prior to impact, and find a way through the rubble while building on the experience. While the manager thinks about damage control, the leader looks for the opportunity in a changing environment, and persuasively communicates this to key people and eventually to all constituencies. The manager surveys others in order to satisfy them, while the visionary thinks, and acts strategically.

The Founding Headmaster initiates a vision with others while the Headmaster that assumes the headship of an established school will adopt a vision. The Founding Headmaster is enlivened by a great idea that needs to be done, or a sense of responsibility or a burden or care for others as the force to start and then overcome the obstacles to fulfillment of that mission. The Headmaster that adopts a vision should carefully consider whether such a vision could be fully his before taking the position. I prefer to found and then pass on the vision to others but it is equally as exemplary to sustain an existing mission for the long term. After all none of us really invents education since “there is nothing new under the sun.” Prior to founding Coram Deo Academy my wife and I considered all we had experienced in the past, all we had hoped for the future of education and then raked through dozens of school brochures. Then we wrote a mission statement, “Coram Deo Academy educates youth in a historic Christian worldview through a vigorous classical curriculum. The goal of CDA is to train ethical leaders and wise thinkers who will shape culture for the glory of God.”

Whether founding or adopting a vision, the Headmaster should make the telos of every day, every activity, and every new program or program that is retired, every admission, and every hiring decision the mission, vision or ends of the academy. In other words, use the vision/mission/ends of the academy as a filter for every decision. If everything rises and falls on leadership, leadership rises and falls on visionary focus. Visionary focus is based on a mission driven labor of love fired by the hopeful expectation of movement toward a worthy end, and then sustaining the that end with continuous improvement. Yes, The Headmaster is a visionary.

* 1. **Unpacking Mission, Vision or Ends Policies**

When the Board of Directors of Coram Deo Academy, which I founded in 1999 voted unanimously to amplify ENDS Policies, as Headmaster I sought to unpack each statement to help all school constituencies understand the significance of the Board’s action and how it would affect staff planning and day-to-day operation. Praise God for the strategic thinking of the Board. The amended ENDS section of the CDA Board Policy Governance Manual follows with the instructional essay.

Board Policy 1.0 Ends Policies

1. The mission of Coram Deo Academy is to educate youth in a historic Christian worldview through a vigorous classical curriculum.
2. The goal of CDA is to train ethical leaders and wise thinkers who will shape culture for the glory of God.
3. An end of Coram Deo Academy is to develop Christian learning communities where teachers, and learners of all ages collaborate in the development of a Christian mind.

Later other ENDS policies were added as well.

1. An end of Coram Deo Academy is to develop multiple locations in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex as feasible so that constituents need travel less, learn more and have a better opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with each other.
2. An end of Coram Deo Academy is that these communities would not only serve themselves but also serve their greater communities for the glory of God and the advancement of a culturally engaged Christian faith.
3. An end of Coram Deo Academy is to explore development of such communities regionally and nationally as the Lord leads. Later it was determined this ENDS policy better achieved through a separate organization which opened in 2010.

Please allow me to briefly explain the first three ENDS policies. More space will be provided to elaborate on worldview and classical education in the section on The Headmaster as Head Teacher. Other institutions will adopt differing ENDS policies, mission and purpose statements that then require The Headmaster to take the lead in kneading them into the dough of the Academy all the time.

Ends Policy number one in the Coram Deo Academy Policy Governance Manual states that “Coram Deo Academy educates youth in a *historic Christian worldview* through a vigorous classical curriculum.” From the first informal discussions about starting an academy, Christian worldview dominated thinking about the underpinnings and critique of a classical curriculum. We realized then and now the necessity of commonness of perspective while allowing a range of thoughtful application. The teacher approaching the Iliad of Homer as a modernist will find the words of the story remain the same but the critique will differ from that of a Christian with a consciously held biblical world and life view.

Coram Deo Academy accepts Al Wolters’, Creation Regained as an answer to the question, “What is a Christian worldview?” To assure reasonable agreement on critique of a vigorous classical curriculum all members of the Coram Deo Academy College of Faculty accept and teach from the general thesis of this 100-page book. “In print for two decades and translated into eight languages, Albert Wolters' classic formulation of an integrated Christian worldview has been revised and expanded to reach new readers beyond the generation that has already benefited from this clear, concise proposal for transcending the false dichotomy between sacred and secular. Wolters begins by defining the nature and scope of a worldview, distinguishing it from philosophy and theology. He then outlines a Reformed analysis of the [four] basic categories in human history creation, fall, redemption, [and consummation] arguing that while the fall reaches into every corner of the world, Christians are called to participate in Christ's redemption of all creation. This Twentieth Anniversary edition features a new concluding chapter, coauthored with Michael Goheen, that helpfully places the discussion of worldview in a broader narrative and missional context.” I hope it goes without saying the many other authors provide a growing library of works on Christian world and life view and that Creation Regained was chosen simply to provide a brief and common rubric not as the only or a total treatment of the subject.

Ends Policy number one in the Coram Deo Academy Policy Governance Manual states that “Coram Deo Academy educates youth in a historic Christian worldviewthrough a *vigorous classical curriculum*.” Repeatedly the Coram Deo Curriculum Director stresses that children can learn much more than most people think they can learn when given a motivating school and home environment with high expectations. No wonder CDA provides a vigorous learning environment, classical pedagogy and a liberal arts curriculum in the classroom and at home.

Learning at CDA compares better to rock climbing than canoeing among the mangroves. It takes confidence, training, equipment, skill and encouragement to reach the top where graduates consistently find success pursuing their post secondary goals. Aware this means teachers cannot lower the bar, parents support with encouragement and refuse to wilt when their children experience temporary lapses in pursuit of the summit – do not look down – just keep climbing! Classical pedagogy subscribes to a timeless approach to developing a sharp, disciplined mind while educational content embraces the seven liberal arts and theology. By employing the classical trivium students learn the grammar or knowledge of each field of study. They progress to think logically and reason skillfully and then to persuade artfully through rhetoric. Moreover, in the four arts of the quadrivium they study mathematics and the sciences as reflections of the created order, the arts as an expression of humane soulfulness and godly order, especially music and known to the Greeks as harmonics. Added to the seven liberal arts is theology as what some called the queen of the sciences.

Finally, they view the body as integrated as part of human fullness through health, conditioning and athletics.

The view from the top is worth the climb. At CDA the curriculum director and I lectured regularly on classical pedagogy. Additionally we elaborated on The Seven Laws of Teaching by John Milton Gregory, An Introduction to Classical Education by Christopher Perrin, Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning by Douglas Wilson and other publications to constantly remind all constituencies of our classical learning distinctives.

ENDS policy number two states, “It is the goal of CDA to train ethical leaders and wise thinkers who will shape culture for the glory of God.” This lofty goal combines the need for ethics and wisdom in the classical education of children. One does not need to look far to find supremely educated thinkers and leaders that seem to lack one or both of these qualities. While some schools employ what they call a character curriculum, we choose to draw out these characteristics by affirmative and negative examples from Homer, the Old and New Testaments, to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza and the characters of The Canterbury Tales. With guidance of teachers and parents ethics in leadership and wisdom in thinking develops over a long period of years.

ENDS policy number three states “Coram Deo Academy is to develop Christian learning communities where teachers, and learners of all ages collaborate in the development of a Christian mind.” The education of children for God as the most important business on earth fits well within this end and so does the lifelong learning of teachers, parents, administrators, board members and anyone else associated with or influenced by Coram Deo Academy. The board amplified its ENDS Policies to include this idea as an expected outcome or purpose of CDA to emphasize the transformational quality of a motivated learning environment for all ages. On our employment application, we ask of all applicants for teaching, coaching and administrative positions, “Of all of the books you have read in the last six months, which one has influenced you the most and why?” I know when I conducted admission interviews I would ask a similar question of parents and older students. Truly all Coram Deo constituencies must read.

To this end one year we established **Gateway to the Great Books** as our annual Classical Educators Training theme. Three Great Books university professors and experienced CDA faculty presented plenary sessions and workshops to teach all teachers and some parents how to conduct Great Books discussions using the proven Shared Inquiry approach. We inaugurated a parent – faculty Great Books discussion group just after founding the academy to provide a forum for continuous learning. All constituencies participate in the Coram Deo Christian learning community and as a result three generations continue their classical education including students, parents, faculty, administrators and board members.

Further I emphasized Coram Deo Academy as a Christian Learning Community with Right Relationships. “Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity”Psalm 133.1 Each year we strove together to spread peace through relationships and joy exhibited over the good things at Coram Deo Academy. We celebrated Coram Deo Academy as a Christian learning community, where teachers and learners of all ages collaborate to develop Christian minds. To be successful in our educational endeavors all constituencies, students, parents, faculty, staff, administrators, board members, advisors and donors, must build relationships and work together.

Anecdotal evidence of pervasively edifying environments at CDA campuses abounded, but we knew there would be disagreements between constituencies from time to time. We needed to concentrate on edification and use a biblical approach to improvement and resolving difficulties. Truly, the glass is much more than half-full.

Jesus and Paul assumed that believers would have disagreements and provided a sensible pattern to restore or improve relationships and institutions rather than tear them down (Matt. 5:23, 24; Matt. 18-15-20; Luke 17:3, 4; 2 Co. 12:20 etc). None of us is perfect. Each of us needs adjustment from time to time to grow in Christ and grow professionally to the glory of God. However, we should never engage in unedifying speech that degrades an imperfect, but good work, for God. Rather, we should follow the biblical pattern for handling difficulties. For this to succeed each of us must refuse to listen to, or make a complaint against a fellow believer without that person present, and we must never backbite with social media that soils the reputation of a brother or sister in Christ. This fellow believer could be another parent, or a student, he/she could be a school secretary, a child’s teacher a coach, administrator, board member or donor. Anyone with a legitimate concern must follow a biblical approach to resolution for the edification of the Christian community.

The biblical process works something like this. The complainant should prayerfully and politely approach the fellow believer in a one-on-one setting to inquire as to his/her perspective on a matter of concern. Often polite communication will resolve a misunderstanding which when cleared up relieves the complaint. Do not allow email outbox courage to masquerade as a virtue.  For example, when a child has a complaint against another Christian a parent should listen intently to his/her child, but should not act against that teacher/parent/student etc. based solely on the child’s testimony. Before assuming truthfulness, verify the story by hearing the accused’s side without treating the child or anyone else as a false witness. A child, or for that matter an adult, can have a stake in knowingly or unconsciously biasing his/her perception of a situation to work for his/her own advantage. When I was a classroom teacher, I remember repeating this adage to a parent after parent, “I won’t believe everything your child tells me about you if you won’t believe everything your child tells you about me.” We do this in our families all the time. What father would immediately act against his dear wife on a child’s accusation against his/her mother without first politely verifying the story. Likewise, we should not rush to judgment against our friends, associates or a Christian teacher.

I fear when we judge another quickly we adopt the unbiblical conflict-based approach to complaint resolution prevalent in the American world of commerce. For some reason we feel justified in belligerence against the person behind the customer service counter or on the phone. This ought not to be so at a retail outlet or at a Christian school. Legitimate complaints may require corrective action. I hope that a Christian appropriately approached will not behave defensively, but responsively. If not, or if the parties differ on a matter of policy or opinion, the complainant should peacefully appeal to the next level of administration. The administrator should then moderate a meeting between the parties with the hope of peaceful resolution.

This dispassionate and biblical approach of believers one to another will build community and improve the quality of education at Coram Deo Academy. The school and the families with children attending the school must view one another as on the same team. Members of a successful team work together. May the Lord help us all dwell together patiently and in unity.

As Headmaster it was incumbent on me as the head teacher to explain the expansion of ENDS policies so they would become animating aspects of Academy life not just sit in the minute book. We articulated END 1) The mission of Coram Deo Academy is to educate youth in a historic Christian worldview through a vigorous classical curriculum, 2) The goal of CDA is to train ethical leaders and wise thinkers who will shape culture for the glory of God and END 3) An END of Coram Deo Academy is to develop Christian learning communities where teachers, and learners of all ages collaborate in the development of a Christian mind. Since repetition is a key to good learning through various meetings and media, all CDA constituencies were to remind one another of these ENDS and seek to employ their energies toward their fulfillment.

* 1. **A strategic plant to start, grow and multiply classical Christian schools for regional influence.**

There are plenty of books and seminars on strategic planning many of which begin with SWOT Analysis. This is all very valuable and available. I use it as well as a part of the strategic planning cycle. However, I first rely on our Trinitarian impetus is to envision boldly for Christ, plan thoughtfully with the Holy Spirit, and implement trusting in the Father. Then we will seek to execute the plan with faith and excellence, operate and continuously improve for the sake of His Kingdom.

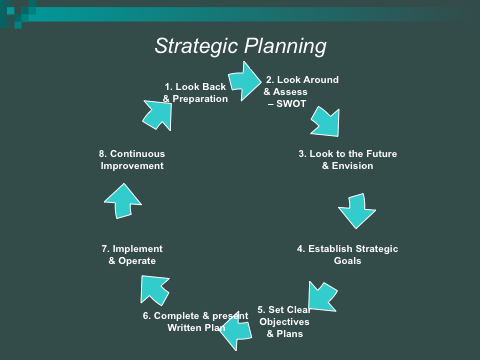
North American and western culture in general needs radical (all the way to the roots) Christian transformation to evidence the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. Let us believe for the moment Thomas Cahill’s claim that the Irish saved civilization in the wake of the fall of Rome by preserving and then spreading Christian liberal arts under the influence of Saint Patrick and generations of his disciples. Even so, now the development of Christian liberal artists through classical – Christian education could help refresh our threadbare contemporary western culture for the glory of God. This enterprise will need soaring vision but it will also require perceptive leadership, strategic planning, funding, and long-term hard work.

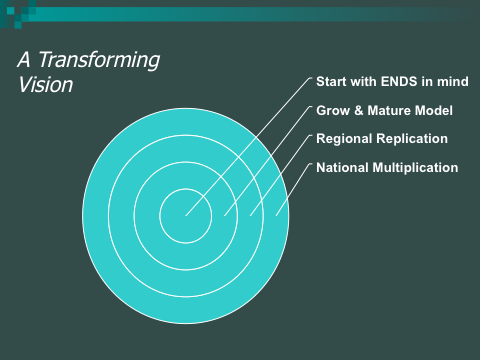
After the converted Irish discovered liberal learning, they copied furiously and then took their learning all over Europe. They opened dozens of learning communities (styled as monasteries or foundations) in what are now Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. It seems a well-organized effort to open learning communities (styled as classical – Christian schools) across America based on Christian liberal arts could yield similar transformational results.

What we think determines how we live. Therefore teaching people to think Christianly is the best opportunity to affect real change in how people live and therefore how they shape culture through their individual callings and their collective impact as God’s covenant people living all of life before God. Therefore, a classical school I founded in 1999, Coram Deo Academy, seeks to educate youth and adults in a historic Christian worldview through a vigorous classical curriculum. The goal is to train youth and adults as ethical leaders and wise thinkers that will shape culture for the glory of God. The classical Christian school as a learning community for students from pre-kindergarten and then through college and adult life – long learning provides the medium for a culture of teaching and learning to cultivate liberal artists who become ministers, and professionals that will spend their lifetime transforming culture as part of the culture. Thus, they will leave a legacy of wisdom, morality and manners for the next generation to build on and amplify over time.

