

# STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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## *The Power of Assessment*

*By Ron Gordon - Executive Vice President & COO of Renovation*



ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS ALL industries have long focused on employee performance to meet their objectives. Routine evaluations of performance are certainly commonplace. However, many organizations, especially those in the nonprofit world, have ignored the power of overall organizational assessment. Failing to assess processes from an aerial view prevents the discovery of underlying root causes, thus hampering healthy growth.

Leading management consultants, such as the late Dr. W. Edwards Deming, stressed the importance for leaders to focus their attention on the organization as a whole as opposed to the performance of specific individuals. Due to the devastation Japan experienced during World War II, General Douglas MacArthur requested that Deming travel to Japan and aid the reconstruction effort. Deming's philosophies reshaped Japan's thinking and ultimately revolution-

ized the world of manufacturing. One of his core principles was the need to focus on the overall management system. He indicated 94% of all the challenges and opportunities faced in an organization were attributed to the systems, not the individuals. He further emphasized that these systems were the responsibility of leadership. Leaders of thriving organizations have realized that assessment plays a critical role in identifying these system gaps and strengthening their key processes.

The same holds true in the world of education. While performance assessments for faculty, staff, students, and board members have become routine and are certainly necessary, Christian schools miss an even greater opportunity to improve their impact when they fail to additionally include overall system assessments. Although various accrediting entities gear their assessment in this fashion,

schools typically become so singularly focused on meeting the detailed guidelines established during the accrediting process that they often miss key success factors specific to their school. The accreditation/reaccreditation audit is then viewed as the pinnacle event which rewards the desired certificate of achievement. With said “stamp of approval” in hand, school personnel breath a collective sigh of relief and carry on with the day to day. Like a student who studied and aced a huge test simply to generally retain the knowledge, rather than seek deeper understanding for futuristic growth and understanding, schools operate similarly. With common sense operational processes implemented and signed off by the accreditation auditor, the risk of complacency looms with key internal factors being ignored. Accreditation is extremely critical to legitimacy and public perception of a Christian school; however, it alone does not provide for the robust assessment needed to evaluate and measure the wholistic factors that are key to a thriving, forward thinking institution.

A truly objective and thorough assessment process can be extraordinarily powerful to a Christian school in numerous ways. First and foremost, assessment conducted by a third party entity can better aid in the *identification of blind spots*. Renewanation serves to partner with schools in this way. The ebb and flow of day to day school life is extremely varied and oftentimes riddled with ongoing troubleshooting. Many times, the struggles at hand are a result of weak processes. Such an environment understandably lends itself to “fix it” strategies that address symptoms, while unfortunately ignoring the often obvious root causes. Impartial, in-depth appraisal serves to identify and equip with best practices to achieve foundationally solid methods of operation. This model of assessment also provides a Christian school with the opportunity to *benchmark* against other similar entities, further helping to *identify* their relative core strengths and weaknesses. Renewanation assessments conducted over the past two years have often yielded appreciated astonishment from headmasters and board chairs who are learning of critical issues that have never been communicated or identified. An essential element of Renewanation’s methodology is providing respondents an outside party for candid communication without fear of retribution, creating an atmosphere of honest evaluation.

As a school board and headmaster prepare for strategic planning, *a solid baseline from an independent perspective* is critical before launching into the development of a path

for the future. Engaging multiple stakeholders such as the administrative team, faculty, parents, students, donors, and even community leaders in this assessment process will allow for a rich, meaningful data set, which will in turn provide a *strong understanding of the current state*. When conducted with a broad reach, this data gathering process provides *stakeholders* with an avenue to *express their concerns* in a non-threatening way and results in the fortuitous benefit of *increased morale*. School boards find that constituents connected to their Christian school will be *more aligned with and supportive of* the resulting strategic plan when they are included in the developmental process. Christian school stakeholders engaged with Renewanation assessments have experienced newfound fervor through this process. In fact, several former donors and supporters have reconnected with their local Christian schools upon discovering that an outside professional organization had been sought out to assist with system development and strategic deployment planning.

