Classical Christian Education

A Different School *for* a Different Life.

CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

MASTERY OF LANGUAGE

FOCUS ON INHERITED WISDOM

DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

ORDERING OF AFFECTIONS

When a student enrolls at Geneva, the whole family begins an educational journey. They join a community that is working together to equip the next generation with the tools and vision to pursue the good, true, and beautiful with wisdom and courage to the glory of Jesus Christ. I invite you to imagine what that journey may look like for your family.

Leslie Moeller
Geneva School of Boerne
Head of School

1.

SECTION ONE

CHOOSING A SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD

Your child will spend more than 16,000 hours in school from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The content and practices of the school in which he spends those hours, and even more importantly, the people with whom he spends them may have a greater impact on who he is and how he envisions his future life than anything else, other than you, his parents. Choosing a school for your child is therefore one of the greatest responsibilities that you face as a parent. **To choose wisely, there are things you need to know.**

"Individuals whose schooling is specialized rather than liberal and who do not continue learning when they leave schooling behind, or do so only to improve their specialized expertise, never become generally educated human beings."
— Mortimer Adler

EDUCATION IS MORE THAN THE ACCUMULATION OF CONTENT OR SKILLS

All education pursues a goal and will determine the formation of a student's future. What a child experiences in school has significant impact on what he learns to value in himself, others, and the world at large. The aim of a Geneva education is not accomplished in 13 years but is a lifelong pursuit to become an educated adult. In that pursuit, we build foundations from which students are equipped to learn anything for the rest of their lives, and we resist specialization that narrows a student's knowledge, interests, and imagination.

As Mortimer Adler, the 20th century philosopher and educator at Columbia and the University of Chicago, noted, *"Individuals whose schooling is specialized rather than liberal and who do not continue learning when they leave schooling behind, or do so only to improve their specialized expertise, never become generally educated human beings."*

ALL SCHOOLS TEACH VALUES

Every school must make choices. What do they teach? What do they not teach? And why? Central to these choices is value: what will benefit our students most and what will not? Every school, teacher, and textbook operates with some idea of what is and is not good and valuable. Answering the question presumes a knowledge or belief of what is good for children and the future adults they will become. As a parent, you must ask the questions necessary to find a school that wants your children to become the same kind of future adults that you do.

Our world offers a vision of mankind that is infinitely malleable. Modern culture suggests that all of us can be whatever we choose, and we each have the ability to define what is real, true, and "authentic" for ourselves. The premise is that every person is free to become whatever they wish and that fulfillment and happiness are ultimately found in deciding for yourself who you will be and what is true for you. **We disagree.**

God is responsible for all of His creation. As a significant part of that creation, He made us wonderfully in His image and He defined what is good, true, and beautiful for us. This is our inheritance. To redefine it is to reject reality in exchange for a destructive fantasy. We are designed to live in the good reality of His creation; it brings Him glory and us ultimate joy.

I praise you,
for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your
works; my soul
knows it very well.
— Psalm 139:14

CHOOSING ONE OF THE MANY NARRATIVES

As a parent, you experience many competing narratives suggesting who your child is, what she needs, what will equip her for a bright future, and what will handicap her future chances. There are many voices telling you what you *must* do as a parent and what you should feel guilty about *not* doing—many of these are contradictory. *You* are the one who must choose which voice to follow. Be conscious that saying *"yes"* to one path will necessitate saying *"no"* to others. It is wise to think carefully and honestly about these choices.

"Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel."

– Socrates

For wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
— Proverbs 2:10

2.

SECTION TWO

CLASSICAL AND CHRISTIAN COMMITMENTS

Choosing a Geneva education for your child means understanding some foundational commitments that are intrinsic to a classical, Christian school. Many are different from those of other schools and from those of schools in which most parents today were educated. To evaluate Geneva as a potential school for your child, you need to understand these commitments and determine if you value them as we do.

THERE IS A "GOOD LIFE"

As a Christian school, we know that all humans are created in the image of God and designed by Him from creation for a fulfilling life of purpose—*a good life.* We also know that in our fallen world there are many things which masquerade as fulfilling but are ultimately empty, deceptive, and destructive. Our highest goal is to form our students into future adults who have the vision and the tools to know the difference and choose wisely. Our school is designed to shape students to value the good, the true, and the beautiful.

