

EAGLES' CALL

SCOTTSDALE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

SPRING 2026





Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Matthew 7:13-14



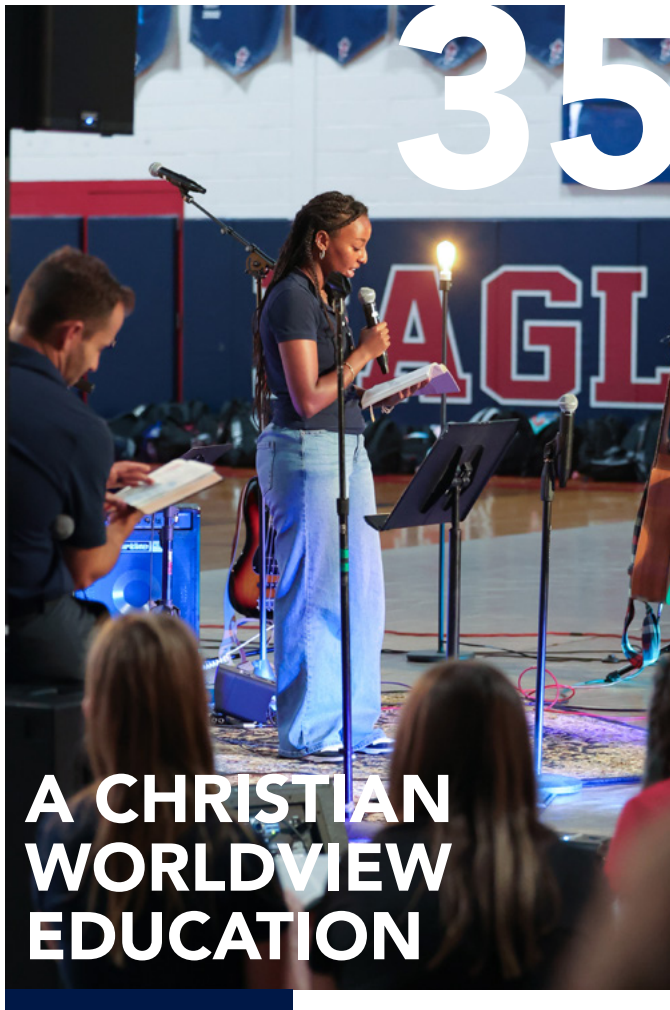


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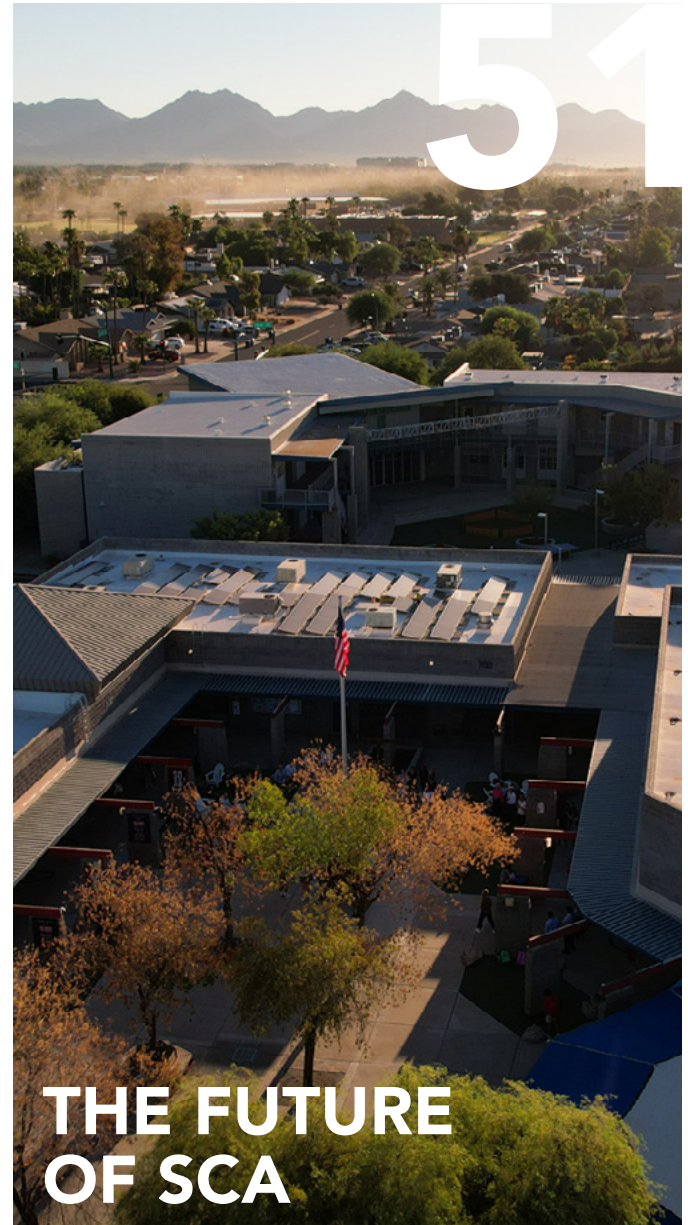


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A MESSAGE FROM DR. BRENT M. HODGES

Scottsdale Christian Academy Superintendent, Former SCA Parent, Former SCA Student

“ **A COMPLETE EDUCATION CANNOT BE FORMED BY TEACHING THE FACTS ABOUT GOD’S WORLD APART FROM THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD.** ”

Dear Scottsdale Christian Academy Community, welcome to this edition of the *Eagles’ Call Magazine*. We are grateful you have taken time to step into the story of our school; a story rooted in the belief that a complete education cannot be formed by teaching the facts about God’s world apart from the truth of God’s Word. At SCA, we exist to educate the whole child so that students are prepared not only for college and career, but for lives of faith, wisdom, and service.

This magazine is designed to reflect that purpose and to help you navigate the ways SCA is thoughtfully engaging in both the challenges and opportunities of our time. You will find the content organized into three main sections, each color coded to guide you through different aspects of ways we carry out our mission.

The first section, **Digital Discipleship**, explores how we faithfully engage in a rapidly changing technological world. Technology is a powerful tool, but it must be shaped by a Christian philosophy that places people before screens and wisdom before efficiency. In this section, you will read about our approach to artificial intelligence, technology use in the classroom, STEM and robotics, cybersecurity efforts to protect our community, parent resources for guiding technology at home, and our phone free campus policy. Our approach is simple yet countercultural: forming students who use technology responsibly rather than being used by it.

The second section, **A Christian Worldview Education**, focuses on the heart of who we are. These articles highlight the spiritual formation of our students, the way we compete biblically in athletics, and what truly distinguishes a Christian education at SCA. You will also learn how we walk alongside parents in their child’s faith formation, why we require a Senior Thesis as a pursuit of wisdom rather than mere information, and how we intentionally cultivate leadership opportunities for our students. This section reflects our conviction that faith is not an add-on to education but the foundation from which all learning flows.

The final section, **The Future of SCA**, looks ahead with gratitude and hope. Here we celebrate the successes God has already provided while reflecting on a season of growth, discernment, and renewal. You will be introduced to our master plan and the seven years of prayerful mission driven discernment that have shaped it. This section is both a testimony of God’s faithfulness and an invitation to join us as we step into the future He is preparing.

As you move through these pages, my hope is that you see a clear picture of who we are and why we do what we do. At SCA, we are committed to forming students who know the truth, love what is good, and are equipped to lead with courage and conviction in God’s world.

Thank you for being part of the SCA community and for partnering with us in this sacred work.

DIGITAL DISCIPLINESHIP

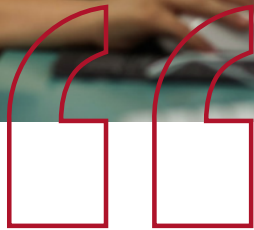
REDEEMING TECHNOLOGY'S

GRIP BY TODD STEVENSON
EDTECH COACH

Due to the increasing awareness of the impact of tech use on health, you are likely hearing about the concept of digital wellness at your job, on social media, in books, or even on health-related podcasts. According to the NIH (National Institutes of Health), "Digital wellness essentially prioritizes the level of self-control one can assert over their usage of digital devices and focuses on aligning them to achieve long-standing goals. Self-control as the focus of attaining digital well-being is seen to be more effective, and a means to achieve personal and healthy lifestyles."¹

The NIH also states, "It has been found that their (devices) design to lure attention has enabled an average person to tap and swipe their phones around 2600 times a day and has caused an individual to spend approximately three to five hours per day. It has been studied that there is a risk of addiction in university students all across the globe due to the constant use of gadgets that causes abandonment of work and engagement in unnecessary screen time. There has been an observational decline in their academic performance and energy due to lack of sleep which has further added to a stressful lifestyle...Due to the negative impact of technology on student health and lower levels of well-being, the need for a novel idea to combat this issue has become a dire need."

One-third of students' days are spent within the walls of the school they attend. The reality is that while this is a large portion of their time, the impact of technology use and exposure starts and ends in the home and time out of school. At Scottsdale Christian Academy, we strongly believe that to see the next generation engage in healthy tech-use, and in turn closeness with Christ, educators must work together with parents



FOR GOD GAVE US A SPIRIT

NOT OF FEAR BUT OF POWER

AND LOVE AND SELF-CONTROL

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

in intentional digital discipleship. This is a call to all of us, (the educator, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, godparent), to begin or continue to include digital wellness in everyday biblical discipleship. But, discipleship starts with modeling; it starts with being a living example of freedom from the bonds of addiction to screens.

We are embarking on an exciting chapter at SCA, declaring, "Slaves, no more!" over this next generation. We are excited to build partnerships with CESA (Council on Educational Standards and Accountability) and ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) schools, colleges, churches, ministries, and more to teach and train children into digital maturity. Professional development for faculty

and staff as well as Parent University sessions will have a focus in the coming years on digital discipleship and wellness. We will make intentional and bold moves to ensure our students are not just protected, but learning to thrive in their use of technology. We pray and dream there will be a movement of young men and women at SCA and beyond who are examples of what it looks like to master technology, not be mastered by it.

Below is a list of resources and tools that are meant to support you and your family on growing in digital discipleship and mastering tech use:

ONLINE RESOURCES

- [Joy of Missing Out \(JOMO\)](#)
- [Wait Til 8](#)
- [Protect Young Eyes](#)
- [The Social Institute](#)
- [AXIS](#)
- [International Society of Technology in Education Standards](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)
- [Code.org](#)
- [Tech-Wise - Barna Group](#)

BOOKS

- *The Tech-Wise Family* by Andy Crouch
- *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Heidt
- *Competing Spectacles* by Tony Reinke

SCA RESOURCES

- SCA's Digital Discipleship Framework (coming soon to SCA website)
- SCA AI Policy (coming 2026-2027 school year)
- SCA Acceptable Use Policy

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SLAVES

NO MORE

MASTERING EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN AN AGE OF BEING MASTERED

BY TODD STEVENSON
EDTECH COACH

When I started as the EdTech Coach for SCA in 2024, it was a career change that I never saw coming, nor did I see the greater “why” the Lord brought me here. I left the hustle and bustle of the Los Angeles animation industry and entered the private Christian education-space, a much tamer and more, “holy” environment (understatement to say the least). My soul is deeply grateful for the change, and I have found the school to be surprisingly similar to an animation studio. There is a great sense of family, community, and creativity in both, though cartoon noises at SCA are not being recorded (it’s just the overflow of child-like energy and joy).

As I have continued my EdTech journey I have consistently prayed for more clarity on the greater, deeper purpose of what the Lord wants to do at SCA. And, not just with me, but specifically with educational technology and how it impacts our faculty, staff, and students. It’s been a consistent personal plea and in 2025, I found myself waking up from a vivid dream that



seemed to be an unexpected answer to those prayers. There I was standing in a classroom with other teachers, declaring over the students, “Slaves, no more! Slaves, no more!” The children joined in, declaring in unison and with great zeal, “Slaves, no more!” But, what were we all being freed from as teachers and students?

“

**WHAT YOU CAN'T REST FROM,
YOU ARE SLAVES TO.**

TIM BIRDWELL, PHOENIX BIBLE CHURCH

We live in an explosive era of tech availability and advancement where the vocational, social, political, and educational sectors are changing at breakneck speed (see Figure 1)¹. Artificial Intelligence has taken the

world by storm, digital devices are more globally available than ever, fiat currency is being challenged by the crypto explosion, warfare is forever changed, cyberattacks have exponentially increased both in frequency and cost (especially in education, see Figure 2)², and studies continue to reveal the deep impact of our increased media and glowing screen use.

TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING SKILLS BY 2030

- 1 ● AI and big data
 - 2 ● Networks and cybersecurity
 - 3 ● Technology literacy
 - 4 ● Creative thinking
 - 5 ● Resilience, flexibility and agility
 - 6 ● Curiosity and lifelong learning
 - 7 ● Leadership and social influence
 - 8 ● Talent management
 - 9 ● Analytical thinking
 - 10 ● Environmental stewardship
- Cognitive Skills
 - Management Skills
 - Self-efficacy
 - Technology Skills
 - Working with others
 - Ethics

Note: The skills selected by surveyed organizations most rapidly in importance by 2030.

