



FLATIRONS
ACADEMY
Comprehensively Christian

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

EDUCATING FOR FREEDOM

Strategy #5:

Financial Stewardship and Advancement : Dominus Providebit



Greetings Flatirons Academy Families,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the five strategies that guide who we are as a school community, where we are going, and how we are going to get there.

To review:

1. [Christian Liberal Arts Education — Libertas Per Disciplinam](#)

We will continue to pursue and refine an education that unifies knowledge through Christ, expands human capacities, and prepares students for lives of faithful discipleship.

2. [Comprehensively Christian Formation — Quaerite Primum Regnum Dei](#)

We will seek to make the Christian faith not merely one part of a student's experience, but the framework through which students understand God, creation, themselves, and their lives.

3. [Thriving Faculty and Staff — Labor Ipse Voluptas](#)

We believe the heartbeat of our school is our faculty and staff. We will invest in the people who teach, lead, serve, and care for our students.

4. [Expanding the Kingdom through Christian Education — Extendere Regnum Dei](#)

We believe Flatirons can become more than a single school. We will explore opportunities to expand access to transformative Christian education so that it becomes a default option for Christian families in our community.

In today's final installment, I will share how we will respond to God's provision to steward the resources He gives us to make the largest possible impact for the Kingdom.

In a moment, I'm going to throw around numbers, market comparisons, and models. I'm going to do my best to give you an insider view of the challenges and opportunities facing private schools in general and Flatirons Academy in particular. But, before we go there, we need to pause and praise God for His faithfulness to our school.

Our school started as a dream and a calling by a small group of families and inspirational leaders. He has sustained our school through radical personal generosity and sacrifice that you wouldn't believe even if I told you. He has woven together the stories of thousands of students, staff, and the church to create and sustain a school that is a monument to His goodness.

These are imperfect stories of failures and successes, breakthroughs and disappointments, that all point toward the same conclusion - God seems to want our school to exist, so we had better do everything we can to take care of it the way He would want us to. This story started before you and I were here, and it will go on long after we leave.

Therefore, it is with a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving that I write this letter. It is with the experience of abundance, not scarcity that I write. It is with the assurance of what God has already done for us that I point to the future of what He is calling us to do moving forward. A calling not only to continue to exist, but a place where students seek to know God and receive His grace.

Praise be to God. We are glad because He has done great things.

With this as our foundation, let's objectively consider the financial realities that schools must navigate and our vision of how to do this best.

Let's start with the bad news: schools are a terrible business. I'm not saying that they are all run poorly; surely, they can be run better or worse depending on the model and leadership.

I'm saying that there is no business plan for any school that actually makes sense in the short term. The financial costs are higher than you can imagine, the market more saturated with supply than demand can sustain, and the return on investment is delayed beyond what a rational actor can envision. Nevertheless, all non-profit private schools must deal with market forces that government-funded schools do not.

I'll let you decide whether or not you agree with Adam Smith that this is a good thing. All that matters for this letter is to state that every private school is one re-enrollment cycle away from closing. I don't intend to be overdramatic, but as I'm writing this, I'm counting on my fingers the number of private Christian schools in the Denver Metro Area that have closed in the last twenty years. I'm on my second hand.

So how do we approach the challenge of continuing to exist while also being worthy of existence. How do we trust in God to provide while also faithfully counting the cost? How do we make decisions about resources?

Here is how we do it:

We run the school year on tuition minus aid. We build and expand capacity with giving. We spend money we have.

This is simple, but it does not mean it is easy. I'll save you the minutia, but I want you to understand the big picture. Let's take it one step at a time.

Running the school year

It costs money to run the air conditioning, buy textbooks, gas up the bus, and clean the carpet. But, the biggest yearly expense is attracting, keeping, and growing the best possible teachers and support staff for our kids. Staffing is roughly 80% of our yearly expense. This is because we seek to be hyper-efficient with operations and generous with the professionals we entrust our kids to.

Tuition

Our goal is to run each school year on tuition. I know this sounds simple, but let's zoom out and do some comparison for a moment. This year our tuition for high school is \$11,555 dollars. I appreciate that this is a lot of money; especially, if you compare it to free.

Here is the current tuition of private Christian schools in the Denver Metro that offer similar or fewer academic and co-curricular programs than us with similar or less developed facilities: \$13,150, \$13,900, \$16,450, and \$17,325.

The average cost for high school tuition at the average private religious schools in the area is around \$20,000. And, there are many private schools that charge around \$40,000 per year. This is not our goal. But, I can understand why a school would do this.

Depending on the group, educational funding experts suggest that it takes between \$18,000 and \$21,000 to adequately educate a student in Colorado per year. This does not include the cost of school buildings. A third party analysis conducted this spring concluded that the market would value our tuition at \$18,000.

I'll let the numbers speak for themselves.

We love that we are efficient and cost effective; this is by design. We are not attempting to maximize short-term profits. We also understand that charging what it costs to run the school is the clearest path to long term stability and the continuous improvement of our programs and the student experience. Tuition will modestly increase moving forward as it has for the past five years. This has been communicated on the tuition page of our website for several years. This is not a new strategy, but I want us all to understand where we are in the market.

