

On Excellence of the Mind at Rivendell School

Rivendell is first and foremost a community of learning, a place set apart to nurture and challenge the life of the mind. Since we seek to be a Christ-centered school, a high view of academics should go without saying. Excellence is inspiring each student to fulfill his or her academic promise in the educational context. For, as Frank Gaebelien once noted, “Christians are obligated to excellence because God Himself is supremely excellent.” In other words, a school that calls itself Christian must never move away from its academic center, if it is to walk worthy of its name.

Educational excellence requires that we inspire a love of God that engages the whole mind. Thus, each student’s reason, conscience and imagination all occupy a central place in the school’s mission. Rivendell seeks nothing less than the renewing of the mind in that context of wholeness, enabling each young person to practice the truth in love.

Each student’s reason is important, of course, as the students explore biblical truth and develop an understanding of God’s world. Our integral approach to the arts and sciences is intended to sharpen the intellect and go far in developing logical and insightful young people. Each student is challenged to think and interact at increasingly deeper levels as they grow through the school’s program. At Rivendell, we desire that each student become not just intelligent and knowledgeable but wise and thoughtful.

The conscience is central to our focus as well. We believe that authentic education maintains the vital link between knowing and doing. We intentionally study the nature of virtue and heroism, we work hard at cultivating healthy relationships in and out of the classroom, and we expect a winsome display of social graces and practical manners. In this way, Rivendell aims for each student to enjoy a strengthened will and a wholesome character as they venture forth into a world yearning for true goodness.

The imagination, too, is vital to what we do and the way we do it. In order for any learning to occur, the imagination must be captured and expressed. We often dwell on the beautiful and the gracious in nature and in the arts. To extol the nature of beauty, and to provide opportunities to make beautiful works of art, stimulates and strengthens each student’s God-given creative impulse. Inspired students become engaged learners, who in turn become truly educated people.

In concert with each child’s parents, Rivendell seeks to be a place “where duty and desire meet” (Tolkien). We have our sights set on the whole mind in all its mystery and glory. Indeed, our mission is to participate in the noble duty of all Christians everywhere: the development of a learned, virtuous and creative life. There is no better way to love God with all our minds, and no surer way to lead a life of excellence.

<i>Quality of Excellence</i>	<i>Cultural Trend</i>	<i>Facets of Mind</i>	<i>How Expressed</i>	<i>Goals for Students</i>	<i>Roles of Rivendell</i>
Understand truth	Intellectual dullness	Reason	Thinking	Wise & logical intellect	Explore truth, sharpen mind
Practice goodness	Moral confusion	Conscience	Doing	Wholesome & Virtuous Character	Strengthen will, cultivate goodness
Extol beauty	Aesthetic mediocrity	Imagination	Making	Strong creative Impulses	Inspire artistry, nurture beauty

-Steve Larson, Headmaster 1992-2002