

A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Over the years at Providence Classical School there has been, at times, a misunderstanding of what the financial significance is for each parent/guardian who signs the Cooperation Agreement. It is the hope of the Board that what follows may insure that PCS and her families will not jeopardize cooperation or agreement in these matters for the duration of our relationship.

First, it may be helpful to understand why PCS needs to have a contractual relationship by means of the Cooperation Agreement in the first place. Unlike churches or mission organizations that determine budgets based on voluntary contributions, PCS, like all other private schools, must determine budgets based on set tuition. From those tuitions we obligate ourselves to pay faculty and staff salaries and benefits, purchase curriculum, pay facility-leasing costs, acquire necessary classroom and office equipment, etc. To be responsible stewards of our sobering educational trust the Board must secure commitments from two fundamental sources: 1) the Board must commit the necessary oversight to deliver the educational product our purpose and vision statements claim to deliver; and 2) the parents and guardians must commit their financial resources to insure that we have the fiscal means to educate their children. For this coming academic year our projected budget nears \$800,000. Therefore, we are not hesitant; on the contrary, we feel it is our duty, to ask parents or guardians to sign a contract committing their financial resources to their child's tuition.

Second, PCS lives with the tension of being both a family and a business. We are both. When we wear the business hat, we do not cease to be or act like family. We try very hard to pursue both our family and business duties responsibly and biblically. This includes making every effort to be forthright to our families when we are putting on the business hat as we do when we go over the terms of the Cooperation Agreement during the parent interview. We want every family considering PCS to know that we ask them to be as serious about their financial obligation to have their child attend PCS as we are about educating their child. That is why we do not shy away from talking about that commitment in the very first meeting with parents/guardians, and why we require their dated signature before admission is finalized. PCS can only assume the very best from each person who signs the Agreement, that they pledge their commitment to fulfill the terms of the Agreement.

Third, the Board assumes the best from any family who chooses to withdraw their child from PCS. That is to say, that the withdrawal of the child is being done because it is thought that is in the best interest of the child to do so and, perhaps, thought to be in accordance with God's will. Yet the Board believes that it's God's will for PCS to utilize and request the honoring of contracts and agreements whether they are parent/guardian agreements or faculty/staff contracts. In other words, the pursuit of wisdom or even God's will by withdrawal doesn't cancel God's will for the parent/guardian to keep the contract; both are simultaneous biblically responsible actions.

Last, it may be helpful to review what ought to be in our minds with every agreement we make whether signed or verbal.

- One, it doesn't make any difference if we make a commitment with a Christian person/business or a non-Christian one. Our obligation is the same either way.
- Two, it doesn't make any difference if our commitment is huge (e.g. wedding vows) or small (e.g. borrowing a friend's book). Christ's honor is at stake in the keeping of our commitment every time.
- Three, we should make sure before we speak or sign that we are serious about fulfilling our commitment. We ought always to think of Numbers 30:2 in this regard: "If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."
- Four, we ought to keep our commitment even when it is uncomfortable for us to do so or if we regret making the commitment in the first place. It's Psalm 15:1-5 we should think of here: "LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from this heart... who keeps his oath even when it hurts."