It seems feasible that starting, growing, maturing, replicating and multiplying communities of teachers and learners through classical Christian schools will lead to cultural transformation. This Christian legacy could expand in an outward and upward impulse as tangible evidence of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ until He comes again. Since this endeavor is so important to the furtherance of Christ’s Kingdom it makes sense to provide the means to extend its influence with greater efficiency through a strategic plan and an organization to administer that means. This plan is not an exclusive means nor does it intend to replace any existing school, organization or plan but to add outward impulse to a movement in classical Christian education to which the stakeholders owe a debt of gratitude. We believe this endeavor so worthwhile and the business of education so important that many wise readers will see this as worthy of prayerful, financial and professional support. As it has been said, “no matter how big your vision is, God’s is bigger.” May the Lord bless the work of our hands.

I propose an orderly roll out of a strategic plan to reach an entire metropolitan area or a region by starting, growing, maturing, replicating and multiplying communities of teachers and learners through classical Christian schools. These slides illustrate the process.





1. Starting: Open a school location no matter how large or small.
   1. Assemble a core launch group of like-minded people that share the common goal of starting a school of a particular kind.
   2. Raise necessary start up capital and operate in the black on the basis of tuition and fees as soon as possible if not in the first year.
   3. Do all the preparation work from establishing a non-profit, to developing brand/identity logo, finding facilities, marketing and recruiting, faculty, staff and families.
   4. Establish a core curriculum program for the development of the Christian mind for a selective group of qualified teachers, students and parents that are committed to the ends established. Focus – major on this major before branching out. Do first what only you can do best in your region.
   5. Open the doors.
   6. Add arts, athletics and leadership opportunities to enrich the learning and growing experience without departing from the mission to develop Christian liberal artists.
2. Growing: Seek to grow the first school location in quality and enrollment
   1. Pursue qualitative development and continuous improvement through accreditation
   2. Add all grades Pre-K-12 as demanded and while maintaining quality
   3. Fill out each grade section to established capacity
   4. Adjust tuition accordingly to assure solvency, respectable compensation for faculty and staff, tuition assistance and the beginning of a surplus
3. Maturing: Financial stability, property acquisition and program expansion to enrich a broader constituency
   1. Develop and implement a financial plan that sustains the financial health of the Academy and is aligned with the mission and strategic direction.
      1. Budget to operate on hard income. Meaning pay all the schools expenses with tuition and fees without subsidizing with donated funds.
      2. Assure a current ratio (ration of current assets to current liabilities) of at least 1:1
      3. Build unrestricted reserves sufficient to weather an unanticipated financial need.
      4. Build an operating budget process that anticipates and responds to fluctuations in the economy.
      5. Grow academy funding through innovative approaches to program development consistent with its mission that generate net ordinary income
      6. Diversify funding by developing an internal culture of philanthropy to be used to start new programs, support tuition assistance, etc. but not for operating expenses
      7. Launch a capital campaign to purchase or build a permanent campus
      8. Develop outside philanthropic resources to fund growth and replication for the sake of the community or region at large
   2. Purchase and develop a physical campus to communicate permanence and provide a multi faceted learning environment conducive to the mission of the academy.
   3. Expand programming for enrolled students
      1. Add a flexible schedule that allows students to attend part time or full time while receiving the same rich education.
      2. Add a study center to provide for flexibility in scheduling, advanced learning, and tutoring
      3. Add an @ home option
      4. Add summer and after school Pre-K-12 programs for enrolled and non-enrolled students
         1. Arts, athletics, college entrance prep, tutoring, and other desirable programs
         2. Accelerated academic programs for students that desire to graduate early and so forth
   4. Expand programming for students not enrolled at the Academy by developing campus services to the community that increase the academy’s Christian influence while augmenting income and responsibly stewarding campus resources. Employ a business plan to put the campus to use profitably while consistent with the academy’s mission. These programs will operate in the summer, after school and on the weekends consistent with the needs of these new families.



* + 1. Retain a separate head for developing these programs that reports to the Headmaster like any other division head
    2. Add expanded conditioning and athletic programs and summer sports camps and select teams
    3. Add a theatre company, school of visual arts and music to serve the community. This will work especially well as specialty spaces for these programs are constructed. One could purchase an existing music or arts schools complete with a customer base in order to jump start expansion.
    4. Provide unique programs such as Latin, great books, progymnasmata, logic and rhetoric, Bible, theology and apologetics as well as programs in the sciences from a creationist perspective to serious students attending other schools.
    5. Add a tutorial center that can compete with Sylvan, Kumon etc. yet with a Christian world and life view
    6. Allow a church to enjoy the facilities while advancing the Gospel and serving the community
    7. Operate the completed campuses as conference centers
  1. Reach adults in the primary (parents of enrolled students) and secondary (grandparents) school constituencies and the broader community with unique learning opportunities in the liberal arts to reach two or even three generations at once. These programs operate after school and on the weekends when the primary academy constituency is not intensively using the campus.
     1. Great Books discussion groups with and without graduate level college credit
     2. Biblical worldview
     3. An overview of Western Civilization
     4. A Latin primer etc.
  2. Whereas points 1 and 2 operate almost entirely based on tuition and fees section 3 adds business income and a well-developed culture of philanthropy. The basic school operation should still operate in the black. Business income and philanthropy provide for physical development of the campus and the outward impulse of program growth



1. Replicating: Start satellite schools imitating the successful model of the first school.
   1. Establish satellite campuses according to the pattern in points 1 – 3 under the same school name and corporate status in an established service region.
   2. Raise start up capital for each new school start and then operate based on tuition and fees.
   3. After developing through stages one and two, purchase property and move into stage three as the Lord provides and demand warrants.
   4. After much deliberation you may decide to transfer the work of establishing additional campuses to a separate company in order to allow the Academy to concentrate its entire effort on schooling. The idea is to develop an outward and upward impulse to reach and entire region through the educational model employed. A single school is good, while reaching an entire region is great.
2. Multiplying for national and international influence through a Christian educational service corporation designed for this purpose.
   1. Assist others inside and outside of the service region with establishing their own programs patterned after the original model but organically local in character
   2. License the educational model providing all the products and services needed to economically and efficiently replicate while assuring organically local character. Provide:
      1. Consulting
      2. Software and web services
      3. Training for start up through maturation and replication
      4. Publishing and curriculum services from individual items through to comprehensive customized on line catalogues of all products needed to support educational and administrative functions.
         1. Develop a fully operational on line learning management system
         2. Develop a full on line curriculum to support the @ home portion of the signature program, a full time @ Home program and distance program.
      5. Management and supervisory services
      6. Professional accounting, development, public relations, buying, marketing, web, and legal services from original incorporation through maturation and replication
      7. Web and multimedia educational and administrative services
      8. Great books based college level training for HS graduates, parents desiring lifelong degree bound learning, new teachers and those pursuing graduate level degree bound training. Could connect with an existing accredited distance program such as the Faulkner Great Books Honors College.
      9. Management and professional training leading to a degree
      10. HR and placement services for all schools
      11. Accreditation consulting and resources
3. Develop a philanthropic foundation to raise funds to support the start-up phase of classical Christian schools.
   * 1. Establish a non-profit foundation solely for this purpose
     2. Seek out visionary philanthropic leaders that connect with the idea that changing the way people think, so that they think Christianly, through long term education in classical Christian schools is the best hope for regenerating American culture for Christ.
        1. Board members
        2. Donors and supporters
     3. Retain a visionary and persuasive executive director to communicate the foundations mission and lead its operation
     4. Establish procedures commensurate with responsible fundraising and disbursement of funds
4. Transforming and rebuilding civilization through classical Christian education until He comes
   * 1. Starting – growing – maturing – replicating – and multiplying classical and Christian teaching and learning communities throughout North America and the world springs from the commission of Christ to discipline the nations. Starting locally and developing a replicable model of education provides the foundation for expanding influence and efficient high quality systems to transform culture by training individuals, families and communities to think and act on the thoughts of God regarding all of life. Now is the time to think big enough to make a difference and start small enough to prove the viability of the concept.
     2. Many books written on transformation guide our thinking; many local works of similar ilk provide hope for success. Now is the time to organize for strategic success by providing a long-term godly replacement for inadequate educational systems with the resources to meet the challenge of educating thousands – tens of thousands – hundreds of thousands and then millions for the glory of God.
     3. History is one our side. The European Brothers of the Common Life simply began to influence lives by starting their first school in the middle ages. They ended up influencing the entire western world by educating luminaries like Calvin and Luther. Scottish Presbyterian minister, Thomas Chalmers wisely instructed us by saying something like, “You can accomplish less in five years than you think you can, but you can accomplish more in fifty than you think you can.” Maranatha.
5. Presuppositions and end notes
   1. We begin with the presupposition that God is and that He has spoken in the Old and New Testaments.
   2. We presuppose that the chief end of humankind is to glorify God and to enjoy Him fully forever.
   3. We presuppose that a Christian should view the Faith as all embracing and seek self consciously to adopt and apply it to all of life.
   4. In doing so they will glorify God and slowly, almost imperceptivity the influence of the Faith will penetrate culture, percolate, and leaven until the glorious redemption of Christ influences and dominates every arena of life and thought.
   5. We also understand that since most people alive have grown up with at best a truncated form of the Faith, education is needed to communicate the truth.
   6. We understand that such education should encompass the whole of life, not just a religious compartment and that all living should grow in the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the water covers the seas.
   7. Since both children and adults need this education, education should embrace people of all ages to provide transformational effectiveness.
   8. Therefore, we agree, “The education of children for God is the most important business that is done on earth.” (R. L. Dabney on education)
   9. Since classical and Christian education provides an excellent vehicle and perhaps the best vehicle for communication of this comprehensive Christian faith, it is wise to build on this successful model.
   10. As teachers, parents, students and even grandparents enter the great conversation in the presence of God – or Coram Deo, with the help of professional educators and faithful parents there will emerge a renaissance in classical and Christian education that will slowly transform communities.
   11. By involving students, parents and families a revival of the Christian family will advance restructuring the underpinnings of society from the bottom up.
   12. As community after community experiences this transformational quality slowly a world dominated by the thoughts of God and love of neighbor will freely and organically emerge to the benefit of all and the transformation of the world.

I offer these thoughts up to God and the Christian community with the genuine yearning for a collaborative and concerted effort to build on the foundations already laid and move the classical Christian school movement to the next level. This is offered for His glory and for the generations yet unborn.

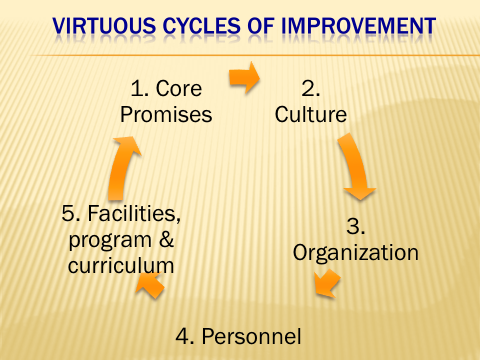
* 1. **The Headmaster and Cycles of Improvement**

The Headmaster: Visionary – Head Teacher - CEO

*Virtuous Cycles of Improvement*

From the first day of a headmaster’s labor of love at any school, he works to sustain its accumulated successes and to generate *virtuous cycles of improvement*. (Watkins)

He works to sustain innumerable successes such as delivering on the school’s mission, building a quality college of faculty, admitting and enrolling students, maintaining a positive public image, and caring for the existing campus.

By generating *virtuous cycles of improvement*, he focuses on aligning everything with the school’s mission. He seeks to create a learning, and leadership culture that ensures fulfillment of core promises to families, improves organizational structure to support this objective, retains, empowers and educates the team to meet these promises, and provides the facilities and programs to achieve and sustain *virtuous cycles of improvement.*

**Core promises at each school differ based on each institutional mission.** They incarnate the school’s mission. They include promises about the kind of student and family the school will admit, the nature of the education a student will receive, and how the school will treat the family. The school that promises a challenging college preparatory education for high performing students will differ from the core promises of a school that seeks to meet the needs of its entire community. The former will employ a more exclusive admission policy to assure a deep and challenging learning culture. The other may accept every reasonable applicant to embody and reflect its community. Both are legitimate but they are very different. The school needs to know its mission and then clearly articulate core promises consistent with that mission.

**The school’s leadership and learning culture should focus on fulfillment of core promises.** If the school promises to teach students to become independent learners its culture should coach students about how and give them time to work independently. This is a decidedly different learning culture than the typical teacher driven classroom with students sitting by rank and file. Instead, the culture would allow for a student to pursue learning at a rate consistent with capability and according to the student’s style. The more extroverted students may want to collaborate with others in the learning process, while the introverted students may enjoy individualized study. The leadership culture would need to match the learning culture by providing coaches rather than lecturers. If the leaders in a school want everything to be teacher driven then the school should not claim to develop individual learners. Instead, that should claim to provide outstanding instruction to all students in a well-ordered atmosphere. The leadership mode would be more formal in this structure. Again, the school needs to understand its own mission, articulate core promises that reflect the mission and develop a leadership and learning culture that will deliver on those promises.

**The school’s organization needs to support achievement of core promises by supporting the school culture.** The community school may have more of a happy family form of organization. In it the headmaster needs to know the name of every student, mother, father, brother, and the pet gerbil. The college preparatory school may engender a more competitive academic atmosphere to encourage high achievement. A military boarding school will include the unique top down command structure. **A classical or liberal arts school should include an organizational structure that sets people free. After all that defines a liberal arts education.**  There is a disconnect when a liberal arts school employs a heavy handed top down command structure that conflicts with the core promises of this kind of education. Instead, the school should employ as much of a self-governing student government as possible so the students learn how to enjoy freedom within order. Each school feels a little different. In most schools this just happens, but rarely does is comprehensively mark a school unless a savvy headmaster acts intentionally to align the organization to deliver on the core promises.

**The personnel selection and development employed in each institution needs to align with the core promises**. A happy family learning culture needs a college of faculty, educational leaders and a board that work in unity to achieve the self consciously warm culture. The high achieving academic atmosphere of a college preparatory school calls for faculty with high expectations. This does not mean the faculty is pompous, or mean-spirited. They still pray for and coach students through to high academic success. But it takes a different kind of a teacher, a different kind of a headmaster, joining different school associations and pursuing different kinds of professional development to deliver on core promises. The wise headmaster aligns the college of faculty, leadership and support staff to fulfill the stated mission.

**Facilities and programs of the school also need to align with the school mission, consciously developed to deliver on core promises.** Whether the school is located in an urban high rise or a sprawling country campus, ideally the designers and developers of the campus will self-consciously seek to build consistent with delivering on core promises. The right architects think this way. They will seek to understand the school’s mission and core promises, and develop a program with school leaders consistent therewith. Thomas Jefferson designed the University of Virginia as an academical village that encouraged deep interaction between faculty and students. The campus was designed for professors to live on campus in second story apartments with classes held on the first floor to encourage this interaction. It was decidedly not the industrial machine that characterizes many modern state universities. The warm community school atmosphere should include spaces that encourage family interaction with each other and with teachers. While the college preparatory school should not be cold, a great space for debate might take precedence over a café.

*Virtuous cycles of improvement* will naturally flow from aligning all aspects of the school to achieve the core promises that amplify on the school’s mission. The leadership and learning culture, organizational emphasis, faculty and staff, as well as facilities and programs aligned with the school’s mission will generate *virtuous cycles of improvement* that deliver on core promises. The headmaster leads the process.