Figure 1. World Economic Forum, 2025.

The difficult task of parenting and teaching children has greatly increased in complexity. Some of the most common fears parents and educators have in this tech-saturated world are, "Will our children lose the ability to thinking critically, will they have jobs? How much screen time is too much? When should I let my children have a smartphone or tablet? Are my kids safe online?" Writing, math, fine arts, and creative skills, attention and focus, depression, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety, all of these are being challenged by our attachment to devices. The Apostle Peter said something that, though not talking directly about technology, certainly applies to this modern-day challenge:

“They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. – 2 Peter 2:1

What were we being freed from in my dream? The intentional dependence and addiction to screens and technology being pushed on all, especially our children.

SCHOOLS FACE MORE THAN DOUBLE THE GLOBAL AVERAGE OF WEEKLY CYBERATTACKS



Figure 2. DeepStrike LLC, 2025.

Enslavement to screens and devices (see figure 3)³ might feel like an extreme way to frame this, but I asked myself, "when was the last time I put my phone away for more than 24 hrs? Is TV the central focus of my living room or more of an afterthought? How often do I grab my phone just to go into the next room? Do I check my phone at stop lights? How often do I see children throwing fits (and this is a 'different' kind of fit) after having a tablet or phone taken from them?" And we do not need to get into details about the porn-pandemic and child trafficking that's exploded with the onset of the internet and smartphone age. The incredible documentary "The Social Dilemma" (2020, Netflix), chronicles in detail how tech companies are intentionally creating devices and apps to be addictive.

DO YOU SLEEP WITH YOUR PHONE NEXT TO YOU?

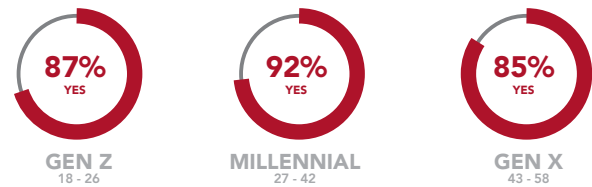


Figure 3. American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2023.



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I AM ETERNALLY
GRATEFUL THAT
DURING MY TIME
AT SCA, I LEARNED
HOW TO USE
TECHNOLOGY
AND NOT
BE USED BY IT.



THERE ARE ONLY TWO INDUSTRIES THAT CALL THEIR CUSTOMERS ‘USERS’: ILLEGAL DRUGS AND SOFTWARE.
– EDWARD TUFTE

According to former Facebook, Instagram, and other tech moguls, the goal of devices and apps our children use is addiction for profit. I think we can all honestly look at our own lives and culture and admit we have a bonafide tech-enslavement problem.

So, what do we do about it? How do we lead the next generation (and ourselves) into a free and Christ-like approach to technology that encourages the positive development of critical technical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual skills? Dream with me here, imagine a senior graduating from SCA saying, “I am eternally grateful that during my time at SCA, I learned how to use technology and not be used by it. I struggle less with anxiety, loneliness, and depression. I have improved focus and I do not need a smartphone or AI...but I know how to use them as productive tools and to advance the Kingdom of God. I find wonder and beauty in life outside of screens and my life is deeper and richer because of it.”

One of the first ways we started to tackle this was through the development of a Digital Discipleship framework and to begin to immediately deploy it for use. The framework builds a clear pathway to digital literacy, technical skills growth, and digital wellness from a biblical perspective. It is a K-12 guide that maps out the technical skills, teaching, and exposure for SCA students from kindergarten through 12th grade. We are aligning the content with SCA’s Core Values, the International Society of Technology in Education Standards, and the aiEDU Readiness Framework. We are combing through each grade to ensure age-appropriate skills grow year-to-year and best equip our students for successful application of technology in academic, personal, and spiritual pursuits. Included in the framework are lessons and curriculum that directly address the enslaving nature of devices and applications and how to live in this digital world victoriously, rather than become slaves to it.



As we move forward, we are hoping to become a leader in educational technology not just amongst Christian schools, but all private schools, and have three main areas of focus: artificial intelligence, technology use in the classroom, and safeguarding the school. ■

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Artificial Intelligence has been one of the most explosive developments in technology since the release of the first smartphone in 2007. A true game changer, sending shockwaves across the globe with an impact that has affected virtually all industries. President Donald J. Trump rolled out the A.I. Action Plan in July 2025¹, Phoenix is now becoming known as “the new Silicon Valley” where the largest microchip plant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) in the country and a \$33 billion AI data center² are being built. The global race to lead in this space has increased and is only tightening.

As the implementation and many benefits of this technology continue to roll out in commerce, transportation, production, education, and other

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

REDEEMING ALL THINGS FOR CHRIST

industries, many questions remain: How many jobs will be taken away? Are the environmental and energy impacts worth it? How can its results be trusted? Will it do more damage than good? Perhaps the most important debate is the impact of this technology on the minds of our children and their developing neurological, emotional, spiritual, and creative muscles.

It is reshaping the world our students are experiencing, and inevitably the classrooms where they are being formed. In a 2024 Impact Research survey (see Figure 1)³ of 4,007 teachers and students, results showed that around half of teachers and students are using AI chatbots at least once a week for school-related work. While use and benefits of technology increase, educators and students alike are fully aware of the pitfalls and traps of advanced machine learning. In

a survey conducted by A.I. in Education in 2025 (see Figure 2)⁴ results showed that the primary concern by faculty, staff, AND students is “the use of plagiarism and cheating” and secondary was the fear of “becoming overly dependent on these tools”.

Perhaps the most significant study on the impacts of AI use on the brain was done by MIT and revealed the compromising of neurological development with the use of AI:

“This study explores the neural and behavioral consequences of LLM-assisted (Large Language Model – i.e. ChatGPT) essay writing. Participants were divided into three groups: LLM, Search Engine (Google), and Brain-only (no tools). Each completed three sessions under the same condition...EEG revealed significant differences in brain connectivity: **Brain-only participants exhibited the strongest, most distributed networks; Search Engine users**

showed moderate engagement; and LLM users displayed the weakest connectivity. Cognitive activity scaled down in relation to external tool use...While LLMs offer immediate convenience, our findings highlight potential cognitive costs. Over four months, LLM users consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioral levels. These results raise concerns about the long-term educational implications of **LLM reliance and underscore the need for deeper inquiry into AI’s role in learning.”**⁵

If you’ve stayed with me this far you might be thinking, “Does SCA dislike advancements in technology?” This could not be further from the truth. However, as AI continues to advance at an extraordinary pace, we feel a responsibility to guide our teachers and students with wisdom, discernment and equipment. In this, we are asking the big question:

ABOUT HALF OF TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS ARE USING AI CHATBOTS AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK FOR WORK OR SCHOOL.

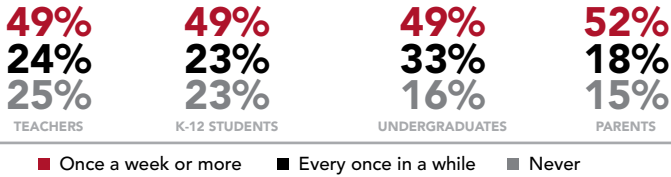


Figure 1. Rosenbaum, E. (2024) CNBC.

WHAT DOES A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO AI WITHIN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ENTAIL?

Our desire is not simply to react to technological change, but to form young people who can faithfully navigate it. As we have embarked on this journey, there have been four foundational tenants which have guided our path:

1 We affirm the goodness of technological advancements which foster care for the world, display God’s provision, and lead to human flourishing.

Technological advancement is woven into the fabric of God’s Creation. God formed humans to reflect His glory as we cultivate the world – finding and developing the hidden potential within Creation for the betterment of humanity and the protection of non-human creation. The task of image bearers is to partner with God to build a world which displays His goodness and provision in all areas of life. As Christian educators we strive to equip students to wield, progress, and celebrate technology for the glory of God.

2 We cautiously consider the effects artificial intelligence can have on the learning environment before integrating within the classroom.

Artificial intelligence is now widely accessible, and the full extent of its functionality is always increasing. It is vital we offer sufficient attention to examining the potential ways it could enhance, change, or impede learning environments.

3 We seek to provide clear boundaries, wisdom, and warning for students knowing the dangers artificial intelligence can pose to the academic process.

While technological expanse is initially intended for good, it can (and has) been abused for sinful gain. Part of discerning AI’s role in education includes defining and addressing the ways in which it contends with student learning and discovery. Some immediate threats of AI to the educational process include completing full writing assignments; solving math problems and providing the process of equation; creating original poetry and songs; compiling research and source citation; and more. All this undercuts sequence, creativity, and critical thinking which lie at the heart of learning. In response, teachers should provide directions—and repercussions—to students regarding proper and improper use of AI within their class.

4 We seek the redemptive value and utilization of artificial intelligence as we prepare students to impact the world for Christ.

The biblical story is a story of redemption. The world is not the way it should be. However, God is moving to reconcile Creation back to Himself

The number of educators who have experienced students cheating with AI has grown from 53% to 61%

Another statistically significant change: a rise in privacy challenges, from 24% to 27%

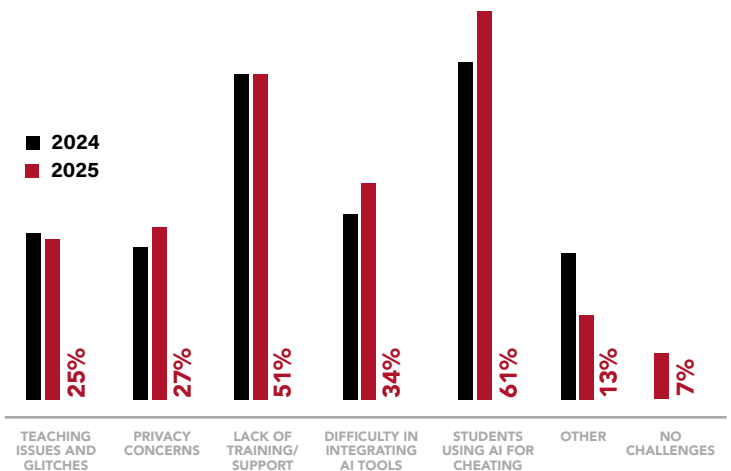


Figure 2. Carnegie Learning (2025) AI in education report.

SCOTTSDALE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

ENGAGES AI THOUGHTFULLY

GUIDING STUDENTS TOWARD

FREEDOM AND PRODUCTIVE USE



(Colossians 1:20). As followers of Christ, we are invited to display God’s rule and reign through engagement within all spheres of life—looking to point all things back to God. This calling involves pursuing ways new technologies can be redeemed to bare God’s love and provision for Creation. As Christian educators we not only seek the redemptive value of AI but also strive to teach and show students how to do so as well.

Artificial intelligence is here to stay. When confronted with such change, it is tempting either to resist it entirely or to embrace it without question. However, Scottsdale Christian Academy seeks a different posture: to not fully adopt nor reject AI, but rather to press into the discussion and tensions this technology imposes in education. Rather than rushing toward adoption or retreat, we aim to engage the conversation thoughtfully — learning how to use technology for the glory of God, naming and resisting its misuse, and guiding students to freedom and productive use. In doing so, we seek to form graduates who are not only

technologically capable, but spiritually grounded—ready to serve Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing world. ■

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KEEPING CRITICAL LITERACY
STRONG
AT SCA

DESPITE AI'S RISE

**BY CHRISTA DRENT, LEANNE DICK, CAROLYN
HOLEMON, PAUL CLARK, CHERIE BROWN,
AND ERICA HALLAM**

SCA MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
ENGLISH TEACHERS



**WHOEVER WALKS IN INTEGRITY WALKS SECURELY,
BUT WHOEVER TAKES CROOKED PATHS WILL BE FOUND OUT.
- PROVERBS 10:9**

SCA's teachers and staff, from elementary through high school, are wrestling with how to faithfully address AI's impact on critical skills. After gathering feedback from teachers and staff, we are collectively arriving at a shared philosophy: AI is a tool, not a substitute for thinking, and certainly not a substitute for the formation of a student's mind or character. From a biblical perspective, this fits directly into our call to develop discernment, integrity, and stewardship.

Students should understand that when used correctly, AI can enhance their learning by providing models of sophisticated writing, clarifying complex content, and providing more feedback. AI must never replace a student's own thinking, writing voice, or ethical responsibility. The question is not "Can students use AI?" but "Are students still learning to think, read, write, and wrestle with ideas for themselves?"

Middle and High School English teachers have seen both sides. Used well, AI can support brainstorming, organization, and revision. Used poorly, it short-circuits the very skills we are trying to build. Because of this, we have intentionally designed more in-class writing, scaffolded drafts, visible thinking, and discussion-based work so we can see students' actual reasoning and growth. These handwritten drafts not only help the students in their writing process, but they help us see the true writing level of each student without any elevation from AI.

