



FLATIRONS
ACADEMY
Comprehensively Christian

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SEPTEMBER 4, 2026

EDUCATING FOR FREEDOM

STRATEGY #2

Comprehensively Christian Formation: *Quaerite Primum Regnum Dei*



Greetings Flatirons Academy Families,

Thanks again for taking the time to read and reflect on who we are as a school, where we are going, and how we are going to get there through this series. If this is the first Strategic Plan letter you have opened, I encourage you to read the [Introduction](#) and the [Strategy #1](#) letter first before moving on.

I acknowledge that this is a lengthy letter. My hope is that the payoff will be worth your time.

I'm going to start with an outline: I'm going to describe the primary problem facing Christian schools like Flatirons Academy. I'm then going to briefly describe two wrong responses to the problem we face. And then finally, I'm going to describe what we think the solution actually is and how we are practically going to do it.

Let's go.

I have had the privilege of working in education for nearly twenty-five years. And, in that time, I've had hundreds, if not thousands, of meetings with concerned parents and students. It would take more room than I have in this letter to recount all the reasons for these meetings, but it doesn't take much imagination to guess what many of them were about. Perhaps you are even one of the amazing parents that I've enjoyed connecting with in this way.

I've had meetings about maximizing grade point averages, Advanced Placement (AP) credit, and SAT scores. I've met about challenges with peers, conflict with teachers, and homework loads. I've met about playing time, program offerings, and who got the starring role in the play. And, as you can probably guess, I've met with parents and students about dress codes, cell phone policies, and many other things too intense to mention in a letter like this.

I could go on for a long time with examples of emails and meetings about almost every aspect of schooling. But, I won't because what I've learned over the years is that every meeting I've ever had with a parent and/or student has actually been about only one problem: a vision for "the good life" and how to get it.

People usually make it to my office or inbox because something at school is standing between them and this vision for what a student really needs to be happy. Or even worse, they got what they had been seeking and found that it did not satisfy.

To be clear, I love meeting with parents. And there are many legitimate reasons to be anxious about the growth, development, and experience of our students.

As I explained in a previous letter, our students are growing up in a world full of persons, principles, and principalities that are actively seeking to fracture their attention, dull their senses, and keep them in chains to the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Objectively speaking, it's a wonder I don't have significantly more meetings with parents and students given the stakes and challenges that families must face.

So this is where the real problem sets in for Christian schools like us. How do we respond to the long list of things standing in the way of our vision for "the good life?" How should school resources be allocated? What students should be served? How should we define success?

I believe there are two mistakes that Christian schools are tempted to make as we deal with the reality of a broken and fallen world.

Mistake #1 - Affirming a vision for life that has nothing to do with Jesus and His Kingdom but sounds good to our world. It is tempting to celebrate state-championships and full-ride college scholarships to elite institutions without caring about a relationship with Christ. It is tempting to talk about enrollment numbers and test scores without thinking about the shape of our students' souls.

"Sure there is some good ethical teaching in there somewhere, but what success really looks like is excellence and advancing in power, wealth, and influence as the world sees it."

Mistake #2 - Promoting a vision for life that is naive and promotes a false version of Christianity that cares more about being "nice," and "safe," and "happy" than it does the God revealed in the Bible. It is tempting to dismiss ineffective instruction and disorganized programs because at least we are being "nice" to the kids. It is tempting to spend time, talent, and resources creating experiences for kids that are "safe and fun" without thinking about the patterns and character of our students.

"Sure there is learning and achievement in there somewhere, but what success really looks like is being happy and comfortable at all times."

I know that these mistakes may seem extreme, but I've sat through twenty-five years of meetings that sound exactly like what I just wrote above.

The Solution

So what is the way out of this conundrum? What insight can I provide next that wraps this all up nicely in a letter?

I'm not actually going to say anything next. Instead, I'm going to let Jesus take the floor for a moment with an excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus:

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' or 'How shall we win a state championship or 'How shall we get into the best college,' or 'How shall we make a lot of money'?

For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

OK, I took a little literary license with the quote, but did you notice the brilliance of what Jesus says about the legitimate concerns of our life, including the schooling of our children. He says that “your heavenly Father knows that you need them all,” and that all of the necessary things of life will be added to us.

Everything I've ever met with a parent and/or student about matters. But, not as much as seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And, when we do seek the kingdom of God, we can trust that He will take care of those other issues as well.

At Flatirons Academy, we take this command seriously. We think that Jesus actually expects us to do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is not a health and wealth Gospel. This is our conviction that we can trust Jesus when He tells us that “the good life” is one spent seeking the kingdom of God first and the good things of this world second.

Free people have a joy that is not based on external circumstances but in a relationship with Jesus. Free people can care deeply about achieving in academics and co-curricular activities without it defining who they are. Free people have rightly ordered priorities and can face the success and failure of life without the anxiety that plagues our world.