Works Cited

The First 90 Days, Watkins, Michael, Harvard Business School Publishing

1. **The Headmaster as Head Teacher**
   1. **Introducing The Headmaster as Head Teacher.**

Head master means head, or lead teacher. The origin of the word in Latin is caput magister, meaning the capital, like the capital on a column, teacher. The Headmaster’s learning audience includes every constituency related to the organization. He teaches directly, and indirectly, the board, the administrative team, the college of faculty, the student body, the parents, the alumni, the donors, the broader community, and those who will join any one of these constituencies in the future. He therefore needs to be an idea leader engaging the great conversation about the world of the past, the present, and the future; about leading, about all the marvelous subject matter that make up a school curriculum, and that of educating in a rapidly changing world.

The Headmaster is head teacher of all Academy constituencies. The head teacher is at once the chief thought leader, and exponent of the great ideas that give rise to the need for an Academy. He is a reader, and learner obsessed with the great ideas the Academy advances. He is a bit of a scholar, and academic leader, a ready writer, and an engaging classroom teacher setting the tone for the college of faculty. He is a persuasive public speaker, a rhetor, convincing all constituencies to achieve the Academy mission. And last but not least a head teacher is not a cold academician but also a giver of a measure of pastoral-like care, because an Academy is a formative organization, and in the process of formation any constituent may need care.

Serving as Head Teacher of Coram Deo Academy I enjoyed educating each constituency. As a classroom teacher, I annually delivered the [Headmaster’s Lecture Series](http://www.marshalleducationgroup.com/articles-media-blog/headmaster-lecture-series) to students in grades eight through twelve. These lectures were delivered to individual class sections contributing relevantly to the curriculum sequence – mostly in history classes. As a result I related directly with each history teacher and to each student in each grade section. I worked at knowing the names of 200+ students in a way not possible through an assembly. Don’t get me wrong I really enjoy assembly speaking, but after five years of teaching a student, even if only a few times per year, I really knew them when then walked up the isle to receive a graduation diploma - how rewarding! I looked forward to each class session because I agree with the late, Christa McAuliffe who famously proclaimed, “**I touch the future. I teach**...” before she died in the shuttle explosion. Headmasters, you touch the future every time you teach any school constituency.

* + 1. **Chief exponent of Academy mission as stated in 1.b.**
    2. **Chief exponent of a Christian world and life view**

Education begins with a presupposed view of God, humankind and the world. Whether consciously or unconsciously all humans have a worldviewish outlook that influences thought and action and therefore teaching and learning. To the Christian this view is self consciously revelational, based on the presupposition that God is and that he has spoken to us through the revelation of God to man in the books of the Old and New Testament scriptures wherein lie the fundamental answers to our questions about life. The non-Christian must search elsewhere whether in rational-humanism-materialism, a mythical spirituality or some kind of a synthesis. When studying anything, one must uncover the underlying worldview of the author, his thoughts, his character or a policy to gain understanding and perform analysis. The importance of this process for the teacher cannot be underestimated as the outlook of the student shaped over time in the classroom will one day determine how each will live, and move and have his/her being.

There are many worldview paradigms helpful to this process but one most helpful to the Christian teacher is the assumption of a creation-fall-redemption-consummation paradigm. In the first phrase of the 4th C Nicene Creed, much that is relevant to the Christian’s worldview is articulated, “We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.” We understand that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:1, 2 ESV. We realize from Genesis as summarized in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, that God made the world, including humankind out of nothing and declared it all very good. He completed His work in six days, including creating humankind in the image of God, stepped back and said, “I like it!” Further, we understand from the book of Hebrews, He “upholds all things by the world of His power,” leaving nothing to chance but rather guiding all things by His divine providence.

Our first parents, however, left to their own free will sinned and fell from the original estate wherein they were created and humankind and all of the cosmos (created order) fell into a state of sin and misery. God however out of his mercy provided redemption beginning with covering Adam and Eve, calling a people to Himself and in due time He sent the only begotten Son of God, to deliver some from this estate of sin and misery into an estate of salvation by Jesus Christ the redeemer. This redemption carries implications not only for humankind but also for the whole creation that longs for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Romans 8) Therefore, the Christian can confidently move into his world bringing redemption into every aspect of life. Ultimately at His second coming, all things will consummate in a renewed heaven and earth. This creation-fall-redemption-consummation paradigm provides the matrix for the Christian worldview and for evaluation of any worldview.

The wise teacher will use real events or fiction to help students learn to discover the underlying worldview of main characters to assess their thoughts and actions and thereby learn wisdom for their own lives. Let me illustrate by comparing and contrasting Alexander the Great and Alfred the Great, two great leaders, worldviews apart.

It was 336 years before Christ when Alexander succeeded his father Phillip as King of Greece. Soon after consolidating power, the 20-year-old King invaded Persia taking control of Asia Minor. Before his death, Phillip staged for the invasion under the pretense of avenging Persian desecration of Greek temples during their invasion of Greece 150 years earlier. Later, with the defeat of Darius, Alexander declared himself Emperor and it would seem vengeance was complete. Since he was far from satisfied, Egypt welcomed Alexander as a liberator while the priests of the God Ammon pronounced him the son of Zeus (meaning the son of god). He founded [Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria) in Egypt, which would become the prosperous capital of the Ptolemaic dynasty after his death. He swept through the eastern reaches of the Persian Empire, married Roxanne of Bactria, and now Afghanistan, to win Persian hearts to their new ruler. Finally, as Alexander staged for the invasion of India at the Indus River, his men, after 11,000 miles of marching and fighting and years away from family, farm and friends, refused forcing him to turn back or lose his fighting force. Soon thereafter Alexander suddenly died of a fever from dissipation without a mature heir or established order of succession. He left behind Greek poetry, art and architecture, language, education and customs, and multiple cities bearing his name in what we know as the Hellenization of that part of the world. Alexander earned the title Great as the avenger of the Greeks, a military genius without contemporary rival, and a magnificent energetic leader, although applied as an international robber. Alexander’s name and reputation secured an immortal place in the minds of every Greek and every educated westerner up to the present age.

About 1,000 years later Alfred King of Wessex (the kingdom of England) earned the title Great for similar reasons but with a very different core motivation. Alfred, like Alexander succeeded a relative after his sudden death when he was only about 20, facing war immediately. The Danish Vikings had swept up the Themes in their colorful shallow draw boats pillaging the peaceful English villages and schools, farms, churches and monasteries in their quest for land. Threatened with genocide, Alfred a man of Christian piety as well as policy and skill at arms painted his face and lead his Saxon countrymen straight into the plunderers. After years of war, Alfred defeated the Danish invaders at the Battle of Edington in 878.

After a Viking defeat, Alfred would have the gospel preached to his enemies and would baptize them into the Christian Faith. Some say Olaf, King of Norway converted to the Christian Faith in this way while leading Viking raids in England. Upon his return King Olaf, lead a great conversion of the people of Norway and Iceland to the Christian religion. Meanwhile Alfred reestablished his nearly destroyed kingdom, made laws consistent with biblical law and the English traditions, restored scholarship, learning and monasteries and opened Christian schools. In his History of the English Speaking Peoples, Churchill said, “King Alfred saved Christianity for England.” Truly, he earned the title Great, as did Alexander.

Alexander immortalized himself through military exploit and cultural exploitation. His name emblazoned on cities and in history books for 2,300 years. Alfred made the name of the Lord great while he restored a just peace to England and is nearly forgotten even by the descendants of Christian civilization. Alexander conquered an Empire for his own glory while Alfred led an Empire to Christ.

Our mission to educate youth in a historic Christian worldview compels us to examine men and movements like these through use of questions like those developed by Walsh and Middleton, in The Transforming Vision. With their questions let us seek some rudimentary analysis of Alexander the Great and Alfred the great as two great leaders worldviews apart.

1. Who am I? - What is the author’s (leader’s) concept of the nature, task and significance of human beings? Does he portray his characters (himself) as innately good or deceitfully wicked or a confusing combination of both? Alexander saw himself as basically good because he was a Greek king and declared the son of the gods. In Egypt, he took the title of pharaoh, was declared to be son of Zeus and understood to be in essence the god-man. Alexander sought a name for himself above all other men. He viewed himself as savior of the world delivering the Persians from their Persianness into the glorious state of Hellenism. Apparently, anything Alexandrian or Hellenistic was innately good while anything Persian was innately bad. This is seated in part in a millennia long cultural feud between the “Greeks” and Persians. Alfred, deeply understanding himself to be a sinner saved by grace and understood himself as a sub ordained creature under the one true God who had called him to glorify and enjoy Him forever. He knew humankind to be desperately wicked but created in the image of God. Perhaps because of this he both knew the Saxons of Wessex must defend themselves from the bloodthirsty Vikings and he knew he must see the redemption of the Vikings once a just peace was affected by warfare. Alfred sought the glory of another.
2. Where am I? - What is the author’s (leader’s) belief of the origin and nature of the reality in which human beings find themselves? How does the author portray the world, what governs the world? How does the author have his characters view the world? Is it ordered, or chaotic, material or spiritual? Alexander fundamentally believed he could control the world as son on the gods. Alfred understood that the sovereign God governed the world. He and his armies prayed before battle. And, after a win, Alfred brought in Priests to preach the Gospel to the conquered Vikings.
3. What is wrong? – How does the author (leader) believe man can account for the distortion and brokenness in this reality? How does the author portray this brokenness, has man forgotten to nurture his spiritual side, rebelled against God, given into superstition or lost his way of being one with nature? Alexander seemed to assume the favor of the gods as he crashed forward in his grand conquests. During his rapid decline in dissipation that lead to death in his early thirties, he did not seem to experience guilt over his brokenness but privilege due to his exalted position. Alfred understood the fallen nature of humankind and the forgiveness of God.
4. What is the remedy? - How does the author (leader) think man can alleviate this brokenness, if at all? Does he need to seek balance (be at one with the universe), solve his problems rationally, be saved alone by grace, or rely on moral standards to remedy the problem? Alexander. If there was a need to remedy the brokenness of human kind this would have taken place through the placation of the gods. At the height of his powers Alexander in a way took the place of the gods, as son of god himself, and was therefore judge of all things. Alfred. Especially during the years of struggle when Alfred was losing to the Vikings, there was much prayer and repentance as Alfred the Christian realized that in God’s sovereignty he and his people could be under judgment because of their sins. The remedy was repentance and forgiveness.
5. What is really real? For Alexander fame was ultimate reality. The Greek view of after life left him little hope for the future. He seemed to seek a place in a new Homeric epic, where he could claim immortality along side Achilles and Odysseus. He slept with a copy of the Iliad corrected by Aristotle under his pillow and held Achilles as his model. Alfred, assured of his eternal salvation, confident of his future resurrection, needed no famous name other than that of Christ Jesus his Lord. Therefore, he could serve his fellow man giving glory to God.
6. What is the essential nature of the world? Both men seemed to see the world as ordered, not chaotic, and both material and spiritual. However, while Alexander consulted the Oracle at Delphi, waiting like many for a confirming prophecy, Alfred consulted the unchanging Word of God. While Alexander ordered his material world to promote his own image, Alfred sought to apply the law of God to justice in war and law, truth in learning and the Gospel for the salvation of many of every tribe, tongue and ethnicity.

1. What is the nature of humanity? Alexander seemed to see Greek humanity as primarily good and other humans as needing to adopt it. Alfred knew of the fallen nature of all humans but of the power of the Gospel to redeem.
2. What is the nature of good? Alexander sought to earn credit for goodness through remarkable achievement while Alfred could peaceably accept the goodness of God bestowed by He would lead us to repentance.
3. What is the meaning of history? History provided Alexander a shrine for his own idolization forever. For Alfred history was the progressive establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in this world until He comes. He did not need to make a name for himself.

These two men were both great, but they were two leaders worldviews apart. In our scoped and sequenced PreK-G12 curriculum we study Alexander during the grammar, logic and rhetoric stages of the student’s education. The student should learn something about both the facts and the interpretation of the facts through the worldview questions at each level. In the grammar stage, the student will learn the facts with the teacher’s careful interpretation lest they think Alexander great in every way. After all he was really one of the greatest robbers in history. Even the descriptions on history memory cards address the facts and some interpretation. At the logic level the students should ask the question why, and explore the possibilities using the worldview questions, but in the end be sure they arrive at an acceptable answer. They might generalize their understanding allowing them to the interpret war, empire and culture of any period with worldviewish assumptions in mind. At the rhetoric level, students will learn to apply these thoughts persuasively to history, literature and to the contemporary world. They may propose an answer to twenty first century international relations based their analysis of Alexander and Alfred over the years.

I hope and pray this single example will help you as you relentlessly pursue educating youth in a historic Christian worldview through a rigorous classical education.

* + 1. **Chief Exponent of classical liberal arts education**

A classical education is a Christian (traditional) liberal arts education. It is an education in a historic Christian worldview through a vigorous classical curriculum. Designed for the free person under God, this education enlarges those who recognize true liberty and work to preserve and extend its influence under God. It is not a secular or pagan education in the liberal arts seeking the liberation of man in terms of himself. Nor is it simply a superior education reserved for an elite class seeking an elevating education as part of their career track, even though it is most certainly an education superior to that, which dominates contemporary schools. It is not a technical education designed to reap the highest SAT score and advanced placement test success although this is often a benefit. A classical education develops in the student a virtuous, well-trained habit of mind that liberates the student for the glory of God.

The pantheon of classically educated covenant-influencers throughout the history of world illustrates the value of such an education as preparation of the contemporary Christian student. Moses received the classical education of his day when schooled in “all the wisdom of Egypt” and deeply infused with the traditions of his Hebrew fathers. He went on to lead God’s covenant people out of bondage, to receive the Law of God on Mount Sinai, to deliver the covenant and promises and to prepare the children of Israel to inherit the land of Canaan promised to their forebears. Solomon received a classical education when schooled first according to the Hebrew Shema, a verse of scripture that became the great confession of Israel’s monotheistic faith, and the verses immediately following it wherein the Lord said, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when your walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up…” (Deuteronomy 6: 4-7) He became renowned for His wisdom, his grasp of natural sciences, art, architecture, poetry and music and brought Hebrew culture to incomparable heights. However, his life illustrates the pitfalls awaiting even the best educated and the most brilliant.

Daniel, one of Israel’s best and brightest, educated as a Hebrew and as a captive in the Babylonian court, found his place as a remarkable prophet and a leader in Babylon. Paul the Apostle illustrates the consummately educated Christian, beginning with his studies in the synagogal schools, mastery of the Torah, and of classical literature and rhetoric. On Mars Hill, he brilliantly weaved his knowledge of Greek polytheism and poetry into preaching the resurrection of Christ with high rhetorical skill to penetrate the proud Athenian culture with the Gospel. These giants of the faith transformed the world because of the equivalent of a classical-Christian education.

The hall of heroes continues as the educated Athanasius, contra mundum, doggedly defends orthodox Trinitarianism at and following the Council of Nicaea. Augustine also liberally educated answered Tertullian’s question, “What indeed, hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?” by agreeing with Origen when he said, “All truth comes from God” and again that we should, “plunder the [educational] Egyptians.” His *On Christian Doctrine* saved rhetoric for the Middle Ages. Later Thomas Aquinas brilliantly blended Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy as an outgrowth of his monastic education developing the dialectic as a pedagogical form to sharpen the minds of his seminarians. His works formed the Organum or instrument of education that dominated the Middle Ages.