What encourages us is that across



**EVEN THOUGH
TECHNOLOGY IS
ADVANCING, WE
STILL NEED TO
TEACH STUDENTS
HOW TO USE
THEIR VOICE AND
COMMUNICATE
EFFECTIVELY...
ON PAPER.**

CAROLYN HOLEMON
SCA MS/HS ENGLISH TEACHER

**WHEN IT COMES TO
AI IN ELEMENTARY,
IT'S MORE ABOUT
INTENTIONAL
EXPOSURE AND
TRAINING, RATHER
THAN USAGE.**

KRISTEN McCLUE
SCA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

campus, even though our methods look slightly different by grade level, the philosophy is remarkably unified: we are protecting the process. We are not trying to compete with technology; we are trying to form thinkers, writers, and readers who can engage the world wisely and ethically.

Our goal is not merely academic performance but character formation. AI forces us to be clearer than ever about that mission. We want students who can use tools responsibly without becoming dependent on them—students who understand that wisdom, effort, and original thought are part of honoring God with their minds.

We emphasize transparency, honesty, and wisdom in terms of how students are using AI on assignments. We have frequent class and individual discussions about how AI is being used for writing assignments for class. We talk often about the dangers of allowing someone or something, in this case AI, to think for us as Christ followers.

We don't see AI as a temporary challenge, but as a permanent shift that requires intentional, value-driven teaching. We are not reacting in fear or embracing AI uncritically; we are teaching students how to live faithfully, thoughtfully, and skillfully in a world where this technology will always exist. Our desire is that students will learn to engage with AI in a way that honors God, respects academic integrity, and develops the critical thinking skills required to navigate our constantly changing world. ■

GENERATIVE AI IN MS HISTORY

BY KIM HARTMANN

SCA MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHER

Artificial Intelligence tools can support students' creativity instead of simply replacing it. Used as a partner in learning, AI can help students improve projects while teachers focus on guidance, discernment, and evaluation. Students have the opportunity to learn the skills of asking better questions, evaluating sources, and making wise decisions about when and how to use technology. Teachers also have a critical role to play in modeling discernment and helping students weigh AI-generated ideas.

One aspect of discernment is helping students recognize bias in AI. Whenever students engage with chatbots or generative AI tools, they should practice asking: Whose perspective is included in this? Whose voices are missing? Are the responses making assumptions or stereotyping people? Activities that allow students to compare multiple answers from AI, verify claims with primary sources, and evaluate where AI likely sourced information can help students build critical-thinking habits. Teachers can help by modeling how to ask these questions, guiding students in fact-checking with sources, and encouraging students to revise AI-generated information to ensure balance and accuracy before using it in their work.

One way I have used AI in the classroom with seventh-grade students is by conducting historical interviews. Using a chatbot in *MagicSchool.ai*, students chose from a list of 40 different historical figures from the American Revolution. Students must imagine they are interviewing that figure. They tell the chatbot,

"ANSWER MY QUESTIONS AS IF YOU ARE

FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR."

They create five questions, type them into the chatbot, and then summarize the chatbot's responses as if it was that historical figure. Students are using creativity and summarization skills. The following school day, they shared at least one interesting fact with their tablemates that they learned from this assignment. ■





TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:

While tackling the world of AI is an important and timely matter, we cannot neglect the use of all classroom “technology” and its impact on learning. Traditionally seen as items such as pen, paper, whiteboard, or sharpener, we define classroom technology as “any tool that aids in instruction and learning”. While physical tools appear to be under threat with the explosion of device use at schools around the world, we believe they will have an increasingly important role. Our philosophy is to use tools that enhance instructional learning and spiritual growth, whether digital or physical. If the tool does not provide a clear path to deep learning, teachers are encouraged to use an alternate method.

According to the global education consulting group McKinsey & Company, “The use of tech must start with learning goals, and software selection must be based on and integrated with the curriculum. Teachers need

OR

DISTRACTION
DISTRACTION
DISTRACTION
DISTRACTION

TOOL

BY TODD STEVENSON
EDTECH COACH

support to adapt lesson plans to optimize the use of technology, and teachers should be using technology themselves or in partnership with students, rather than leaving students alone with devices.”¹ As students and parents wrestle with the distraction of screens at home and attempt to balance use, establishing a rich and targeted educational environment is critical. Students at SCA are not only using technology to learn, but learning what it looks like to use technology as a tool rather than as a numbing distraction. ■

SOURCE

1. Bryant, J., Child, F., Dorn, E., & Hall, S. (2020, June 12). *New global data reveal education technology's impact on learning*. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/new-global-data-reveal-education-technologys-impact-on-learning>

DEVICES & GAMIFICATION IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

BY TODD STEVENSON
EDTECH COACH

WITH

CHRISTEN BUMAN
KAYLA O'BIER
ASHLEY ALLEN
4TH GRADE TEACHERS

As children gain more access to and familiarity with modern technology, educators are challenged to balance lesson plans with traditional activities (pen and paper) and engaging technology options. Not only is differentiation a challenge but keeping kids moving and active physically will always be critical to growth. Edtech and school leaders have an ongoing partnership to tackle this challenge and have found success in providing teachers with shared classroom devices, apps and tools with educational gamification, and interactive smartboards.

In order to provide ease of access for individual or group work, each elementary classroom has tablets. This is not to increase tablet time at school, but to create an educational environment with intentional use of these tools for learning. Access to these devices provides the ability for reading, math, writing, and gamification tools that are proven to improve learning outcomes.

The Fourth Grade team takes full advantage of the new shared device cart, providing research, IXL, and full-class gamified learning sessions. Edtech coaches

LEARNING IMPROVEMENT WITH READING AND PLAY IN DIGITAL EDUCATION

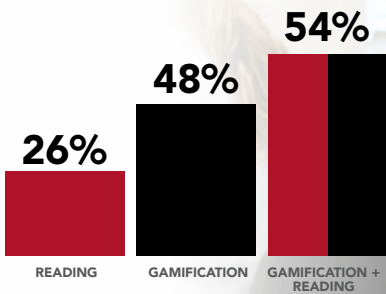


Figure 1. Bai et al., 2020.



the teachers and students on how to best use the devices and apps while teachers provide targeted instruction on specific projects. Students use these devices for research on the Christian Heroes project, state symbols, and their Great State projects. Access to these devices in class allows students to learn how to research and find reputable sources and introduces them to collaborative group projects.

Gamified learning with a competitive component has been a huge hit for elementary students. The classroom comes to life as students learn essential skills and have a blast while doing it. This method has proven learning outcomes and holds additional opportunity with educational technology at SCA (see Figure 1)¹.

There are many examples of intentional gamification in use in elementary classes at SCA. Gimkit is used to run interactive, game-based quizzes with virtual rewards for studying vocabulary words for quizzes. Wewillwrite is used to encourage creativity in writing by providing opportunities for short bursts of writing and creative challenges that make writing fun and interesting for the students. 99Math is used to help students practice math facts and math concepts to work as a class to earn points getting math problems correct. IXL is used to individualize math and reading learning for students based on concepts being studied in class and is tied to individual standardized testing scores. It is an incredibly effective tool that has proven outcomes in immediate and long-term growth. (See additional information in "IXL at Scottsdale Christian Academy: Supporting Student Growth Through

Purposeful Practice" by Janka McArthur.)

Interactive touchscreen displays are devices intended to increase class engagement and movement and are used in various classrooms and grade levels. These large touchscreens provide abundant opportunities for students to touch, move, write, draw, manipulate content, and solve problems in front of the classroom. While traditional whiteboards can handle some of these needs, an interactive display provides additional ways to move kids from passive listeners to active participants. Differentiated lesson plans and various learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) can all be effectively implemented with these touchscreen displays, where multiple students can interact at once and teachers can quickly move between screens and platforms.

These are just a few of the many examples of how new, engaging, educational technology can additionally impact learning & retention for our students. We are excited for what the future holds and will continue to approach device use in the classroom from a perspective of victory and freedom in Christ. ■

SOURCE

1. Bai, S., Hew, K. F., & Huang, B. (2020). Does gamification improve student learning outcome? Evidence from a meta-analysis and synthesis of qualitative data in educational contexts. *Educational Research Review*, 30, Article 100322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100322>

THE
K-12
INNOVATION
AND CREATION
HUB

DEVELOPING CREATORS, LEADERS, AND KINGDOM-MINDED INNOVATORS

BY BRIAN MARTIN
MS/HS HUB TEACHER

JEFF HEROLD
ELEMENTARY HUB TEACHER

WITH HELP FROM CHATGPT

At Scottsdale Christian Academy, we believe students are called to be creators, not only consumers. They are bold thinkers who use their God-given talents to shape the world around them. The SCA Innovation and Creation Hub (the "Hub") is where that vision comes to life. As the center of STEM excellence on our campus, the Hub is expanding opportunities for students through robust technology programming, industry partnerships, and hands-on innovation that prepares them for a rapidly changing world.

There has never been a more important or exciting time for students to engage with technology in meaningful, real-world ways. Every day, SCA students build skills that will influence their futures and the future of the communities they will one day lead.

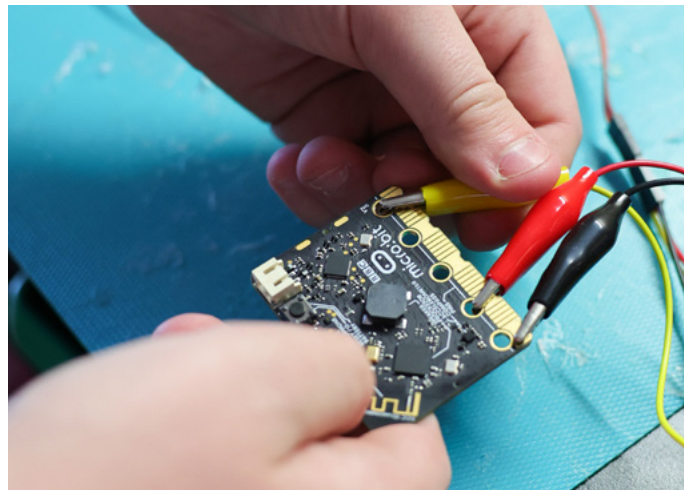
A MAJOR MILESTONE: LAUNCHING SCA'S FIRST VARSITY ROBOTICS TEAM

This year, SCA proudly launched its Varsity FIRST® Robotics Competition (FRC) program, marking a significant step forward in our commitment to STEM excellence. Students not only compete at the highest level of robotics in the nation, but they also earn a Varsity Letter, which recognizes the advanced engineering, coding, problem-solving, and teamwork required to succeed in this elite program.

FIRST® Robotics is known as "the sport where every student can go pro." Beyond the thrill of competition, students gain:

- Hands-on experience in engineering, fabrication, and computer science
- Leadership and project management skills
- Access to more than 100 million dollars in FIRST® scholarships
- Impressive portfolios recognized by the top 100 universities nationwide

In 2025, we celebrated our first Dean's List Finalist, Ingrid Gardner, one of only three students in the state of Arizona, who advanced to the World Championships.



INNOVATION BEGINS EARLY: A K-12 VISION FOR STEM

The Hub provides an inspiring, cutting-edge environment for students starting in kindergarten where the goal is to turn imagination into impact. While our middle and high school students take part in Project Lead the Way (PLTW): Pathways in Engineering, Biomedical Science, and Computer Science, our youngest learners benefit from thoughtfully designed foundational STEM experiences, including:

- Sphero Robotics for early block-coding, problem-solving, and creative design
- AI-based learning tools that introduce emerging technologies in safe, age-appropriate ways
- Hands-on STEM challenges that spark curiosity, teamwork, and perseverance

POWERED BY PARTNERSHIPS: CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS

The HUB is committed to developing meaningful partnerships with professionals in engineering, software development, biomedical science, and other rapidly growing fields. Through mentorships, internships, workshops, and real-world collaborative projects, students gain invaluable exposure to cutting-edge technologies and career opportunities. These relationships enrich student learning and demonstrate to our community that SCA is preparing young people to be equipped, adaptable, Christ-centered leaders in the workforce of tomorrow.

While our programs equip students with 21st-century skills, our mission remains constant. We develop Christian leaders who innovate with integrity, purpose, and biblical truth. We are committed to expanding STEM opportunities, strengthening strategic partnerships, and fostering a culture where students confidently pursue excellence for God's glory.



A special **THANK YOU** to the Joseph and Marion Wesley Family Foundation for their support in initially building the Hub, and their continued support of our programs.

GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in partnering with the SCA Innovation and Creation Hub, either through support, mentorship, or volunteering, we would love to connect with you.

Contact:

Mr. Brian Martin (MS/HS)
bmartin@scamail.org

Mr. Jeff Herold (Elementary)
jherold@scamail.org

Together, we can empower the next generation of creators, problem-solvers, and world-changing Christian leaders. ■

SOURCES

1. Scottsdale Christian Academy Varsity FIRST® Robotics Competition (FRC). (n.d.). *Homepage*. <https://sites.google.com/view/frcteamlove10905/home>
2. Project Lead The Way. (n.d.). *Project Lead The Way*. <https://www.pltw.org/>

WE DEVELOP CHRISTIAN LEADERS WHO INNOVATE

WITH INTEGRITY, PURPOSE, AND BIBLICAL TRUTH.



