

SECTION 101

Philosophical Assumptions: Christian Worldview

It is necessary to realize that the philosophy of education expressed in the following point is based on a number of other principles which themselves are not strictly related to, or derived from, education. They are part of the philosophical tradition which provides the historical and metaphysical context for our views of education. Since they constitute basic ideas about life they are sometimes referred to as part of a World and Life View held by people adhering to the Reformed Faith.

The supplementary principles are defined as follows:

1. Knowledge, insight, and wisdom cannot be divorced from a person's faith commitment. Scholarship and thus education in general, in fact all human activities, are affected by the benefits and values of the individual person who is part of a community.
2. Any absolute view of scientific objectivity or religious neutrality is inherently false. The community has traditionally rejected both individualism and collectivism as social philosophical positions. The community has rejected both subjectivism and positivism. Instead, the community favours a social philosophy called structural pluralism and an educational philosophy loosely based on the Christian liberal arts position in Western society..
3. Reality exhibits a great variety, but all of this is structured as part of a meaningful cosmos. Since each created structure has its own unique characteristics and function in life, the school too should be encouraged to flourish as an institution that must fulfill its *own* potential. Hence the school should not be dominated or exploited by state or church.
4. The school takes its basic meaning from the role of the family and the specific God-given, natural responsibilities of the parents. Hence, parents must have a direct control over the nurture of their children and a significant choice in the schooling options available within a given society.
5. The family is not an autonomous source of meaning. It is normally part of a community/subculture which provides the basic world-and-life view for the younger generation.
6. Subcultures are substantial enough to provide a world-and-life view in a given historical period. The integrating focus of a subculture can be religious,

ethnic, linguistic, and/or geographic.

7. As a result of this we come to one important political premise, namely, that not any one single school system should try to entice all children into its fold. Rather, different faiths should direct different school systems.
8. The state is a divinely ordained institution for the maintenance of order, peace, and justice within a specific territory. It should encourage the development of an appropriate variety of institutions in different areas of life in order to promote human happiness *and* freedom.

The state should not have the authority to use the public school system as the vehicle for imposing a compulsory morality on its citizens. In a democracy that would be considered a violation of basic freedoms and rights.

9. The state does not have the right to usurp the authority of the parents except in cases where there is clear neglect. In cases of neglect or abandonment, the state should see to it that a suitable school is found.

Adapted from:

Effective Governance for Good Schools - OACS, 2003 p.147-148

SECTION 102

Philosophy of Education

1. The basis of the Christian life is the absolute commitment to live a life of obedience to God as he is revealed in the Scriptures and Creation.
2. Scripture teaches the norms for Christian living in the area of education as specified in the principal guidelines of the OACS Bylaws.
3. All educational philosophies are based on fundamental assumptions about human nature. The key ones in our Christian tradition follow:

The Child

The primary institutions for the care of children and youth are the home, the church and the school. All of these participate in the mission to promote the Kingdom of God within a specific culture but each of these has a special, essential task as well:

- a. The family *nurtures* the child as a human being in an environment of intimate love and loyalty.
- b. The church calls each person to a commitment to the true worship of God within the fellowship of faithful believers of all ages and stations in life.
- c. The school instructs the child in preparation for a life of service in society in an environment of love of literacy and respect for knowledge and wisdom.

Education

Learning in its various institutional dimensions in the modern world serves to help persons become literate and informed about life and the world but always in different contexts and for different purposes.

The School

- a. Schooling is the formal, required, preparatory stage of education which provides the skills, habits, knowledge, attitudes, and commitments necessary for continual learning. The primary focus of the activities of the school is the intellectual development of the child within the world-and-life view and faith of the supporting Christian community for the purpose of stimulating a Christian mind.
- b. The school is a social institution that does enhance and enrich human experience. It is not inherently alienating due to its formal structures.
- c. The teacher is the authorized agent of the school society to direct the child's development in the school. The authority of the teacher is based on both the legal endorsement of the community (Board of Directors) and the existence of professional competence.

Social Balance

While the welfare and needs of each individual person are of vital significance to

Christian educators, these interests and needs must be balanced by these two norms:

- a. The school is not the only institution responsible for the child and therefore is not responsible for the child's total welfare and development.
- b. The command to love God requires that ultimate allegiance cannot be given to any creature, including oneself. Hence the Christian school encourages the harmonization of the unique individual aspirations of the person with the proper obligations attendant on each citizen.

Pedagogical Principles

- a. **The student** is a person whose primary task is learning and studying in accordance with the official school curriculum.
- b. **The Goals and Programs** of the school are determined by the Board of Directors as representative of the supporting community. The faculty is expected to implement this in a specific curriculum in accordance with professional standards.
- c. The word **education** can be used to denote the general process, either formal or informal, of intentionally changing or attempting to influence a person's mind through selected means of rational persuasion. **Learning** is a general and natural capacity in all human beings, to consciously change one or many internal states. It is not exclusively related to education.
- d. The basic distinction between **nurture** and schooling is very significant, but like all paradigms, not simple to explain. The school is characterized by its instructional (pedagogical) intent. The actual student outcomes are important but not definitive of the school as institution.
- e. **Teaching** (instruction) is the authoritative development of the intellectual functions of the child primarily through controlled, analytical reflection on human experience as mediated through various languages.
- f. The **curriculum** embodies the image of the educated person. In today's instant, mass society this ideal image should focus on the attitudes and competencies necessary for conserving Christian cultural traditions.