As a classical school, we know that the pursuit of a *good life* has inspired and challenged the greatest minds since the dawn of time. Knowledge is not sufficient for a good life. Knowledge must be clothed in virtue, humility, and put into action through personal discipline. Over time, repeated actions determine who we become as humans. As Aristotle said, *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit."*

The Greeks had a word for excellence: *arête*, which simply means that a thing is living up to its fullest potential, flourishing at what it was designed to do. Something could be rare, or even beautiful, but if it did not also do a good job at what it was designed to do, it was not fully excellent. The Romans applied this idea to humans and called it "virtue." John 1 tells us that we were designed by God to live in Him and for Him. Virtue then is in a human who is doing an excellent job at what he was designed by God to do. Over time, this Roman idea of "virtue" or honor was defined as having seven characteristics which were adopted by the early church:

Virtues:
Faith
Hope
Love
Prudence (wisdom)
Fortitude (courage)
Justice
Temperance (self-control)

At Geneva, we know that virtuous character is essential to a good life. Our culture, our studies, our athletics, our competitions, and our celebrations are structured for the pursuit of godly, honorable character.

CHRIST IS CENTRAL TO A "GOOD LIFE"

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.
— John 8:32

The Bible teaches us that our efforts, apart from Christ, accomplish nothing. We are all sinners, our children included. We are unable to save ourselves or accomplish anything good on our own—we need a savior. Accepting this core truth is the basis for finding freedom and God-given *arête.* He graciously shares with us that He alone is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Christ is at the center of all wisdom, truth, knowledge, goodness, and beauty. He *is* the purpose, and thus central to all we do at Geneva.

We teach *history* as the unfolding of God's purposes in the world. *Science* and *math* are the exploration of God's creation and reflect His character of abundant creativity and order. *Language* is connection between humans and with our relational Creator, who powerfully used words to literally speak all of creation into being. We pursue these academic subjects so that we can answer timeless questions about God's character, His creation, and our need for relationship with Him. Even the great literature we read reveals these repeating themes common to all humans: the desire to know

their nature as created beings, to know the nature of their creator, and to know the purpose for which they were created. As Augustine wrote in the 4th century, *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you."*

THE INHERITED WISDOM OF PRIOR GENERATIONS IS VALUABLE

While technology may change the pace and activities of modern life, we know that no "progress" changes the inherent nature of man. From creation and the fall in the Garden of Eden, and every generation since, the same fundamental questions have been asked of educated people: *what does it mean to be human* and *what does it mean to live a truly good life?*

Anyone who does not seriously engage with these two questions handicaps himself in the daily business of making choices: deciding what to value and how to pursue it. These choices determine if each of us will spend our days, years, and life on what is of true value and as a result, ultimately, whether we live a truly good life.

In engaging the fundamental questions, we prioritize Western Civilization's more than 2,000 years of accumulated wisdom. The great thinkers who have gone before us and built upon each other give us broad and deep perspective that we could not acquire on our own as modern men and women isolated in the 21st century. The pre-Christian pagans asked the same questions as we do today. In doing so, they give us insight into the immutability of man's nature and our deepest desires.

Christian thinkers from the Apostles to current day have considered the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers and used their writings to show how our ultimate human needs can only be met in Christ.

WORDS, THOUGHT AND COMMUNICATION ARE PRIORITIZED

As a classical school, we know the value of all of the liberal arts, including math and science, and we desire to equip our students with depth and excellence in each of them. In fact, Geneva students consistently perform above their peers in public and private schools on Advanced Placement math and science exams. However, because *language* is integral to ordered and disciplined thinking across *all* subjects, and communication is core to being human, we intentionally prioritize the mastery of language.

The focus of the *great conversation* that has taken place between writers and thinkers throughout history is a treasure trove that has withstood the test of time. We aim to equip our students with the ability to read, understand, think, write, and speak so they can engage in this ancient and ongoing conversation, and steward it for generations to come.