IXL

AT SCOTTSDALE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY: SUPPORTING STUDENT GROWTH THROUGH PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE

BY JANKA MCARTHUR

DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

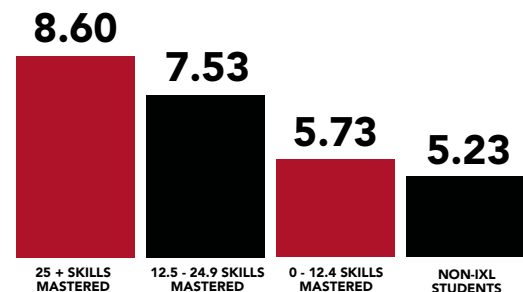
At Scottsdale Christian Academy, we consistently strive to help each student grow as a confident learner and faithful steward of their unique God-given gifts. Our teachers encourage student engagement and content growth in their classrooms as well as providing purposeful practice at home. One way we support continued growth (K-8) is through the thoughtful use of IXL (I Excel) as a supplemental learning tool.

In a sea of apps, platforms and resources, IXL was intentionally chosen as a resource to support our students in their development of ELA (English Language Arts) and Math concepts. IXL offers practice skills which align directly with classroom instruction, Arizona Academic Standards, and specific learning needs identified through Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth assessments. Teachers assign these skills to provide targeted practice that reinforces essential concepts and supports individual student growth at each student's unique learning level. IXL does this through an adaptive algorithm with built-in practice and reteaching opportunities to guide students in their learning.



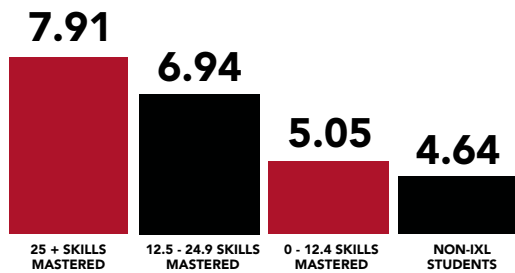
DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (IXL) THAT PROVIDE ADAPTIVE FEEDBACK AND SCAFFOLDED HINTS CAN FACILITATE PRODUCTIVE STRUGGLE BY ALLOWING STUDENTS TIME TO GRAPPLE WITH TASKS WHILE OFFERING SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED. ¹

IXL EFFECT: MATH SKILLS MASTERED BY STUDENTS



Source: IXL Learning, n.d.

IXL EFFECT: READING SKILLS MASTERED BY STUDENTS



Source: IXL Learning, n.d.

...THE IXL EFFECT FOR STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 25 SKILLS MASTERED (ABOUT ONE TO TWO SKILLS PER WEEK) WAS ABOUT THREE TIMES GREATER THAN THE IXL EFFECT FOR STUDENTS WITH LESS THAN 12.5 SKILLS MASTERED (ABOUT ONE SKILL PER WEEK). ONE ADDITIONAL SKILL MASTERED PER WEEK WAS ASSOCIATED WITH AN EXPECTED HALF POINT INCREASE ON MAP RIT SCORES IN BOTH MATH AND READING. ²

School-aged children are used to a fast-paced world with answers at their fingertips or only a voice prompt away. Productive struggle is important in neuro development as it deepens understanding and promotes retention. While the younger generation is often eager to rush toward quick answers, IXL provides the best of both worlds. By incorporating games, videos, micro-lessons, and immediate feedback it draws in the learner. However, unlike other apps and learning games, IXL encourages learners to slow down, think critically, and truly process the skills they are learning.

Teachers commonly set clear mastery expectations through IXL's Smart Score (often 80% or higher) to ensure skills are well understood. As students build accuracy and confidence, they develop stronger problem-solving skills and greater ownership of their learning.



FINDINGS FROM STUDIES ACROSS 70,000 SCHOOLS IN 45 STATES SHOW THAT STUDENTS USING IXL OUTPERFORM STUDENTS USING ANY OTHER LEARNING PLATFORM. THE SECRET LIES IN THE SMARTSCORE, AN ADVANCED ALGORITHM AND CORE FEATURE UNIQUE TO IXL, THAT MEASURES STUDENTS' TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF A CONCEPT WHILE REINFORCING LEARNING IN REAL TIME. ³



SCA has always been a close community, one in which we value our partnership with families. Families can come alongside teachers with IXL at home, encouraging consistent time dedicated to skills practice, helping students manage time wisely, and celebrating their progress over time. By partnering together with students, teachers, and families, we are creating a strong foundation for lifelong learning. ■

SOURCES

1. Walkington, C., & Bernacki, M. (2020). Personalization of instruction: Design dimensions and implications for cognition. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 26(2), 227-243. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000248>
2. IXL Learning. (n.d.). *Research: IXL evidence and studies*. <https://www.ixl.com/membership/teachers/research>
3. IXL Learning. (2023, December 5). *IXL usage leads to real learning gains*. IXL Blog. <https://blog.ixl.com/2023/12/05/ixl-usage-leads-to-real-learning-gains/>

THE UNSEEN WAR: SAFEGUARDING SCA

BY CRAIG CUMMINGS

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

CYBERSECURITY IN MOTION: HOW SCA STAYS AHEAD OF MODERN THREATS

In today's digital landscape, defending against cyberattacks requires more than a strong firewall or a good antivirus program. Threats evolve daily, becoming faster, smarter, and increasingly unpredictable (see Figure 1). For SCA, maintaining a secure environment for students, staff, and faculty means building a cybersecurity posture that is equally dynamic. Rather than relying on a single tool or strategy, SCA has embraced an adaptive, multi-layered security model inspired by the NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) Cybersecurity Framework, one of the industry's gold standards. By organizing its security approach around NIST's five pillars—Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, and Recover—SCA has created a system designed to withstand the complexities of today's threat landscape.

CYBERATTACKS ON SCHOOLS HAVE SURGED THROUGHOUT 2025, WITH NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN

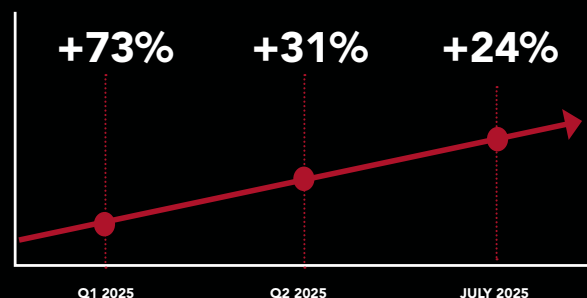


Figure 1: DeepStrike LLC, 2025

IDENTIFYING WHAT MATTERS MOST

Before any organization can protect itself, it must first understand what it needs to defend. For SCA, that means creating visibility into every device, user, and system across the network.

SCA's IT team leverages Cisco Meraki and Microsoft Intune to maintain a clear, real-time inventory of managed assets—from staff devices to student Chromebooks to cloud-based tools such as email. These platforms allow administrators to enforce policies and maintain governance across the school's digital ecosystem.

PROTECTING THE DIGITAL CAMPUS

Once the critical assets are identified, the next priority is keeping them safe.

To shield devices from malware, ransomware, and other malicious software, SCA deploys the ESET® Security Management Suite on its endpoints. This is complemented by robust password policies and multi-factor authentication (MFA) for faculty and staff—adding an essential layer of security that stops unauthorized access even when a password is compromised.

DETECTING THE THREATS OTHERS MISS

Even the strongest defenses are not always capable of stopping everything—especially in an age when cybercriminals often use deception, social engineering, or subtle network intrusions to slip past security tools.

MORE THAN TECHNOLOGY: THE HUMAN ELEMENT

While sophisticated tools are vital, cybersecurity ultimately rests on three pillars: People, Process, and Technology. If any one of these fails, the entire system becomes vulnerable.

Recognizing this, SCA invests heavily in staff awareness and training through KnowBe4. Regular simulated phishing emails help educate users on how to recognize malicious attempts and avoid becoming the “weak link” in the security chain.

In the spring of 2026, we will begin including high school students in this training.

A SECURITY STRATEGY THAT EVOLVES WITH THE THREATS

Cybersecurity is never a finished product—it is a journey that requires constant refinement. By combining best-in-class tools, a respected national framework, and ongoing user education, SCA has built a security posture designed not just for today's threats, but for whatever tomorrow brings. ■

SOURCE

1. DeepStrike LLC. (2025). *Data breaches in education 2025: Trends, costs & defense*. <https://deepstrike.io/blog/data-breaches-education-2025>



MORE THAN SCREENED

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT OF A PHONE FREE CAMPUS

BY CHUCK WATKINS
PATHWAYS | SOAR | STUGO TEACHER



After twenty years of teaching and eleven in Christian education, I have learned that shaping hearts matters just as much as shaping minds. SCA's smart phone policy decision using Yondr pouches has allowed both to happen organically at the same time.

When the no phone policy with Yondr pouches was first introduced for the 2024-25 school year, there was hesitation from students, parents, teachers, and even me. Phones had become such a normal part of daily life that removing them felt countercultural. Yet Scripture often calls us to live counter to the world, and that is exactly what has happened within our classrooms and hallways. I have been impressed to see the ability of our kids to adapt to such a drastic change.

What we did not fully anticipate was how quickly the culture of campus would change once the constant buzzing, chiming, and vibrating disappeared. When phones are present, students are inundated with a steady stream of notifications, texts, alerts, and outside pressures that fracture attention and increase anxiety. When those distractions were removed, something remarkable happened: students rediscovered focus. They rediscovered conversation. They rediscovered one another.

Students are now learning what it means to be fully present. They listen more attentively not only to instruction but to one another. Hallways feel different. Lunch tables feel different. Classrooms feel different. The absence of phones has created space for real human connection and deeper learning to take root.

I recently took a field trip with students to meet with public school student leaders for a spirit conference. It was amazing to watch our students, who actually did have their phones with them but were accustomed to not using them during the day, not be on their phones while with others. I was blown away and took notice as did a teacher from another school. Our kids were actively engaged in conversations and what was being presented while others were scrolling on their phones. That moment captured more than good behavior. It revealed a formation taking place. Our students were practicing presence.

STUDENTS THEMSELVES HAVE NOTICED THE CHANGE.

I had a discussion with a senior just last week when he remarked that he thought the school would only do this for maybe a month or two when it was first promoted. He noticed quickly how seriously the school took the move and noticed how different the campus was. He mentioned how he did not like it at first but now as a senior he is only “bummed” he does not have many pictures from his last few school years. However, he still feels it was a great move by the school. “It completely changed the fabric of our school,” he said.



I PERSONALLY LOVE
THE CELL PHONE BAN!

I feel like I am able to connect more with my peers, and I am not tempted to check my phone to draw away from conversations. Although I miss having funny school vlogs to look back on, I feel more present with my friends. I also feel more motivated to do my schoolwork at school. I don't even notice that I do not have my phone anymore, and that in a way feels very liberating.”

– Female senior student

FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON CAMPUS, THE DIFFERENCE IS EXTREME.

Teachers report that it is so much easier to teach and be relational. Students are learning again how to sustain attention, wrestle with ideas, and engage deeply with Scripture. This kind of engagement is a muscle that has not been used in a while. Now it is strengthening.

The students are engaging with each other so much more that I don't ever see them sitting alone. It is a blessing to see them talking to each other and spending time together!

– Susan Garcia, Teacher



STUDENTS HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE UNPLUGGED

Independence matters. Learning how to get through a school day on their own is part of growing up. It builds resilience, patience, and confidence. While students can still be reached through appropriate school channels when truly necessary, the daily rhythm of learning is no longer interrupted by constant outside communication.

Many students initially tried to find workarounds but quickly realized that sneaking a phone offered no real benefit when no one else had theirs either. Over time resistance gave way to relief.



“

As a leader in Spiritual Life, I talk in front of everybody and in the back of my mind I don't have to be anxious about someone taking a picture or recording me. I can go up there confidently and talk to my friends and peers knowing that if I mess up it won't be posted on social media.

- Abraham Ortega

THE GIFT OF BEING PRESENT

In a world that constantly tells young people to compare, perform, and respond instantly, school has become a place of rest. A place to simply be present. Research consistently shows that excessive phone access is linked to increased anxiety, depression, distractibility, and diminished learning, especially during adolescence. What we are seeing at SCA aligns with that research. When phones are removed, students are happier, more socially engaged, and more confident in who they are. One of my hopes is that by removing phones it will create a place for spiritual growth. When distractions fade, students are better able to hear God's voice, reflect on truth, and engage in prayer and worship with sincerity.

Community or fellowship has been better because we don't have a screen in the way. It's really helped me to connect on a deeper level with friends and other students without having the constant distraction. It's especially helped reduced the negativity in my thoughtlife that can come with constantly being on social media.

- Female sophomore student

“



I am convinced that sometimes the most faithful thing we can do is help students unplug so they can reconnect with God, with others, and with who they were created to be. Life is about real relationships, and a simple cell phone pouch has brought greater depth of connection on our campus.