In the fourteenth Century Gerard Groote was converted and established the Brothers of the Common Life. The biggest impact of the brethren was in the area of education. First he formed schools that made education available to common people. Then these schools went on to cultivate a large number of famous pupils including Thomas a Kempis, author of *The Imitation of Christ*, and Erasmus, the greatest scholar of his age and an agent of reform. Likewise, such luminaries as Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin were all educated in Brethren schools earning Groote, a Roman Catholic, Luther’s praise as the “Father of the Reformation.” The ideas taught by the brethren had consequences as far reaching as the foundations of western religious, political and economic liberty. Their Christian schools transformed culture over the course of hundreds of years, just as will yours.

A classical education is precise and formal, traditional and enduring and rich and rewarding in content.

A classical education is precise and formal. In the tradition of the west, this is education that is chronological and ordered not haphazard, nor piecemeal. From poetry to physics, from recitation to rhetoric, systematic line upon line, precept upon precept, principles are taught, reinforced and applied. Precision and formality in education run against the tide of a casual, apathetic and egalitarian culture. It acknowledges the supremacy of God, the Bible and the teacher in the classroom and parent-educator at home in the life the child. Rather than placing the child at the center content and structure fill and organize the child. The student learns needed habits of mind.

A classical education is traditional and enduring. It is an approach to education that held favor for at least two thousand years before its Hegelian displacement over a century ago. Unlike other educational methods, this is one that is time-tested; it enjoys historical ballast. The student moves through an established body of content with specific tools and methods employed for centuries. Everyone studies the same general curriculum. Eratosthenes, Blaise Pascal and Dorothy Sayers had their lessons in grammar, logic and rhetoric and so do our sons and daughters. Isocrates and Quintilian advised that children learn a progressive set of thinking, speaking and writing heuristics through the progymnasmata and so do our students. They do not just learn these as formulas but as a means to learning to reason and express that reasoning interestingly. This approach is no easier or harder than ever before. In post revolutionary America, Thomas Jefferson bemoaned that children no longer read the good books. Leonardo Bruni, Chancellor of Florence in 1404 wrote *The Education of a Renaissance Woman,* and stated that true learning has almost died away amongst us. However, in their day, only the privileged received the upper levels of such an education.

John Adams was the only child in a large family to complete this kind of education because he was the one with the most potential. We seek to provide this education to the privileged and the common to the bright and the average because of a passion to develop free people under God. This traditional and enduring education will enable students make innovative decisions for the coming decades.

A classical education is rich and rewarding in the content of the liberal arts. This Christian education in the liberal arts includes a curriculum, an educational culture or a paideia encompassing the scope and sequences, books, methods, classroom environment and decorum from around the debate podium to the soccer pitch and the dinner table. The goal of a classical education includes learning how to learn, a skill that will serve the student, the parent and the educator for the rest of their lives. Moreover, it is connecting with students, parents and educators from centuries past and looking forward to centuries ahead until the Lord returns.

Consider that the liberal arts produce artists, for they are traditionally the arts taught to the free or liberated person. Just as the artist of wood, paintbrush or structure is trained to produce something true, beautiful and good; so is the student trained in the liberal arts. While the process is demanding, arduous and time consuming, it is also joyful and the product, like the beautifully painted canvas, gracefully carved falcon, or consummately designed opera house is to be a thing of beauty, rightly proportioned and useful to the world around it.  The liberal arts when applied to the human mind, heart and imagination can produce similarly beautiful things in the life of the student. The mind of the student is developed, disciplined and nimble. The heart is inspired and trained to discern good and evil—true, sacrificial love compared with selfish, faux love. In addition, the imagination is guided to be keen, creative and true, like the mind ’s eye, it vividly pictures the story of dedicated Moses, wise Eratosthenes, handicapped Demosthenes, available Cincinnatus, prudent Oliver, observant Galileo, brave Joan de Ark, creative J.R.R. Tolkien and perceptive T.S. Eliot. These ideals guide the liberal arts student who has worked hard, cooperated with the process and grown to love God as the source of all truth.  Thus, a student trained in the liberal arts should mature to great fruitfulness guided by a mind well furnished, a discerning heart and a vivid imagination.

The Seven Liberal Arts consist of the Trivium and the Quadrivium. The Trivium includes grammar, logic or dialectic, and rhetoric while the Quadrivium includes arithmetic and geometry or mathematics, astronomy or the sciences and music or the arts. Add theology as the queen of the sciences, philosophy her handmaiden and a healthy dose of physicality and the student will receive a complete preparation for Christian success.

Grammar is literally the study of the rules governing the use of language, part of the general study of language called linguistics. It also applies to the early stage of other disciplines such as history and mathematics. The key to the first stage of the Trivium, or grammar is content, content, content! Students learn who, what, where and when in each area of learning. They can do so by rhyme, rhythm and recitation.

*Surveyor, General, Number 1,*

*Father of our country, George Washington*

*Well-spoken John Adams, Number 2*

*Created the Navy and Marine Corps, too*

*Inventor Thomas Jefferson, Number 3*

*Bought the Louisiana Purchase- - - It was almost free!*

At this early stage, students easily and enjoyably learn by memorizing and reciting deep reasoning is difficult and unnecessary. Timeline dates are learned so that Children learn the timeline of God’s providential superintendence of history and hang upon those dates copious volumes of knowledge packing their intellectual pantries in preparation for analysis and application in the logic stage. Teachers teach the dates of the kings of England accompanied by costumes, architecture and everyday things so the mere mention of a King Henry the fifth emits strong images. Reading at the grammar level focuses on the child mastering phonics and grammar. Latin begins at grade 3 teaching precision and attention to detail. Students learn physical geography including continents, oceans and seas, mountain ranges and rivers, nations and cities. Mathematics includes mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in preparation for higher math. Geometric shapes and groupings lead students easily into more complicated mathematical processes. Study of the Bible at the grammar stage becomes acquainted with the story of God and man in creation, fall and redemption. Old and New Testament stories are soundly learned and joyfully recounted. Teaching at the grammar level should include all parts that make up the whole such as the eight parts that make up the sentence or the dozens of key historical dates encompassing each epoch of history. Learning the parts of phonics and grammar, history, arithmetic and Latin gives the student all of the pieces to assemble them into a meaningful structure. Because the grammar level lays the foundation, it will enable the next level of learning to take shape!

The logic or dialectic as a stage begins as the student approaches about the fifth grade. The growing mind begins to shift up from joyful memorization to questioning and argument or reasoning. In the language of Bloom’s taxonomy the student moves from recall and understanding to application and analysis. The child who enjoyed rattling off memorized grammar rules now begins noticing all the awkward exceptions in history, ethics and science. The mind begins to generalize, to question, to connect and to analyze, developing the capacity for abstract thought and construction of sound arguments. While the first grader learned that Rome fell to the Barbarians, the sixth grader learns that rising Roman taxes, government corruption and injustice, an increasing slave population, an army made up of mercenaries and polytheism weakened the Roman Empire. Students identify logical fallacies and delight to point them out in every conversation. Later, a course on formal logic teaches cause and effect; valid and invalid arguments, fallacies and syllogisms. Each of these mined for use in historical debate, literature, and political campaign, criticism of current events and in dinnertime conversation!

Logic level students write papers and deliver speeches that focus on questions of motivation, of historical development, of debated fact. What were the real causes of the French Revolution? Why did Jefferson and Washington keep slaves? Logic level students enter the world of symbolic mathematics. Algebra requires the student to work with the unknown; to analyze each problem, discover its central point and apply knowledge already acquired to its solution. Algebra is not just technique; it orders the student’s mind for all kinds of problem solving. We all need to work from unknowns to knowns when solving problems every day.

History at the logic stage finds the student still responsible for dates and places but digging deeper into the motivation of leaders, the relationships between different cultures that existed at the same time, into forms of government and causes of war both just and unjust. History provides the spine for a classical education. Literature, art, music and even science organize around the outline provided by history. Science at the logic level finds students making connections among the branches of science and between science and history and the scientific method and the rules of logic. Remember that the goal of classical education is to generate an adult who can take in new knowledge, evaluate its worth and then discard it or enjoy it put it to good use. Students who never learn to organize the information will never realize that the linkage between the Law of Moses, the Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights. Without logic, information will remain jumbled and unusable. Thus, the Logic level equips students with the tools to make connections and to judge. The subjects studied become the substrate for the real object, or learning to reason.

Rhetoric, the advanced stage of the Trivium is the art of expression. Students in high school and beyond learn more precisely how to express their arguments with order, clarity, force and style for effective and elegant persuasion. Rhetoric is the available means of persuasion. Rhetoric depends heavily on the first two stages of the Trivium to prepare contenders. Grammar laid a foundation of knowledge; logic taught the student how to think through the validity of arguments and to organize. In rhetoric, the student learns principles of expression. At first, a formal course in rhetoric is taught focusing on the contributions of Aristotle, Quintilian and Cicero. Later the principles learned will be applied to history, science, literature and theology. Rhetoric is organized into five areas or canons. Students are taught 1) the art of formulating an argument and gathering all the supporting evidence or *inventio*, 2) arranging or organizing all that information into a persuasive order or *dispositio*, 3) determining the style needed for the occasion or *elocutio*, 4) memorizing important points or entire speeches or *memoria* and 5) delivering the speech effectively or *pronuntiatio*. Aristotle tells us that Rhetoric leads to fair-mindedness. The student trained in rhetoric must be able to argue persuasively on both sides of an issue; not in order to convince an audience of that which is wrong, but “in order that we may see clearly what the facts are.” (Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.1). Students will learn and seek to apply that rhetoric “is the art of a good man [or woman] speaking [and writing] well.”

The Quadrivium includes arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Arithmetic and geometry or more broadly mathematics traditionally began after the Trivium. After students learned literacy and orality, they move into numeracy. In the modern conception, arithmetic begins as early as in the grammar stage. A classical education includes competency in higher math skills such as algebra, geometry and trigonometry and for many an introduction to the calculus. Astronomy or more broadly the sciences include biology (formerly natural philosophy), geology, chemistry and physics. Music or more broadly the arts include musical theory and composition as well as vocal and instrumental performance. The visual arts begin with exercises in the elements and principles of art as well as drawing, painting and three-dimensional media. Along with the oratorical arts, all these combine in theatre. At the rhetoric level, the focus of the arts is the means by which ideas are expressed.

As did the Medievalist, we add the Queen of the Sciences, theology and its handmaiden philosophy. The student studies the drama of scripture including the Old and New Testament people and events. Later he/she learns systematic and biblical theology. Finally, students study apologetics—the articulate and well-reasoned defense of Christian belief so they can contend for the Faith in any arena of life and thought.

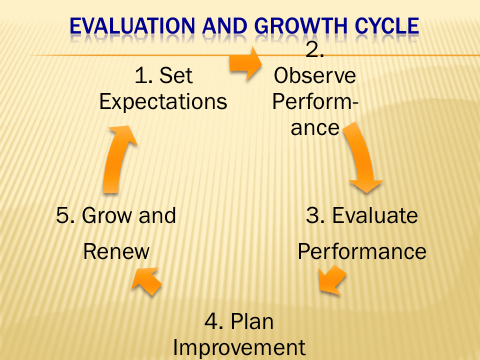
Since the classical school is a gymnasium for the mind and for the body, it therefore includes physical education, and athletic competition. Originally the Greek gymnasium focused on military arts such as wrestling, archery, missile (javelin) throwing and horsemanship. This is one of the best places to develop student fortitude, teamwork, leadership and stamina. Therefore, a classical liberal arts education is a well-rounded preparation.

And finally,as said Francis Bacon in Of Studies, “Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.”

Therefore, a classical education is a complete education developing in the student a virtuous, well-trained habit of mind and body for the glory of God. As classical educators, we endeavor to prepare citizens of the City of God to aim for a life that knows and reveres, speculates and acts upon the good, that loves and reproduces the beautiful and that pursues excellence and moderation in all things. We aim to prepare learners and citizens for life. This is classical education, a Christian education in the liberal arts.

Sources Used:

* Aristotle, *Available Means of Persuasion*
* Bauer, Susan Wise *The Well-Educated Mind, The Well-Trained Mind*
* Berquist, Laura *Designing the Classical Curriculum*
* Bruni, Leonardo *Education of a Renaissance Woman*
* Joseph, Sister Miriam, *The Trivium*
* Sayers, Dorothy *The Lost Tools of Learning*
* Schlect, Chris *The Seminal Words of Medieval Education*
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  + 1. **Developing a Vibrant Faculty Culture**

Developing a vibrant faculty culture is the most important initiative to foster improved student learning at any school. Many factors contribute to this culture. This paper focuses on that most important, which is maximizing teacher performance. School leaders should employ an orderly approach to improving faculty performance by 1) setting expectations, 2) observing performance, 3) evaluating performance, 4) developing individualized teacher improvement plans, and 5) supporting professional growth and renewal. Regular coaching and mentoring surround these five steps. [[1]](#footnote--1) This article briefly describes and provides a plan to improve these five aspects of developing a vibrant faculty culture. A real school case study provides and example. With hearty E) leadership and a supportive F) financial plan any school can emerge on a path toward more robust fulfillment of its mission.

**A) Setting Expectations:**

The first step toward developing a vibrant faculty culture involving a positive evaluation cycle is to set clear expectations. The organization then gathers around fulfillment of these expectations in its every facet. Leaders know what direction to lead and teachers know how to orient their daily objectives. We need to know what is to be evaluated. “As the private school teacher’s role extends well beyond the classroom, schools should view-and evaluate-a teacher’s performance comprehensively, considering the full range of a teacher’s interactions with students, the school, administrators, colleagues, and parents…” This begins with the statement of school objectives.

