

March 11, 2010

*Holiness Christian Academy
Elkton, MD*

Dear Pastor & Sister Parret,

You are blessed with beautiful facilities and student body. From what I have seen, you have a lot of the pieces in place to be successful as a school.

I want to encourage Sister Parret to not constantly second guess yourself. As long as you remain humble, learn from other people, and lean on the Lord it doesn't matter if you 'don't do it like everyone else.' You will grow and learn as an educator every day. The truth of the matter is, that nothing will be done 'perfect' the first or second time through and no one reasonable expects that.

Your greatest asset will be ASKING QUESTIONS. Utilize all the people that God has blessed you to know and 'pick their brain' every chance you get. Asking questions doesn't make you stupid, but it makes you honest and brings you closer to the answers you need.

Looking at Christian schools in general, they are as diverse as people are. No one does it exactly the same way. What works well for one, might not work for you. The challenge is finding what works for you. So, do learn what others are doing and try it out. Also, do not be scared to be creative with your own solutions. ACE gives you the core structure as a foundation to your school, but the very details that will make your school uniquely effective is your personality, gifts, and anointing.

As far as your questions concerning marketing go, you can and should of course do the simple things like a website and other forms of advertisement, but your real 'draw' is going to be the SUBSTANCE of your product. Do you create an atmosphere and setting in which students may excel if they set their mind to it? (Are there a lot of distractions? Inconsistencies? Is their absolute fairness and equal treatment? Is the quality of education offered 'top-notch'? and etc.) Second, capitalize on your uniqueness. If you do what everyone else is doing, what reason would someone have in choosing you? Dare to be different and dynamic while maintaining a consistent core structure. Demand excellence from your students and you will reap excellence.

I will try to briefly outline in the next few pages some ideas I hope will inspire even better ideas for you. You are taking up an incredible challenge that is SO needed and rewarding. I believe you two and your church have what it takes to be successful—a vision and sincere burden.

Sincerely,
Stephen Reynolds, Jr.

Scheduling

What are your main goals for the school day?	
PACE work complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily complete 20-27 pages. • Depends wholly on the age of the student. High school students will need to average more pages per day. • All PACE work should be completed during school time in any reasonable schedule. • If students are given only 2 hours of class time to complete assignments, it would be unreasonable to expect 30 pages of production.
Spiritual Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Devotions and opening exercises (15-20 mins.) • Weekly chapel services. (Again a reasonable period: 45 min.) • Challenge them DAILY.
Real World and relational interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field trips. • Special trips can be planned on a larger scale for quarter ends, but the average field trip should be of minimal cost and time. → Trip to the town hall, local farm, local manufacturer, someone that hand carves wood? Etc. • Bring in professionals to the school—policemen, city councilmen, missionary, etc. • Students' own 'oral reports' are excellent structured times of learning from each other. • Structured learning games as rewards. → scrabble, bible trivia, jeopardy, etc.
BREAKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to rest their eyes and stretch about every 45 minutes of sit down study. • Breaks should be as consistent and rigid as the Law of Moses! Frequent changing of break times and lengths is counterproductive. • A couple 5 minute 'breaks' is more beneficial to 1 long break. (with the exception of lunch allowing for time to eat.) • Do the same thing every time. i.e., bell rings at 9:30. "Five minute break everybody." At 9:35, "Break is over, please return to your seat." Only moments allowed to find a seat and sit down. • Leniency with break times are often the greatest source of stress for the teachers. Keep it simple and consistent. • Every break should have an OBVIOUS purpose. "The five-minute break is a time to rest the eyes, use the restroom, and get a drink of water. NOT a time to play a game of 21. • Lunch breaks could include a time for 'cool off.' Five minutes before the 30 minute mark, the bell could be rung so everyone can cool down and get ready to reenter the solemn learning center.
Exciting for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety • Give them incentives. "If you complete 20 pages before lunch today, we will leave early for gym." • Give them options. "Would you like to go on a field trip or finish working toward honor roll status this Friday?"

- How can all this be fit into a school week? A simple but consistent schedule.
- ULTIMATE GOAL OF A SCHOOL SCHEDULE: CONSISTENCY.

SCHEDULING, cont'd.

Section 7-103 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, requires that each Maryland public school "be open for pupil attendance for at least **180 actual school days** and a minimum of **1,080 school hours** during a 10-month period in each school year". These numbers give us an average minimum of 6 hours a day.

I will create a hypothetical regular weekly schedule based on this Maryland rule.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00-8:30	<i>Opening Exercises</i>	<i>Opening Exercises</i>	<i>Opening Exercises</i>	<i>Opening Exercises</i>	<i>Opening Exercises</i>
8:30-9:30	Goal setting, Tests & PACE work.	Goal setting, Tests & PACE work.	Goal setting, Tests & PACE work.	Goal setting, Tests & PACE work.	Goal setting, Tests & PACE work.
9:30-9:40	<i>Breakfast Break</i>	<i>Breakfast Break</i>	<i>Breakfast Break</i>	<i>Breakfast Break</i>	<i>Breakfast Break</i>
9:40-10:25	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK
10:25-10:30	<i>5-minute Break (restroom, water)</i>	<i>5-minute Break</i>	<i>5-minute Break</i>	<i>5-minute Break</i>	<i>5-minute Break</i>
10:30-11:15	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK
11:15-12:00	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
12:00-12:45	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	PACE WORK	Field trips, special privilege activities, special visitors, etc. (once or twice a month)
12:45-12:50	<i>5-minute Break</i>	<i>5-minute Break</i>	<i>5-minute Break</i>	<i>Clean-Up</i>	
12:50-1:35	PACE WORK/ special privileges	PACE WORK special privileges	CHAPEL	Physical Education	
1:40-2:00	<i>Clean-Up</i>	<i>Clean-Up/Oral Reports</i>	<i>Clean-Up</i>		