What began as a policy has become a posture. A posture that says we care deeply about our students' hearts, minds, and souls. At SCA we believe you cannot offer a complete education by teaching only the facts of God's world, it must be through the truth of God's Word. Becoming more seen than screened is one small but powerful way we are living that mission every day. ■

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

F O R Y O U N G H E A R T S

BY NICK BARKER

SPIRITUAL LIFE DIRECTOR

What if education, and specifically Christian education, was not simply about imparting the “right” information? In his book *Desiring the Kingdom*, James K. A. Smith suggests that as image bearers we are not merely thinking beings, but desiring ones shaped and guided by our loves. If this is true, then it is no surprise that the starting point of Jesus’ discipleship in the Gospel of John is a question of desire. He asks the first disciples, and He asks us today, “What do you want?” (John 1:38).

At Scottsdale Christian Academy, our desire has remained consistent since our founding in 1968: to maximize the God-given potential of each student as we prepare them to live lives of distinction and impact the world for Christ.

As Christian educators, we are realizing more and more that the shaping and nourishing of desires is done through cultivating practices and rhythms. Therefore, a

Christian education is one that guides students in the formation not only of beliefs, but of practices as well. This raises important questions for us at SCA:

What does it look like to foster spiritual practices that cultivate our students’ affections for Christ while preparing them for a life of faithful discipleship?

How is this done in a world shaped by competing stories and rhythms that often pull hearts in different directions?

In response, we have been intentionally seeking to cultivate three biblical practices among our students and faculty. These practices described below are designed to meet students where they are in their walk with Christ, equip them for the world they are entering, and thoughtfully engage the challenges of our cultural moment.



THE PRACTICE OF FELLOWSHIP IN A WORLD OF ISOLATION

Formation happens in community. At SCA, we intentionally create spaces for students to learn from and encourage one another across grade levels—to be known, seen, and loved. Middle school and high school students gather weekly in Small Groups. These include the High School Spiritual Life Team leading middle school groups and fostering meaningful mentorship. Bible Buddies pair older and younger elementary school students to read Scripture together and pray together. Each year as we gear up for high school Missions Week our Missions Buddies give space for our high school students to share about their trips with elementary students, and for elementary students to pray and encourage the high school students. These relationships reflect and help nourish the intergenerational nature of the body of Christ.

THE PRACTICE OF REST IN A WORLD OF WEARISOME TOIL

Another formative rhythm we seek to reclaim is rest. In a fast-paced, achievement-driven culture, slowing down is both countercultural and deeply biblical. Each quarter we celebrate Feast Chapel. At its simplest, it is a school-wide potluck. At its fullest, it is a time of celebration,

gratitude, and rest unto the Lord—a reminder that our lives are sustained by God’s grace, not constant striving. Feast Chapels have quickly become a staple for our middle school and high school students that they always eagerly anticipate.

THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER IN A WORLD OF FRANTIC NOISE

Prayer is the center of spiritual formation. For faculty and staff we have incorporated a lectionary “Spiritual Life Guide” which invites slow, intentional prayer through the school year. For students, one of our monthly chapel formats is devoted specifically to guided prayer. During these chapels space is created for students to quiet their hearts, sit in God’s Word, and commune with God. In a noisy world, being still in the presence of God is not only life giving for our students, but also something they crave.

Our hope at SCA is that through these intentional practices—lived out in classrooms, chapels, and relationships—students are shaped not only in what they know, but in what they love. We are grateful to walk this journey alongside families and churches, trusting that God is faithful to form young people for the sake of the gospel within the world. ■



WHAT

TO

DOES

COMPETE

IT

BIBLICALLY?

MEAN

BY PAUL CLARK

DIRECTOR OF FACULTY AND
STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Let us be honest—if we have ever coached, played, or even just watched a big game, we know how powerful competition can be. It fires us up. It taps into something deep inside of us that craves purpose, adrenaline, and the thrill of rising to a challenge.

There is a popular phrase in the sports world: *“Competition doesn’t build character—it reveals it.”* And honestly, there is a lot of truth to that. At Scottsdale Christian Academy, we started asking some hard questions: What does competition really look like when it is aligned with God’s Word? How should athletes, coaches, and parents approach sports if they want every part of life—including competition—to reflect Christ?

That question launched us into something bigger than just “playing the right way.” It led us into a bold and intentional journey—one we call *Competing Biblically*.

From the beginning, we realized that taking this route would set us apart. Not many schools are willing to reshape their entire athletic mindset around a Biblical framework. And let us face it—most of us have grown up in a competitive culture where winning at all costs is often celebrated, no matter how it is done. So, for us, this was not going to be a surface-level change. It was going to require a complete heart shift.

Together—our coaches, athletic department, and school leadership—decided to fully commit to something different. Something better. We made the decision to compete in a way that honors Christ and points others to Him in everything we do—both in our sport and in our daily lives.

THE VISION

Every meaningful movement starts with a clear vision. We needed a 30,000-foot view of where we were going. So, we asked ourselves: What should it look like for our teams to compete in a Christ-centered way? Here is what we landed on:

“The Scottsdale Christian Academy Athletic Department seeks to develop a culture where student-athletes and coaches pursue maximum potential while competing and leading in a Christ-honoring way.”

That vision became our north star. Just like building a basketball system starts with a playbook—offensive and defensive philosophies—we knew that building a culture of Biblical competition would require foundational principles we could lean on.

WHAT IT MEANS TO COMPETE BIBLICALLY

Once the vision was in place, we had to define what Competing Biblically really meant in practical terms. We asked questions, wrestled with Scripture, and worked together as a team. Here is the definition we came up with:

“Competing Biblically, at its core, is a philosophy—a mindset. It is a way to play, a way to coach, and even a way to cheer. It is a framework that integrates sports and faith, with the ultimate goal of glorifying God and sharing the gospel through every moment of athletic competition.”

That definition set the tone. It gave us a target for how we want every athlete and coach to show up. Whether it is a practice, a playoff game, or a moment of competitive adversity, we want people to see something different when they encounter SCA athletics.

Next, we had to break that definition down. We needed to get in the weeds—to really understand what this kind of competition looks like on a practical, everyday level. And that is where the real work began.

TO. BY. FOR.

The philosophy of Competing Biblically is rooted in the **“To. By. For.”** framework—competing according **TO** the Word of God, **BY** the power of God, and **FOR** the glory of God. This framework provides the foundation for how Competing Biblically is lived out, not just understood. It shapes both our mindset and our actions in competition.

TO THE WORD OF GOD

When we compete according TO God’s Word, Scripture becomes the lens through which we evaluate our attitudes, decisions, and behaviors. The Bible defines what success, integrity, effort, and excellence truly mean both on and off the field of competition.

BY THE POWER OF GOD

Competing Biblically is not something we can accomplish through our own desires or sheer will. Apart from the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, our efforts will ultimately fall short. When we rely on our own strength rather than God’s power, our “success” becomes inconsistent, incomplete, and ultimately flawed.

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

At its core, Competing Biblically is about honoring God. Our ultimate goal is not personal recognition or competitive dominance, but God’s glory. This means prioritizing His will in how we prepare, practice, and perform, allowing our competition to reflect His character and purposes.



KINGDOM OVER SCOREBOARD

By adopting the philosophy of Competing Biblically, we learn to think differently—viewing both sport and life through the lens of God’s Word and seeking His glory rather than our own. Simply put, we prioritize the Kingdom of God over the scoreboard.

Ultimately, Competing Biblically is not just something we do; it is someone we become. It reflects an inward transformation that produces outward action. While winning is not ignored, it is a secondary outcome. What matters most is the effort we give and the mindset we bring, because how we compete is the primary way we honor God through sport.

When we commit to glorifying God by giving our best in preparation, practice, and performance, success often follows. Winning becomes a byproduct—not the purpose—of competing with excellence, integrity, and faith.

To truly adopt this mindset in our programs, we knew we would need to rely on the Holy Spirit and God’s Word to manage the challenges of competition in ways that would consistently make God look good.

PLAY FREE

In the world of sports, pressure often peaks in defining moments. Athletes are quickly labeled as “clutch” or “chokers” based on performance. But our true identity is not found in what we do on the court or field—it is found in Who we belong to. It’s not who we are, but Whose we are.

Scripture clearly defines our identity in Jesus. When we are in Him, we are:

- Children of God (John 1:12)
- Loved (1 John 4:19)
- Wonderfully Made (Psalm 139:14)
- Filled with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- More Than Conquerors (Romans 8:37)
- Never Alone (Joshua 1:9)
- Forgiven (Acts 13:39)
- Empowered (Ephesians 3:16)
- Redeemed (1 Peter 1:18–19)
- Transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- Equipped (2 Timothy 3:17)
- Chosen (Colossians 3:12)
- Free (Galatians 5:1)

When athletes embrace this identity, they are able to compete with freedom and confidence—unburdened by the fear of failure. They are able to now truly **PLAY FREE**. Their worth is no longer tied to outcomes or statistics but anchored in their relationship with God. This understanding allows them to rise above both internal doubt and external pressure, competing with peace, purpose, and courage.

We believe that once participants in our athletic program are conscious of and intentionally attempting to achieve the ability to compete in a state of **BIBLICAL FREEDOM**, they will now be able to view their competition through a different and very countercultural lens.

A photograph of a coach in a blue Nike jacket and headset, wearing a black cap with an American flag patch, talking to football players on the field. The players are wearing white jerseys with blue numbers and red gloves. The coach is gesturing with his right hand raised. The background shows other staff members and a building under a bright sky.

THE FOUR PILLARS

OF COMPETING

BIBLICALLY





STRIVE WITH

Competing Biblically encourages coaches, athletes, parents, and fans to **STRIVE WITH** our competition, **not against it.**

We desire to compete in a way that elevates everyone involved. Our goal is to give our opponents our very best while recognizing them as fellow image-bearers of God—athletes using their unique gifts, talents, and passions to honor their Creator. They are not enemies to be diminished, but competitors who challenge us to be our best.

We will approach competition as a collective pursuit of glorifying Christ. Preparing well, playing hard, and striving to win—while keeping character, integrity, and witness—will be considered the ultimate measures of success.

Competing with passion, toughness, and accountability, while consistently displaying Christlike respect, humility, and grace is our goal. We want every contest we participate in to reflect that *Competing Biblically* values people over outcomes and seeks to glorify God—regardless of the final score.

Having this countercultural view of our competition will now provide us with an abundance of new opportunities to point our competition, the people who officiate our games, and those who watch us from the stands, back to **the reason why we compete the way we do - JESUS.**



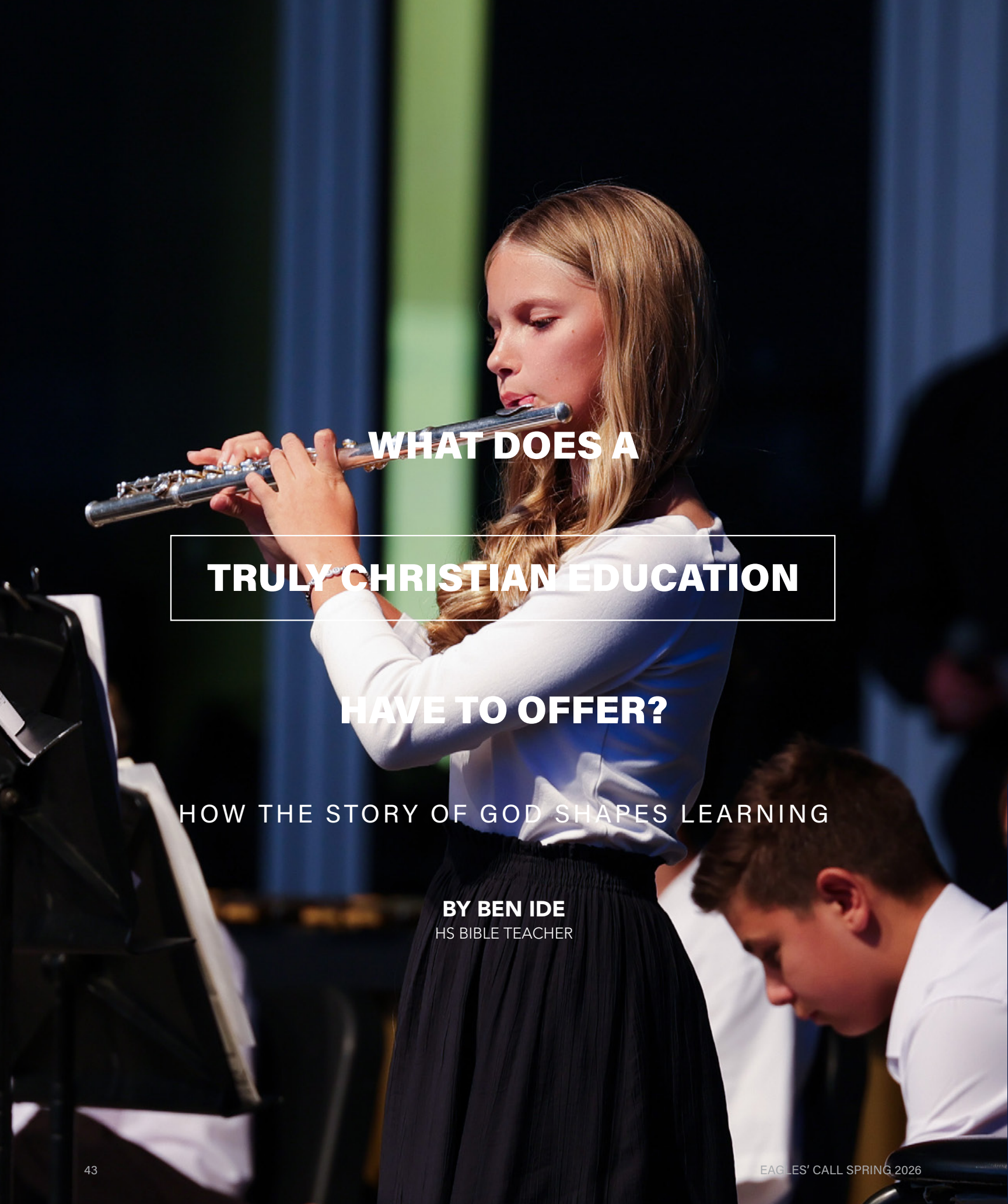
BE A BLESSING

BEING A BLESSING through athletics means using the gifts, opportunities, and influence of sport to reflect the love and character of Christ—both on and off the field. In a Christian school athletic program, this is seen in athletes, coaches, and teams who compete with **humility, integrity, and joy**, seeking not personal recognition but the honor of God and the good of others.

