

Mission and Vision Renewal

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Project Description and Outcomes:

A powerful vision does not emanate from the solitary musings of the supposed leader. A vision that truly enlists and inspires others wells up from their deep needs and aspirations. The way to achieve such a vision is by working with and through the people for whom it is intended. The vision moves others because it is deeply in touch with their reality and their hopes. That is why they respond. And the vision is credible because they can see that it is not a castle in the air, but a vision that is grounded in their lived experience. (Robert E. Quinn, Building the Bridge As You Walk On It, p.139)

This project is to create a new mission and vision statement for Glenmore Christian Academy(GCA) where all stakeholders of the school feel that they have contributed to these statements.

The Board of Glenmore Christian Academy has agreed to the following process of creating a new mission and vision for our GCA community:

- Seek permission from the First Alliance Church Elders to craft a new mission and vision
- Hire a consultant to engage all stakeholders (parents, GCA staff and members of the Board) on separate evenings to respond to and analyze the current mission and vision.

- To gather all the data and find similarities of what the stakeholders appreciate about the mission and vision; what concerns them, what concepts are priorities to them, and how we can improve these statements so that they are “living and breathing” statements.
- To hire another consultant to analyze the data and assist the board and administrative team to construct a new mission and vision.
- Once the mission statement is crafted, the staff will include descriptors of how this statement will be lived out in the everyday life of students, staff and our school community.

Our outcomes are as follows:

- That the stakeholders of the GCA community have a common understanding as to purpose of our school and why we exist.
- To have an easy to memorize mission statement that clearly defines the purpose of GCA.
- To have a mission and vision that truly inspires as well as one where the staff and parents feel deeply connected to the process of constructing these statements.
- That these statements will drive our curriculum, philosophy of education, pedagogy, Christian worldview, everyday activities and interactions with GCA community, guide decision making, financial decisions and fundraising.
- That the mission and vision will lead to teacher growth and best practices
- That the mission and vision, by God’s grace, will honour God in how we help shape students for His glory!

What I learned in the Process:

Glenmore Christian Academy hired me to work as the Head of School on May 1, 2016. As I prepared for the interviews, I memorized their mission statement trying to incorporate their mission in the answers I gave. The mission statement of GCA was as follows:

*To educate children in a dynamic Christian environment dedicated to
excellence in learning and life development.*

In my first few months of employment, I quickly realized that decisions had not been made to keep the mission in the forefront. Out of interest, I would ask teachers, students, parents if they knew the mission statement of the school. Most did not! Glenmore Christian Academy had a mission that was adrift!

When I was accepted into Van Lunen Program I knew that my project would center around revisiting our mission statement. I am excited to share that GCA now has a new mission and vision for their school community.

I had no idea how long this project would take. Board members shared, that they were overwhelmed with the task of refreshing the direction of our school. Megan Stuart, the secretary of our board commented that, “The process was worth it and a reminder of how much work it takes to get this right.” The desire of the Board was motivated by Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

I learned that an “exercise” such as coming up with a new mission and vision brought our community closer together. We had great discussions about simple questions such as ‘Why do we exist’ or ‘What is our purpose?’

As Peter Senge in his book, *The Leader’s New Work: Building Learning Organizations*, notes, “A vision for creating a healthy school culture should be a collaborative activity among teachers, students, parents, staff and the principal.” The school culture will progress towards higher student improvement and teacher satisfaction, “When staff members have become collectively committed to shared vision and values.” (Mulder, C.T, *Biblical Leadership in Christian Organizations*. Faculty Dialogue 13 (Winter) 1990, p.99-100)

In the annual Alberta Accountability Pillars it was not a surprise that parents indicated a high satisfaction with being involved with decision making at GCA. The pillars were the highest they have been in the last seven years at Glenmore Christian Academy. (See Appendix A)

The data that was collected from the parents, staff and board members had key similarities. It was encouraging to see that the parents, staff and board members were aligned with what Gloria Stronks (1993) in her book, *A Vision with a Task*, calls the nonnegotiable for Christian schools; “Faith in God, trust in His Word, personal salvation in Christ, reliance on His Spirit, commitment to family and community and a calling of service and self sacrifice (p. 34).”

Having this alignment greatly assisted us with coming up with the following mission and vision (See Appendix B):

TEACH TRUTH
INSPIRE EXCELLENCE
EXPERIENCE CHRIST
SERVE THROUGH LOVE

What difference is it making in your school?

Keeping the mission and vision at the forefront of daily activities in our school community is the key for the mission and vision to remain effective.

The mission and vision helps members in the school community to regularly define and clarify what they are seeking to accomplish; it helps them envision how each can contribute to the purpose of the whole school; it is a vision, which encourages and assists in personal and communal growth and renewal (Mulder, 1999, p.99).

Running a Christian school in our world is becoming increasingly challenging. The Boards' intent was to build a mission and vision deeply rooted in scripture and believe that this mission and vision will be something they can draw on as a clear and public statement of GCA's direction for many years to come.

Finally, the most significant difference our new mission and vision has made is that we are now moving in a unified direction for God's glory. The process of creating this mission and vision has set the foundation for future decision-making.

GCA desires to be a vibrant community! As my friend, Lee Hollaar says "a community that is bound to a set of shared hopes, ideas and values that they believe in, support and feel compelled to follow." It is our desire that the mission and vision of GCA will "move others because it is deeply in touch with their reality and their hopes" in Christ Jesus.

Appendix A – 2018 Alberta Accountability Pillars

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total Satisfied
151 parents responded to this survey					
To what extent are you involved in decisions about your child's education?	51	40	8	1	91%
To what extent are you involved in decisions at your child's school?	44	44	12	0	88%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your input into decisions at your child's school is considered?	48	40	5	7	88%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunity to be involved in decisions about your child's education?	60	32	5	3	92%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunity to be involved in decisions at your child's school?	56	37	6	1	93%

Appendix B – Mission and vision Statement of Glenmore Christian Academy

Our Mission:

Teach Truth, Inspire Excellence, Experience Christ, Serve Through Love.

Our Vision:

TEACH TRUTH

- Foster an understanding that God is the author of all truth
- Impart knowledge within the framework of Biblical principles
- Equip students to discern and engage with confidence

“Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in You all day long.” Psalm 25:5

INSPIRE EXCELLENCE

- Deliver exceptional academic and extracurricular programs
- Promote critical thinking, a strong work ethic, independence and resilience
- Discover potential, celebrating the unique gifts and talents God bestows

“So... whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31

EXPERIENCE CHRIST

- Nurture grace centered, transformative relationships with Christ
- Reveal the beauty and worth of life rooted in prayer and worship
- Encourage responsive discipleship

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

SERVE THROUGH LOVE

- Value others with love and compassion
- Instill a passion to serve
- Engage in local and global service opportunities

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35