



Christian Unified Schools

El Cajon, CA

Chuck Leslie, Superintendent

Strategic Planning 101

Located in beautiful San Diego county, Christian Unified Schools was founded in 1965 by Dr. Tim LaHaye. With 900-plus students on two campuses, the schools have a rich legacy of providing a Christ-centered education for grades K-12.

Believing that if you are not going forward, you will go backwards, CUSSD embarked on a strategic planning process to guide its schools programs in coming years.

Challenges ranging from a shrinking demographic of school-aged children, competition from charter and home schools, and the world-wide economic malaise have made the need to plan and think strategic ally more important than ever.



Team Get It Done

Thinking clearly and unbiased is difficult. To help Christian Unified understand its strengths and weaknesses, surveys of staff, parents, and students were employed, then a team of key constituents was assembled to talk candidly about the issues. The team of twenty members included:

- **Board Representatives**
- **Administrative Personnel**
- **Parents** from various grade levels
- **Teachers** – new and long-term
- **Alumni**

After an initial all-day gathering, the team meet for five additional half-day meetings to form a Strategic Plan.

Four Overarching Areas

The team identified four broad areas of school life that needed planning:

- **Christ-centered Governance**
- **Quality Instruction that is Biblically-based**
- **Sound Fiscal Stewardship**
- **Student Development**

Within each of these broad categories, specific objectives and strategic initiatives were developed.



The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

Taking the time to think through the schools' programs with an eye toward the future was a very rewarding task. We grew stronger through the process and are currently implementing key initiatives that will serve Christian Unified Schools for years to come.

However, we were probably too ambitious in the scope of what was reviewed and created more goals than we can focus on at a time. Plus the realities of the economic slow down has meant that most of our time has been spent on initiatives to aid enrollment growth and to more effectively raise funds.

Nonetheless, working through a Strategic Plan is something every school should do.