1. “Basic Teacher Expectations. These are “non-negotiable” tasks required for the school and classroom to operate effectively. Examples include professional appearance, timely submission or grades, and excellent attendance record.
   1. Overtly supports and acts in accordance with the school’s mission and values
   2. Demonstrates appropriate planning and preparation for instruction
   3. Develops and maintains a classroom atmosphere that inspires learning
   4. Upholds professional standards of personal presentation, punctuality, professional courtesy, and discretion
   5. Appropriately carries out specific assignments, including but not limited to service learning, advisory programs, assigned supervision, and other areas as determined by the head of school
   6. Maintains professional credentials and/or certification
2. Characteristics for Professional Excellence: These are the higher-order behaviors, values, and attitudes that must be present in strength within your faculty in order for the school’s mission to come to life and to be delivered with excellence to your students. Examples include creating a predictable and supportive environment for students, collaboration with colleagues, and ongoing focus on professional growth and development.
   1. Professional growth: Pursue career-long professional development as a foremost priority. Dedicated to maintaining cutting-edge knowledge of the latest developments in the field.
   2. Personal renewal: Strives to maintain a healthy work-life balance, regularly engaging in personal and professional renewal of mind, body, and spirit to offer the best to others.
   3. Supportive demeanor: In all interactions inside and outside the classroom, the teacher makes it obvious to students that she is eager to teach them and to wish them success every day. Even when enforcing discipline leave the student’s dignity intact regardless of the nature of the issue or infraction.
   4. Consistency and reliability: Not arbitrary or capricious.
   5. Academic standards: Set and support clear and appropriately challenging standards for student academic performance and grade student work consistently with these standards.
   6. Behavioral standards: Set and consistently enforce appropriate standards for student behavior.
   7. Real-life applications: Apply subject matter to real-life conditions beyond the classroom.
   8. Enthusiasm: Demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for teaching/learning and for the content of studies, striving to engender similar enthusiasm in all students.
   9. Commitment to the school: Demonstrate through words and actions an earnest public and private commitment to the school, its mission and purposes, its leadership, and teaching peers.
   10. Emotional engagement: Strive to have meaningful and healthy emotional engagement with students. Display conspicuous interest in students’ outside-the-class lives without crossing privacy barriers.
   11. Commitment to colleagues: Consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to the personal and professional well being of faculty colleagues, administrators, and staff.
   12. Socializing knowledge: Demonstrate skill and commitment to communicating in-class experimentation-and-testing outcomes and findings to colleagues, within and beyond the school.
3. Case Study School specific expectations: The Bylaws summarize its expectations of educational philosophy in Section (2). “The educational approach of [The Case Study School] as defined below is fundamentally different from government operated education both in philosophy and content. The Case Study School recognizes that an excellent education is founded upon disciplined, eager attention to learning; that this discipline rests upon the student's moral character; and that this moral character can only be developed through a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. In support of parents’ God-given responsibility for educating their children, The Case Study School seeks to:
4. Provide a clear model of Christian life through its staff and board members; (Matt. 22:37-40)
5. Encourage every student to begin and to continue to develop a relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ; (Matt. 28:18-20)
6. Teach all subjects from a biblical worldview as parts of an integrated whole with the Scripture at the center; (II Tim. 3:6-17)
7. Provide students with a classical education, in which grammar (the fundamental facts and rules of each subject), logic (the ordered relationship of particulars in each subject), and rhetoric (the expression in speech and writing of the ideas of a subject) are emphasized in all subject areas;
8. Encourage all students to develop wisdom, discernment, and a love for learning. Children will be taught how to learn for themselves and how to express what they have learned; how to think rather than simply what to think;
9. Provide an orderly and safe atmosphere conducive to attaining these goals.”

From these sources, we should clarify expectations. The basic expectations + characteristics of professional excellence + specific The Case Study School objectives + guided observation + evaluation > individual teacher improvement plan and professional development.

“By comparing a teacher’s performance to stated expectations, you can now evaluate whether a teacher meets the school’s needs-and by extension, the needs of your students.”[[2]](#footnote-0)

**B) Observing and Evaluating Teacher Performance**

An intentionally designed and diligently followed system for faculty observation, evaluation and feedback should be exercised in every school. The following principles and system design is a way to successfully carry out the objective of improving teacher performance. If a school has a good system, I suggest using it as a foundation and then incorporate the missing elements to make it work better. Before proposing a particular system, here are some general principles of evaluation.

“Focusing on the evaluation segment of this process, we [ISM] believe that effective teacher evaluation in  the 21st century:

1. involves regular and timely feedback, coaching, and mentoring throughout the year (i.e., it is not a one-time event);
2. is anchored by an annual written evaluation that serves as a summary of the year’s coaching and mentoring conversations and guidance;
3. is seen as being predictable and supportive by faculty;
4. leads to identifying skill enhancement needs and growth opportunities;
5. helps identify mission-inappropriate, mediocre, toxic, and/or incompetent teachers; and
6. provides the school with legal protection (i.e., serves as “documentation” should a lawsuit or discrimination claim develop).”[[3]](#footnote-1)

**Case Study - The process at one school I consult works like this:**

1. weekly meeting: Each *new* teacher meets weekly with his/her division principal beginning the first week of school. This meeting begins the communication and feedback needed to improve teaching and forms the foundation for future coaching and mentoring.
2. formal Observation: Each *new* teacher is formally observed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters while *continuing* teachers are formally observed in 1st and 2nd quarters. The process follows and much time is invested school wide.
   1. pre-observation meeting of 15 – 30 minutes with the division principal for *new* teachers
   2. scheduled observation from 30 minutes to full class period of teaching
   3. principal fills out the observation form (sample attached. Note the attention to detail and feedback provided to the teacher)
   4. interview and feedback discussion for teacher formation of about 30 minutes in a scheduled meeting
   5. this process provides an excellent foundation for continuous coaching and mentoring within the Evaluation and Growth Cycle.
3. informal Observation: Each principal intentionally attends to unannounced periods of observation of a duration sufficient to follow up with feedback 2 to 5 times per quarter. Again this contributes excellently to coaching and mentoring opportunities.
4. end of year evaluation summative in nature. To date this process did not involve direct contact with the teacher for the purpose of coaching, mentoring and preparation of an individualized professional improvement plan.

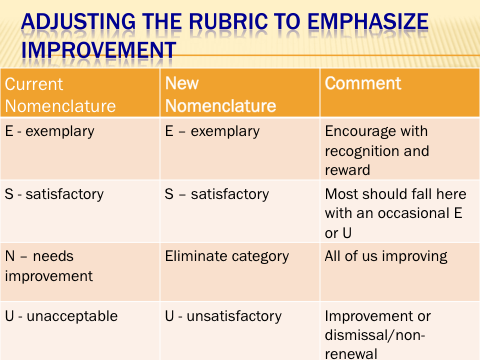
This observation and evaluation process includes many of the elements desirable for teacher evaluation and some of the elements for formation or improvement. Teachers do improve as a result of this process. Notwithstanding, the evaluation process should be improved to assure new or clarified expectations are considered. These clarified expectations become the standard for the observation – feedback – evaluation process that segues into individualized improvement or professional development plans for each teacher and for the school as a whole.

**Administration Evaluation of School Faculty**

I reviewed all of the observation and evaluation forms for each faculty member, and conversed with the division heads. Then I performed my own formal and informal observations to validate those I read. Results have been compiled from observation and evaluation forms and included in the employee compensation spreadsheet to inform salary setting during the budgeting process. Taken on the whole The Case-Study School has good faculty that need coaching and professional development so more of them can become great at their craft. Only a few teeter on the brink of non-renewal and even these may become good solid teachers with clearly defined expectations, intentional coaching and mentoring and professional development. The teacher of greatest concern is in her first year, was hired in June without a teaching background and received no substantial training. The School will do better in the future. The primary need is for The Case-Study School to adopt more professional expectations. Teachers that have not pursued any kind of professional development or served on a single improvement team have been ranked exemplary. Why? Because the school’s expectations are low and narrow.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Evaluation Summary | Observation | Evaluation |
| Average Grade | A - | S + |
| Range | C + to A + | S – to E + |

**Analysis and Ideas**

Evaluations at The Case-Study School tend to be inflated or at least skewed to the high end compressing the scale. Only one of many dozen observations was graded in the C range while most were in the A range with an average grade of A -. No reviewed evaluation received an unsatisfactory rating. There has probably been evaluation grade creep over time. A strong clarification of strengthened expectations, encouraging the principals to spread the grades out by removing the + and – should help. An exemplary teacher should stand out from the crowd with clear reasons for such a rating that merit reward. An unsatisfactory teacher performance should be obvious from the process, evidence the attempt of the principal to coach and mentor the teacher to success and if necessary justify dismissal or non-renewal. Everyone else should be rated as satisfactory and specify strengths and articulate a plan for professional development. Some systems do away with the grades altogether unless the teacher is unsatisfactory. This forces the system to be more formative based on specific feedback.

I advised The School to replace the A, B, C… observation grading system because it implies academic competition and is contextualized in the American psyche to mean that nothing beneath an A is acceptable. Instead shift to a redefined U – S – E nomenclature for both observation and evaluation. Then more clearly define the meaning of these categories with a universally applied rubric and apply this meaning vertically through all grades.

**Changing Teacher Performance Requires Clarifying Expectations**

Most of the teachers in The Case-Study School, especially in the lower school, do exactly what they believe they are supposed to do. If The Case-Study School wants to change teacher performance it needs to change or at least clearly define the meaning of expectations. The teachers need to know where the new target is. And the new target needs to include more of the “Characteristics of Professional Excellence,” and higher level thinking, reasoning and expression skills. If the target is moved The Case-Study School should do so intentionally and make the new expectations clear to all concerned. For example The Case-Study School’s evaluation form places a disproportionately high emphasis on student attentiveness to the teacher. Although student attentiveness is important, the emphasis produced in some lower school classrooms an over attention to strict order, closed window blinds to avoid distraction, finger snapping to regain attention, and sometimes a forced environment. These are not best practices but they do get the teacher high marks on the evaluation form. The form must change to reflect upgraded expectations and best practices.

At the outset of my consult, The Case-Study School stated that it wanted a culture change from an overly strict toward a more creative effervescent environment. This requires a clear and agreed upon adjustment to expectations. Some upper school teachers have bogged down in the grammar stage of learning and need to emphasize higher order thinking, reasoning and communication skills characteristic of the logic and rhetoric. Any change needs to be clarified under expectations and be changed on evaluation forms. Then the entire observation – evaluation – feedback and professional development cycle will encourage a unified school wide shift over the course of a couple of years. This process will take above all good leadership and total institutional support.

**Underperforming Teachers are Difficult to Identify from the System**

All teachers need an annual professional development or improvement plan to engender a vibrant culture of faculty improvement. Thankfully, no teacher at The School is toxic to the organization and it does not appear that any particular teacher needs to be under any kind of discipline. Some need improvement plans that clarify areas that must be improved by the time contracts are offered in the following school year in order to be retained. The School’s division heads need to provide intentional, active, goal oriented coaching and mentoring to the teachers that have the lowest ratings. Some of these teachers will need to obtain more outside training as well to succeed and continue into the next school year. In light of past retention practices, and a lack of documented underperformance, few if any teachers should be replaced for underperformance immediately. Sudden dismissal or non-renewal of teachers could cause unnecessary employment culture shock especially in the light of a change in expectations. Consistent with the parable fertilize the tree in the next school year with the expectation it will grow. If the tree does not bear fruit then that tree would not return during the next school year.

**C) Supporting Professional Development**

Expanding faculty capacity through professional development involves both form and content. The various forms include the coaching and mentoring inherent in the evaluation and growth cycle described above, peer-to-peer observation and demonstration and review, graduate level education and conferences and seminars both internal and external and so forth. The content of professional development will be determined by clearly articulated expectations, and from the individual improvement plans generated annually during the evaluation cycle. For example, a new teacher that holds a teaching degree may still lack specific experience in the classical Christian philosophy and pedagogical practices of The School. This educator needs a year of well thought out orientation that begins as part of the induction process the summer prior to the first year of school. It would be best for a teacher like this to assist in the first year and move into a lead teacher position the next. All teachers need ongoing professional development to grow from good to great.

**To Develop a Vibrant Faculty Culture The Responsibilities of the Division Head Must Adjust**

The primary responsibility of the division head needs to move from mechanical operation of the school day/quarter/year to that of “leadership of adult faculty in a manner designed to enhance the capacity of the faculty to deliver the mission with excellence. As evaluating, coaching and mentoring faculty are crucial elements of enhancing faculty capacity they are integral to the administrator’s role and exactly the place in which significant effort and focus is worthwhile and required. Less essential tasks need to be pushed to the margins or delegated.”[[4]](#footnote-2) This requires rethinking the division head’s job description, matching the right people with the job, providing the necessary training, and making the necessary adjustments to the operation over time to free up the time. This will take both a shift in perspective and financial backing.

The Case-Study School observed has an evaluation/feedback approach in place that takes much division head time. But it has achieved limited results because of weak professional teacher expectations, mechanical execution of the process, and lack of funding for customized professional development. Rather, the process should be full of a vibrant enthusiasm for growing teacher performance by applying best practices. The School needs to power up through the professional development of division heads and make sure they have more time and support to observe/evaluate and coach teachers. This is a job of the head of school.

Division heads need to have the time to emphasize faculty leadership. ISM recommends that administrators directly supervise no more than fifteen teachers to maintain an effective coaching and mentoring relationship with each. This has several practical implications regarding time, money and other resources. In one school I consult I found division heads with about the right span of control over full time teachers to allow time for coaching and mentoring. However, they were loaded with so many part time teachers, volunteer coaches, new student admission duties, curriculum development and acquisition, and risk management that little time remained for the observation/coaching/improvement cycle. To develop and sustain a vibrant faculty culture the school administration will need to fund, develop and retain division heads that lead faculty, reduce the span of control to give time for coaching and mentoring and fund professional development.

**Forms for Professional Development at The Case-Study School that are Doable Right Away**

1. Cycle of observation, feedback, evaluation and segue to professional development
2. Coaching and mentoring targeting first full time classroom teachers then part time teachers and coaches
3. Peer to Peer observations, demonstration and eventually peer review of some kind
4. Annually updated individual professional improvement programs for each teacher as part of the end of year evaluation
5. Professional development days that focus on developing teachers to perform on expectations. In one school I consult we increased these days from zero to five in the first year.
6. Bring in the needed teachers of teachers to strengthen professional development days. The Case-Study School will bring in a highly regarded teacher of math teachers to teach all of the math teachers in grades six through twelve. Another school plans to introduce composition and speech in the classical tradition in upper school as a prelude to rhetoric. They will bring a specialized teacher of the progymnasmata to teach all English language and literature, history, theology and rhetoric teachers to apply this approach across the curriculum.
7. National conferences for school leaders.
8. Specialized off campus training such as Advanced Placement and Great Books Shared Inquiry, developing upper school students in higher reasoning skills, identifying and remediating reading deficiencies and more.
9. Book studies by school division that focus on meeting expectations not just philosophy of education
10. School visits to expose division heads and faculty to high performing faculty and faculty cultures

**Examples of Content of Professional Development for The Case-Study School**

The case study school adopted a realignment of middle and upper school curriculum that will require considerable faculty development.

1. Integrating the principles of logic and rhetoric, or higher level reasoning and articulation skills into upper school teaching, conversation, assignments, and assessments
2. Improving mathematics and science instruction and learning in middle and upper school including philosophy, methods and advanced placement for advanced sections.
3. Integrating classical languages more deeply across the curriculum into middle and upper school teaching, assignments and assessments
4. Integrating composition and speech in the classical tradition (progymnasmata) into writing, literature, bible/theology/apologetics and history
5. Principles of good classroom management. This is especially important because the length of teaching periods varies requiring an adjusted approach to maximize learning
6. Employing multiple techniques to obtain, maintain and regain student attention and interest and to challenge the student to rise to the next level of learning
7. And so much more.

**A Monthly Plan for Implementation at The Case-Study School**

1. August – Orientation and initiation during 2 professional days
2. August – Begin weekly morning book studies by school division emphasizing performing on expectations
3. August – Begin weekly coaching/mentoring for all new teachers
4. August – Begin informal observation and feedback
5. September – First quarter formal observation, feedback and response
6. October – Professional development day after the quarterly break
7. October – Begin peer-to-peer observation and reciprocal demonstration
8. November – Board approved strategic plan supporting development of a vibrant faculty culture
9. Nov/Dec – Informal observation and feedback process
10. December – Board approved strategic financial plan supporting a vibrant faculty culture
11. January – Budget supporting a vibrant faculty culture
12. Jan/Feb – Second quarter formal observation and feedback
13. February – Annual faculty survey
14. March – Begin conversations to fill staffing plan for next school year
15. April – Evaluation, improvement plans and contract offers
16. May – Professional development days
17. June – National conferences
18. July – Reading, college coursework
19. Arrangement – Specialized training of all kinds

**D) Coaching and Mentoring –** The how tos to be developed

**E) Providing Leadership**

Everything rises and falls on leadership. The board, head of school, director of academics and programs, director of advancement, division heads, and grade and subject chairs provide the leadership to develop a vibrant faculty culture.

