

Knox Classical School Information Meeting

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Preacher: Katie Montoya

[0 : 0 0] My name is Katie Montoya. I am a lifelong Christian. I'm a member here at Providence. I'm wife to my best friend and God's greatest gift to me, Mike. And I am a second-generation homeschooling mom of four boys, ages almost eight through almost one.

My own homeschooling was really a mix between my parents' diligence and a tremendous collaborative program with devoted teachers in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where I grew up.

And through that program, I read the great books. I had really rigorous and robust writing training. And it was an education that prepared me well for college and that I truly loved. And I knew, even when I graduated from high school, that I wanted to give any future children of mine something similar.

I went to college at a small classical Christian liberal arts school in northern Virginia called Patrick Henry College. And while I was there, two important things happened, the first being that I met Mike, the second being that I had a roommate who God would later use to persuade us to move to the Kansas City area.

But secondary to those things, I got exposed to what I learned to understand as classical education for the first time, both through the core curriculum at Patrick Henry and then just through the really devoted professors who were careful to adhere to classical methodologies.

[1 : 1 2] I ultimately earned my degree there in government with an emphasis on political theory. And then I went on to law school at the University of Virginia.

All the while, though, I had really gotten the impression during college that education is the indispensable ingredient to maintaining a free society and to developing virtue in the citizenry.

So while I was in law school, I served on the law review. My first son was born, and I had some doors open to me that I really credit to the classical training that I had received, certainly in primary and secondary school, but especially at Patrick Henry because of my professors.

After law school, I had the opportunity to clerk for two different federal appellate court judges, and then I went into private practice as an attorney in Washington, D.C., doing constitutional and appellate litigation for several years.

I just left that position last month in order to begin focusing entirely on my sons and on this effort to help start Knox Classical School. But it may sound kind of funny to be transitioning to education when my background is as a lawyer.

[2 : 1 8] And so the reason of the story is kind of this. As soon as my oldest son was old enough for kindergarten, I knew that I wanted to be able to classically educate him, but we were kind of at a tricky crossroads.

I was working full-time, and homeschooling was really not an option for my family. But at the same time, a private school, five-day education was kind of cost prohibitive for us. And I also knew I didn't want to forsake the really special time with my son, especially when he was super young.

But by God's grace, we found a classical Christian collaborative program in Alexandria, Virginia, and were able to enroll our son for his kindergarten year. And that year truly changed our lives from an educational perspective.

Mike and I knew that that was what we wanted for each of our sons. And when the Lord moved us here to the Kansas City area, we looked for a similar program, but couldn't find anything within reasonable driving distance.

And so I joked at the time that I was like, oh, I'll just start one one day, but then kind of tabled it to keep working and to plunge into full-time homeschooling. But as we continued with homeschooling, and maybe those of you who have had homeschooled or who have experienced homeschooling at all sympathize with this a bit, but when you're homeschooling and suddenly there's like babies who need taken care of or meals to cook or laundry to fold, it's hard to achieve the kind of rigor and excellence that you want to on a day-to-day basis.

[3 : 40] And I was really missing the collaborative support for that. And also my sons were really missing kind of the social side that a collaborative school provides to have some like-minded friends around consistently.

And so I joked again that it was maybe just something we needed to do was start a school, but this time I joked in front of Angela Oswald, who's the wife of Chris, who's now one of our founding board members. And one thing led to another, and by June we were meeting together and decided that it really was a goal or it was a go to launch a school because it was something that Chris and Angela had dreamed about too for a long time.

So along with another couple from our church, the Coens, and then another great team that started to come together, and I'll introduce them all later, God really pulled together a team, and it's been very, very clear to me that we are on the right path and that this is his will and this is what we're supposed to be doing.

Now I do want to say that as a parent, I am very keenly aware and very humbled by the fact that you would be here to learn about a startup school for your children.

That's a big thing, like to have a school that's just launching, and it's not lost on me that it's a privilege that we have you here today. Please know that I love my children very much, and their academic education is extremely important to me as a way of helping them love the Lord their God with all their hearts and with all their minds and with all their strength.