This response to listen to Jesus starts at home, is guided by the church, and supported at school. We don't think we can do this by ourselves. But we are committed to doing everything we can to point our students to Jesus while they are at school.

We call it being “Comprehensively Christian.”

It means:

We seek to know God (an interactive relationship) through every thought, every action, and our vision for the “good life” both right now and in the future.

Through Every Thought

We are first and foremost a school, so we care deeply about teaching and assessing the thoughts of our students. We do this in all subject areas, including our Bible and Theology classes.

We expect our graduates to know their Bibles inside and out. We expect that they know and can contribute to the theological conversations that go on inside of the Christian church as they reach adulthood. And, we expect that graduates apply the truth and wisdom found in the Bible to the ethical and cultural issues of today as they serve the church.

Every area of study points to the reality of God and His creation. So, we actively teach and learn as free people who can see the truth of Christianity in all of life.

We also acknowledge that thinking rightly is incomplete if it does not lead to action.

Through Every Action

Our staff and students teach and learn in an environment that assumes that God exists and is involved in our daily lives. So, we seek to create a school culture that is pervaded by love as we spur each other on to good works. We seek high standards in ethical living, academic integrity, respect for God-ordained authority, and positive peer relationships.

We believe that character is formed through consistent healthy patterns of correction and forgiveness, in community, powered by grace, over time, through discomfort and steadfastness.

We are transformed by the Holy Spirit as we learn to engage in the practices of the Christian life: study, prayer, solitude, silence, service, worship, rest, celebration, etc.

We don't do this to gain God's favor, but because we have His grace. We believe that the Bible shows us how to act as free people.

Vision for Life

We seek to think right thoughts and do good things, but these don't amount to much until we gain a new vision for our lives as Jesus changes us from the inside out.

So we rehearse a new story for ourselves in all that we do. We practice answering the great questions of life from a Biblical perspective:

- What is real? - God and His Creation
- Who is a really good person? - Anyone whose character is overflowing with self-giving love toward God and other people.
- How do you become one? - By submitting to Jesus and learning how to do the things He said to do, powered by the Holy Spirit.
- What is the "good life"? - The "good life" doesn't depend on material wealth, power, or any external circumstance. It belongs to anyone who lives their life in an interactive relationship with God in a community where His will is done.

Our success and failure as a school is not based on enrollment, test scores, or championships. Our success is based on whether or not we raise a generation of students who seek the Kingdom first.

Here are a few ways that Flatirons Academy seeks to do this:

- We believe the most important thing our students do at school happens in Bible and Theology class.
- We love reading, especially our physical Bibles. We spend significant resources in cultivating a culture of reading print media.
- We find historical creeds helpful.
- The Bible is very clear about many societal issues that plague our culture, so we speak clearly about these issues.
- We are obsessed with the Sabbath. Free people take a day off of work on a weekly basis.
- Youth sports and arts are great; however, they have become an idol in our culture that negatively impacts families and gets in the way of church attendance. So we invest significant resources to provide an alternative way of doing co-curriculars that support church attendance and family dinner.
- We think that some aspects of modern American school culture align with God's plan for human flourishing and some do not. So we thoughtfully engage in school events and operations that we think are good for kids and families. And, we abstain from those that we do not think are good for kids and families even if they are expected in our culture. We don't always get this perfectly right, but we expect that living in the Kingdom will look different from the school down the street.
- We are very pleased with the academic achievement of our students; however, we do not use this success to publicly promote our school because doing so reinforces a false vision for life.
- While we have quantitative Key Performance Indicators as an institution, we define success as radically doing God's will for Flatirons Academy and His students.

Strategy #2: Comprehensively Christian Formation: *Quaerite Primum Regnum Dei*

We seek to know God and His creation through every thought, action, and our vision for life, both right now and in the future.

2.1 Develop a definition of "Comprehensively Christian" suited to the unique vision of Flatirons Academy and our cultural context. We aim to develop a definition that is clearly stated and easily understood by our families, teachers, and community. This definition provides insight into how we achieve our expected student outcomes.

2.2 Evaluate all K-12 students' experiences for explicit and intentional alignment to a Comprehensively Christian experience.

2.3 Develop and implement Flatirons Youth Sports (FYS) and Flatirons Youth Arts (FYA) as viable alternatives to youth club sports and private fine art lessons to promote a natural pace of family life that supports church attendance and family dinner.

2.4 Clearly articulate the propositions, historical creeds, and cultural intersections vital to an orthodox Christian worldview.

2.5 Develop a clear Portrait of a Graduate that clearly articulates the aspirational characteristics of our culture for a life of following Jesus and doing the things He says to do.

2.6 Develop and implement a student "Rule of School" at Flatirons Academy that normalizes biblical spiritual disciplines in student life.

2.7 Identify potential church leaders and connect them to the local church for development.

Thank you for reading all the way to the end, and I look forward to sharing the next strategy with you next week.

Go Bison,

Jared Wallen
Executive Director
Flatirons Academy