Adapted from:

Effective Governance for Good Schools - OACS, 2003 p.155-156

SECTION 103

Professional Standards for our Teachers

Christian educators are committed to implementing this set of guidelines in their professional activities:

1. The articulation and proclamation of these religious and philosophical principles (previous two points) in areas appropriate to the school's task.
2. The setting of and striving toward common aims and objectives for the school programs.
3. The implementation of a well-defined course of studies (curriculum) combining Christian priorities with the demands of our national culture and educational authorities.
4. Professional management of classroom activities employing sound methods of instruction.
5. The maintenance of reasonable standards of achievement for all students and the exercise of fair evaluation practices.
6. The central importance of the modeling role of the teacher to instill Christian virtues and encourage a Christian lifestyle which takes learning seriously.
7. The importance of a quality general or liberal arts emphasis basic to the curriculum as the means to help all students lead informed Christian lives, so that they can,
 - a. grow toward Christian maturity and true spirituality,
 - b. understand humankind, culture and the world,
 - c. be aware of social responsibility and active citizenship,
 - d. prepare for economically adequate and honest vocations,
 - e. understand and appreciate the theological and ethical issues central to

Christianity,

- f. develop an articulate Christian world-and-life view in the context of their community.
8. The encouragement of the essentials of Christian ethics in the daily operation of the school.
9. The pursuit of excellence in all school activities.
10. The significance of scholarship, both in service of the community and for the pursuit of truth.
11. The recognition that these high ideals must be implemented in a manner suitable to the different ability levels of the student body and take on different forms in elementary and secondary panels.
12. The necessity of encouraging the development of various talents and abilities in each student towards happiness and welfare.
13. The regular and firm implementation of clear and consistent standards of behaviour within the school at all times, for both faculty and students.

Adapted from:

Effective Governance for Good Schools - OACS, 2003 - . p.157

SECTION 104

Christian School Values

A Summary of our Values

Christian Values

- The standard for atmosphere, behaviour, curriculum, and policies in each school.

Christian Perspective

- Permeates the entire curriculum through the use of Christian textbooks and learning materials written by committed teachers and produced by OACS, CSI, and other Christian curriculum writing organizations. Other materials can be used at the

discretion of the school Board and administration.

Curriculum Organization

- follows the general pattern suggested by the Ministry of Education.

Certification

- All teachers are have certification from registered Canadian universities and meet Ontario Professional standards.

Achievement

- In addition to each school's own assessment, students participate regularly in national tests and competitions.

Evaluation

- External OACS teams review the viability of the entire school operation on a regular cycle.

Family Basis

- The entire school budget is dependent on parental contributions and donations from the community. Christian educators listen to parents!

Responsibility

- The Board of Directors is elected by the parents, not by a church council or the government.

Relationships

- As many as 20 church denominations support OACS schools in any one town or city. The school is open to all who wish to benefit from Christ-centred education.

Sensitivity

- The school, while directed by Reformed principles, encourages a broad understanding of the Christian life and witness in Canada.

Community

- An OACS school is a small, caring community of adults and children in which each individual is encouraged to develop their God-given talents. Teachers know the child and the family and are dedicated to preserving a family-oriented Christian lifestyle.

Open

- Parents are involved in all aspects of the school's operation. They make decisions, they are consulted, they participate, and they see what is happening in the school.

Adapted from:

Effective Governance for Good Schools - OACS, 2003 - . p.13

SECTION 105

Goals of Christian Education

The term "goal" refers to the purposes of the educational process as it is focused in the school as a unique societal structure. It defines the nature of the schooling process as well as the image of the educated person assumed and/or desired by the school system, but it does so from the *student's point of view*.

The primary goal of the Christian day school consists in helping each student to grow into an independent person so that each can serve God according to His Word, and is able and willing to employ all talents to the honor of God for the well being of fellow creatures in every area of life.

This general goal is specified into several main goals which will guide each student to:

1. a deeper commitment to love God,
2. mature as a Christian person in relation to self, others, and the environment,
3. discover and develop particular gifts and talents,
4. develop abilities of perception and judgment in moral and ethical matters,
5. follow the norms for good health and physical fitness,
6. acquire competencies for reasonable living as an adult, especially the sensitivity and skill necessary for effective communication,
7. develop awareness of oneself as a learner able to adapt knowledge, skills,

and attitudes to the ordinary tasks of life,

8. develop the knowledge and understanding necessary to fulfill one's calling effectively in modern society,
9. train and discipline those skills and attitudes necessary for satisfaction and productivity in the world of work and/or advanced levels of schooling,

10. acquire appreciation for the customs, habits, and beliefs of other faith communities, ethnic groups, and other cultures.

