



May 1, 2022

Dear ZCA Families,

I can't believe we're already at the end of the school year! It has been a great year at ZCA. You know the phrase: "Patience Is a Virtue"? Well, it truly is. When I was first approached about the principal position at Zion four years ago, I had no idea what God had in store for this school. What a ride it has been! I will admit that the first couple of years were tougher than I ever imagined (especially with the transition from Zion Lutheran School to Zion Classical Academy, and then the COVID pandemic on top of it). But now that we are on the other side of those obstacles, we are starting to see the fruits of our labor. When I meet with the potential new families who come and visit our school, I consistently hear things like, "Wow. It is so peaceful here," "We just love the family atmosphere," and "I wish I would have had this type of education when I was growing up." It is so uplifting when a student tells me how much they love coming to school each day. Learning should be joyful – especially when it is all grounded in God's Word.

Although classical Christian schools do not emphasize standardized test results (because we know that our children are so much more than just their grade performance or future earning potential), our students typically score higher than the national average, despite the fact that we refuse to "teach to the test" at ZCA. We are much more interested partnering with parents to cultivate wisdom and virtue in our students so that their lives will glorify God. This is done through the distinctive culture, curriculum, and structure of a classical Christian school. Higher standardized test scores are simply a by-product of this unique approach to learning. Students who regularly read challenging literature in class easily master reading passages on standardized tests. Students who have studied the rules of formal logic don't get tripped up by trick math questions on standardized tests. Students who have studied Latin have a deeper understanding of English grammar and can more easily solve writing problems on standardized tests.

More importantly, we have noticed a positive change in how our students treat one another, respect authority, and apply Biblical Truths. It is easy to get more learning done when students are attentive and eager to learn. Honestly, our uniform policy has improved our culture a great deal. Everyone is on the same team, and personal style doesn't detract from the learning environment. So many parents have thanked us for requiring uniforms because it makes their mornings go so much smoother and faster. It is also easy to get more learning done when you have dedicated teachers who truly love what they do, and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to teach at a private school because they are so passionate about our mission.

When God places the right people in the right place at the right time, we know that anything is possible ("With God, all things are possible." -Matthew 19:26). It is exciting to see all of the different ways that Zion Classical Academy is blossoming. Thank you for being a part of it!

Blessings,

Sara Nielsen, Principal

---