

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: WORTH THE COST?

Is it really worthwhile to spend your hard-earned money on a Christian education? At ACSI, we firmly believe it is. I've invited Karen Winter, superintendent of Turlock Christian Schools (Turlock, California), to share some of the reasons why Christian schooling is worth what it costs. —Dan Egeler

Our kids mean the world to us as parents. We would do anything to help ensure their future success and Christian character development. However, as financial pressures weigh on families across the country, you may have wondered whether a Christian education is really worth the cost.

As a Christian school superintendent for 35 years in both church and independent schools, I've had the pleasure of hearing hundreds of testimonies from students, parents, and alumni about the exceptional academic education they received at our Christian schools. One of our recent graduates, who attends a prestigious university, recently shared her professor's accolades: "In all my years, I've never had a student who could think and debate with facts so clearly and not just argue. Where did you learn to debate with such conviction?" With a confident smile, our graduate replied, "Senior Bible class."

Bravo to the dedicated Christian school teachers and leaders in all our schools, because these results are emerging from thousands of Christian schools. In fact, there are several benefits to attending a Christian school:

1. The 2002 National Center for Education Statistics report showed that students who had completed eighth grade or higher in a private school were **twice as likely as other students to graduate from college**. They are also **twice as likely to complete a bachelor's degree or higher** than those who have attended public school, according to the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988.
2. Christian school students consistently **score top marks on standardized tests** and college entrance exams. "Private high school students scored significantly higher than public high school students on reading, math, and science assessments by age 15, and by age 23 had higher levels of educational attainment" (Frenette and Chan, 2015).
3. Between 90 and 100 percent of Christian school graduates **attend their university of choice**.
4. Christian education reinforces a **commitment to excellence**, strengthening a biblical Christian worldview.

5. Christian schools have a **higher percentage of students involved in extracurricular, leadership, and outreach activities**, which help develop new talents, responsibility, discipline, and a heart for serving.
6. A 2007 study reinforced the power of **dedicated teachers** in private schools (Van Pelt, Allison, and Allison). Christian teachers help children reach their God-given potential.
7. A **safe, secure learning environment**, one of the keys to student success, is a top benefit of a Christian school.
8. Christian education **supports a positive, Bible-based value system**, helping ensure your child makes good choices.

Two days after transferring to our school, one student said, "I love it here. The teachers and kids really care about me, and no one ever calls me names." The student's parent added, "If I had known Christian schooling would make this much difference in my child's life, we would have changed years ago!"

On occasion, I hear disappointing stories of students who leave Christian schools because they want to be in a bigger sports league or a larger choir. All too often, the child gets in with the wrong crowd and loses motivation. Grades drop and college plans fade, resulting in lost hopes and dreams. Time and time again, parents say, "I wish I would have kept my child in the Christian school. This was one of the biggest mistakes I've made!"

Being in a Christian environment with the support of other Christian parents, teachers, and students is one of the most important benefits of a Christian education. No amount of money can replace the benefits of Christian education for your child's future!

Karen Winter  
Superintendent of Turlock Christian Schools, Turlock, CA

### Reference

- Frenette, M. and P. Chan. 2015. *Academic Outcome of Public and Private High School Students: What Lies Behind the Differences?* [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2015367-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2015367-eng.htm)
- Van Pelt, D., P. Allison, and D. Allison. 2007. *Ontario's Private Schools: Who Chooses Them and Why?* [www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/OntariosPrivateSchools.pdf](http://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/OntariosPrivateSchools.pdf)