1. The Board needs to include in a strategic plan an emphasis on improved teaching and learning as the highest priority. This plan should be supported by a strategic financial plan to provide the funding to pay teachers competitively, recognize high performing teachers, retain exemplary leadership, create space and time for division heads to emphasize coaching and mentoring teachers as their highest priority, fund the director of academics and programs, free some time for grade and subject chairs, and fund professional development and renewal at about two percent of expenses. Each school needs a trend toward this provision that grows a little each year.
2. The head of school leads from the front making the development of a vibrant faculty culture the top priority of his office.
3. The director of advancement could develop programs to endow the school to help it achieve the highest and best culture of learning if tuition does not fully support this direction within the limits of the strategic financial plan.
4. The director of academics and programs needs to be funded to provide the direct hands on leadership to develop and implement programs and school culture to support a vibrant faculty culture.
5. The division heads need to move from concentration on operations to development of vibrant teachers that develop vibrant classrooms full of extraordinarily good learning. This assumes each division head is fully capable and if not a transition would be needed over time. The division heads need to be able to nurture this kind of teaching to be successful.
6. The subject and grade chairs need to be developed to champion teaching and learning in their respective discipline and grade levels.

**F) A Supportive Financial Plan**

A supportive financial plan will provide directly for competitive teacher pay, a fund for rewarding exemplary teacher performance, and professional development at about two percent of expenses. Schools need funding to provide competitive faculty compensation to keep and attract excellent faculty, enough faculty oversight to support coaching, and mentoring, a dedicated academic and program development administrator, and finally a head of school intent on making development of a vibrant faculty culture the top institutional priority. At most schools this idea translates into reality when the facilities are at full capacity creating maximum margins, and when tuition increases outstrip inflation by at least two to three percent over time.

**G) Action Steps to Develop a Vibrant Faculty Culture – over time:**

1. Develop a board approved strategic plan and financial plan to improve learning by developing a vibrant faculty culture over time. Clarify expectations and board intentions.
2. Retain a head of school that will provide institutional leadership emphasizing development of a vibrant faculty culture.
3. Appoint a director of academics and programs with the intention of moving it to a full time position over time to provide focused leadership of this initiative.
4. Re-describe the position of division head as leadership of adults (faculty) in a manner designed to enhance the capacity of faculty to deliver the mission with excellence. Reduce their span or control, and reassign tangential administrative tasks (athletics, admission, compliance, curriculum purchasing etc.) to free them to lead teachers.
5. Improve division head observation and feedback by providing professional development in this arena to help them improve as evaluators and as coach/mentors. ISM has a weeklong seminar related to this.
6. Revise evaluation and observation forms to include ideas from “Characteristics of Professional Excellence,” [[5]](#footnote-3) and more specific school expectations.
7. Add a collaborative teacher improvement plan to the end of year evaluation process based on the many interactions from the previous year. This plan would be initiated by interview and then completed by the teacher so that the teacher owns his/her professional development or improvement plan. The supervising division head would sign off in agreement or add comments before signing
8. Provide support for professional development for each teacher based on the individualized improvement plan
9. For underperforming faculty, make crystal clear the performance expectations in the improvement plan that must be reached to renew for the next year and replace any faculty that continues to underperform
10. Fund this process through the operations budget
11. Build toward providing a budget line item for professional development equal to two percent of expenses
12. If the school employs many part time teachers, move toward a full time professional faculty
13. Align faculty compensation to industry standards to help make attracting and retaining quality faculty more competitive. That industry standard may be locally determined but should be equal to or greater than public school pay. Understand that the better independent schools pay much more than public school and have higher retention rates.
14. Reward exemplary teaching with recognition and merit pay though a well thought out system.
15. Narrow the span of control for division heads, and delegate administrative tasks in order to favor coaching and mentoring teachers. This means providing the funding for additional competent administrative help.
16. Assure that principals are fully qualified and educated to coach and mentor teachers to excellence
17. Solidify the forms and content for professional development
18. Implement the professional development calendar
19. Promote and retain grade and subject chairs to augment the work of the director of academics and programs in development and the principals in coaching and mentoring
20. And more…

**Closing**

If we really believe the following quote as educational leaders we will find the means to make developing a vibrant faculty culture the most important activity of our offices. “The education of children for God is the most important business done on earth. It is the one business for which the earth exists. To it all politics, all war, all literature, all money-making, ought to be subordinated; and every parent especially ought to feel, every hour of the day, that, next to making his own calling and election sure, this is the end for which he is kept alive by God - this is his task on earth.” The important thing is to lead the organization on a trajectory of improvement. Over time you will then reach your goal of outstanding student learning. [[6]](#footnote-4)

1. **The Headmaster as Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**
   1. **Introducing The Headmaster as Chief Executive Officer**

As Chief Executive Officer, and the only direct report of the board of trustees, the Headmaster is comprehensively responsible for successful achievement of organizational ends while maintaining organizational integrity. The board will link governance and management functions through a single chief executive officer, titled Headmaster by means of written management delegation policies. The Headmaster will regularly report back to the board on the achievement of academy ends and integrity.

Depending on the size of the Academy, the Headmaster as CEO must act as, or be fully communicative with the chief business, and financial officer, chief operations officers – normally school principals or division heads, and chief advancement officer. This broad role in organizational leadership is vital to the long-term success of any academy.

As chief business or financial officer he assures the academy is run behind the scenes on solid business principles, operated on hard income that is duly collected, recorded, reported, and audited. He understands the Academy is not primarily a business operated for a profit but that he must employ excellent business administration to assure solvency. He assures the academy normally operates with a surplus producing reserves that will allow the academy to succeed during a downturn and expand during times of prosperity. He should not allow the academy to fall into the bad practice of requiring charitable contributions to meet a budget gap. He provides adequate facilities, equipment and supplies to for a positive learning environment. He assures ends are met by lawful means, and that all personnel are treated well. He is an educator and a business leader.

As chief operations officer, he assures that all those directly involved in the teaching, and learning process are free from unnecessary encumbrances to achieve the great end of educating the soul. The academy is operated as an orderly, but not a militaristic organization, with adequate, well maintained facilities, a smoothly run, predictable annual cycle, weekly schedule and daily ritual where conflicts are anticipated, and mitigated ahead of time. This means he thinks a minimum of one year ahead of all the rest of the staff. I always kept a monthly tickler file of that which needed to be accomplished month by month rather than just forging ahead. Think about it, as soon as school opens the Headmaster begins preparation to open new students enrollment for the following school year even though it is twelve months in the future. He plans five years ahead for facility expansion. When every one else is back in the classroom one the jobs of the Headmaster is to think ahead.

The Headmaster as chief advancement officer engages in recruiting families, and faculty, marketing, and brand development, public relations during times of peace, and especially in a crisis, and he must raise money through charitable development. His gifts of passion for education, writing and public speaking combined with a winsome social attitude will serve him well in this role. Again, he is anticipating the annual cycle of admission and students recruitment through promotion, academy preview meetings, web site and social media renovations and any other means appropriate to his locale. I also accepted opportunities to speak at Rotary, home school groups, to appear on Christian television broadcasts, on the radio, and I provided a column for the local newspaper, and blogged on classical education as often as appropriate. Since he believes passionately in the mission of the academy he heads, these should be attractive activities. They are important activities he must not allow to be crowded out by the urgent.

The Headmaster is responsible for the entire operation. However, the Academy is not operated as a machine, and the excellent headmaster will take care not to apply scientific management to an organization of humans, engaged in interaction with great ideas, and with each other. The Academy is decidedly not making widgets, and therefore it should be run differently than a manufacturing operation. The formation of humanity takes plenty of art, not just rigorous science.

* 1. **The Board – Headmaster Relationship based on Governance Policies**

There are several approaches to the government of an academy. The most important thing is to choose one that fits the academy and follow it carefully to maximize organizational performance. The following approach to the board – headmaster relationship is adapted The Carver Institute Policy Governance Model.

"Policy Governance® is the world's most complete theoretical foundation for the board's governance role in business, nonprofit (NGO), and government organizations. Policy Governance is an integrated set of concepts and principles that describes the job of any governing board. It outlines the manner in which boards can be successful in their servant-leadership role, as well as in their all-important relationship with management. Unlike most solutions to the challenge of board leadership, its approach to the design of the governance role is neither structural nor piecemeal, but is comprehensively theory based. The model covers all legitimate intentions of corporate governance codes (including Sarbanes-Oxley), but in a far more comprehensive, theory-based manner."

Summarizing this approach based on an actual board policy governance manual for an academy, the role of the board, on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ and like minded Christian families in the Academy’s region is to assure that the Academy fulfills its intended ends and avoids unacceptable activities and conditions.

1. The board will define in ends policies what is to be accomplished. It will define in executive limitations policies those activities and conditions it considers unacceptable. The board will delegate performance of these matters to a CEO, titled Headmaster.
2. The board will carry out its job with discipline, emphasizing strategic rather than short-term issues, policy rather than single events, and group rather than individual decisions.
3. The chairperson is charged to make decisions on issues of governance process and board-staff linkage within board policies.
4. Conduct of board members will be consistent with their fiduciary responsibility and with the discipline adopted by the board.
5. If board committees are necessary, they will assist in the board’s job only, never interfere in the direct link between the board and CEO, and never fragment the wholeness of the board’s job.

The board will link governance and management functions through a single chief executive officer, titled Headmaster by means of written management delegation policies such as those that follow.

1. All board authority delegated to staff is delegated through the CEO so that all authority and accountability of staff as far as the board is concerned is considered to be authority and accountability of the CEO.
2. The CEO is accountable to the board for achievement of provisions of the board’s ends policies and avoidance of provision of the board’s executive limitations policies.
3. Monitoring data that discloses the degree of organizational performance upon Ends policies and Executive Limitations policies will be systematically gathered by the board and considered to be the only evaluation of CEO performance.
4. Individual board members may have relationship with staff members but can never carry the instructive authority of the board, nor can they waive requirements set out by the board in relationship with staff.

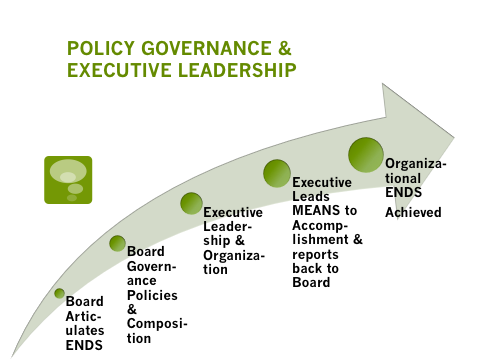
The CEO/Headmaster is charged with the responsibility to achieve clearly articulated organizational ends. The means to achievement of such ends is at the discretion of the CEO without the need for guidance from the Board. However, the CEO may not violate executive limitations clearly articulated in the board adopted policy governance manual in the achievement of such goals. Following is a sample board policy governance manual section on executive limitations. Adherence to this approach released leadership energy on the part of the CEO while satisfying the board’s fiduciary responsibility for maintaining organizational integrity. Rightly applied both the board and the CEO will do and better job and have a more enjoyable time doing it!

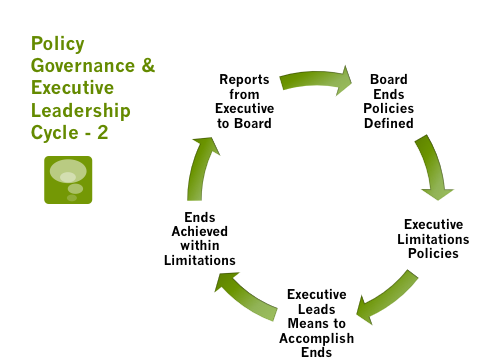
Board Policy Executive Limitations Policies

The CEO, titled Headmaster, will not cause or allow any practice, organizational circumstance, activity, or decision that is either imprudent, illegal, or in violation of commonly accepted business or professional ethics.

1. Paid staff and volunteers will not be subjected to unfair, undignified or unsafe treatment or conditions.
2. Assets may not be inadequately maintained, unnecessarily risked or unprotected.
3. Actual financial condition and performance will not incur jeopardy or compromise the board’s ENDS priorities
4. Staff compensation and benefits will not deviate materially from market.
5. Board information will not have significant gaps in timeliness, accuracy or completeness.
6. The CEO will not cause or allow any financially related decision, action or activity that is illegal, imprudent or that places the organization’s financial health in jeopardy.
   1. Fiscal year budgeting will not materially deviate from adopted Ends policies, risk financial jeopardy or be derived from other than a multiyear plan. Without limiting the scope of the aforementioned, the CEO shall not allow budgeting that:
      1. Omits credible projections of revenues and expenses, omits separation of capital and operational items and omits disclosure of planning assumptions.
      2. Fails to show the amount spent in each budget category for the most recently completed fiscal year and the amount budgeted for each category for the current fiscal year.
      3. Plans for the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be available during the year.
      4. Fails to plan for hard income coverage of operational expenses at a rate approaching ninety percent. Hard income is defined as monies that are billed such as tuition, fees, and profits from auxiliary programs such as summer programs, or funds gleaned from interest bearing accounts (e.g., from an endowment fund) In other words the CEO shall not fail to pay for operational expenses primarily from operational income.
      5. Fails to assure a current ratio of at least 1:1.
      6. Fails to add at least 1%/year to a reserve fund with target reserves equal to 15%-20% of one year’s operational budget.
      7. Fails to reflect anticipated changes in capital or operational needs that are material.
      8. Is not in a format understandable to the Board or that is presented in a manner that does not allow the Board to understand the relationship between the budget and the approved Ends policies.
      9. Fails to be presented in a timely manner that would prevent prudent review prior to approval.
   2. Actual financial performance will not materially deviate from approved budgets.
   3. Financially related operational decisions, actions and activities will not be conducted in a manner that is contrary to commonly accepted business practices, professional ethics, governing law or that would be considered imprudent. Without limiting the scope of the aforementioned, the CEO shall not allow financially related decisions, actions and activities that:
      1. Receive, process or disburse funds under insufficient controls.
      2. Fail to settle payroll, debts, tax and other government ordered obligations in a timely manner.
      3. Allow federal, state and other governmentally required filings to be filed inaccurately or not in a timely manner.
      4. Fail to aggressively pursue receivables after a reasonable grace period.
      5. Undertake a single capital project or capital purchase in excess of $50,000 without board approval.
      6. Fail to use a competitive bidding process for purchase of equipment and contracted professional services in excess of $25,000.
      7. Make any purchase without weighing reasonable precaution against and avoiding conflict of interest.
      8. Fail to maintain adequate, customary insurance to protect against theft, loss, and liabilities to board members, staff and the organization itself.
      9. Acquire, encumber or dispose of real property without board approval.
      10. Establish compensation for staff or administrators that is excessive or materially outside industry norms for the responsibilities and geographic location.
      11. Change his or her own or a relative’s compensation and benefits without board approval.
      12. Invest or hold operating capital or invest funds in insecure instruments including uninsured checking or savings accounts.
   4. Fiduciary reporting will not omit material information or be prepared in a manner that is not in accordance with professional standards. Without limiting the scope of the aforementioned, the CEO shall not allow financial reporting that:
      1. Fails to keep complete and accurate financial records by funds and accounts in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
      2. Fails to publish standard format monthly and annual income statement and balance sheet reports.
      3. Fails to obtain an independent auditors review of the organization’s financial records and reporting on a basis less frequently than every two years.
7. The CEO will not cause or allow any human resources related decision, action or activity that is illegal, imprudent or that places the organization’s employment culture in jeopardy. With respect to the treatment of paid staff and/or volunteers, the CEO may not cause or allow conditions that are unfair, unsafe, unbiblical, undignified, or unlawful. Accordingly, pertaining to paid staff, the CEO shall not:
   1. Discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or sex.
   2. Operate without written personnel procedures and guidelines, which clarify personnel rules for faculty and staff, provide for effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions.
   3. Prevent staff from following the grievance procedure.
   4. Fail to acquaint staff with this policy.
   5. Fail to receive approval from the Board to hire a Board member's spouse, family member or relative.
   6. Fail to employ teachers that meet the approved qualifications. Accordingly, all faculty and staff must:
      1. Profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and maintain a credible Christian testimony that does not reflect negatively on the mission of the academy. The CEO is not expected to pry into the private lives of employees but to supervise circumspectly.
      2. Be an active participant in and subject to the authority of a local church whose doctrine is consistent with the Nicene Creed. There can be no harmful deviation in the belief system of the applicant from the Nicene Creed.
      3. Possess other personal and professional qualifications that show promise of successfully discharging duties while in the employ of the School as assigned by the Headmaster.
      4. Be able to evaluate his/her subject material through the light of the Old and New Testaments and to present a thoroughly biblical point of view in his/her entire professional and academic discipline.
      5. Submit to criminal and reference background examinations, as well as such other examinations, tests or analyses as the Headmaster may require.

