



January 2017

## *Education Constitutionalism and the Family-School Partnership*



Dear Parents,

This past year has seen no shortage of political rhetoric leading up to the inauguration of our 45th president as political pundits pontificate on what is right and wrong with our nation's government. The nomination of charter school advocate Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education is no exception with angry voices coming from progressive organizational leaders like the National Education Association's President, Lily Eskelsen Garcia.

Political ideology and party affiliation aside, the reality is our family-school partnership at Prince follows a constitutional model that stands in stark contrast to the absolutism required of public schools who must adhere to mandatory federal regulatory policies like those contained in the 1950s Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which gave way to the No Child Left Behind Act in the 1990s, and the latest administration's efforts at education reform, the Every Child Succeeds Act, which became law in 2015.

Some opponents of private schools often cite “isolationism” as a detriment to student education in favor of regulations that require government directed classroom content, which too often promotes a secular, progressive agenda. However, a constitutional model like the one we use at Prince, one which more closely parallels our country’s founding, means that the authority over our school is best exercised by those who are closest to it and not educational leaders who work hundreds of miles away, leaders that lack the authority (and in many cases the desire) to integrate Christian principles into the daily lessons of students as our country did for over one hundred and sixty years until a string of Supreme Court decisions in the mid 1950s ruled the teaching of the Bible in public schools illegal. Biblically, we know that parents are God’s appointed leaders and teachers of their children (Deuteronomy 11: 18-21), and that the job of school teachers, like parents, is not to *make* students learn but rather serve as mentors and guides in the learning process. This is one critical difference between good schools and great ones. We are a school that promotes the belief that students should become increasingly self-governed and intrinsically motivated, especially in the upper grades, a school where students, despite their choice to attend other schools without a Christian emphasis or the rigor we expect, choose to take the road less traveled knowing that a holistic education will better prepare them spiritually, scholastically, emotionally, and physically for the challenges they will face in college and beyond.

Partnerships like ours are voluntary, one where parents, teachers, administrators, and school board members work cooperatively to advance a Christ centered atmosphere, uphold high standards for moral conduct, and embrace rigorous academics and robust cocurricular programs to challenge students to reach their maximum potential by fully exercising the unique gifts God has given

---

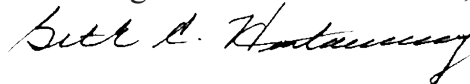
***“With God’s Word as the foundation, our family-school partnership is at the heart of providing a stable, safe environment where the teachings of Jesus Christ are reviewed daily.”***

---

them. We are also a school that understands while much is made about grade point averages, course rigor, and standardized test scores, that education is simply a means to an end and the end itself is a personal relationship with Christ. With God’s Word as the foundation, our family-school partnership is at the heart of providing a stable, safe environment where the teachings of Jesus Christ are reviewed daily, and where Christian parents who share similar values and beliefs willingly volunteer their time on campus to help shape and develop tomorrow’s leaders for Christ.

I recently heard a reminder from the pulpit that amidst this political season we should not put our trust in an elephant or a donkey but in *The Lamb*, which God’s word tells us will soon return as a Lion. Until then, we will continue on our mission of partnering with Christian families, making deliberate efforts to place Christ first, and to continue to seek excellence in our scholastic and cocurricular programs with the objective of saying and doing that which is pleasing in the eyes of our Lord. Thank you for embracing the strategic mindset that Christian education is a critical investment in the life of your child as we continue with our partnership this second half of the school year.

Warm regards and in His service,



Col Seth Hathaway  
Head of School  
Twitter: @PACS\_Head