Minus Aid

The most important thing about our students is that they are made in the image of God, not their socioeconomic status. As we work to make Christian education the default option for Christian families on the Front Range, we will always seek to support access to our school. Our needs-based aid will increase faster than our tuition cost. This costs money.

Any financial aid philosophy raises a myriad of questions around fairness and quotas and equity and responsibility and justice and about a dozen more loaded terms. If what I say next doesn't calm your nerves on this issue, I'd love to speak with you in person about this sometime.

The aid discussion becomes quite simple once we realize that every one of our students' education is currently being aided at around 33% of the actual cost by the radical generosity of Flatirons Community Church tithers and a handful of significant benefactors who would be furious if I mentioned their names. Your students' education is already subsidized. We're all in this together.

Build and Expand

The primary way that each student's education is subsidized is through the capital investments of the people mentioned above. We have first-class athletic facilities because of these people, not because of tuition. We have classrooms for three sections of middle school students instead of one because of these people, not because of tuition. We have a refreshed elementary facility because of these people, not because of tuition, etc., etc...

Our plan is to build a Worship and Performing Arts space at our Zuni campus through the radical generosity and sacrifice of these people.

Our plan is to expand our elementary facilities on the Zuni campus through the radical generosity and sacrifice of these people.

Our plan is to start new K5 schools through the radical generosity and sacrifice of these people.

Spend Money We Have

Everything I've mentioned in this letter requires large sums of money. Large sums of money require (yes, I'm going to say it again) radical generosity and sacrifice. This is true of tithers. This is true of families that pay tuition. This is true of a small number of potential donors that have the ability to make an outsized impact on the advancement of the Kingdom of God through education. This is true of all of us who call ourselves Bison.

But, if there is one thing that you take from this letter I hope it is this: we are so confident that our God will provide that we will spend and build and advance as God provides, not before. We will trust God but not presume how and when He will do it.

We will not undercharge, over-promise, and over-extend our operation. We will not run yearly fundraisers in last-ditch efforts to cover operating expenses that could be avoided. We will not ask for donations after we take out new loans. We will not unnecessarily become slaves to the lender.

And, we will continue to value efficiency and simplicity so that tuition does not become so high that our school becomes a luxury item for the privileged few in the market.

On Another Note - Tax Credits

When I originally planned this communication series, I was hopeful that much of this letter would be explaining our multi-year strategy to maximize the impact of the ["Education Freedom Tax Credit."](#) This is a federal tax credit program that Governor Polis has opted into. Unfortunately, the Treasury Department is four months behind on releasing details, and it is unclear whether or not whoever the next Governor of Colorado will be able to opt out before the program ever begins. Anything I would share at this point would be mere speculation.

I do want you to know we spend extensive time researching this program and consulting with organizations in other states that are currently operating similar programs. On a monthly basis, I receive legal briefings and strategize with our third-party advancement company, RedefinED, to get the latest information.

I am hopeful that this program, or one like it, will allow us to supercharge our plan and achieve our goals faster. But, even in the most advantageous political climate, a program like this would not change the fundamentals of our financial stewardship.

Summary

We will use tuition to run our school and provide aid to students who need it. We will use charitable donations to build and expand access to more students just as we have in the past. This benefits every student, current and future.

We believe that God will be glorified through Christian education on the Front Range on His timing, not ours. We believe that He will provide this through the radical generosity and sacrifice of those reading this letter, and those He will bring to us.

And, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are prepared to be responsible stewards who strategically funnel these resources to achieve strategies one through four. And, if Tax Credits become a legal option for us, we are fully prepared to execute a plan to add it to our business model.

But most of all, we pray that after we have gone to see Jesus a new generation will look at Flatirons Academy and say: "We are glad because He has done great things."

Final Thoughts

I started this letter by claiming that schools are a terrible business: the economic incentives are all wrong for short-term profit.

However, if you are still reading this letter you already know something that you can't find on a balance sheet.

You know that your student is of infinite value. You know that an education built on the Word of God is priceless. You know that an eternity of knowing and enjoying our Creator is of unfathomable value.

You know that “the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

And you know that the awesome life of following Jesus brings freedom into everything, including education.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for entrusting Flatirons Academy with aiding you in the education and discipleship of your student. Thank you for engaging with our strategic plan through these letters; a condensed version will also become available on our website in the near future.

And thank you in advance for your radical generosity and sacrifice that enables our students to seek God in every thought, every action, and their vision for life, both right now and in the future.

Strategy #5: Financial Stewardship and Advancement : Dominus Providebit

5.1 Implement a partnership with RedifinED and Federal SSO to maximize revenue via the Educational Tax Freedom Credit (ETFC).

5.2 Develop a Non-Profit Investment Policy to manage current assets

5.3 Develop and implement a comprehensive ten year advancement strategy that includes individual donors, external vision dinners, internal capital campaigns, and ETFC.

5.4 Eliminate All Debt

5.5 Establish a tuition structure that maximizes accessibility for all families

5.6 Raise funds to build a Worship and Performing Art space on the Zuni Campus, etc.

5.7 Raise funds to expand student capacity at the Zuni campus.

Go Bison,

Jared Wallen
Executive Director
Flatirons Academy

P.S. I look forward to sharing more in the future as we progress through our strategic plan. And, please let me know if you want to meet in person to learn more about what God is doing at our school.