



September 2019

What Constitutes a Healthy Christian School?

Dear Parents:

As in past years, once a month you can expect a letter from me addressing a topic germane to our PreK-12 community; every other month you can expect articles from our dean, principals, athletic and fine arts directors. These letters will share topics and issues concerning your investment in a Prince Avenue education, with the intent of educating parents on various topics as we partner to educate your child through a biblical lens within a post-modern world. This leads me to the topic I would like to address with you this month as we begin this new and exciting school year: **four indicators of a healthy Christian school.**



using a variety of leadership approaches and management tools. With a mindset of continuous improvement, we routinely reexamine our programs to improve effectiveness and efficiency in meeting our students' needs, and we implement moderate change when and where it makes sense. Our leadership team is going on its fifth year together; we have a firm grasp of one another's gifts and imperfections and a clear understanding that as a team we are stronger than the sum of our individual parts. We have the right leaders in place for this time in our school's history.



1. A Healthy Board of Trustees. While board operations may seem far from the classroom, the reality is they set the tone and path of Prince's future. Our board provides long term stability to our school by providing clear vision and specific expectations in the performance of our mission; one example of their intentional commitment to good governance is demonstrated by their unity of purpose. The long-range vision contained in our strategic plan, [PACS 2023](#), provides clear goals and expectations for Prince's future; operationally, my office reports quantitative and qualitative benchmarks in compliance with an annual reporting agenda to ensure I am held accountable for the school's performance. Our Board is fair, firm, and consistent in its decision-making process, and as head of school I am blessed beyond measure to serve under the leadership of a vision filled and talented Board.

2. A Healthy Administrative Leadership Team. The ability to take a board's vision and expectations for performance and tie them to a timetable separates good schools from great ones, and our administrative leadership team is skilled and adept at achieving this

3. Clearly Defined School Values. Prince's strong stance for Christ, unified belief in the unchanging truth of the Bible, and emphasis on upholding the tenants our Christian faith define our values as a family-school community. The curriculum void in public schools created by a series of Supreme Court rulings in the 1950s that removed the use of the Bible from the classroom has been substituted with concepts like *ethical norms* and *relative morality*, which are more concerned about political correctness than teaching moral absolutes. At Prince we are *unashamedly* Christian; though imperfect but thankfully forgiven through God's grace, we will continue to promote and teach Christ-centered

values to our students with the strategic goal of raising the next generation of Christian families.

4. A Family-School Community of Like-Minded Believers. At Prince, we welcome professing Christian families and hire highly qualified Christian teachers, staff, and administrators who are dedicated to pursuing scholastic achievement and excellence in co-curricular programs to aid in the development of each student to her or his full potential. There is enormous strength in unity; however, unity does not mean uniformity – there is a significant difference between these two. Uniformity should be a concern as too often it leads to



legalism, which is not healthy (candidly, I detest legalism because I believe it drives students away from Christ by forcing them to believe their value in His eyes is determined by a “checklist” rather than what’s in their heart). Prince remains a healthy, growing, vibrant community that believes children should enjoy childhood by preserving a level of moral innocence consistent with their age; ultimately, we aim to educate and mold young people to reflect the heart of God and to look like Jesus.



Jesus’ life on earth was marked by His love for people, and at Prince, we strive to follow His example.

With excitement for a productive, rewarding, and memory-filled school year, I remain,

Very sincerely,

Seth Hathaway
Head of School