Lastly, a comprehensive assessment serves to distinctly *evaluate team dynamics*. God’s gifting of our various personalities and inherent communication styles plays a significant role in both team dynamics and the organization’s ability to effectively address challenges and leverage opportunities. The culture and spiritual vitality of a school is generally cultivated by purposeful and inspiring leadership. As a result, both the leadership team and faculty will be well positioned and aligned to meet the mission and vision of their Christian school, reaching and discipling the next generation for Christ. ■



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# STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

## *Strategic Planning and Deployment*

By Ron Gordon - Executive Vice  
President & COO of Renewanation



IN THE LAST ISSUE of *The Renewanation Review* magazine, we reviewed the critical role assessment plays in routinely monitoring the health of your Christian school. The natural next step resulting from thorough assessment is the development and deployment of a strategic plan. Unfortunately, strategic plans have become synonymous with that binder on the shelf that must be refreshed every year but has little significance or impact. As a result, strategic planning has become viewed as simply a waste of time. Nothing is further from the truth. Without detailed planning, organizations often arrive at a destination they never intended and struggle to make solid progress toward a desired future. Who would consider heading out on a journey without first charting out the best path to reach your destination? Yet, we find many Christian schools that are doing just that. With the right process employed, stra-

tegic planning and deployment will be a powerful guiding practice to strengthen your Christian school.

***“The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps” Proverbs 14:15.***

However, some have questioned whether strategic planning is even biblical. They question whether this practice was simply transferred from the business world to secularize ministry. The Bible gives us multiple examples to support that strategic planning is actually a biblical mandate. Old Testament examples include Jethro’s coaching of Moses to establish a delegation process to more effectively manage the Israelites and Nehemiah’s strategy development and execution to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Perhaps, the clearest example from scripture was from Jesus Christ Himself. He

recruited and developed a small team of disciples, powerfully taught and performed miracles, and ultimately chose death on a cross and resurrection from the grave to redeem all of mankind.

***“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established” Proverbs 16:3.***

Planning starts with vision. A Christian school must understand their purpose. Why does the school exist? What is unique about the education they offer their families? How is the model graduate characterized? Clearly articulating answers to these questions is the first step in recognizing the core values the school aspires to be recognized by and the life they intend to impact. This step, in particular, is what separates secular strategic planning with that of a Christian school. The vision and purpose of the school should be born out of God’s plan, not our own. With a clear, God-breathed vision articulated, the Christian school needs to understand how they are perceived in their community, especially compared to other educational options that exist. Market research with demographic studies, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses, and benchmarking can all be helpful tools as a team prepares to develop their strategic path and priorities.

***“Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed” Proverbs 15:22.***

Strategic planning is not as much about the resulting plan as it is about the process used to arrive upon that plan. The learning associated with understanding the school’s current position and where they are headed helps the team buy into the plan and develop ownership. Engaging key stakeholders of the leadership team is critical to success. The Chief School Officer (CSO), the school board, key administration personnel and, in the case of a church-operated Christian school, the lead pastor are absolutely necessary in the planning process. Influential teachers or committed donors may also be participants to consider in the development of the school’s strategic plan. The most effective method to connect these various leaders into the process and leverage their inputs is conducting a collaborative strategic planning workshop. While scheduling challenges and the tyranny of

the urgent will always make planning this session difficult, the leadership team must make this session a priority.

***“Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war” Proverbs 20:18.***

At the outset of the workshop, the team must understand the difference between tactical and strategic issues. The target of the workshop should be to deal with larger scope, longer term improvement priorities that build capability for the Christian school. Planting a feeder preschool in a neighboring community, developing a formal spiritual transformation program for students, or instituting a donor development program would each qualify as strategic priorities. They are significant efforts requiring a cross-functional team over several months or years to complete.

Successfully implementing these efforts would result in additional capability and greater sustainability. However, left unchecked, the well-intended participants in this process will unintentionally redirect the focus of the workshop to the advancement

of personal agendas. Their discussions will often migrate to a desired change in the car line route, a favorite candidate for the open basketball coaching position, or a preferred sequence of books to be used in the high school literature track. While these decisions may be part of a detailed action plan flowing out of a strategic priority, they are tactical discussions that are not relevant to the top-level strategic workshop. Utilizing an experienced facilitator for these workshops will ensure the team remains focused on the key priorities as they navigate the multitude of personalities and passions inherent in any team.

Making strategic decisions is to consciously decide not only what areas to prioritize but also which areas will NOT be prioritized. Every organization must execute their strategies with limited resources. Christian schools are no exception. Strategic priorities must be time-phased and synchronized with the resources available to accomplish these priorities. As capabilities are added, processes are implemented, and resources become available, the next prioritized breakthrough area can be tackled.