BEING A BLESSING is lived out through **servant leadership, respect** for opponents and officials, **gratitude** in victory, **grace** in defeat, and a genuine commitment to **encouraging** teammates and **serving** the broader community. When approached this way, athletics becomes more than competition—it becomes **WORSHIP**. Teamwork becomes **MINISTRY**, and every practice and game becomes an **OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OTHERS TO CHRIST.**

COME AND CHECK US OUT!

We hope that you will come out and see with your own eyes what God is doing within and through SCA athletics! Join us in our desire to make God look good throughout the Valley and beyond! ■



**WHAT DOES A
TRULY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
HAVE TO OFFER?**

HOW THE STORY OF GOD SHAPES LEARNING

BY BEN IDE
HS BIBLE TEACHER

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

We have all been asked this familiar question. As a high school teacher, one of the greatest joys of my job is working with students during a critical time where they are figuring out who they are in relation to the world. Many eagerly anticipate the day when they will be able to contribute with the gifts and passions God has given them. This question, which we so frequently ask, hinges on the assumption that we all grow into something. We ask children, “what do you want to be?” knowing that they will in fact change into a certain kind of person. This is what makes education so exciting to me—it belongs to the realm of human development.

We must learn how to grow up into the kinds of people we want to be. But with countless pictures of human flourishing at odds today, who gets to set the trajectory? This is precisely what Christian education must have to offer a world seeking to answer the question, “what do you want to be?” An education from the standpoint of Christ must offer a distinctive kind of human development in comparison to the world, one that holistically sweeps individuals into the story of God to uniquely find their place.

Jack Mechielsen puts it simply—

“ Relating the gospel to education is not simply a matter of putting religious icing on an otherwise secular educational cake.

Those who are in Christ, who believe that Christ is Lord, are called to develop learning and teaching which is based on the Word of God. Recognising a living Lord, victorious in creation-wide redemption, Christians will produce fresh and new approaches in education: a brand new cake! ¹

In light of Christ's resurrection, a new kind of life is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. Every individual has this potential by learning from Jesus how to become redeemed humans in every area of life. Christian education ought not settle for anything less than this vision. Every subject in school, without exception, finds its purpose within the scope of the created world that God has set forth to restore. The content, practices, environment, and teachers in an education that is truly Christian are established to cultivate space for this kind of formation.

Dallas Willard, the renowned Christian teacher and philosopher, once remarked, “the main thing God gets out of your life is not the achievements you accomplish, it's the person you become.” In a similar vein, as Christian educators we want students to be formed in such a way that who they are becoming is taken just as significantly as what they are accomplishing.

SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

At Scottsdale Christian Academy we are trying to help students answer this question by becoming the kinds of people who understand themselves in God's story. We seek to integrate this into everything we do because, as an educational institution, we take seriously what we have to offer. It is not anything of our own making. It is God's mission. We simply seek to be an intentional training ground for young persons to encounter the living God and creatively explore the manner in which the gospel transforms every area of life. ■

SOURCE

1. Mechielsen, J. (1979). *No icing on the cake*. Brooks-Hall Publishing.

WALKING ALONGSIDE FAMILIES

At Scottsdale Christian Academy, we know that families are the first and most influential teachers in a child's life. Parent University was created with that truth at its heart, a way to intentionally walk alongside parents as they nurture and guide their children.

Did you know that SCA offers at least two Parent University sessions each year? These sessions are free and thoughtfully designed around the issues our families are navigating and the realities of the world beyond our campus. With each gathering, our goal remains the same: to support our parents as they faithfully shepherd their own children.

During the 2024 and 2025 school years, Parent University welcomed faith-based counselors who shared insight and encouragement around topics that touch many families. These sessions focused on supporting students through anxiety, understanding the pressures children face at different stages, and guiding kids of all ages toward healthy ways of managing stress. Each conversation emphasized honoring how God uniquely created each child while offering practical strategies and resources to equip parents to tackle various challenges.

We were also grateful to welcome one of the authors of Mama Bear Apologetics to campus. Amy Davison spoke on two topics requested by our community: raising disciples and engaging in thoughtful, biblical conversations with children about sexuality. These sessions offered parents clarity and encouragement, reminding us that we are not leading these conversations alone, and that Scripture provides a firm and loving foundation for guiding our children.

Parent University is open to parents, grandparents, other family members, and members of the broader SCA community. This wide invitation is intentionally designed to reflect our belief that raising children is a shared calling.

Through Parent University, Scottsdale Christian Academy continues to celebrate and strengthen the partnership between home and school. We are grateful for the opportunity to listen, learn, and grow together as we seek to raise students who know Christ, walk in truth, and live out their faith with confidence. ■

THROUGH PARENT UNIVERSITY AT SCA

BY JANKA MCARTHUR
DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM
AND INSTRUCTION



SENIOR THESIS

THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM

BY MALLORY GILBERT

HS BIBLE TEACHER



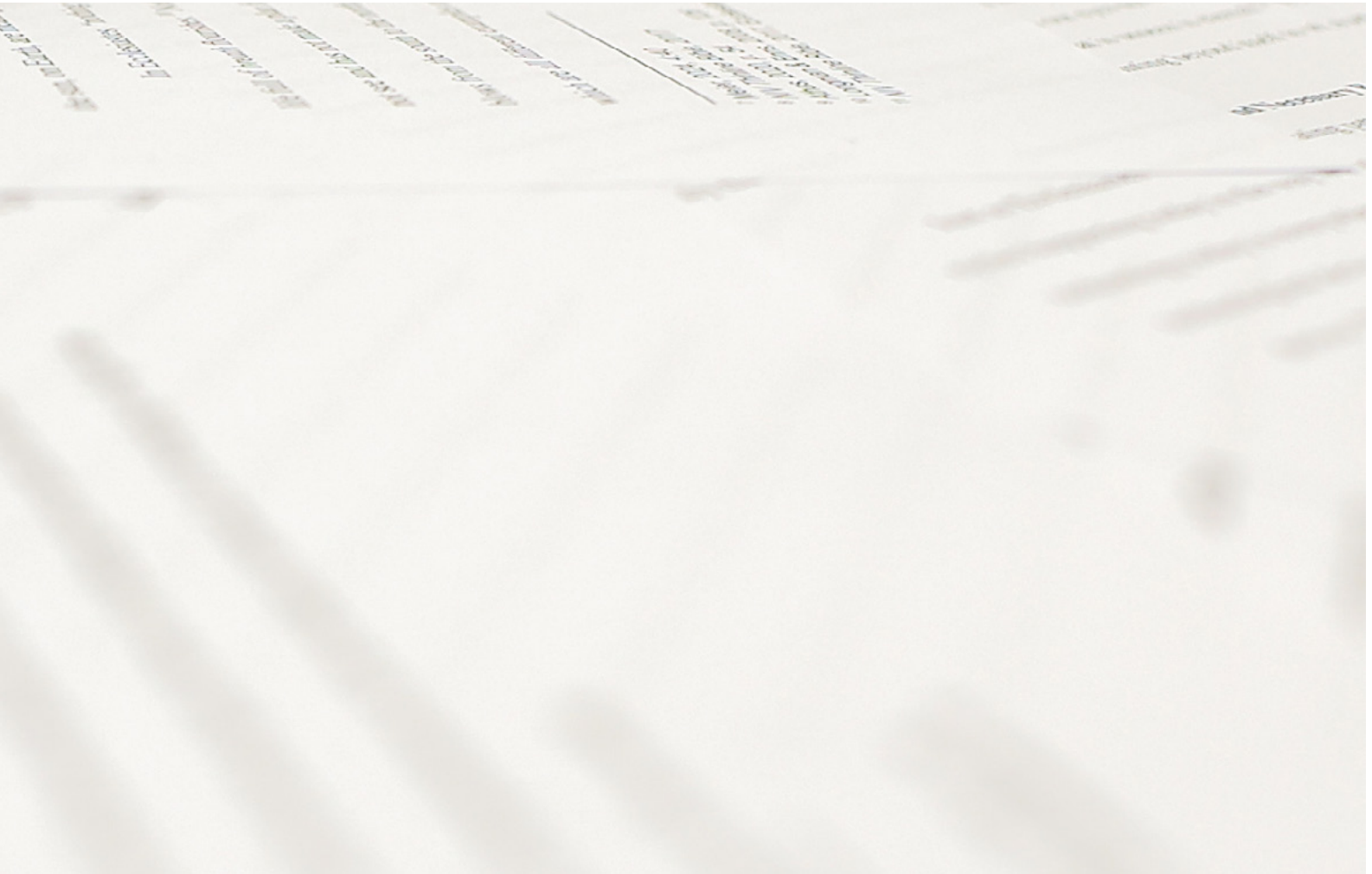
**BEGIN,
BE
BOLD,
AND
VENTURE
TO
BE
WISE**

- HORACE

Scottsdale Christian Academy launched our Senior Thesis program during the 2022-2023 academic year. Behind this launch was a dream first formulated by Dr. Brent Hodges and our Spiritual Life Director, Nick Barker. Looking at the landscape of our day, it was growing ever more apparent that in order to continue pursuing the SCA Mission Statement of “Maximizing the God-given potential of each student, preparing them to live lives of distinction, by impacting the world for Jesus Christ”, students needed the opportunity to develop not only knowledge, but wisdom. Wisdom does not simply know, it discerns. Oxford English Dictionaries define wisdom as “the capacity to judge rightly in matters relating to life and conduct,” but also says “wisdom is one of the manifestations of the divine nature of Jesus Christ.”¹ Throughout scripture wisdom is given by the Father, through the Spirit, finding its fullness in the Son.² It begins with the fear of the Lord and this is why Denis

Haack of Sage Christianity says, “Reason alone does not make one wise.”³ Wisdom requires one to seek it, and it is this pursuit of wisdom that is the plumbline of SCA’s Senior Thesis Program.

This initial dream, leading to the development of the program, has proven even more necessary than we could have first imagined. In December of its inaugural year, the first public release of a Generative AI Large Language Model went live. ChatGPT and its successors are rapidly changing the landscape of education. Chip Conley makes the case that for the past 65 years we have lived in a ‘knowledge economy’ where knowledge has been the most valued asset for success in this world. However, he theorizes that we are rapidly moving into a ‘wisdom economy’ where wisdom is the resource to be prized. He says, “In this landscape, artificial intelligence will be the commodity, and human wisdom will be a valued yet scarce resource.”⁴ We know that it is not



simply human wisdom, but God-given wisdom that has been the prized resource from the beginning. However, this observation by Chip Conley reinforces the fact that our students need wisdom, need to learn how to seek wisdom, and need the opportunities to obtain wisdom now more than ever. Senior Thesis is a prime opportunity for exactly that.

Over the course of its first four years, the thesis program has grown and adapted to the ever shifting landscape of education, and in its current form has four major components: Curiosity, Discernment, Development, and Communication.

CURIOSITY

The year begins with students choosing a topic that they are curious about. This topic can be housed within scripture itself - such as a word study, book

study, theological concept, life of a biblical character, scriptural theme, or characteristic of God. The topic can be one pertaining to historical Christianity - such as the life of a martyr, the history of the early church, how the sacraments are viewed in various traditions. The topic can also be one where the student is interested in developing a biblical worldview and its implications - such as biotechnological research, the role of craftsmen in the church, the church's response to human trafficking, or how consumerism affects discipleship. Students are encouraged to choose a topic where they do not already have an answer readily in hand. In life we will, more often than not, develop wisdom in the areas where we find we have the most questions. Students are encouraged to lean into the unknown.



