



Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy

Erdenheim, PA

Donald B. Beebe, Head of School



Project Summary

About PMCA

- Independent college preparatory school located in Erdenheim, PA near Philadelphia
- 320 students in grades PreK–12
- Family population diverse in racial, geographic, economic, cultural, and ecclesiastical make-up

Summary

- Develop a framework to impact the school community and reflect a culture of grace
- Academic achievement and college-preparatory effective, but enrollment declining for 10 years
- Regional campuses consolidated into one
- Desire as new Head of School to apply tools of excellence in academics, extra-curricular programs by godly teachers, contributing to faith formation, spiritual growth, and understanding of living in grace
- Framework of key institutional components developed, including:
 - Policy
 - Personnel
 - Program
 - Pupils
 - Parents
- Foundation for review served through self-study for accreditation by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS).



Project Results

➤ Policy

Board reaffirms the mission as established in 1943

- Governance:
 - Board is establishing a model of constructive partnership
 - In-service component included in each agenda
- Board/Head relations:
 - Clarifying expectations for board, head of school
 - Ascertaining expectations and consensus assists in reaching strategic objectives
 - Annual administrator agenda established and reviewed with Board
 - Board committee for head support meets monthly with head of school for care and prayer

➤ Personnel

- Summer reading cycle
- Established faculty forum
- Board reports to faculty, due diligence meetings

➤ Program

- MSACS and teams allowed for review of program
- Academic offerings: Online experience, admissions to more international students
- Leadership: Use of student government leaders
- Worship: Student spiritual life committee, worship teams under direction of dean of students

➤ Pupils

- Student Empowerment: increase involvement, initiative and responsibility for school culture
- Student Discipline:
 - relationships, role, and rules
 - built on heart motivations, not simple behaviors
 - emphasizes repentance, restoration
- Student Service: Change the emphasis from service hours to voluntary service based on need.

➤ Parents

- Conviction: Belief in parent as primary teacher
- Commitment: Inviting culture, opportunities
- Communication: Middle States Committees, board committees, town hall meetings



What We Are Learning

- Three major areas of priority included:
 - Parents & students: connection, communications, confidence
 - Personnel and program development
 - Community presence, donor base development
- Value in using existing strengths of formal, informal leadership among faculty and staff to test theories and strategies; established Instructional Leadership Team of administrative staff—meets weekly to discuss big picture and direction
- Established Lead Teachers for elementary, middle and high school levels, enhancing efficiency in communications and coordination of activity
- Differing perspectives on concept of “parents as primary teachers” and “partnering with parents”; change requires perseverance and patience.
- Clarity of roles among faculty and staff valuable in maintaining focus on primary and secondary tasks
- Empowering students is better instructional tool than controlling students; requires tolerance for failure, continuing commitment to come along side
- Tenure, tradition and collegiality can be stumbling blocks to growth, and an advantage. Change that effects those areas can cause growth to bog down.
- Effecting a culture of grace is not an end destination but a continuing process.