The key failure to most strategic planning initiatives has been lack of execution. The strategic planning process must trigger deployment. Without action, a plan is useless. The

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***“Without action,  
a plan is useless.”***

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critical few priorities that are determined must have clear ownership, defined targets, and a detailed action plan. The leadership team, including the CSO and the school board, is responsible for ensuring plans are reviewed and progress evaluated routinely throughout the year. At Renewanation, we've seen this be a consistent challenge for Christian schools. School boards struggle to move beyond the daily pressures of administration to concentrate more of their time on advancing the strategic agenda of the school. However, this transition is an absolute requirement if a Christian school is to realize its full potential. As schools embrace their strategic plan and move into action, we are seeing tremendous improvement and advancement in schools all across America. ■



*Ron Gordon is Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of Renewanation and brings strong education and executive experience to the cause. Ron holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering and an MBA from Virginia Tech. Ron's wife, Tonya, is a trained and passionate educator. They have twin boys, Caleb and Jacob, and a daughter, Gracie.*



In every community there are wonderful men and women that God has entrusted with wealth. These men and women are looking for ways to maximize the impact of the funds God has given them.

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# STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

## Accountability Coaching

By Ron Gordon - Executive Vice  
President & COO of Renewanation



WHEN YOU HEAR the word *accountability*, what do you think of? Does the mental image of a harassing drill sergeant quickly form in your mind? When conducted with gentle yet honest guidance, accountability can be highly productive in shaping and repositioning leadership and organizations.

In the past two issues of *The Renewanation Review*, we explored the *power of assessment* in understanding the current state of a Christian school and the critical role of *strategic planning and deployment* in developing a thorough plan of attack for reaching a stated mission. Assessment and planning are both crucial; however, execution is where the rubber meets the road and unfortunately where many leaders and school boards fail in their efforts to strengthen their Christian school.

Accountability coaching is a powerful method to ensure

both solid execution and lasting change. As with most leadership roles, a Christian school headmaster can be a lonely one. Faculty and staff are expecting direction and support, parents and students are expecting guidance and solutions, and board members are evaluating your every move.

The Christian school leaders we've provided with accountability coaching have come to view our revitalization support team as their trusted advisors and advocates. They become dear friends, reaching out to us routinely to share their joys, frustrations, and challenges. We help them by:

- Pulling their focus back on the important items that often get lost in the tyranny of the urgent
- Sharing best practices and benchmarking information
- Sequencing their improvement priorities to develop a connected path to the future



- Ensuring appropriate resources are identified to be successful or rescoping their efforts as necessary
- Most importantly, serving as their prayer partner

Ultimately, accountability coaching means ensuring execution. We desire the Christian schools we partner with to foster a goal-driven culture of accountability. Our Christian school leaders define the culture. If they are not held accountable, their team is also often not held accountable either. While school boards have this responsibility, board members rarely have a true understanding of the environment in their Christian schools nor clarity on the measurement data they should be monitoring to verify solid progress is being made. It is often said that you should only expect what you inspect. Accountability coaches ask the tough questions, hold leadership to the commitments they've made as part of their strategic deployment plan, and praise the numerous wins they are blessed to experience along the journey. They also establish a methodology so that school boards can begin evaluating the key health indicators they should measure on an ongoing basis.

**Throughout the implementation and accountability coaching phase, there are seven key principles to follow:**

1. *“Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.”*

This quote from Peter Drucker reminds us to take time first to ensure our leadership team is truly leading by setting a vision for the future, not just fine-tuning the processes and practices we already have in our current set of capabilities. If we're doing things that get in the way of our strategic vision, either stop or change them. Don't accept the response “we've always done it that way.”

2. *“Don't let perfect get in the way of better.”* All too often we get caught in analysis paralysis or waiting for the perfect conditions before enacting change. Start making progress today even if the improvements are small. These quick wins help spark enthusiasm in your school and with your team.

3. *“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much.”* Helen Keller's quote should remind every leader the critical nature of forming a solid leadership team. While leadership absolutely sets the tone, the leader must form a core leadership team to propagate the vision and culture

throughout the organization. Jesus provided us with the perfect example of this principle by utilizing His mentorship of twelve men to change the course of history and spread the Gospel to all nations.

4. *“In God we trust; everyone else bring data.”* Every stakeholder in a Christian school can be an influencer. Unfortunately, many of those stakeholders, especially the loudest ones, are often driven by an emotional response to an isolated situation. Prayerfully consider the options as teams are working towards improvement, and use real data to help drive decision making.