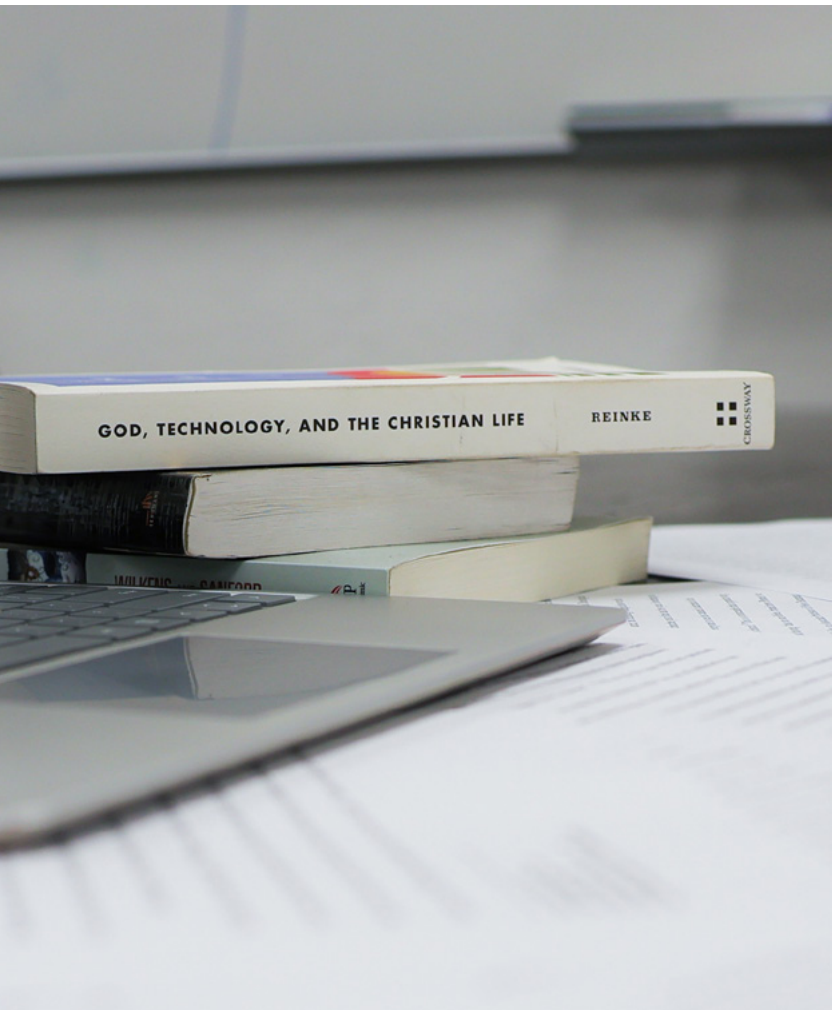
DISCERNMENT

Following the initial choice of topic students begin their learning by identifying experts in their field and examining what they have to say. This is the part of the process that is most continually in development as Artificial Intelligence makes advances every single day. While information is readily available, it is not always good or even helpful, and knowledge takes time to build. Therefore the heart of the research portion is to help students discern the quality of their sourcing and to engage in listening to the experts over a longer period of time than they are more commonly used to. In the midst of this process students develop a thesis statement which begins to narrow their focus and give them specific direction to continue seeking insight.



DEVELOPMENT

This stage of the process allows students to begin synthesizing their research. One of the most important aspects of our student's faith is their ability to know and understand God in the ways that God Himself has uniquely designed them to. Written across the top of the whiteboard in class are the words, "Everyone has ideas that need to become flesh and live outside of us. Amazing ideas, things we've dreamed about, things we don't even know we know yet but we're going to start knowing."⁵ Development is not just about writing a good paper, but it is about listening to what God would have them know and communicate to the world. Students are guided through a process of outlining, writing, and ordering their ideas into a cohesive argument with the voice God has given them. This first takes the form of a written thesis that is ultimately submitted at the end of the third quarter.



COMMUNICATION

The culminating piece of the year-long project is that of communicating their argument to a panel of teachers and administrators in front of their friends, family, and peers. Students give an oral defense, followed by a time of question and response. These defenses are conducted in an open forum, where upper school classes may observe. Over the course of their academic journey, students will encounter different opportunities for discipleship. Senior Thesis provides the unique space to wrestle with the story of scripture and its implications for life; mirroring Paul's prayer for the people of Philippi "that [their] love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that [they] may be able to discern what is best..."⁶

If we are to truly maximize the God-given potential of every student, then the development of wisdom must be at the forefront of our pursuit.

God's timing of introducing the Senior Thesis Program as the capstone project for students at Scottsdale Christian Academy has been a gift to us for the development of this next generation; teaching them to pursue wisdom, knowing that their God-given thoughts, ideas, and words matter. ■

SOURCES

1. Oxford University Press. (n.d.). *Wisdom*. In Oxford English Dictionary.
2. *New American Standard Bible* (2020). (Exodus 28:3; 31:3; 35:1; 1 Kings 4:29–30; 2 Chronicles 1:8–12; 1 Corinthians 1:30).
3. Haack, S. (n.d.). *How do we know wisdom when we see it?*
4. Conley, C. (n.d.). *The 6 qualities of a wise leader—and how to cultivate them*.
5. Winship, J. (2017). *Living fearless: Exchanging the lies of the world for the liberating truth of God*. Baker Books.
6. *New International Version Bible*. (2011). (Philippians 1:9–10a).

A SEASON OF

REFLECTION, GROWTH, AND CELEBRATION.

BY JANKA MCARTHUR

DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM
AND INSTRUCTION



CONGRATULATIONS SCA!

Each fall brings familiar rhythms to the Scottsdale Christian Academy campus. Students settle into routines, classrooms buzz with learning, and the steady pulse of community life commences. This fall, one of those rhythms unfolded largely behind the scenes while still involving every corner of our campus: accreditation.

SCA has been an Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Cognia accredited school for nineteen years. Accreditation is far more than a credential. It is a disciplined and prayerful process that calls leadership, faculty, and staff to regularly examine the foundations of Christian education. Through this process, we reflect on where SCA is thriving, identify areas for growth, and set intentional goals to ensure our mission is not only stated but lived out daily in classrooms, relationships, and school culture.

Since 2007, accreditation commissions have affirmed that SCA meets rigorous standards in key areas such as governance, relationships, well-being, teaching and learning, and professional expertise. This year, as our accreditation cycle approached once again, our entire community engaged in a thorough and thoughtful self-study. It was an honest look at who we are and who God is calling us to become.

We are excited to share that not only was SCA granted continued accreditation through ACSI, but we were also awarded the distinction of being named an **ACSI Exemplary School**. This recognition is reserved for schools that go beyond meeting foundational standards and demonstrate a sustained record of exceptional, Christ-centered programs, strong leadership, vibrant culture, and continuous improvement. Exemplary schools intentionally use data and research to support flourishing in academics, spiritual formation, and overall operations. This distinction is one of the highest honors within the ACSI network. **Of ACSI's 25,000 plus member schools in 108 countries, only 27 schools hold this designation.**



In addition to receiving Exemplary status through ACSI, SCA also pursued and received Council membership with the Council on Educational Standards and Accountability (CESA). CESA exists to “motivate, support, and hold accountable Christian schools that aspire to superlative academic standards, institutional best practices, and collaboration with like-minded schools.” This partnership further affirms SCA’s commitment to excellence and a continuous path of growth. It also connects us with other mission-aligned schools for collaboration, training, and shared learning. Obtaining membership is a high bar within Christian Education, and SCA is proud to be a part of and collaborate with the Council.

While accreditation is often experienced as a year-long self-study, its impact reflects something much greater. It provides an opportunity to celebrate a legacy of quality Christian education in Arizona, to recognize how far we have come, and to look forward with confidence and hope toward a future of continued faithfulness and success.

We are deeply proud of our leadership team, faculty, and staff. They serve with excellence and humility, working each day for an audience of One. In all that we do, our desire remains the same: to glorify God and faithfully steward the calling entrusted to Scottsdale Christian Academy. ■

THE MASTER'S PLAN
Seven Years of Discernment:
HOW MISSION
BECAME A MASTER PLAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH

DR. BRENT M. HODGES
SUPERINTENDENT

AND

MR. AARON BYNUM
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
AND DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

This master plan is really about partnering with parents in teaching their children about knowing, loving, and following the Lord.



— **Dr. Brent M. Hodges**

For over five decades, Scottsdale Christian Academy (SCA) has been grounded in a simple, unwavering purpose: to provide a complete education in which Christ is at the center. Seven years ago the school embarked on a bold, multi-phased master plan, with the mission remaining unchanged. The story of how this plan came to life is a story of faith, prayer, community, and God's guidance at every step.

Brent brings a perspective few leaders can match. He has been a part of SCA in many roles: student, parent, and now superintendent. "I started at SCA in 1976," he recalls. "I was a student in the '70s and '80s, came back as a parent in the late '90s and early 2000s, and now I'm in my 11th year as superintendent. I have personally witnessed and experienced how this school touches lives across generations."

Brent's journey of faith also intersects with his story at SCA. "I gave my life to Christ in my late 20s," he shares. "I realized that the seeds planted at SCA by teachers and administrators decades ago guided me to the Lord. That's what's unchanged at our core: we want to see students come to know and love Christ while receiving an excellent education."



This is Jesus' school. We are stewards of it, entrusted with this fertile ground for the Holy Spirit to work.

— **Dr. Brent M. Hodges**

The master plan did not begin as a blueprint for new buildings. It started with prayerful discernment and a vision for how SCA could continue to impact lives for Christ. Aaron recalls, "We had a clear development message back in 2016-17 that was mission-centered and purpose-driven. From there, we let the Lord work

through it. Every step — from land acquisitions to partnerships — was prayerfully considered."

The journey quickly led to a seemingly impossible opportunity: purchasing seven acres of adjacent land from Temple Chai. "It was a daunting financial task," Aaron explains. "We wanted to raise at least 50% of the funds before even considering the purchase. And God provided." Generous families stepped forward with commitments that far exceeded expectations, setting the stage for what would become a larger, God-ordained vision.

The story did not end there. Shortly after, an additional two acres became available — a purchase that seemed improbable given the \$1.3 million debt on the initial acquisition. "And then a donor stepped in to cover that debt," Aaron recounts. "It wasn't something we could have planned. It was a clear example of God preparing the way."

We realized early on that this wasn't about our plans or our desires. It was God's plan unfolding before our eyes.



— **Mr. Aaron Bynum**

Following those land purchases, there was an additional third purchase of one acre on the corner of Tatum and Acoma, and the purchase of what was a neighboring home to assist with safe student crossing across Acoma. With the land secured, the next step was working with the master plan to serve the mission of SCA while reflecting the desires and needs of the school community. Brent and Aaron began by engaging over 70 families in due diligence meetings to gain feedback, complemented by an online survey to the entire community or those unable to meet in person. This assisted them in gaining a greater understanding of stakeholder viewpoints on the plan.

"The feedback was consistent," Brent recalls. "Families wanted to ensure that Christ remained at the center. They also wanted to maintain our sense of community. This plan isn't about growth for growth's sake — it's about impact."

Aaron adds, “Families also expressed incredible generosity. Tuition dollars cover the day-to-day operation of the school, but the master plan’s success relies entirely on the community’s willingness to support this vision above and beyond tuition dollars. Without them, none of this would be possible.”

It’s humbling to see so many families invested in the long-term mission of SCA — spiritually, financially, and relationally. “

— **Dr. Brent M. Hodges**

A recurring theme in the master plan story is God’s provision through people. The Board of Director’s vision and support was integral throughout. Chad Bechert, a parent and board member, was an early visionary in initiating early conversations, and Brent’s relationship with a key individual at Temple Chai assisted in beginning the conversations around a purchase. John Gilligan, project manager for the master plan, was sent to Brent through a mutual friend and deeply committed member of the SCA community for over 50 years, Archie Wright. “John has been incredible,” Brent says. “His expertise, vision, and faith-driven commitment make him indispensable.” John, with years of building experience, along with his son and SCA parent, Mike Gilligan, have committed to years of volunteer service to SCA to see this vision become a reality.

Other partnerships — like AMDG Architects, the CHASSE Building Team, key donors, and families deeply invested in SCA’s future — have shaped every phase. “It’s remarkable how God has orchestrated the right people at the right time,” Aaron reflects. “These partnerships make the impossible possible.”

“**We’ve been blessed with incredible people who share our vision — not just contractors or donors, but true partners in ministry.**

— **Dr. Brent M. Hodges**

The master plan is intentionally multi-phased, designed to unfold over several years.

PHASE 1

Safety, Traffic, and Parking Considerations – Pre-planning took place to ensure smooth traffic flow, student safety, and parking that will include taking some of the traffic off Acoma, ensuring safe student crossing, and the multitude of safety features the school incorporates into the current campus, were all a top priority.

PHASE 2

Early Childhood Center — A standalone facility doubling the school’s preschool and pre-k capacity, set to open soon.

PHASE 3

Track and Field – Competition eight-lane track, full size competitive field, bleachers, scoreboard, and sound system to enrich the student experience.

