

Cost vs. Value

Performance in the Classroom and Re-enrollment Decisions

The time of year when you send your re-enrollment and enrollment information out is a good time to work with your faculty to build their understanding of what matters to parents as they consider your school. What leads parents to feel they are getting or not getting exceptional *value* for their tuition dollars? Teachers need to know that how they do their job and handle their students *does impact* enrollment decisions.

Introduction – Working with your faculty in light of what matters to parents most about your Christian school.

Myths about Tuition

1. Tuition must be priced so that everyone can afford a Christian education.
2. Tuition is a watershed issue when it comes to choosing a Christian school.
3. Those who take a long, hard look at tuition rates have the least money
4. If tuition is too low, surely we can raise it.

Facts

1. When tuition is a major consideration to a family, it has more to do with financial value than with family income or tuition rates.
2. Tuition does affect perceived financial value.
3. *A follow-up to Facts 1 & 2:* Financial value is measurable, it can be changed, and it must be present to warrant a tuition increase.
4. You don't have to be in a nice building and have fancy programs to generate financial value.

So ... I ask my faculty in a “Think Tank” discussion:

1. What FACTORS would lead school parents to feel that they are getting exceptional *value* for their tuition dollars? In other words, what kinds of things make parents think, “This Christian education may be a sacrifice, but it's worth every penny of it”?

On the other hand ...

2. What NEGATIVE FACTORS would work *against* parents feeling they are getting good value for their tuition dollars? In other words, if *you* were the parent of a student at our school, what kinds of things would you *not* want to be hearing from your child/middle schooler/high schooler?

COST VS. VALUE – 1
EXAMPLES OF WHAT CONSTITUTES VALUE
IN RE: RE-ENROLLMENT DECISIONS

1. Meeting the child's needs
2. A complete curriculum including advanced courses
3. A sense of seriousness about quality education
4. The effort of the teachers – a sense that the teachers are working *hard*
5. Teachers
 - a. Highly qualified teachers, teaching in their discipline and grade level
 - b. Teachers who are role models
 - c. Strong, positive student-teacher relationships; loving, caring teachers
 - d. Availability of teachers to students outside the class period; individual attention
6. Good school-home communication
7. Availability of special help, including special programs for special needs
8. Moral values; spiritual impact of the school on the child; the feeling that they as parents have support in standing up for biblical standards
9. Bible-centered in fact, not just in what the promotional literature says
10. The students in the school are good “raw material”
11. Peer influence
12. Discipline handled in a loving way
13. A workable student-teacher ratio
14. How is our school significantly different than the public school in positive ways?
15. The helpfulness of the non-instructional staff
16. Traditional education without an emphasis on the gimmicks
17. Technology

COST VS. VALUE – 2
EXAMPLES OF WHAT CONSTITUTES NEGATIVE VALUE
IN RE: RE-ENROLLMENT DECISIONS

1. My child's teacher is not qualified
2. Too many hard-to-handle students; too much energy expended on them; parents are hearing that we are struggling (unsuccessfully) to handle a poor student
3. Racism, either subtle or overt
4. Other parents who are negative, not really on board
5. Antiquated learning materials
6. Favortism
7. Undue harshness
8. Inconsistency in applying the rules
9. A sense that students are being treated unfairly
10. Opinions taught as fact
11. Lack of sympathy for theological differences
12. Academic pressure due to poor planning; panicked academic pacing
13. Inability to meet the child's needs; lack of special programming to meet special needs
14. Lack of extra-curriculars
15. Inconsistency on our published standards
16. Legalism or the appearance of it
17. A lot of lost teaching time
18. Lack of challenge; too much academic coddling/"dumbing down"; fear on our part of challenging students (Kids need to SWEAT!)
19. Kids are swearing/cheating/bullying/putting others down
20. Tests on Thursday (if students are involved in youth groups Wednesday night)