5. *“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”* During our improvement efforts, we cannot be focused on simply responding to crises, fixing problems, or creating short bursts of improvement. We must thoroughly train our teams on new processes and capabilities that are developed and clearly document them. When improvements are not systematized, their impact will not last, and sustainability will evade us.

6. *“What gets measured gets done.”* Measurement is critical in driving improvements and validating their impact. Visible, clear, and simple metrics will create both unity and synergy in the efforts of our team

to reach our strategic priorities. The leadership team must consistently monitor and remind the organization on why these measurements are important and how they will positively impact the Christian school in the future.

7. *“If not us, who? If not now, when?”* President Reagan's famous quote is one many Christian school leadership teams need to keep in mind as they execute their deployment plans. The daily, urgent issues and struggles we face tend to push us away from working on the more important strategic priorities that can help our Christian schools break through. Reaching these targets provide greater opportunities for our students to be more effectively equipped to defend their faith, know God more intimately, and win others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Consistently communicate the urgency of this mission to your team. God has placed us in these positions to accomplish His purposes. We dare not waste this opportunity.

**“Accountability coaching is a powerful method to ensure both solid execution and lasting change.”**




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Does your Christian school need support in reaching the next level and becoming a vibrant, thriving Christian school that glorifies God in all they do? We have developed an extremely affordable approach to supporting you, and we welcome the opportunity for our coaching team of seasoned professionals to engage with you soon. ■

**Editor's Note:** Please visit [renewanation.org](http://renewanation.org) to read the other two articles in the *Strengthening Christian Schools* series.



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A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a blue and black striped shirt and a blue backpack, is smiling and holding a white sign with both hands.

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# christian school accountability

*By Ron Klein*

I HAD TWO CAREERS before I came to Christian Education. Business roles and international business-as-missions work have given me the opportunity to analyze scores of organizations. A common practice of excellent organizations is the tracking of key performance measures. Hospitals track infection and readmission rates. Retailers track sales per square foot. Insurance companies track satisfaction rates. Therefore, I was surprised to discover this practice is uncommon among Christian schools. Each day schools determine whether students can add fractions and know what adverbs are. Yet, few school board members or headmasters hold themselves accountable. This is unfortunate because it impedes growth. More crucially, when we say we're engaged in God's work, I suspect He has an opinion on the quality of what we do.

Often, school board members lack an understanding of their essential roles. School board members are *not* parent advocates. With the exception of the smallest schools, they

should *not* be involved in hiring decisions or curricula choices. The school board has three core responsibilities:

1. Ensure the school's vision is maintained.
2. Hire, oversee, and when needed, replace the headmaster.
3. Ensure the health of the school.

The most common board difficulty is not knowing how to ensure the health of the school. Board members don't know what class size is appropriate or the merits and resources associated with offering an additional A.P. course. Often, board members intrude into operational matters because they aren't provided health indicators and don't know what should warrant their attention.

The financial health of the school is paramount. It's not uncommon for finances to consume most of the attention of school board members. While financial matters are crucial, this topic should not require a great deal of attention. Furthermore, under most circumstances, neither



the headmaster nor the board should be surprised by financial outcomes. The business manager should have a comprehensive budget and, on a monthly basis, track actual expenses to the expected ones. Some expenses, like textbook purchases and school supplies, will be high in July and August but nominal for the other months. Once the business manager has an accurate budget, then it's relatively straightforward to provide the school board with a condensed, one-page monthly report of expenditures-to-budget. Once the school year starts, income and revenue are set. With few exceptions, if the headmaster or board is surprised by shortfalls at the end of the year, something is awry with the budgeting process.

While finances are foundational, the school is much more. To ensure the health of the institution, the board needs information on how the school is doing with things such as adult-to-student discipling, fifth-grade math scores, biblical instruction, and the trend of ACT scores. What has been the trend of middle school reading scores over the past five years? How many high school students have accommodation plans? Are teacher performance evaluations accurate and useful? Are professional development funds applied in a manner that results in higher student achievement? The school board can't perform its responsibility of ensuring the health of the school if it isn't receiving an annual report of key performance metrics.

Every school should be pursuing improvements. Most headmasters could identify dozens of improvements they'd like to pursue. The constraint, of course, is that resources are limited. No resource is a greater constraint than the time and attention of the headmaster. Leaders can't simply direct change. Substantive change requires the active engagement of the leader. This is one of the reasons organizations can only successfully pursue three to seven change initiatives at a given time. The school board and the headmaster need to be aligned with the priorities for each school year. Importantly, they need to have documented how success will be measured. Once this is done, it's a small task for the board to provide the headmaster with a written performance review.