The Grammar School

Practically speaking, our prioritization of words means we expect our students to spend a significant amount of time developing their reading and language skills beyond simple independent reading. From early years, students acquire the tools necessary to read and understand difficult and unfamiliar texts. Fluency and reading speed are both essential to comprehension and are only built through time spent reading. Knowing this, we require students to read a minimum number of minutes daily throughout Grammar School.

Modern science demonstrates that our vocabulary and knowledge of *grammar* shape and even limit our ability to order our thoughts. In the early grades, our students develop strength in the foundations of our language, including formal grammar, vocabulary, ordered writing, and punctuation. This emphasis is why we call these grades our "Grammar School." We introduce students to the study of the ancient language of Latin in third grade, beginning the process which will culminate in the high school when students will read classics in their original language.

If you are new to classical education, you may ask "why Latin?" There are several advantages. For example, Latin is an inflected language. This means that word endings reveal how words function within a sentence. The process of deducing the function of a word within a sentence by the changes in the word endings teaches the reader's mind to think analytically. The study of Latin also increases students' ability to organize their own language and therefore their thoughts and to better understand the structures of our language and that of all romance languages.

Benefits of Latin

Deepen understanding of our language

Master the use of language

Uncover systems inherent in language

Form sensitivity to the nuances of language

Increase accuracy of translation in reading classical manuscripts

Build logic through decoding inflected language

Additionally, the skills for *understanding* are formed in Grammar School. Understanding requires a student to make connections between new facts and facts already known. Otherwise, unrelated information has no meaning. Our Grammar students build a bank of knowledge through a systematic study of history including acquisition of facts and timelines. Our students memorize and present great speeches, poetry, and scripture. The Grammar years prepare students for even greater learning in the middle school grades when they will be required to participate in an oratory contest and debate, and for high school when every senior must complete a senior thesis.

A Word About Technology: We expect our parents and students to refrain from modern technologies that erode ability to focus, read, and engage productively including smart phones, tablets, video games, and screens.

Logic School

Developmentally, in the middle grades students increase their ability to engage in abstract thought. Upon the foundation of strong reading habits, we prioritize disciplined thinking, language, and communication, both written and oral, and we introduce students to ordered thought. We build upon these foundations with instruction in logic and argument. This is why we call these grades the "Logic School." In sixth through eighth grade, we expect students to begin to exercise responsibility for their learning by engaging in text-focused class discussions, recognizing sound argument, and considering differing viewpoints. Students are introduced to original sources in history and continue their study of classic works of literature. Eighth grade culminates in two compet-

itive events: an oratory contest which requires each student to memorize and then present a classic poem, monologue, or speech; and a "switch-side" debate tournament in which everyone must argue both sides of a proposition multiple times.

Rhetoric School

By the high school grades, we expect students to be active participants in their education. Geneva's Rhetoric School is designed for the curious learner who is willing to bring himself fully to the conversation and the exploration of knowledge in pursuit of wisdom. Students are expected to participate in discussion-based engagement with classic texts and historical events. The Rhetoric School experience culminates with the senior thesis project. This year-long process requires students to select a topic of personal concern, complete research, create a written argument, then publicly present their position and defend it to a panel of three questioners.

Geneva high school students are required to continue their mastery of language in the study of Latin through their sophomore year with the option for AP Latin afterwards. They also have the option of adding Biblical Greek as well as Spanish, a modern language which shares Latin roots with English.

Our students simultaneously continue to build mastery in math and science while discovering the ordered make up of the Creator's world. Advanced studies are available in high school with the opportunity to pursue math through AP Calculus and AP Statistics, and science through AP choices in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics along with a large number of dual credit college level classes.

"Mathematics is the language in which God has written the universe."
— Galileo Galilei

We know that investment in consistent, ordered development of disciplined thought, paired with an increasing emphasis on the student's responsibility to engage and ask meaningful questions, develops a productive curiosity that pays lifelong dividends in his ability to tackle difficult work and master it without intimidation.

