

Programming

You have identified “programming” as an area of weakness in your school and one that needs improvement.

Becoming an uncommon Christian school requires programming that creates a high impact value proposition for parents. We have found that parents pursue an education at an uncommon Christian school for their children because they desire them to become highly productive, sought-after, and successful Christ-centered leaders. Students seek the school to be part of a Christ-centered community that will provide connection, opportunity, belonging, and success throughout their lives. To meet this value proposition for both parents and students, the uncommon Christian school must deliver innovative and creative programs that are focused on the whole student and equipping them for a rapidly changing world. They must deliver these programs by creating space for professionals who thrive in a creative Christ-centered culture.

This value proposition requires you to hire only “living curriculum” faculty, staff and coaches that not only excel in their content area but also in their ability to disciple students. Each employee must have a vision for transformational growth and understand the power and importance of a meaningful and “knowing” relationship with students. They must be disciples, program builders, and seek to help students see the world from a biblical perspective.

The uncommon Christian school then must intentionally implement methods for building relationships and discipleship for students into its schedule. Those systems must be unified around the mission of the school and must be evident in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and in other co-curricular activities and spaces. There are multiple layers for knowing students, including such places as in advisory groups, in student services support, and in co-curricular involvement, for example.

To measure progress, the uncommon Christian school must routinely assess whether all students feel known through surveys and feedback loops. Based on the results, adjustments can be made with intention and purpose.

Next, a school wide learning philosophy and stated student outcomes must exist for each department and class and be implemented consistently across the school. A school should have a curriculum based on stated student outcomes and agreed upon learning standards. Student achievement must be measured on a regular basis through normed testing and local formative and summative assessments. The school must be able to meet the needs and customize learning opportunities for as wide a range of students as possible.

The co-curricular, athletic, and fine arts programs must be aligned to the school mission as they are key vehicles to achieve the expected student outcomes. These programs must provide opportunities that allow the beginner and for the expert to find a place and develop their gifts. Coaches and sponsors must meet the standard for living curriculum educators and use their activity to disciple students. It is in the co-curricular arena that the students can often face failure and the need to achieve despite the difficulties. This is where “grit” can be developed in our current world that makes little room for heroic achievements.

The uncommon Christian school must provide training and support for teachers, staff, and coaches in both the areas of teaching biblical worldview and discipleship. The school must

have evidence that students understand a biblical worldview and must know where the students are in their faith journey. Discipleship must be intentional, and all faculty and staff must seek to help student grow in their walk with Jesus both inside and outside the classroom.

Students must be taught how to grow in the agreed upon character traits. There must be a cohesive sense of how to help students develop these traits like grit, gratitude, and self-control, for example, that spans from the classroom to clubs, sports, and the fine arts activities. Leadership needs to be taught and students need to have opportunities to lead in real and authentic situations. Service must happen regularly, and students need to have a vision for how to connect using their gifts to serve others.

How to –

The following detailed suggestions will assist your school in establishing uncommon Christian school programming:

1. Focus on the Whole Student:

- An uncommon Christian school should aim to deliver innovative and creative programs that focus on the holistic development of students. This involves recognizing that education goes beyond academic achievement and includes character development, spiritual growth, and the nurturing of unique talents.

2. Hire, Train, and Keep Living Curriculum Employees:

- To bring the value proposition to life, the school needs teachers, staff, and coaches who are not just experts in their subject areas but are also committed to discipleship. These educators should view themselves as living curriculum, embodying the values and principles the school seeks to instill in its students.

3. Schedule Relationship Building and Discipleship:

- The school should implement intentional methods for building relationships and discipleship into its schedule. This includes advisory groups, student services support, and co-curricular involvement.

4. Assess Progress:

- Regularly use assessment tools and feedback loops to gauge whether students feel known and supported.

5. Implement a School-Wide Learning Philosophy:

- A school-wide learning philosophy, coupled with stated student outcomes, provides a framework for consistency across departments and classes. A curriculum based on these outcomes, aligned with learning standards, allows for systematic measurement of student achievement through various assessments.

6. Align Co-Curriculars:

- Co-curricular, athletic, and fine arts programs play a crucial role in achieving student outcomes. These activities should be aligned with the school's mission, providing diverse opportunities for students to discover and develop their gifts. Coaches and sponsors should meet the standards set for living curriculum educators.

7. Train and Support Teachers, Staff and Coaches:

- Recognizing the importance of teaching a biblical worldview and discipleship, the school must provide training and support for all educators. There should be evidence of students understanding and applying a biblical worldview, and intentional discipleship efforts should extend beyond the classroom.

8. Provide Leadership and Service Opportunities:

- Students need opportunities to develop leadership skills in authentic situations. Regular service initiatives should be integrated into the school culture, encouraging students to use their gifts to serve others.

The above provides background and some suggested steps for improvement in this area based on best practices. To make more detailed and specific suggestions, we would need to know more about your circumstances. Please contact us if you would like to discuss your unique circumstances or would like assistance in facilitating the above steps.

Disclaimer

Once again, we emphasize that these ideas and suggestions may or may not address your school's specific needs as they are based on your responses to the survey. The feedback is limited to the questions asked and your responses. There is a whole lot more to every school.

We pray that God will lead you in your journey to becoming an uncommon Christian school and we do hope the input is helpful in this journey. If you want more detailed feedback, have questions, or would like assistance in any of these areas, please don't hesitate to contact us.