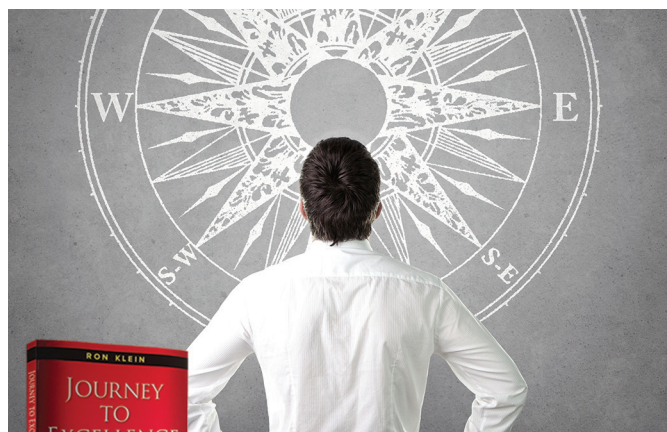
In summary, excellence requires accountability. For Christian schools, this is threefold: financial, ongoing activities, and improvement initiatives. Headmasters should welcome this assistance from their boards. First, this provides much-needed clarity. An important secondary outcome is these practices keep everyone aligned. The headmaster doesn't find that he needs to shift priorities to respond to each new

idea. Leaders often lament that they don't have time for such planning and processes. However, if you're fighting fires every day, you always will be.

Renewanation's Christian School Revitalization Program was developed to support Christian schools in the journey to being all that God called them to be. Through assessment, strategic planning, and accountability, Renewanation seeks to shepherd Christian school leaders on a path toward biblical excellence. For further discussion on how Renewanation can best support your Christian school, contact us today at [info@renewanation.org](mailto:info@renewanation.org). ■



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# connecting



**mission**

**vision**

**and  
practice**

*By Dr. Allison Bearden*

**WHEN TAKING A ROAD TRIP,** the driver must first know a destination before he can embark on the journey. Without a clear route, he is sure to run into many detours that could have been avoidable had his sights been set on the destination from the beginning. These detours could result in additional travel time due to recalculating, possible danger, fewer hours to enjoy his destination, and a waste of gasoline and tread on his tires.

Just like a road trip, intentionally pursuing your school's destination, or vision, involves planning the way you will progress through the journey mile by mile, year after year. Your school's mission statement is the route you plan to travel while steadily pursuing the vision. Families choose Christian education for their children for many reasons, but one overarching reason is the shared beliefs and values. It is our responsibility as school leaders to be vision and mission minded in all our decision making to honor the integrity in which those families chose to partner with us in the building of their child's spiritual and academic foundation. In our

current culture that constantly promotes a secular worldview, along with the rapid rate of Christian schools closing each year, this pursuit of vision and mission fulfillment is perhaps more important than ever to the sustainability of Christian schools.

## **The Destination**

"Begin with the end in mind" was Dr. Stephen Covey's second habit in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.<sup>1</sup> Christian schools' vision and mission statements are most often the very reason families choose to sacrifice



for a Christian education. For this reason, the pursuit of a school's vision and mission fulfillment is even more crucial and bears even more weight than any other.

Before a Christian school can set about on the road to success, a vision must first be created. Why does it exist, and where does it seek to be in the future? A vision statement is often synonymous with a purpose statement. With the end in mind, the road on which all decisions are made becomes a little straighter.

Shockley-Zalabak, Morreale, and Hackman identified four core purposes for vision statements that are certainly

applicable to Christian schools.<sup>2</sup> First, vision should motivate and inspire. Vision statements need to set the bar for optimum performance and goals within the school. Second, vision should push staff and faculty to action. Your staff and faculty should be bought into and invested in your school's *why* in order to pursue the vision and foster an environment that encourages their involvement. Third, vision should operate on multiple levels. Vision statements need to be applicable to all levels and job functions within the school. Finally, vision statements should be short and to the point. Perhaps the most pivotal piece of creating a vision statement is that if staff and faculty have difficulty remembering the vision statement, then the vision does not exist within their practice. In order for successful vision and mission fulfillment to take place, all employees should have ownership of each.

