

## **A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION AGREEMENT**

Because of the significance of the financial commitment made by each parent/guardian who signs the Cooperation Agreement, it is the Board's hope that what follows may ensure that PCS and its 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 ensure we have the fiscal means to educate their children. For this coming academic year our projected budget is approximately \$2,200,000. Therefore, we are not hesitant to utilize the Cooperation Agreement; on the contrary, we feel it is our duty to ask parents /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. When we wear the business hat, we do not cease to be or act like family. We strive to pursue both our family and business duties responsibly and biblically. This includes making every effort to be forthright with our families when we are putting on the business hat as we do when we cover 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 on the Cooperation Agreement before admission is finalized. PCS can only assume the very best from each person who signs the Cooperation Agreement, that they pledge their commitment to fulfill the terms of the Cooperation Agreement.

Third, the Board assumes the best from any family who chooses to withdraw their child from PCS. Meaning, that the withdrawal of the child is being done because it is thought to be in the best interest of the child and, perhaps, thought to be in accordance with God's will. Yet, the Board believes that it is 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 does not cancel God's will for the parent/guardian to fulfill their obligations; both are simultaneously 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, our obligation is the same whether we make a commitment with a Christian person/business or a non-Christian one.
- Two, it does not make any difference if our commitment is significant (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 ensure 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 including if we regret making the commitment in the first place. Psalm 15:1-5 illustrates this, "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."