

Development of Critical Skills

As we begin this year, I want to share the fourth of a four-part series on encouraging you to be an appropriately engaged parent in your student's Christian school education. I have approached this issue by addressing four crucial areas of learning that the Association of Christian Schools International believes are essential in Christian schooling. This edition emphasizes skill development.

No one would argue that we live in a rapidly changing world. Because of the explosion of knowledge, how we teach and learn has become more about how to discover than merely what to memorize. And the rapid growth of technology and its potential implementation has made a significant impact on how students carry out that discovery process.

Your Christian school, then, is challenged with the task of helping students know how to use resources, including technology, to find, analyze, and evaluate information. And, with overwhelming amounts of information available at near warp speed, students' skills of analysis become extremely important. This need for information analysis brings to our attention the critical importance of helping students develop and know how to use skills of questioning, solving problems, and making wise decisions.

Perspectives regarding wisdom and making wise decisions, we believe, are best couched in a worldview that is based on a biblical framework, and it is hoped that this biblical framework will result in your student's development of a Christian worldview. Students do not develop their worldview solely in the Christian school; they also absorb the values and views they witness and learn at home, in social engagements, in the church, and in the many other ongoing interactions that weave the fabric of their lives.

You can be assured, though, that the Christian school also engages in other aspects of skill development, which include teaching students to understand, value, and take part in appropriate social and civic activities. This skill development can reach the highest levels of effectiveness as parents encourage and reinforce it. Doing so will include screening activities and encouraging your student's participation in those activities that promote less emphasis on self and greater emphasis on serving.

Christian school students receive an education that underscores practicing principles of healthy, moral family living. Again, this emphasis is based on principles from Scripture that the school both reinforces through its Bible curriculum and integrates into the various appropriate subject areas and school activities.

Again, the challenge for parents is to ask important questions: Where? With whom? and Why?

Finally, we believe that it is important for students to develop the skills to be good stewards of their finances, their discretionary time, and all other resources. The cultural influences through the entertainment media conflict with values that focus on good stewardship, responsibility, and moral virtue. Again, the challenge for parents is to ask important questions: Where? With whom? and Why?

Consider your Christian school a partner, one that works with you through a formal education program intended to develop responsible young men and women who love God with all their heart and mind and soul. Your school wants you to be engaged in achieving that goal.



Ken Smitherman, President
Association of Christian Schools International

We welcome you to download *Christian School Comment* and print it for distribution to your school's constituency. You are also granted permission to place this publication on your school's website. ACSI must grant permission for other forms of distribution.