

Notes from Town Hall Meeting / July 31, 2019

What stands out to you from the school survey?

*Disappointing to see that contribution % was so low. Time has been invested to create a vision, why would more people not want to help? What is more important than your kids? Would marketing ideas and transparency help?

*Rigorous foreign language – we haven't experienced this for our younger kids historically

*Well prepared for college / life – 76% and 63% -- Surprised this wasn't higher with all the good things we've heard about SLCA. We're new here and I expected this to be higher. We need to dig deeper to find out exactly why this percentage isn't higher.

**College prep* was a top phrase for what SLCA should be but wasn't a phrase that does describe SLCA. Make college acceptance lists more visible to parents.

*Better dining facilities was a top priority for change but wasn't high for donations. Is this because adequate facilities are expected to be provided by the school?

*Diversity should be one of the top four words to describe SLCA. This family had seen many African Americans leave their children's classrooms since JK. They've chosen to leave because of the lack of diversity. (People in the majority want this. Diversity better prepares students for life beyond SLCA and it's what the kingdom of God looks like. It's very important to the school.)

*90% of the people were happy with the class size but only 28% think we do a good job marketing. If you like lower class size, why would you want better marketing.

(We want to grow to capacity but not beyond. We have waiting lists for classes that have reached the limit until we have enough on the list to hire another teacher. We need to increase awareness to bring more to the school. Our competition is in lower school.)

*Phrases that describe and should describe are very close which shows our identity is stable.

*58% feel we have a quality fine arts program. We need to continue to drive that program.

(We do have room to improve. We can mine for more information to help us understand specifics.)

What jobs are parents hiring SLCA to perform?

*Partner with parents to help grow children with school and parent strengths together. We want to further their education without agenda and promote critical thinking and integrity as an adult.

(Clarify *without an agenda*: Stay away from noise of politics)

*Nurture children as individuals

*College Prep ***

*Christian Worldview ***

(*Worldviews* – this takes us back to diversity and reinforcing what's in the home)

*Competitive analysis of what other schools are doing

*Strong identity of who they are in Christ

*Expectation of investment – At SLCA is expected that teachers and staff are more invested in what they do for students than in other schools.

*Safety ***

*Medically safe

(Thank you all for your input. There were no unusual expectations. These are all things that we should do well. If expectations were for us to make your child an NBA star or get them ready for Harvard, that would be different. Not that we don't have students ready for Harvard. 😊 We are preparing for college in JK. Teachers work together to vertically align the curriculum from top to bottom.)

*SLCA gives students the chance to explore personal passions. There are good mentors, people who invest their lives. There is a well-rounded offering here.

What schools to you consider to be our top competitors?

Cannon, Country Day, Davidson Day, Pine Lake Prep, Grace Covenant, St. Marks, Hickory Grove, charter schools, Covenant Day

(No one said Huff. We have kids who leave and come back from Huff. Why? People go to schools closer and ones that cost less.)

What makes SLCA distinct from our competitors?

*Christian values, academic rigor, value of education, quality, small classes, loving, location, cost, affordability – not just cheaper, but a good value

(I love that we have millionaire families and minimum wage families. We have remarkable socioeconomic diversity. Our retention rate is 93% which is very stable. When we ask people why they are leaving the answers are usually moving, money, or academic struggles. We always ask.)

*How do we get back to that waiting list for kindergarten years ago? (Financial decline coupled with the scandal have caused some of these problems. There are also more schools to choose from, more competition.)

*It starts with us. We need to be sure we have positive comments in the community.

*We are a new family. We started making decisions about school last spring. When people ask where we're sending our child, we didn't hear one negative comment. I know about the scandal. I talk a lot, so I hear from a lot of people. We haven't heard anyone say a negative word in the five months since we've made this decision.

*Word of mouth advertising is the most powerful. We need to be ambassadors for the school.

(When we ask how parents know about SLCA, word of mouth is first and the web is next.)

*Our biggest competitor is the charter school. As they become saturated, we may see more growth. (There's a new one popping up down the road.)

*We have a core identity – Christianity. The scandal didn't change what our teachers care about. They are called to do this.

(It's amazing that we have made it through something like this scandal. Most schools have closed for far less. This speaks to the loyalty of our parents and the strength of our teachers. God has his hand on this place. I saw it when I came here to interview. It is hard to put your finger on it.)

What are our most important attributes to keep at all costs?

*Everything we discussed earlier.

*Staff and teachers

*A good balance between academics, athletics, and fine arts

*Sense of community

Are there attributes we should eliminate at all costs?

*Any possible safety lapses

(We are a strong community. We practice prevention rather than response. We know our students and stay in touch with those who might have a problem with the school.)

*Careful balance of technology. I don't want to see students on screens all day.

(We're going to try and chart a good balance. We need to meet everyone's needs. We do know that navigating the technology world is important for students to keep up with.)

*Socioeconomic image – “rich kids” We need to be transparent about the diversity we have / don't have

*We seem to have a “white privilege image” We need more inclusion.

*Our benchmark should be what our diversity is in our communities. We need to set reasonable growth goals. What can we do to address the economic challenges of this? We need to have plans to overcome barriers of the goals. We need to sustain them with a diverse staff and classroom.

(Huntersville has a population of 10% African American. Our high school is 8%.)

What attribute do we lack that we should develop at all costs?

*Safety to the greatest degree possible

*Athletics need to be important. I was just at a sixth-grade meeting for soccer and it didn't seem organized. There seems to be a lack of communication.

We need to get away from the “mom and pops approach”

(Now that we've turned the corner and are coming out of survival mode, we need to be increasingly professional.)

*What is the job outlook in ten years? This will help prepare our young kids for when they get there.

*I like what you said earlier – “We practice prevention, not response.” I think this is key across the board.

(I shouldn't say we don't practice response. We do have plans in place if needed.)

(We want to be innovative. We want to teach our kids how to learn. We need to equip our students with the ability to be prepared for the future.)

What most excites you about the future?

*Graduation!

*Cohesiveness in the school- beginning with Dr. Kerlin and staff which trickles down to students and parents.

*Transitioning out of survival mode

*Renewed energy – When you walk on campus, whether you're speaking to students, faculty, people at the front desk, there's just a different feeling.

(You! I see tremendous energy, excitement, and passion. Thank you for taking time to have a voice and give input in how we honor Christ and teach and prepare students. Thank you for all you do for the school.)