DEPTH OF PERSPECTIVE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BREADTH

Integration

One of the greatest disservices that modern education has done to wisdom and knowledge is to steadily fragment study into disconnected "subjects" and then to multiply those subjects so that academic knowledge increasingly involves many disparate things whose relationship to each other is unexplored.

These practices handicap the ability to learn in many ways. First, true advances in every field have historically come from the individual who can look at the known facts from a different perspective. If we continue to educate the next generation to only see each "discipline" within its own structure and vocabulary, we will rob our future scientists, mathematicians, technologists, writers, artists, politicians, and philosophers of perspective. The truly great leaps of the past were almost always made by those with broad liberal arts backgrounds making connections between disciplines others saw as unrelated. Just a small sample might include: Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglas, Marie Curie, Thomas Edison, the Wright Brothers, Henry Ford, Albert Einstein, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Steve Jobs.

Core to classical education is the commitment to integrate knowledge across all disciplines. What a child learns in history is connected to what she learns at the same time in literature, art history, geography, math, and science. Connections are emphasized through the curriculum and structured to encourage students to search for connections across all areas of knowledge.

Ironically, the modern attempt to build specialists is addressed in a recent June 2026 *Workday* online article which declared "An End to the Specialist Century" and noted that as AI absorbs more specialized jobs, *"the core job skills needed will change by over 40% in less than five years."* The article described the skill that will be needed to thrive as the ability *"to make connections others can't—or aren't brave enough—to see"* and then rejected the current relevance of the education of the last century: *"If the specialist was the mind the last century was built around, the polymath is the one this moment rewards. This isn't someone who knows a little about a lot. The root is the Greek* mathanein*: to learn. A polymath is someone who has pursued and developed knowledge across multiple disciplines in new or novel ways"* (https://www.workday.com/en-us/perspectives/ai/what-is-a-polymath-ai-era.html). This "new" wisdom has always been central to classical education.

Memory

Further hindering the development of students is the modern dependency on technology. Tech has increased our outsourcing of knowledge and memory to devices so that students personally own less factual information than they once did. Somewhere in the mid-20th century, memorization was devalued. The criticism "drill and kill" was popularized with no real exploration of the benefits of memory or the dangers of its loss.

In the 21st century, with the convenience of devices in our pockets and on our desktops that provide us with more facts at faster speeds, we find less need to know and remember things ourselves. The result is a continued erosion of an appreciation for memory and an actual deterioration of our own.

Modern educational research and brain science have reinforced our understanding that humans do not learn in a vacuum. We learn by relating new information to something that we already know. This is what educators mean by the term "scaffolding." Not only does a lack of scaffolding hamper our ability to learn new things, but it also hampers our ability to formulate good questions about new things. In other words, a student with a smaller body of information and facts is at a disadvantage not only in the mastery of something new but also in asking good questions or even becoming curious about something new. If the modern world will require each successive generation to learn more new things throughout their lifetime, they will need greater, not lesser stores of personal knowledge.

Classical education has always known that a fulfilling life is one of lifelong learning and requires a store of knowledge, facts, memorized aspirational words, and scripture. We take this responsibility seriously. Students memorize and recite dates, facts, poems, speeches, work math facts, and internalize large blocks of scripture so that they have them mentally accessible for developing deep understanding and articulations.

Perspective

Modern man has, either explicitly or implicitly, convinced himself that modern life, with all of its fast-moving accoutrements is fundamentally different

from the "primitive" life of those that have gone before, especially the ancients or even the pre-industrialists.

It is impossible, however, to have an accurate perspective on a single cultural moment in isolation. We can only understand the strengths and weaknesses of the present by relating them to the past. For example, to say in the abstract that the 2020s are politically polarized may be true, but this same fact may be equally or more true of every time period in our history. A student of American History might know that in the early years after our Revolutionary War victory, public voting locations were characterized by threats of physical violence and bribes of alcohol or even cash. The same student would recall to mind the U.S. political climate of the 1860s prior and during the Civil War, the violence of post-war Reconstruction and the later Civil Rights Movement, or the protests against the Vietnam War.

