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The math that doesn't work!



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Sometimes I think we forget just how wonderful our schools are - they're not perfect, but they are wonderful.

This year I had the privilege of attending the grand opening ceremonies of two schools. The first was Grace Christian School in Millgrove, whose community celebrated the completion of a new school building. The second was Bellstone Christian School in Mount Hope - a school that opened its doors for the first time this year.

Both openings gave reason for rejoicing. In them we can see the Lord's faithfulness to us, his people. For many of those reading this column, a League school plays/played a large role in the formal education of the people we love. We are thankful not just when new buildings are built or when new schools open their doors for the first time. We thank the Lord continually for the blessing that schools can be. We are thankful that our schools can be a part of his plan for the children he entrusted to us.

Does it come at a cost? Yes, it does. This year, the Lord willing, the communities that support League schools will be spending more than \$18.75 million on operating budgets alone. This does not count expansion drives, bazaars, or chocolate bar sales. Nor is it a one-time event; it happens every year.

It brings to mind David's exclamation of praise when he witnessed the gifts being given for the building of the temple in 1 Chronicles 29, "*But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.*"

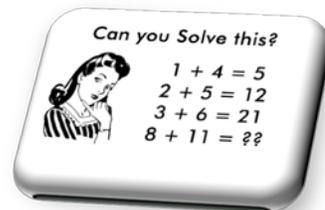
The Lord has also given wealth into our hands. The money we set aside for schools is a trust that the Lord places in our path - and not just for parents. In one League school with roughly 80 students, parents give \$9,600 per year for tuition. However, if you take the total school budget and divide it by the number of tuition paying families it should cost each family just under \$16,000 per year.

Looking at it another way, a secondary school with 400 students has a yearly cost per student of \$10,214. However, tuition is only \$10,272 (if you have children in high school only), regardless of how many children attend. If you are also blessed with children attending a League elementary school, your yearly tuition is \$7,044, regardless of how many children you have in high school.

The math, you will note, doesn't work. More noteworthy is that every school in the League has a similar story.

It leaves us with the question: If parents pay less to educate three students, than it costs to educate one, how do schools keep their doors open?

The answer is simple: The Lord is faithful. He works it in the hearts of broader church community members to understand their responsibility toward the children of other believers, and act on it. These 'others' become part of the fabric of the school, giving back to the Lord what the Lord loaned to them. It is not just in finances either, people give of their time, their skills and their prayers. It is a by-product of a covenantal view of education. The children we see baptized are a communal responsibility. As we witness parents vowing to raise their children in the fear of the Lord, to the best of their ability, we take on a part of that vow as a community of believers. That means we have to make sure that the best is within their ability. And we praise the Lord that he works this in the hearts of so many of his people!



Jason Heemskerck

Government Contact Committee: H.S. v. The Private Academy

LCRSS Committees:

Assistance for the Special Child (ASC)

Compensation Committee

Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Educators (CARE)

Government Contact Committee (GCC)

Pension Committee

Professional Development Committee (PDC)

In 2014, a multi-denominational evangelical Christian school in Ontario was put on notice that they had to appear before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. At issue was the denied application of a potential student because the child was being raised in the home of a lesbian couple. This couple could not subscribe to the school's Life Style Policy. This policy included, among other things, that marriage is between one man and one woman.

There is not space to review the findings of the case in detail. ARPA has written a thorough and thoughtful news article about it which can be found on their website (<https://goo.gl/7hzVWc>). Or, if reading the complete ruling intrigues you, (it is really interesting) the detailed findings can be found here: <https://goo.gl/jczpVi>.

Even without all the details, one can imagine that the impending hearing concerned the school. They were not certain that they would be protected under Section 18 of the human rights code, which reads: *The rights under Part I to equal treatment with respect to services and facilities, with or without accommodation, are not infringed where membership or participation in a religious, philanthropic, educational, fraternal or social institution or organization that is primarily engaged in serving the interests of persons identified by a prohibited ground of discrimination is restricted to persons who are similarly identified.*

In other words, at heart, the hearing was about the school being free to assist a community of like minded believing parents to educate children in

an environment that reflects an interpretation of God's word that is consistent with the beliefs of the community. It also looked at the school's ability to withhold admission to those who hold other views.

We can be thankful that the adjudicator of the case found that the school was not in violation of the Human Rights Code, and that Section 18 protected them.

Though the situation is not identical to what we find in most League schools (where 'member in good standing' at a particular church is the litmus test), there is something to be learned.

The school was protected because it had at its root a 'covenantal model' of education and the school was consistent in its application of that model. Its primary purpose was "assisting and supporting parents relative to their responsibility before God," and, "They did not want to confuse children by teaching something at odds with what parents might teach in the home." This model had also been tested and other applications refused because parental lifestyle did not reflect the school's core values.

We can see the Lord's hand in the ruling. The school was protected because its admissions guidelines were clearly explained as being meant only for a specific religious group and there was evidence of the policy being consistently applied. To have the same protection, our schools need to be careful, and do the same.

2017 League Learning Day

On October 14, 2017, Grace Christian School, in Millgrove played host to the 2017 League Learning Day. More than 30 League principals, committee members and school board members worked to answer this question: How can the League serve member schools more effectively?

Those in attendance worked well together as they collected and refined their answers. Every suggestion generated by the group will serve to advise the direction of the League. However, those present were asked to prioritize some common themes that surfaced from the whole group effort. Sixteen statements were prioritized by those in attendance as important deliverables for the League.

While a full report to the member schools and participants will be forthcoming, we thought it would be of interest to share the top four ways those in attendance felt League could serve the schools. In order of popularity:

1. The League should develop a common/uniform Reformed curriculum.
2. That League/Boards/Principals will commit to effective professional development.

3. League to build training opportunities for Board members.
4. League develops templates of governance documents (handbook, policies, procedures).

Of course, what this will look like is still a matter for development. The directors and member schools will be working with committees to see how these points, and others, can be converted into deliverables that will benefit member schools.

Fittingly the day finished by praising our God, through whom all blessings flow. Indeed, those who were able to attend, were blessed to be working with others who shared a common desire to work with the League in its assistance of member schools.



Volunteers working to distill more than 100 suggestions into a small number of common themes.