PHASE 4

Auxiliary Gym and Eight-Classroom Building — Additional classrooms and full auxiliary gym for additional sports capabilities on the campus to serve student interests and academic excellence.

FUTURE PHASES

At the completion of these four phases, there are future plans for a Fine and Performing Arts Center, and a renovation of the current two-story building to become the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) Center on the existing campus. Aaron emphasizes, “These aren’t just buildings and fields. Each phase is prayerfully considered to maximize student impact in line with our mission while remaining financially responsible. We build as the resources come in.”

Throughout the planning process, God’s guidance is evident in both large and small ways. Brent shares, “One of the most profound stories came during the initial land negotiations. There was uncertainty, but we committed to operating to always honor the Lord in all our dealings. We trusted God to open doors if it was His will — and He did.”

Aaron recalls the community feedback sessions: "Families helped shape the plan. They told us they didn't want to grow so large that we lost the sense of community. That became a guiding principle. We weren't just building; we were ensuring the culture and mission remained intact."

Another memorable story is that of upstream work, a parable Brent uses often. "Imagine a couple of adults fishing by a river who suddenly are surprised to see a child struggling in the water floating down the river. They jump in to rescue the young child. However, they soon realize another one is coming, followed by several more. They can barely keep up with rescuing these children. Eventually, one of the adults departs, realizing someone needs to go upstream to find out why kids are struggling in the water in the first place. That's the upstream work we strive for at SCA - work to partner with parents and churches so kids can experience the love of Christ at home, at school, and at church, to stand on the solid rock of Christ rather than find themselves struggling in the river."

“ This master plan is about creating fertile ground for the Spirit to work in more children's lives.

— Dr. Brent M. Hodges

Brent and Aaron are united in the vision that the master plan is more than bricks and mortar. "This is about enabling children to experience freedom in Christ," Brent emphasizes. "Our responsibility is to protect the non-negotiables of who we are as a school, while equipping the next generation to live lives of distinction for Christ."

Aaron reflects on the community's role: "It's awe-inspiring to see families, alumni, grandparents, and friends coming together to partner in God's work. The generosity and faith of our community make this plan a reality — and more importantly, allow the mission to flourish for decades to come."

The master plan is not about scale or visibility. It's about lives transformed, hearts surrendered to Christ, and families partnering with us to raise children in faith.

— Dr. Brent M. Hodges

The SCA Master Plan is a story of vision, faith, and perseverance. It is a testament to the belief that education and discipleship are inseparable. From prayerful discernment to God-provided partnerships, from careful stewardship to community generosity, every element is woven together to serve one purpose: impacting lives for Christ. ■

At the end of the day, this master plan is about partnering with parents to teach children to know, love, and follow the Lord — and giving them an excellent education along the way.”

— Dr. Brent M. Hodges

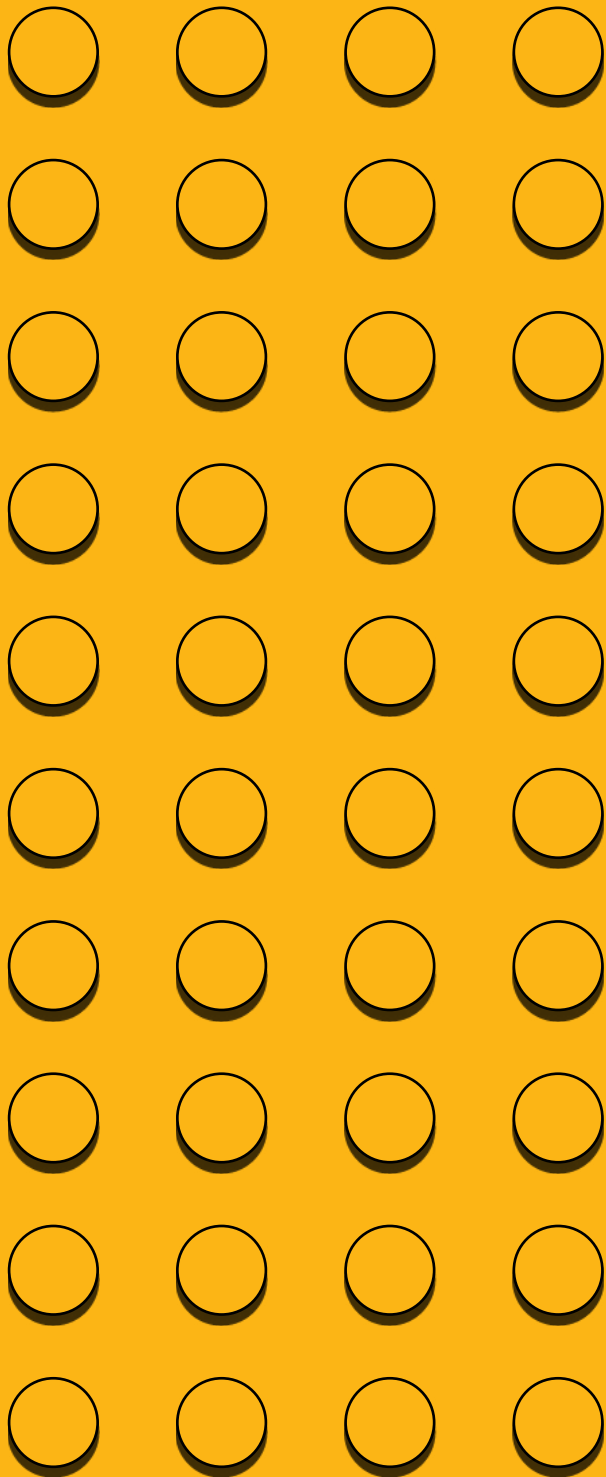


* In conjunction with some of the topics of A.I. in this magazine, this interview was conducted with the assistance of an A.I. journalist.



BUILDING THE FUTURE

ONE BRICK AT A TIME



It started with a “secret hobby.”

Our Superintendent, Dr. Brent Hodges, has long had a quiet appreciation for complex LEGO® builds. From a functioning Pac-Man machine to the Titanic, he enjoys the patience, creativity, and precision required to bring thousands of tiny pieces together into something remarkable.

So when he heard that 12-year-old former SCA student Charlie Martin was not just a LEGO enthusiast, but an award-winning competitive builder, an idea sparked.

What if, instead of commissioning a traditional architectural model of our Master Plan, we commissioned Charlie?

What if the future of SCA could be built... in LEGO bricks?

A VISION REIMAGINED

Charlie, now attending another Christian school after his family moved across town, has remained closely connected to SCA. When the idea was presented, he did not hesitate. What began as a creative thought experiment quickly became a serious undertaking.

THE SCOPE?

Our entire 24-acre campus master plan.

THE SCALE?

Over 23,000 LEGO pieces!

THE COMMITMENT?

Over 300 hours of time
Months of design, sourcing, sorting, and building
Final product measures 6' x 3'

By early September, Charlie had already logged nearly 60 design hours in LEGO Studio, carefully recreating the campus digitally—complete with the new Performing Arts Center, track and soccer field, expanded parking lots, and future buildings. At that point, the model was 75% complete digitally and already over 16,000 pieces, without any pieces being connected yet.

Ordering the physical bricks required purchases from 23 different stores internationally. Boxes began arriving. Then came the sorting. Tens of thousands of pieces had to be organized by color, size, and function.

And then, brick by brick, the future of SCA began to rise from a table in Charlie's LEGO room in North Peoria.

MORE THAN A MODEL

This is no ordinary student project.

Charlie is the 2025 "Mini Master Model Builder" at the Legoland Discovery Center in Tempe, a title he earned after beating hundreds of submissions with an intricate LEGO tech store featuring multiple rooms, a courtyard, and even a waterfall. His win earned him mentorship and the opportunity to compete globally, with the added privilege of having his creation displayed at the LEGO House in Denmark.

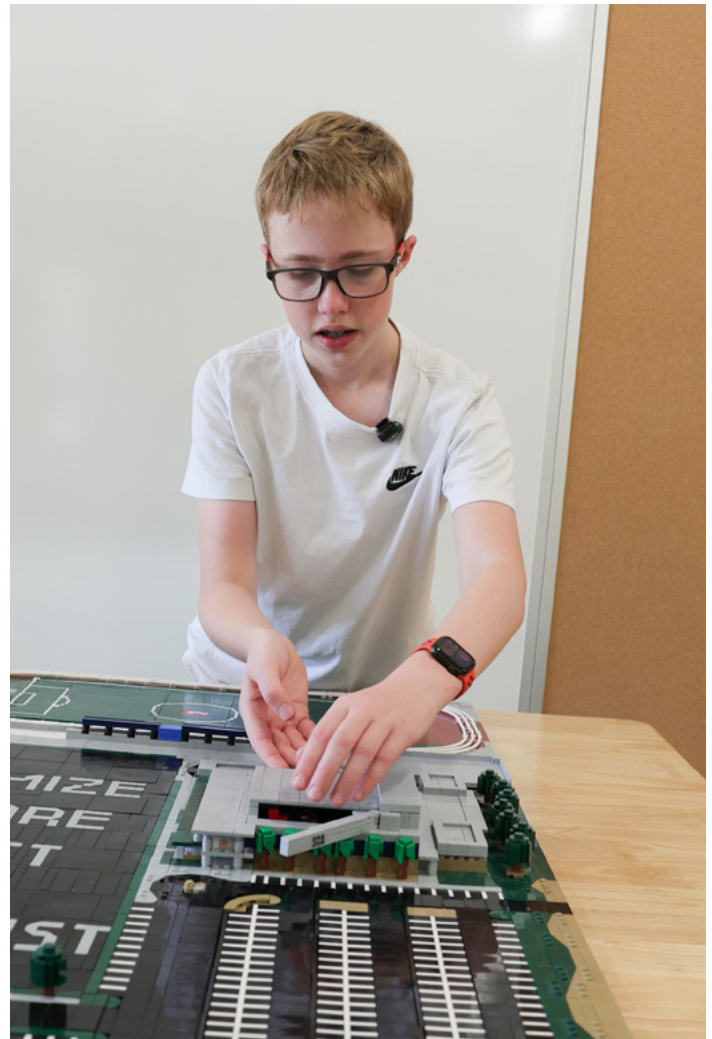
In short: SCA didn't just hire a LEGO fan. We partnered with one of the most talented young LEGO designers in Arizona.

By January, Charlie was 40% through the physical build, 10,000 bricks placed, despite battling the flu over Christmas break. By early February, he had reached 75% completion. His projected delivery date? The week of March 15 in time for the ribbon-cutting of our Early Childhood Center, the first phase of the master plan.

Throughout the process, Charlie has documented the journey on his own YouTube channel, sharing behind-the-scenes design footage, 10-hour build sessions, and the meticulous counting of 23,000 pieces. What began as a model has evolved into a full documentary of vision, craftsmanship, and perseverance. You can see Charlie's Lego channel by visiting youtube.com/@365lego.

When Dr. Hodges first watched one of Charlie's update videos, his reaction in an email to Charlie was simple:

"I am beside myself. I literally teared up watching this. This will be one of the most memorable things of my career."



A COMMUNITY EFFORT

This project has also been a family investment. Charlie's parents have opened their home for visits, welcomed SCA leaders to place ceremonial bricks on the build, and supported the countless hours required to bring the campus to life.

During one visit, SCA leaders stood in the "magical LEGO room" watching as the new gym/classroom building and expanded campus layout took shape before their eyes. It was more than impressive, it was symbolic.

SCA faculty and staff are sent updates regularly, and broke into applause at one of the video updates during a professional development session. They wait on pins and needles for each update from Charlie.

A young student, once part of our community, building the future of that same community. It doesn't get more "Future of SCA" than that.

EVEN BIGGER IDEAS

As if over 23,000 bricks weren't enough, Charlie recently proposed an additional idea: creating a standalone custom LEGO set of one of our new campus buildings, complete with its own box design and step-by-step instructions, so that others could build a piece of SCA themselves. The custom set may even appear at a future SCA auction!

Because for Charlie, creativity isn't just about building once, it's about inspiring others to build, too.

In his own words:



CREATIVITY ISN'T SOMETHING YOU GET STRAIGHT AWAY. IT COMES OVER TIME AS EVERYTHING YOU HAVE DONE BEFORE COMES TOGETHER.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Our Master Plan represents prayerful vision, bold faith, and long-term commitment to the next generation. To see that vision interpreted through the imagination of a now 13-year-old builder is both humbling and inspiring.

This LEGO campus is more than a display model. It's a reminder that the future of SCA belongs to students like Charlie, students who dream big, think creatively, and build with excellence.

On March 17, the completed model was delivered. Over 23,000 bricks that told a beautiful story:

A STORY OF INNOVATION.

A STORY OF CONNECTION.

A STORY OF A YOUNG BUILDER HELPING

CONSTRUCT THE FUTURE OF A SCHOOL

HE STILL CALLS HOME.

And perhaps most beautifully—

A STORY PROVING THAT SOMETIMES

THE SMALLEST PIECES BUILD

THE BIGGEST VISION. ■



EAGLES' CALL

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