The following two illustrations highlight the role of the board, the CEO and the linkage between each. This is not a hands off approach by the board unfettering a CEO for independent action, but rather a clear definition of roles for maximum organization achievement of clearly articulated ends without violating clearly articulated limitations on the means to accomplish such ends.





1. **Organizational Structure**

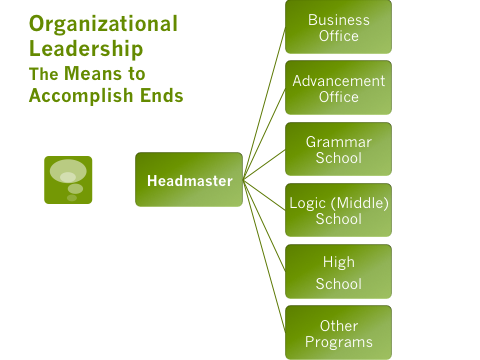
Organizational Leadership

The Means to Accomplish Ends

Private schools choose to organize themselves in a myriad of ways. The school’s stated mission or ends, size of enrollment, solvency and other factors will affect organization structure. Some school create extraordinarily complex organizations that bog down decision making, while others employ leaner means because they have recruited great people that can achieve at a high level when provided an environment of trust, support and freedom to act within clear boundaries. Obviously I prefer the latter.

While advising schools, I conduct a Strategic Academy Assessment using a self-reporting tool that works excellently. Recently the SAA revealed many strengths and weaknesses in a school. Because its organization and decision making process did not clarify the headmaster’s scope of authority and executive limitations all decisions of consequence eventually devolved to the board. In fact I have found in many schools the headmaster is not allowed to change from one educational product to another without board approval. This is unnecessarily strict oversight that usually results from a failure of the board to clearly identify educational ends policies and the reflecting executive limitations. Clearly the choice of a curriculum product is a means issue well within the scope of authority of the headmaster. The good-hearted people involved in these schools work hard and have many good ideas but the process of moving from idea to implementation crawls stifling innovation.

The following organizational diagram assumes an organization that has adopted a governance model that unleashes executive leadership within limitations. As a result all means to accomplishing organizational ends fall under the purview of the headmaster. In a small school the organization will be structured more simply. A larger organization may have the privilege or including an academic dean or director of curriculum and instruction. In future post each department or job title will be briefly explained.



STRATEGIC ACADEMY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Preparing an Action Plan for Qualitative and Quantitative Growth

Every academy should formalize a process for continuous qualitative and quantitative growth. It seems a healthy organization needs a well-entrenched culture of improvement that becomes a normal habit. The Headmaster as CEO will lead this process, sometimes with the aid of a consultant that has developed multiple academies. He will add effervescence for a good academy to become great and for the newly developing academy to achieve sustainability. We recommend use the seven categories of AdvancEd Standards for Accreditation and Quality Standards with additions for analysis of branding, external and competitive factors, and school statistics. Then use a form of SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) as the basis for the Strategic Academy Assessment. After the analysis is complete the intention is to provide a comprehensive action plan for the qualitative and quantitative improvement of the school. The headmaster, or consultant will coach the process from beginning to end. Through this means the academy will improve and prepare for accreditation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Each category in the table of contents is fully developed in the assessment and action planning process.

Summary of Steps toward Success – See below

STANDARD 1: VISION AND PURPOSE

STANDARD 2: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

STANDARD 3: TEACHING AND LEARNING

STANDARD 4: DOCUMENTING AND USING RESULTS

STANDARD 5: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

STANDARD 6: STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

STANDARD 7: COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

SECTION 8: EXTERNAL FACTORS, BRANDING, IDENTITY AND GROWTH

SECTION 9: SCHOOL STATISTICS

SECTION 10: HEADMASTER AND TEAM CHAIR ANALYSIS AND PLAN

SECTION 11: BOARD ANALYSIS AND PLAN

SECTION 12: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS



Summary of Steps toward Success

1. Executive Summary prior to assessment process.
   1. Summarize the primary challenge the school is facing; the problem it needs to solve, or the desire it longs to fulfill.

Begin here:

* 1. Summarize the expected outcome of the analysis; if you had to decide what to do right now, before the SAA what would you recommend.

Begin here:

* 1. School Objectives for the next 3 – 5 years as you seem them now, prior to the process.

Begin here:

1. Teambuilding and Preparation
   1. Win all school constituencies necessary to the process of the Strategic Academy Assessment so that all work toward the qualitative and quantitative improvement of the school. Constituencies consist of the board, headmaster, division or department heads, faculty, staff, donors, parents, students, alumni, and a few people from the community with a high interest in the success of the school.
   2. Choose three to nine small teams of two to three qualified people to address each of the categories. Determine a chair for each team. The Headmaster is either the chair of each team, a member of each team or an ex-officio member of each team. If you prefer a simpler alternative choose a smaller team.
   3. Meet with the teams to explain the process, determine a timeline, and work out the practical means for its accomplishment. When, how often and where will teams meet and what is the first deadline.
   4. Each team uses the Strategic Academy Assessment Template section or sections for which they are responsible as a guide to their research and analysis.
   5. Carefully survey constituencies remembering that if in the survey someone says they want something they will expect you to do it. The consultant can recommend questions.
   6. The headmaster should meet weekly with the team chairs to spur progress.
2. Analysis with SWOT and Action Planning
   1. When Executive Summaries are completed the Headmaster or consultant may make preliminary recommendations to handle urgent items and give further direction to the process.
   2. When each team has completed its portion of the template including a recommended action plan, the headmaster with team chairs perform the last step of SWOT analysis; recommend a prioritized comprehensive action plan with a timeline for implementation.
   3. Submit the plan to the Board.
   4. The board should seriously consider the report and its conclusions and then perform its own SWOT analysis, recommend a prioritized comprehensive action plan with a timeline for implementation.
   5. Since strategic planning of any kind must also include strategic financial planning, the board and headmaster will also need to determine the budgetary considerations of each action plan item and provide the funding for achievement by the determined deadline.
3. Coaching, Critique and Recommendations by a Qualified Outside Consultant
   1. The headmaster or consultant coaches the process from beginning to end.
   2. When Executive Summaries are completed the outside consultant may make preliminary recommendations to handle urgent items and give further direction to the process.
   3. When the initial team reports are submitted to the headmaster, then the consultant meets with all teams during a campus site visit.
   4. An interim report and short-term recommendations may be made following the site visit.
   5. After the headmaster and board complete SWOT analysis and Action plans, the outside consultant conducts his/her analysis and presents results during a working session with the headmaster and board
4. Presentation to All Constituencies
   1. Provide public oral presentation of conclusions with illustrations while allowing Q&A.
   2. Back up the public presentation with a written report and illustrations.

The idea is to make continuous qualitative and quantitative improvement a part of the academy culture. This is not a process that is completed and filed away, but rather, completed implemented and started again as part of a healthy planning cycle.

**The Headmaster as Chief Advancement Officer**

**Marketing Outside the Box**

This outline is derived from the philosophy and methods utilized to grow a classical Christian school at an average annual rate of 50% for six years and from 0 – over 1,000 students in ten years. This approach resulted in rapid numerical growth with strong retention, financial growth, and mission accomplishment while maintaining quality standards, and achieving regional accreditation. A few of the methods have been updated to reflect the advent of social media marketing opportunities. This article is not intended to become your marketing plan but rather to stimulate creative thinking to help your school grow and meet its mission. I would be happy to help you customize a marketing and growth program for your school – partly because it is fun!

**What do you do? See *The Art of Positioning*, by Guy Kawasaki**

Market your mission-What do you do?

* + Differentiate yourself from the competition-define your niche
  + Stand out, don’t fit in
  + Choose a school name that communicates your mission
  + What makes your school like others and what makes it different? Although your audience needs to hear some things that are the same as any other school, be sure you clarify what makes your school unique

Market for a match - What do people in your community desire?

* Interest in your mission. For example:
  + Christian environment, teachers, friends etc.
  + Christian perspective, worldview etc.
  + Kind and interested faculty
  + A place where they know their children will be safe
  + Quality academics
  + Advanced placement
  + College entrance
  + Parental involvement
  + Reasonable price or prestigious price
  + Athletics and arts to meet the basic need or remarkable programs that stand out.
  + Or, as one school states, “The premier Christian and classical school in the United States.” If you say something like this be prepared to deliver on your promises
* Consider the Demographics
  + Location and regional draw
  + Population
  + Income
  + Culture
  + Competition

Market to meet your vision and strategic goals

* + The intentionally small school or the large multifaceted school
  + One campus or multiple locations
  + For example the school we founded that grew quickly stated, “We envision thousands of Christian youth trained over time in a historic Christian worldview through a system of academy campuses in the metropolitan region.”
  + Clearly define your admission standards consistent with your mission. For example, if you plan to have a 90% pass rate on AP tests in high school then this should be reflected in admission standards in the lower grades. Or, if your mission includes meeting the needs of students with learning differences, the admission standard would be very different. No school can meet every need. Know who you are and admit those that will succeed in your school.

Market your mode – Clarify the kind of school you are up front

* + Boarding school
  + Intense five-day school
  + Less intense five-day school
  + University schedule school
  + Homeschool classes offered or not offered
  + Distance education

Marketing and admitting for growth and retention

* Creating demand by persuading people to buy into your mission and mode
* Matching the mission and mode of the school with parental expectations and student ability
  + Educating inquirers about your intentions
  + Determining level of compatibility
* Delivering on your promises
  + Deciding based on mission and mode
  + Evaluating quality of delivery
  + Continuously improving
* Reenrolling those that turn out to be a good match
  + The most important family is the one with students already enrolled
  + It costs six times as much to win a new family as it does to retain a family.
  + Seek to enjoy 85% + retention. 10% attrition is normal churn in urban areas because of employment transience and changing parental preferences.
  + Actively seek to enroll siblings of enrolled students

Maximizing successful methods without the usual advertising

* Viewing all faculty, staff and parents as a part of the marketing team
  + Generating qualified leads by word of mouth
  + Satisfied parents will win the most new students
  + The satisfied teacher will bring his/her colleagues
  + Forwarding marketing emails through satisfied parents who would like to see a friend's children added to the school community.
  + Support with a full color pamphlet, web site with a landing page for new family, friendly telephone services, and events
* Assuring premier web presence in search engines
  + Get over any discomfort about use of technology to get your message out,
  + Check out free helps to learn this approach to marketing such as [www.webmarketingtoday.com](http://www.webmarketingtoday.com).
  + Understand most families will hear about your school by word of mouth and then check it out anonymously on the web, or they we find it first on the web,
  + Develop your web site with first time visitors in mind not for enrolled families. The school community can relate to each other through a log in based learning management system,
  + Carefully choose the language you use to meet seekers where they are not just to say things exactly like you like to be heard. We developed a web site template to streamline this process at [www.demo.marshalleducationgroup.com](http://www.demo.marshalleducationgroup.com),
  + Blog from the school website about classical education, student test scores, scholarships obtained, remarkable faculty, what others are saying about your school. This will push your site up in search engines as well educate those that visit your site. The blog that received the most hits on one site was sent in 2008 and was entitled, “The Best Defense Against Unemployment in the 21st Century.” Thousands of hits with content describing the benefits of a classical liberal arts education for flexibility in a changing world.
  + Engage several faculty and administrators as bloggers – do not do it all yourself. Remember, everyone is on the marking team,
  + Check web analytics often to determine what pages are most popular on your site (I use Google analytics – it is free),
  + Consider web based ads and other optimization techniques,
* Use social media marketing techniques
  + Have active school Facebook page(s), Twitter, YouTube, blog, and Constant Contact
  + Post often
  + Repost any blogs to social media outlets,
  + Voice over materials to create audio,
  + Do not be afraid to record brief videos for YouTube (be sure to obtain permission to use any student images).
  + Set up Constant Contact to share to Facebook and Twitter automatically,
  + Have lots of people post and interact on FB
  + Keep up with this rapidly changing means of reaching the market.
  + Remember you are reaching the parents of five year olds. Don’t market to yourself, market to them
* Meeting with inquirers through regular presentations
  + Take every speaking opportunity offered
  + Conduct monthly information meetings
  + Regularly conduct campus tours and open houses,
  + Allow older students to shadow a student for part of a day to become comfortable,
  + Have key parents play an active part at public meetings,
  + Have key faculty at public meetings to answer questions. Especially have the most popular entry grade teachers present such as kindergarten
  + This decision to enroll is intensely personal. Help people through the decision process,
* Provide a safe and friendly landing for all newcomers,
  + - Provide an easy to fill out online application that downloads to a data base,
    - Provide an automatic thank you to any applicant. Then follow up the next day with a personal call from the admission director,
    - Set up testing while lowering parental and student anxiety.
    - Make the interview and admitting process friendly and thorough. Answer all the questions the parents and students ask. Remember they are interviewing the school as much as the school is interviewing the applicants,
    - Accept the good match but have the courage to graciously decline an application that is not a good fit,
    - Welcome the new family and student
    - Orienting for success
    - Following up quickly to assure successful assimilation
    - Reinforcing all year long
    - Reenroll as many as possible as early as possible

If you believe in your school you should seek to grow it for the benefit of others. Please write if you would like some help growing you school. [Rodney@marshalleducationgroup.com](mailto:Rodney@marshalleducationgroup.com).

1. **The Preparation and Tenure of the Headmaster**
   1. **Introducing the Preparation and Tenure of the Headmaster**

The Headmaster leads across a broad-spectrum of arenas as visionary, head teacher and CEO. Preparation requires years of formal education, and well-mentored experience. Evaluation of the headmaster is based on achievement of well-articulated academy ends, while assuring organizational integrity. The role is challenging and the rewards long term. In his role leadership is the key to organizational success; and that success is key to the world of the future. So, we embark on the journey of training headmasters, the men and women that will prepare the next generation of wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, leaders, designers, healers, polemics, and more.