Perspective grows with similar comparisons of every disquieting element of our culture. For example, the disruptive technologies that are reshaping our workforce have not yet proven to have the breadth of impact on global social structure that the swings of global power from the invention of gunpowder in the 9th century, the printing press and widespread literacy of the 15th century, or the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th and early 20th did. The economic swings, bubbles, and crashes of our lifetime have been less impactful than the Great Depression of 1929, the Credit Crisis of 1772, the Dutch Tulip Collapse of 1637, or the Roman Financial Crisis at the time of Christ.

Modern man operates under the temptation to reject the accumulated and inherited wisdom from prior generations. Each new scientific, political, or philo-

sophical *"breakthrough"* has tempted the people of the time to see themselves and their world as fundamentally different and therefore disconnected from the people before. Yet in the hindsight of history, every *"new"* iteration has involved the same struggles and vulnerabilities as the old.

No matter how advanced our science, economies, and sensibilities evolve, we are still human and humans continue to behave in the ways they always have. As the philosopher George Santayana famously said in 1905, *"Those who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it."* Or as Solomon says in Ecclesiastes, *"There is nothing new under the sun."*

"In reading great literature, I become a thousand men and yet remain myself."
— C.S. Lewis

Without perspective, we cannot accurately evaluate our culture, the roots of its weaknesses, the benefits and risks of our responses, and the strengths we take for granted. Geneva is committed to building this perspective through the study of the classics so that our graduates are better equipped to engage the present.

EDUCATION MUST BE HUMAN AND RELATIONAL

Education is Modeled and Mentored

Education is relational. It can never be adequately transferred by inhuman screens or machines. The adults that stand in front of your child daily will shape her by their example and by discourse as much as by the content of their classes. Because content knowledge transfer is only a small part of the necessary work of human formation, education must be shared by humans who value relationship and serve as models in this educational fellowship. A student should be surrounded by adults who consider the future lifelong learner a child will become and model a joyful

curiosity for Christ as well as their subject matter. This is critical to helping a child develop a full vision of a good life.

We depend upon qualified and invested adults who live and engage in ways that capture the imagination of our students. We value the faculty and staff of Geneva. This is why a classical, Christian education is costly and increases in cost over time. Personnel expenses are approximately 80% of annual operating costs. We are committed to paying our faculty competitive salaries that attract and retain excellent teachers and keep up with the market over time.

Discipline is Education

For a parent it can be difficult to recognize the truth of Romans 3:28—that *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* But this means that, while there is much in every child that is good, developing honorable character is a lifetime discipline that requires the difficult, often uncomfortable work of admitting when one is wrong, accepting responsibility and consequences.

At Geneva, discipline is not primarily a tool for maintaining order and outward conformity but is rooted in discipleship. The goal is heart transformation, and it is done in love for the good of the child. The remedy that all of us need for our sin is a heart changed by Jesus Christ. Discipline aimed at the heart requires:

The outward behavior be addressed – for a heart to be changed, the child must first acknowledge her bad behavior.

Biblical confession and repentance – the condition of one's heart can often be gauged by contrition and a desire to repent.

Restoration of relationships – too often, issues are allowed to fester and go unresolved. At Geneva, we seek to live in fellowship with one another and discipleship-oriented discipline helps restore relationships.

We know that our students are not perfect. We are not surprised or shocked by their sin. We see each moment of discipline as an opportunity to shepherd a child's heart through the uncomfortable but critical process of growing in wisdom and self-control in Christ. The reality of living in community with other sinners, which we do in all communities, is that our sin does not just hurt us, it hurts others as well. Both the child who has done something wrong and the child impacted by another's wrong have important life lessons to learn. The steps of forgiving and participating generously in restoration are hard but necessary.

THE LONG-TERM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SHORT-TERM

One of the primary characteristics of being human is a drive to have our desires filled *(now!)* whether or not they are actually good for us. One of the challenges of parenting is to know when to frustrate a child's current desire for the sake of his long-term benefit. A child's resistance to eating the vegetable before getting dessert, or happily accepting an established bedtime, demonstrates the gap between what a child wants and what is actually good for him. If we are honest about our own lives, we must admit that this work is never finished.

