



Critical Questions

Every Parent Needs to Ask the Christian School

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Spiritual aspects:

1. In what way does the school combine Christianity and learning? (Answers may range from a modest "required chapel" to a quite thorough program of seeking God's truth in all subjects).
2. Must all children come from Christian homes or are some non-Christian homes represented? (Some parents prefer a mix, especially since it may indicate a respect for the academic standards of the school).
3. Is there a denominational or sectarian emphasis in the religious teaching?

Teachers:

1. Are the teachers required to accept the authority of Scripture or are they merely "Christian" in general terms?
2. What is the average number of years the faculty has been teaching? (Look for some seasoned veteran teachers, not a whole staff just out of college).
3. How many present faculty members have been here five or more years? (High turnover may indicate a problem)
4. How many different subjects would a teacher in the upper grades usually teach? (Usually points to mastery of a subject when teaching just one or two subjects).
5. Are the teachers certified by the state or working toward it?
6. What experience and academic credentials does the headmaster and/or principal have?
7. Is the principal the pastor of the church? What role does the pastor play in the school?
8. What is the teacher-student ratio?

Student body:

1. What percentage of last years' students are returning this year? (A retention rate of 80%-89% is good, 90% -100% is excellent)
2. What are the discipline procedures? Under what circumstances would a child be suspended or expelled? What are the school's three biggest discipline problems?
3. What rules will my child be expected to follow? Do you have a student handbook we could look over?
4. How diverse is the student body culturally and socio-economically?
5. Have there been any problems with drug or alcohol abuse?

Academics:

1. How do standardized test scores in basic academic areas compare with other schools in the area, both public and private?
2. To what colleges have recent graduates gone? What percentage of the graduates go to a four-year institution? What percentage go to a two-year institution?
3. Are there any honors and/or advanced placement courses offered? What are they? What's the grading system look like?
4. What are some of the extra-curricular activities (music, art, sports, drama, etc.)?
5. What textbooks would my child be using? How often are they updated?

Foundation of the School:

1. Is the school a member of a national association of schools or a state association of secondary schools?
2. Is the school accredited or registered with the state education department? (Lack of accreditation may affect college entrance)
3. How much involvement are the parents expected to take in the life of the school?
4. What contacts are maintained with non-Christian schools, such as athletic competition or debating teams?
5. What standards does the school have for acceptance? (Some schools cater to problem students: others are so selective they would be called "elitist.")
6. How closely have operations come to breaking even financially in the last two years? Does the school have any debt? What has enrollment been like the last five years?
7. Can the school supply the names of some parents in my neighborhood with whom I can discuss the school?