- This kind of schedule accomplishes goal number 1: Complete PACE work required by allowing ample time during school hours to do the book work. (Regularly 3:45+ hours a day.)
- This schedule is only one way of doing things.
- Remember that while you want to make things fun and dynamic for the students, the most important thing is to provide a 'structured' learning atmosphere.
- Be consistent with the core structure of your schedule and add intermittent modifications for variety.
- Prime time for attention spans is the morning for 'most' students. Take advantage of this by doing testing and PACE work in the mornings.
- Schedule special activities for later in the day and toward the end of the week to help bring in some energy when energy is running down simply because of the school week.

Discipline

A lot of disciplinary problems can be avoided if the law is 'laid down' (NO exceptions) on core rules. For Example:

- Maintain Library Atmosphere. Classroom during study times should be as solemn as a funeral. Whispers and minimal noise are only acceptable. Breaks will be provided for time to talk and enjoy each other's company.
- PACE work time should be a concentrated time on their work and free of classroom distractions.
- Visitors should converse quietly or better yet, outside of the classroom.
- Phone calls should be taken outside of the classroom.
- The teachers must set the example in the sanctity of the classroom and the students will learn to follow.
- Certain rule infractions should be considered unacceptable behavior in any measure at all (backtalk, threatening, violence, etc.) and met with immediate disciplinary action.
 - **Involve the parents** – do not assume the students are communicating with their parents. Send home notices to be signed by parents concerning poor behavior and set detentions. Hold special interviews with parents to discuss their child's behavior and needs. PTA meetings will allow you to deal with many things corporately so that no one will feel singled out.
 - **Involve the pastor** – Schedule 'talks' with the pastor. Etc.
 - The more you let 'slide' the more they will try to get by with.
- REPEAT rules often. It is a pain but necessary. Remind them of what they should be doing. It comes with the job ☺

SOME IDEAS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION:

- Suspension of Privileges (lose A,C,E status).
- Isolation from student body during break times.
- Manual Service (extra cleaning, perform another student's regular duty)
- Detention time spent writing essays related offence.
- Lecture the student body as a whole for the infraction of one or a few students. (Students will work as their own policemen because they don't want to hear another lecture.)
Require hand written notes on the lecture given.
- Never wait to boiling point, but take some level of action for each offense. (step 1 might be a demerit slip, but a repeat of the same offense might justify detention and an essay.)
- Expel is obvious the last resort and the least desirable method, but sometimes absolutely necessary. Always consider the well-being of your student body as a whole. 1 rotten apple can spoil a whole barrel.

Website

OPTION A: FREE HOSTING – Most companies will include ads on your page, but you could find one that will take your concerns into mind and not advertise things that would be questionable to you. (You can upload photos and add articles, **but most services will be limited. This is still a great option for a simple website.** (You will still have to DESIGN the website and MANAGE it.)

OPTION B: Find a cheap server host (\$120/yr) and manage and build the website yourself.

OPTION C: Find a cheap server host (\$120/yr) and hire someone to manage the website for you but on a 'per service basis.' (\$25-\$75/month) and hire someone to design the website for you which would be a 1 time cost determined by how complicated the site would be.
Total cost: \$320-\$600/yr.

OPTION D: I would love to design and build the website for you, but my schedule is very tight right now. If I did it, you definitely would not get it until your next school year. I could teach any or all your students how to manage it so that you would not have to. Which would include how to add a picture, sermon, create a page and lay it out.

If you go the route of doing most of the work 'in-house' that is managing the site yourself or the students or someone close by that will save A LOT of money.

Courses of Study

Hypothetical courses of study options for students and their parents.

“At Holiness Christian Academy we offer 5 high school courses of study:

- **High Honors** (this is the ideal course requiring maximum achievement.)
- **Silver Honors** (to recognize above average effort, but shy of ‘honors.’ In a particular study category i.e., Math)
- **College Preparatory** (designed to prepare student for entrance into college. Most colleges require pre-requisites that could be done now in high school instead of later at a greater cost to the student.)
- **General** (standard and average requirements)
- **Vocational** – (not to be encouraged, this is designed to recognized graduating by meeting the bare state minimums and emphasis on practical math—basic accounting and math skills.”

SATs can be taken ONLINE now. School of tomorrow.com has a form to order licenses for your students at \$28.00 a student for grades 4-12.

See FAQ section at schooloftomorrow.com = “Stanford 10 Testing”

WHICH LANGUAGE COURSE TO USE???

- My Jury is still out.
- I haven’t come across a perfect one yet.
- I used the ACE Spanish curriculum when I was in High school.
- But I do like the idea of computer based language learning because it gives some variety for the students compared to the PACE’s.
- **For Rosetta Stone, It’s all right on schooloftomorrow.com.** You can order it through ACE. The cost is like \$1,500 for the entire course one time fee. All pricing questions should be directed to the person you make your order through. This will ensure you are getting the best price possible.