"Education must not simply teach work— it must teach life."
— W.E.B Du Bois

As stated, a Geneva education is designed with the future adult in mind. We are aware that we must not handicap the development of a future adult by accommodating the current child. This does not mean that

the child should only work without play. It does mean, however, that the building of foundational skills, and the homework required to do so, take precedence over other activities that a child may find more to her taste; that fun and celebration are done in a way that orients a child towards the type of adult we all hope she becomes and not away; and that we are vigilant in excluding influences that undermine a student's progress towards the life of that future adult.

Overall, education should be a joyful experience of developing confidence in one's foundations and one's ability to tackle new challenges. It is not, however, always *fun*, as we all know from our own experiences of growth physically, spiritually, or academically.

Education is formation, and formation involves periodic discomfort. A child does not happen into a masterful playing of a Mozart sonata by only doing what he finds enjoyable nor does he become an accomplished athlete without submitting to training that is often tedious and painful. No one becomes "educated" without engaging with many things that at first may have seemed boring or intimidating. And as with the classical pianist or the star football quarterback, the discovery of the exhilaration of success and the resulting confidence become proportional to the sacrifices made.

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."

– Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Hard G
Soft G
The HOLY BIBLE
Early Reader's
Bible

"To be free, one must have the critical-thinking skills that inoculate against the alluring rhetoric that pervades contemporary society ..."
— Gary Edward Veith, Jr.

3.

SECTION THREE

WHAT PARENT PARTNERSHIP MEANS AT GENEVA

Parent involvement has been part of Geneva's different DNA from our founding. We join with parents. We don't replace them. The community of parents at Geneva is forged by common commitment to raise their children together towards a fulfilling life of service to Christ. This shared work shapes our school and shapes our parents as much as it shapes our students.

HAVE CONVICTION TO BE DIFFERENT

As a school there are many things that Geneva offers, or requires that are *not* what other schools do, and many things that other schools do that we do not. As a parent, it's important to understand these differences and to wrestle with whether they fit your goals for your child before choosing Geneva. This is a *different* path.

Over the course of your time here, you'll need to remind yourself, and your child, of the reasons for your choice. This is ongoing, not a one-time activity. For example, during these formative years, you will need to remember that reading classic works from prior centuries, and not modern works that your child may feel are more *"relatable,"* is a deliberate decision to equip her with depth of wisdom and experience that immersion in her own culture and time cannot.

"The truth is that the study of literature requires different skills than reading for pleasure. The inability to tackle, unaided, a list of Great Books and stick to the project doesn't demonstrate mental inadequacy —just a lack of preparation."
— Susan Wise Bauer

As parents, we all want our children to be successful. Our culture defines *"success"* in varied and changing ways such as popularity, admirable grades, athletic prowess, impressive college admissions, enviable career prospects, ample resources, prestige, and simple fame or power. Each definition carries explicit and implicit prerequisites that you, as a parent, will face pressure to provide:

Does your child love her sport? *"You will handicap her future prospects if she does not spend hours and days on elite teams and training."*

Does your child find math and technology intuitive and attractive? *"He needs early advanced opportunities in engineering, robotics, or computer science or he will never reach his entrepreneurial potential."*

Does your family have a historical relationship with a beloved university that you hope your children will attend? *"You must prioritize checking all the boxes of their high school resumés and preserve their GPAs or they will lose the opportunity to attend their 'dream school.'"*

The bad news is that the pressures you face as a parent contain a kernel of truth. *If you do not fill your child's hours with the plethora of activities designed for future advantage, your child may not have that advantage.*

However, the thing that remains unexamined is the impact of the tradeoff. The days, months, and years of childhood are not unlimited. A childhood of select athletic games that prevent regular church attendance embeds in the child the sense of the relative importance of worshiping God versus fulfilling one's own potential. An over-scheduled childhood conditions the future adult to equate busyness with meaning. High school years spent cultivating a resumé to please an admissions officer carry the displaced message that the credential, not the growth in wisdom, is the lifetime goal.