### The Journey

The journey of pursuing vision fulfillment begins with the day-to-day practices and operations. Mission statements are typically longer in nature but are the practical, daily ways staff, faculty, and administration pursue fulfilling the vision in and out of the classroom. When hiring and retaining staff and faculty, leadership must seek individuals who desire to be mission fit and desire to put the mission into practice each day in whatever capacity they serve.

One of the biggest pieces, and one often forgotten in the consideration or assessment of vision and mission fulfillment, is the culture and climate that exists. Like vision and mission, culture and climate are often mistakenly used interchangeably. The culture of a school is the *why* of an organization. It is simply the personality of a school and the "unwritten mission statement."<sup>3</sup> The climate is what the school does and can be referred to as the attitude of



the school.<sup>4</sup> A school's culture is directly shaped by the climate that exists within it. When considering this, intentionally fostering a healthy climate, as well as hiring and retaining mission minded employees, becomes even more essential.

### The Detours

A common misconception is that school leadership not only creates vision and mission, but it is also their sole responsibility to fulfill them. While leadership is certainly the most pivotal piece of successful vision and mission fulfillment, it takes all the passengers on the bus to safely journey towards the destination. A lack of vision and mission minded leadership, staff, and faculty will surely lead to detours that were never intended to be a part of the journey. These detours can negatively affect the school's ability to effectively equip students academically and spiritually.

One of the most common detours is two-fold: an unhealthy climate and culture and a lack of effective leadership. "Cultures do not lead; leaders lead. If the culture is leading, the leader is only managing." Too often, unhealthy climates have led to unhealthy cultures that have thrown schools off the path of their vision. Many times, unbalanced approaches to programs, unhealthy governing bodies, poor leadership, or lack of transparency have negative and long-lasting consequences. "A muddy vision or mission can help lead to continuing conflicts and a school that has difficulty identifying priorities."<sup>5</sup> This lack of ability to prioritize shows the disconnect to vision and mission driven decision making, thus creating a circular pattern of repeated issues. This can lead to wasted resources and time and cause irreparable damage that has long lasting and possible permanent consequences. Leading researchers Steve Gruenert and Todd Whitaker went as far as to say, "If there is ever a conflict

existent between mission and culture, culture will always win." In many cases, this can be damaging to a school's sustainability when left unaddressed for too long.

### Recalculating

So how do you recalculate your school's vision, mission, and culture to either revamp or overhaul an outdated statement?

1. **Implement effective leadership.** Without effective leaders to create, cast, and chase the vision and mission, the culture of a school will follow and become ineffective to change. School leadership sets the tone and expectations for staff, faculty, and families. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty encourage what they refer to as "purposeful community."<sup>6</sup> Within purposeful community, leadership involves other staff and faculty to create agreed upon goals and processes in order to reach those goals. Within purposeful communities, leaders know their employees on not just a professional level but a personal level as well. This allows them to see an individual's strengths and utilize them in roles or tasks that highlight those strengths. With a purposeful community, everyone is striving towards vision and mission fulfillment all while positively impacting and changing the culture of the school.

2. **Assess your school's climate.** Before you can change a culture, you must assess the climate. Gruenert said, "If the culture is ineffective, there are probably climate issues that were missed before they became rooted in the culture." Without addressing the attitude of the school, the personality of the school will remain unchanged.

3. **Be intentional.** Good leaders are intentional in their decision making, in conflict resolution, and in the hiring and rehiring of mission fit and mission minded employees. Provide the resources your employees need in order

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only managing."**



to catch the vision and fulfill the mission. Approach conflict with the vision and mission as your roadmap to resolution.

4. **Assess and create or recreate your school's essential values and beliefs.** Vision and mission statements should be based on your school's core values and beliefs. Without these foundational pieces, your vision and mission statements may not resonate with stakeholders. Families are looking for educators to partner with them in not only the academic career of their child but also in their child's spiritual growth and development.

## Conclusion

While there are many other dynamics that can affect successful vision and mission fulfillment, I firmly believe that most leaders need to begin with the assessment of the culture that resides within their building. When there is a climate that fosters the pursuit of vision and mission fulfillment, the culture becomes one of motivated and satisfied employees, institutional practices that positively affect student achievement, a haven for spiritual growth, gratified and involved families, and an opportunity to navigate conflict when the ending destination has already been identified. But regardless of the way vision and mission are unique to each Christian school, there is no doubt that the one commonality that exists between them all is more crucial than any other: furthering the advancement of the Kingdom. And in the end, what better final destination is there? ■



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## FOOTNOTES

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