Adapted from:

Effective Governance for Good Schools - OACS, 2003 - . p.159

SECTION 106

Distinctiveness of Christian Curriculum

The OACS defines curriculum "as the set of programs designed for the students of a particular school." This limited focus does not negate the importance of the role of the teacher, the school atmosphere, or the many subtle influences that permeate the educational process. Rather, the specified curriculum dimension permits the expression of a number of distinctive characteristics.

Our Distinctive Curriculum:

1. Provides the confessional focus that the intent of the unit is to support and develop the central goal of Christian education: to prepare the student for obedient service in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.
2. Elicits a two-fold response:
 - the wonder, beauty, and amazement that *This is my Father's World*,
 - the sadness of a broken world, steeped in sin, that moves us to long for renewal in Jesus Christ.
3. Implants a biblical way of knowing:

- our everyday naive knowing is a holistic experience of creation and culture,
 - scientific knowing is a legitimate, abstracted, limited analysis that leads to precise, more fully-understood holistic experience,
 - to know means to understand structure and to recognize the direction of human response.
4. Chooses significant content that exposes the student to the best of human culture as needed to promote competent Christian service.
 5. Incorporates a discussion of a particular current issue for the sake of learning to evaluate the moral dimensions of a problem.
 6. Develops personal meaning by including some choice in assignments and response opportunities.
 7. Integrates the practice of skills when possible.

Adapted from:

Effective Governance for Good Schools - OACS, 2003 - . p.161

SECTION 107

Our Mission

Orangeville Christian School nurtures children through quality, Christ-centered learning within a caring environment supported by a dedicated, interdenominational community.

SECTION 108

Our Vision

Orangeville Christian School will achieve growth by providing children with excellent innovative programs while partnering with our local communities, thus becoming a vibrant Christ-like presence in the world.

SECTION 109

Our Purpose

The Orangeville Christian School strives to awaken a sense of wonder and joy in the child for a world that is God's handiwork, so that the child comes to recognize God as the Creator and Lord of all things and praises His name. Through curriculum of the highest caliber that demonstrates the love and glory of the Lord, the children are encouraged to develop a relationship with God through Jesus Christ as well as a sense of responsibility towards the Lord, His Creation, themselves, and fellow people.

SECTION 110

Core Values at Orangeville Christian School

Core values are statements that identify the essential beliefs that shape our school and set us apart from other independent schools in Dufferin County.

Our core values are a statement of who we are, and outline the basic assumptions and convictions that guide the policies and practices of the school enabling us to challenge children to connect with God, recognize their uniqueness, and to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to succeed in the tasks of life.

- OCS is a Christ-centered school.
- OCS is an interdenominational school.
- OCS is a member school of OACS (Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools), CSI (Christian Schools International) and CSC (Christian Schools Canada).

- OCS is committed to a low student to teacher ratio.
- OCS is committed to hiring fully accredited teachers who are followers of Christ.
- OCS recognizes the excellence of our staff and hold them in esteem.
- OCS believes that parents ought to be partners in the education of their children.
- OCS emphasizes collaboration rather than competition amongst the students.
- OCS is committed to providing excellence in all areas of our program.
- OCS strives to integrate a comprehensive Christian worldview into every part of the program.
- OCS recognizes that to enable students to learn we need to provide a safe, clean, environment for all students.

SECTION 111

Graduate Profile

Further to successful completion of the academic program at Orangeville Christian School as outlined in program expectations and Ontario Ministry of Education standards, we strive to assist and train our students to be:

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS:

Students who have an understanding of and strive to:

- ✚ promote a healthy and safe environment by using resources wisely,
- ✚ participate in the life of the community to the benefit and welfare of others,
- ✚ work for justice in building God's kingdom,
- ✚ celebrate the gifts of others,
- ✚ demonstrate knowledge of personal strengths and
- ✚ demonstrate personal management skills such as self control, flexibility and working independently without supervision.

COLLABORATIVE WORKERS:

Students who demonstrate cooperative skills and work toward common goals and:

- + participate in group activities to meet the group goal,
- + demonstrate consideration for individual differences,
- + demonstrate organizational skills and
- + exhibit responsibility.

DISCERNING PROBLEM SOLVERS:

Students who:

- + carefully identify and analyze problems,
- + demonstrate creative thinking in the problem solving process and
- + pray, memorize scripture, and examine solutions in light of God's word

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS:

Students who are able to use and evaluate information by:

- + listening to others and responding appropriately,
- + demonstrating the ability to follow and give instructions and
- + demonstrating skill in listening, writing and speaking.

COMPLEX THINKERS:

Students who begin to:

- + identify, access, integrate and use available resources and information, reason, make decisions and solve problems in a variety of contexts.
- + Encounter a personal God and discern God's working and direction in their lives.