Headmastering is a calling, requires formal educational preparation, informal on the job mentoring through well supervised experience both as a teacher and as an administrative leader, until finally the called, educated and proven leader receives appointment as the Headmaster of an academy.

The calling of The Headmaster is every bit as much a calling as that of a minister of the Gospel, or that of a civic leader or businessperson. Yes, many can serve as an interim headmaster in a time of vacancy but the person that combines that of an educational visionary, a high quality head teacher and chief executive officer into one person who can serve with long tenure, takes someone that is called.

The educational preparation of the Headmaster includes a broad education in the liberal arts, an education in classical pedagogy, and an education in business and organizational leadership. There are many routes to this educational end as way leads on to way, but somehow the Headmaster needs to become competent in all three major arenas. I first received an education in business administration, worked in business while earning my theological training, and then labored as a Christian schoolteacher, associate pastor, Headmaster before pursuing the Doctor of Education through study of the Great Books of the Western World. It might be more ideal for an aspiring headmaster to first pursue a general education in the liberal arts and learn to teach, accept a teaching position while pursuing a masters in education administration, work his way up the ladder to Headmaster and then if desirable pursue a doctorate. A myriad of paths lead to the full educational preparation of The Headmaster.

* 1. **Calling**
  2. **Education**
     1. A liberal arts education
     2. Pedagogical and practical training of a teacher
     3. Business administration applied to the world of school management
  3. **Experience**
     1. Teacher
     2. Intern or work various staff positions representative of the departments he will supervise
     3. Assistant Headmaster
     4. Finally appointment as a Headmaster
  4. **Endurance**
     1. The Headmaster can use a good advisor

Mentor, trusted counselor, coach, advisor, guide, tutor, teacher are synonyms that describe the kind of person The Headmaster needs to gain wisdom for good decision-making. Sometimes, The Headmaster needs to talk to someone that is not in one of his many constituencies and not a part of the chain of command. Although he talks to his Board, sometimes he needs an advisor that is not his boss before making proposals to his boss. While a good board member can be a good advisor, many school boards do not include an experienced headmaster. Besides, the primary role of a board member is to develop strategic policy and monitor organizational integrity not to provide professional advice. He consults his professional staff, division heads, key parents and donors, and for specialized advice his CPA and school attorney. But sometimes the need is exclusive to the role of The Headmaster and he would be well served by speaking with an experienced headmaster as an advisor.

Odysseus had Mentor, his trusted counselor in the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer. No matter how innately wise was the character of Odysseus, Homer makes it clear the man did not stand alone, or make decisions on his own. King David had Ahithophel ‘And the counsel of Ahithophel in those days, was as if a man had consulted the Word of God’ (2 Samuel 16:23). One can retain a certified life coach to help with difficult decisions and how to manage as “way leads on to way.” (David Frost) The President of the United States employs a plethora of advisors including the National Security Advisor, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ranking officers that are not in the chain of command to give him independent advice about matters of defense and war. So, it should not be surprising when The Headmaster needs to talk to someone to gain wise insight for good decision-making.

A trusted advisor, counselor, coach or mentor, can help The Headmaster grow in his multifaceted role. So, the wise headmaster will make sure the budget includes enough funding to cover such a position. He would be well served to have an advisor on a modest retainer, talk weekly, and have access to him during times of crisis, difficult decision making, or after he has taken a battering from someone from his many constituencies. I think this approach could make for better school leadership extend the tenure of headmasters generally.

* + 1. How to last
    2. Managing up by working effectively with the Board of Trustees
    3. How to grow while lasting
    4. Mentoring protégés
    5. Planning for succession

1. **Conclusion**
2. **Appendix**
   1. **The Headmaster and the First 90 Days**

Have you ever entered a new leadership role or promoted someone into a new one and wondered how to accelerate the ramp up process? Here is the answer. When I began a one year interim head of school job, my good friend and colleague Keith recommended I read *The First 90 Days* by Michael Watkins. He had just accepted a new leadership position as chief financial officer of a countywide community college system and found the book spot on, and so have I. The book gives “Critical success strategies for new leaders at all levels.” I knew the book hit the mark when I started sharing it with others before finishing it. In fact every time I raised a question when reading, the answer appeared on the next page. If you have entered a new leadership role, ever expect a promotion, or if you are bringing someone into a new leadership role at any level this book if for you and your school.

Leerskov states “This book is not just for managers at the executive level. It's also for you and me. It's for functional managers, project managers, and supervisors. The book targets new leaders at all levels that are making the transition from one rung of the ladder to the next.

If you have just been promoted to a new leadership position (or expect to be soon), then this book is for you.

The book outlines ten strategies that will shorten the time it takes you to reach what Watkins calls the breakeven point: the point at which your organization needs you as much as you need the job. Here they are ... the ten strategies:

1. PROMOTE YOURSELF. Make a mental break from your old job. Prepare to take charge in the new one. Don't assume that what has made you successful so far will continue to do so. The dangers of sticking with what you know, working hard at doing it, and failing miserably are very real.

2. ACCELERATE YOUR LEARNING. Climb the learning curve as fast as you can in your new organization. Understand markets, products, technologies, systems, and structures, as well as its culture and politics. It feels like drinking from a fire hose. So you have to be systematic and focused about deciding what you need to learn.

3. MATCH STRATEGY TO SITUATION. There are no universal rules for success in transitions. You need to diagnose the business situation accurately and clarify its challenges and opportunities. The author identifies four very different situations: launching a start-up, leading a turnaround, devising a realignment, and sustaining a high-performing unit. You need to know what your unique situation looks like before you develop your action plan.

4. SECURE EARLY WINS. Early victories build your credibility and create momentum. They create virtuous cycles that leverage organizational energy. In the first few weeks, you need to identify opportunities to build personal credibility. In the first 90 days, you need to identify ways to create value and improve business results.

5. NEGOTIATE SUCCESS. You need to figure out how to build a productive working relationship with your new boss and manage his or her expectations. No other relationship is more important. This means having a series of critical talks about the situation, expectations, style, resources, and your personal development. Crucially, it means developing and gaining consensus on your 90-day plan.

6. ACHIEVE ALIGNMENT. The higher you rise in an organization, the more you have to play the role of organizational architect. This means figuring out whether the organization's strategy is sound, bringing its structure into alignment with its strategy, and developing the systems and skills bases necessary to realize strategic intent.

7. BUILD YOUR TEAM. If you are inheriting a team, you will need to evaluate its members. Perhaps you need to restructure it to better meet demands of the situation. Your willingness to make tough early personnel calls and your capacity to select the right people for the right positions are among the most important drivers of success during your transition.

8. CREATE COALITIONS. Your success will depend on your ability to influence people outside your direct line of control. Supportive alliances, both internal and external, will be necessary to achieve your goals.

9. KEEP YOUR BALANCE. The risks of losing perspective, getting isolated, and making bad calls are ever present during transitions. The right advice-and-counsel network is an indispensable resource

10. EXPEDITE EVERYONE. Finally, you need to help everyone else - direct reports, bosses, and peers - accelerate their own transitions. The quicker you can get your new direct reports up to speed, the more you will help your own performance.

This book is not only relevant on the individual level. This transition process for new managers happens so often that it should be handled with more professionalism by (big) organizations. Whereas we as managers try to work actively with introduction programmes and training for new employees, then many managers must face their transition challenge alone. It shouldn't be like that. The "sink or swim" approach should be doomed.

*Leerskov, P. (2004, December 20) . An antidote to sink or swim [Review of the book, The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels].*

*Retrieved from*

*http://www.amazon.com/First-90-Days-Critical-Strategies/dp/1591391105/ref=cm\_rdp\_product*

* 1. **The Headmaster Search Process – Strategic Legacy in Action**

Retaining and transitioning to a new headmaster is one of the most strategic legacies a sitting board of directors will leave to their school. The board can choose to conduct the search or retain a specialized executive search firm search firm. This outline assumes the board has chosen to conduct the search although the outline will be similar to the retained search process. When you are in this process, pray the Lord in his superintendence of all things assures selection of the candidate genuinely called to lead the school to the next level.

Search Process:

1. Refining the school mission, ethos and vision
2. Defining and profiling the opportunity
3. Creating and distributing the opportunity
4. Assessing the candidates and making a selection
5. Making the offer and concluding the search
6. Accelerating transition into leadership

Taking it Step by Step:

1. Refining the school mission, ethos and vision
   1. What is the school’s vision, what are its core promises based on and what does the school embody
      1. Mission vision and core values statements
      2. Ends Statements in the Policy Governance Manual
      3. Statement of purpose in the Articles and Bylaws
2. Defining the opportunity and profiling the position
   1. Who is the school looking for?
      1. A *visionary* Christian school leader that incarnates the vision and core promises of the school.
      2. A *head teacher* passionate about Christian education that is persuasive as a teacher, public speaker and writer, and effective in curriculum, faculty and student development and evaluation.
      3. A highly capably *chief executive* officer possessing strengths in broad institutional supervision, advancement, staff development, finance and business, and capital project leadership.
   2. Opportunity Profile – Combines candidate description and a profile of the school - Samples are available
3. Creating and distributing the opportunity – How does the school find candidates?
   1. Abbreviate the opportunity profile as an advertisement – Samples available
   2. Distribute to appropriate outlets or institutional leaders to query for developing a pool of candidates.
      1. Directly contact colleagues and leaders of the Christian school renewal and readily identifiable heads of leading schools that you know who can help generate some of the best leads.
      2. Advertise the opportunity
         1. Choose appropriate school associations that include position-posting services.
         2. Direct your search toward the school and opportunity profile. If the school is a classical day school advertising will be different than if it is a military boarding school.
4. Assessing the candidates and making a selection – What are the selection criteria.
   1. Selection criteria based on the candidate profile
   2. Vetting the prospects
   3. Developing a short list
   4. Interviewing etc.
   5. Making a decision
5. Making the offer and concluding the search – How much will the school spend and how open is the board to a candidate’s specific needs and desires?
   1. Salary and benefits
   2. Opportunities for professional growth such as completion of a doctorate
   3. Leadership and working conditions. Provision of staff, financial resources and scope of authority matter to a new leader. An experienced headmaster candidate will be interviewing the board as much as the board is interviewing the candidate. The candidate will also desire an environment suitable to his/her leadership approach.
6. Accelerating transition into leadership – How can the school pass the baton in stride.
   1. The school needs to be prepared to receive the new superintendent such that transition is as accelerated as possible.
   2. I recommend applying the principles found in *The First 90 Days* by Watkins.

Handled well with the favor of God, the search process and transition to new leadership can rejuvenate a school providing the impulse to move to the next level consistent with the school’s vision.

**c. The Great Conversation Meets the Digital Age**

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The central educational issue this project intends to illuminate is how to conflate high school education in the western intellectual tradition and Open Educational Resources (OER) to make such an education available to anyone, anywhere, anytime. An education in the western tradition abounds with timeless ideas, old books, and scholars, and by nature it is slow to adopt a new influence especially if it seems hypermodern. This longstanding mistrust regarding the use of digital technology to educate youth in great ideas can and should be overcome for great advantage while assuring achievement of the intended ends of a classical education. Recent advances in digital education publishing promise fresh solutions but need philosophical freight to channel its products toward the most meaningful educational ends. Blending the best of these two streams into one would advance the great conversation and help channel digital publishing for long-term success.

Some definitions are in order. A high school education in the western intellectual tradition is a liberal arts inquiry into the great books, and ideas of the western world such as that described in *The Great Conversation*[[7]](#footnote-5)*,* and often referred to as a classical education*.* “Open Educational Resources (OER) are digital materials that can be re-used for teaching, learning, research and more, made available free through [open licenses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_license), which allow uses of the materials that would not be easily permitted under [copyright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright) alone.” [[8]](#footnote-6) Conflating these two streams is achieved by blending the great conversation into well-designed digital courseware and resources that blends digital great books, discussion materials, and media rich coursework with on site teaching. This approach must be accomplished consistent with emerging intellectual property law regarding the use of OER in educational publishing. This process is intended to then enable a classical education to be made accessible to individuals and institutions anywhere at anytime through a contribution to the open space.

This project in the digital humanities is an excellent way to solve the problem of blending traditional western education with OER because the timing is right. The project will take advantage of enthusiasm for traditional liberal arts education before it is overwhelmed by the digital tide of less weighty alternatives. It will leverage and contribute to the rapidly growing body of OER just as this movement is achieving momentum. Many of the authors’ works contained in the *Great Books of the Western World[[9]](#footnote-7)* are now available online enabling them to be repurposed into digital courseware. Research will clarify the intellectual property issues regarding use of OER through a legal opinion just as such definition is becoming possible. And, the project will show instructors and course designers how to confidently develop their own courses just as state-of-the-art courseware has become available as an OER. The project’s intention is to take advantage of this opportune time to propose the preservation and proliferation of high school education in the western tradition through a blend with OER.

The recent emergence of OER repositories, inexpensive digital devices, and open source courseware design software present a remarkable opportunity to proliferate liberal arts education. The educators that cross the digital divide will need to do so while retaining non-negotiable aspects of their intellectual and pedagogical tradition. The rapidly growing body of Open Educational Resources and repositories of courses include [MIT OpenCourseWare,](http://www.ocw.mit.edu/) [The Saylor Foundation](http://www.saylor.org), [Khan Academy](http://www.khanacademy.org), [CK-12 Foundation](http://www.ck12.org), [Curriki](http://curriki.org/), [Connexions](http://cnx.org/), [Bloomsbury Academic](http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com/), [Flat World Knowledge](http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/), the [National Repository of Online Courses](http://www.montereyinstitute.org/nroc) and many more sources. Inexpensive digital devices enabling interaction with these resources by instructors, course designers and students include mobile hand helds, e-readers, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers all with multimedia capability. Open source software for courseware design is now emerging. For example the Penn State [ELMS](http://www.elms.psu.edu) (Electronic Learning Management System) developed by course designers for course designers is written over the popular DRUPAL open source software platform that can be downloaded free. The availability of OER, inexpensive devices and courseware design software will enable any educator to develop online courses. Classical educators should seize this opportunity to develop rich courseware consistent with the western intellectual tradition for their own students and as a contribution for the common good.

This project is not just an academic exercise. Since it really does matter what and how American youth think, therefore it matters how and about what they are educated. The rise of the digital age in education provides a plethora of new curricular options and rich multimedia means. It also places the fledgling renaissance in classical liberal arts education at risk of falling into obscurity through inaction or through misapplication of OER, which could lose its distinctive features. Liberal arts educators ought not to reject digital resources as threats, nor should they become enthralled by technology as the answer in and of itself. To the extent that digital means can help reach traditional ends, they should be adopted and adapted for beneficial use. The means should facilitate the ends not redefine it. A way to describe the end of a high school education in the western intellectual tradition is that of a student well versed in all the liberal arts who learns to become wise in judgment, persuasive in communication and resolute in action for the good. The means to that end can and should enjoy the benefit of emerging digital resources.

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3. Ideas & Perspectives Vol. 37 No. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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6. *On Secular Education*, Dabney, R. L. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
7. The Great Conversation, A Readers’ Guide to Great Books of the Western World, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1993 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
8. **^** Hylén, Jan (2007). [*Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational Resources*](http://www.sourceoecd.org/education/9789264031746). Paris, France: OECD Publishing. p. 30. [doi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_object_identifier):[10.1787/9789264032125-en](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787%2F9789264032125-en). Retrieved 2010-12-03. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
9. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)