None of us intend to convey these messages to our children but we do, in large part because of our dreams and fears as parents. Our culture is intensively focused on external measures of success and uninterested in whether those measures bring long-term fulfillment. It attempts to entice all of us with counterfeit visions of happiness. Even when we know they are counterfeit, it is hard to resist. It is even harder to resist them on behalf of our children.

There is no parenting path that will not require you to make choices for your children. You, and they, cannot "have it all." Every choice opens an opportunity and

excludes another. A classical, Christian education will require you to make choices that look different from the choices other parents make. Geneva is a *different* school for a *different* life.

It is your opportunity, as a parent, to thoughtfully examine the cumulative impact of the choice to be made and select what is overall in the best interest of your child.

UNDERSTAND THE LIMITS OF A SCHOOL

Over the past 75 years, schools, especially public schools, have taken on roles beyond traditional education. They have responded to cultural needs and parent desires with increasing services that were more traditionally met by parents and/or the church. These include values laden instruction in areas like sexual education, providing mental health or counseling services, or political and cultural commentary on current events.

Geneva is a school. Like all schools, we have limited resources of time and money. The broader those resources are spread, the less effective they are in any one area. We intend to focus our resources on core education and resist being drawn into other areas outside our expertise and traditional areas of influence.

We are also a school that operates *in loco parentis* and are therefore required to protect parental authority by not intruding into areas of traditional parental choice and responsibility. This principle also requires us to disclose information regarding a student to her parents and conflicts with the obligation of confidentiality that a school counselor would be professionally required to provide to a student.

Christ is the center of all that we do. We seek to provide a full and rich Kinder-Prep through twelfth grade education through a cohesive and consistent biblical lens. In so doing, we build our students' foundational biblical knowledge, scripture memory, and understanding of church history.

Even so, our instruction is not sufficient to replace the role of the church in the life of a student, nor do we desire to do so. We do not provide the depth of theology, liturgical structure or church rhythms, ecclesiastical authority, pastoral advice, multi-generational relationships, youth groups, and youth Bible studies that are traditional roles of a church. We expect Geneva families to be active and committed members of a local church and to model this commitment with regular attendance and participation.

CULTIVATE A HOME THAT SUPPORTS WHAT YOUR CHILD LEARNS AT SCHOOL

You are your child's primary teacher. While you delegate that authority and responsibility to your child's school in the hours that he is there, you are still his teacher in the hours that he is not. You and your home teach him more about what is important and who he should desire to be than any school can. Alignment between what you teach and what the school teaches is critical for his healthy formation. What you say and what you do will tell him what to value.

A home that supports a Geneva education is a home where:

Parents model prioritizing Christ by joining a local church, attending weekly services, praying together as a family, regularly and openly discussing biblical wisdom as the basis for family decisions, and staying involved in Christian community.

Parents model a love of lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity, by reading books to and in front of children, discussing ideas and events, and engaging in the information and topics their children are studying.

Parents are comfortable being in charge and have the confidence to say "no" when a short-term desire or activity is not in the child's long-term best interest.

Parents protect their children from counterproductive and harmful influences including:

- Over-scheduled evenings and weekends
- Screens large and small; smartphones and social media apps (through high school)
- Access to any technology in private, away from the oversight of a parent

Parents give their children meaningful work and chores that contribute to the well-being of the family, modeling being a contributor to any community.

Parents prioritize education and schoolwork, providing appropriate study space and time, and being willing to limit a child's other activities to allow sufficient time for schoolwork when necessary.

Parents understand that life involves struggle. The struggles of childhood provide the opportunity to prepare a child for the struggles of adulthood. Every child will face difficulties and those difficulties will change over time. Some are of their own making and others are not. Academic, athletic and social challenges, discipline, and disappointments are all critical opportunities for a parent to lovingly guide a child towards dependence on God, confidence, and virtue. These are often the moments where short-term pain endured yields the biggest long-term gains.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNITY

True community is the byproduct of people who share common commitments. The Geneva community depends upon each parent understanding and valuing our classical, Christian commitments and working, with every other parent, to protect and support them. This requires the members of the Geneva community to do the following:

Speak the truth in love. In Ephesians 4:15, Paul encourages us to "grow up" in Christ by "speaking the truth in love." As members of a committed Christian community, when we are offended or concerned, we must obey Matthew 18:15-17 and do the hard, sometimes awkward thing, talk to the person who has offended us, and do so in love. And, as 1 Corinthians 13 instructs us, love "thinks no evil" and "rejoices in the truth." This requires us to listen with grace, humility, and an open mind, and fact-check before coming to conclusions.

Don't make things harder for other parents. As we all know from our own experiences, peer pressure is real. The parent in the neighborhood who allows teenagers to have a party at his home with alcohol or other illegal substances because *"it is better they do it here than somewhere else,"* has made it harder for every other parent of students in the peer group to prevent their child from engaging in the behavior. Similarly, the parent who gives her freshman student a smartphone, makes it harder on all the other parents who are trying to hold the line by making their children feel even more left out. The parents who maintain standards in their homes do the hard work that makes it easier for other *"like-hearted"* parents to do the same.

Help your child have the courage for hard things. One area of community where students often face difficult choices is when they are impacted by another child's negative act. Whether it is a single act, or a repeated one by one child or several, speaking up when someone is doing something wrong or harmful requires courage. It is impossible for any school's faculty and staff to be aware of everything that happens on campus. Too often, children and their parents avoid coming forward out of fear of making things worse. As John Stuart Mills said in 1867, *"Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing."* This is as true today as it was then. It is as true for playgrounds as it is for nations. We ask that you help your child do the hard and sometimes frightening thing and speak to the appropriate authority when something is wrong.

INVEST IN GENEVA EXCELLENCE

Geneva depends upon the investments of our families over and above the payment of tuition. For our school and community to function well in the present and into the future, we need families to invest in two ways:

Financial Support – We know that tuition is a sacrifice in every family's finances, and we take seriously our responsibility to use your tuition dollars wisely. However, tuition does not cover all the costs of educating your child. Each year in the fall, the Board of Trustees, working with the Head of School, sets tuition for the following year. We do so with the goal of covering the core operational costs of the school: salaries, health care and other benefits, supplies, utilities, etc. These are the things that are necessary to open the doors to our students each day.

We do not set tuition to cover other costs that are equally necessary to providing an excellent education. For example, tuition does not cover construction of facilities: the buildings, the grounds, and any improvements or additions to them. Refurbishing a playground, updating a playing field, or simply adding new outdoor gathering spaces are all costs that are not included in tuition and for which we depend upon your donations.

We also expect parents to recognize that their children benefit from the sacrifice of decades of parents who have gone before them. These families gave to provide the facilities that our current students now use. In gratitude, we ask all parents to contribute not only for the benefit of their child but for the many who will follow.

Volunteering Time – We expect every family to volunteer time at our school. This can be done in many ways. We need music and art docents, classroom readers, lunchroom volunteers, room moms, house moms, oratory coaches, and debate judges. We need parents to serve on senior thesis panels, and doctors and medical professionals to volunteer for our Rhetoric GenMed mentorship program. Our families gather for a Saturday before the start of school and work to beautify the campus for the incoming students, and all of our events and celebrations depend upon participation of parent volunteers before, during, and after. The investment of our parents' time not only makes it possible for us to enrich the day-to-day experience of our students, but it also *deepens our parents' understanding* of and commitment to the unique education that they have chosen for their children. The mutual sacrifice towards this common goal is one of the primary ways that our community is uniquely built and strengthened.

RESOURCES

Parenting
Raising Sturdy Kids, Keith McCurdy
The Anxious Generation, Jonathan Haidt
Feeding the Mouth that Bites You, Kenneth Wilgus

Classical Education
Wisdom and Eloquence for Parents, Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans
The Liberal Arts Tradition, Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain
Norms and Nobility, David Hicks

From your first inquiry, we have been praying that God will direct you as you contemplate the best next steps for your child. We are excited for your family as you explore classical, Christian education at Geneva and consider how it will uniquely challenge and equip your child. We hope that you will experience the beauty of families moving forward together with the intentional purpose of forming flourishing adults in Christ. We look forward to having you with us on this journey to a different life.

— Leslie Moeller

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