[5 : 02] And so I pray that this school that's established here will be the school that they graduate from one day as committed disciples of the Lord Jesus. And I'm committed to doing everything within my power, and our team is committed to doing everything within its power to ensuring that it is excellent and that it is a success unto the glory of God.

I'd like to sum up here with our slide with our school motto, which you see on the bottom, Lux Invictus Est, which translates light is invincible.

We draw this from John 1, 5, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not understood it. In our world, there's a lot of darkness, and the enemy would have our children bound up in that darkness.

But our hope for Knox is that it would help even one child have the light of truth, the light of the word Jesus Christ shined on their life, so that one day they will see that every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess that he is Lord.

The light is and was and always will be invincible. So as we continue, we'll go on to our next slide. And before we get too far, I wanted to offer a brief word about why Knox Classical School.

[6 : 18] John Knox is probably best known as a Scottish reformer, but less known as a passionate advocate for education in Scotland. And Knox actually dedicated a large part of his life, too, to helping start a system of free schools in Scotland, which at the time was known as the most culturally backward nation in Europe.

But his heart was to establish schools where children, no matter their income level, could come and be trained to read the Bible and to study the classical liberal arts so that they could think well.

A lot of those values are similar to ours at Knox Classical, and so we've taken the John Knox name to inspire us on our efforts to train students to be able to study scripture and creation well. And then we go on to our logo.

This draws, I'll just say briefly, this draws from our inspiration from John Knox. In the center, we have the Word of God, showing some movement in the pages to symbolize that the Word of God is living and active and able to divide the hearts and minds of our students.

Central, too, is the cross, the central message of the scripture, the gospel of Jesus Christ. And then on the sides of the logo, you'll see a wheat in the shape of a wreath. The wreath is a symbol of victory or conquest, which draws into our motto of light is invincible.

[7 : 34] And then also there's just wonderful imagery, of course, throughout scripture about wheat and harvesting, including that whoever sows sparingly would reap sparingly, but whoever sows generously will reap generously.

And it's our earnest prayer that we will reap generously through the sowing of, sowing generously at Knox Classical School. So these introductory matters aside, I'll jump into our mission here.

Our mission, which we're going to unpack throughout this meeting, is to empower parents to raise their children in the instruction of the Lord by providing a comprehensive, classical, educational framework that trains students to explore scripture and creation with humility, excellence, and wonder.

Our board of directors is responsible for carrying out that mission. And as I indicated earlier, one of the ways that I really know and have a lot of confidence that God is at work here is because a whole set of extremely talented people happened to be around and happened to be willing to say yes when we pitched the idea of a classical collaborative school.

So I'd like to take a moment to introduce our inaugural board of directors. Each of our directors is also here today and willing and ready to talk with you about our school. So directors, if you'll wave and say hello, when I introduce you, that way people can find you.

[8 : 53] So we'll start with Dottie Morgan. Dottie is back there. She's our curriculum queen who's been back at the curriculum table talking with some of you. But Dottie received a purportedly phenomenal high school and college education, earning her bachelor's of science in aeronautical engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

But she wanted more for her own kids. After discovering the classical Christian model, she and her husband David have spent the last 15 years homeschooling. She originally envisioned creating a STEM powerhouse, but it didn't take long before use of the Tapestry of Grace curriculum, more on that later, changed her top priority to character formation through history and literature analysis.

The older Morgan children have homeschooled through high school. The oldest attends my alma mater in Virginia, and the middle child is a junior in high school. The youngest is an eighth grader at Whitfield Academy and KC Moe, where Dottie has been a substitute teacher for four years.

Next, we have Chris Oswald, who's in the back working on the slides for us. Chris is the senior pastor here at Providence Community Church. And between him and Dove, who I'll introduce, they're two of the best read people who I know.

Chris has an endless fascination with a wide variety of subjects and a really great ability to measure them all in the light of infallible truth, which is what the goal would be for all of our Knox Classical students.

[10 : 12] Chris and his wife, Angela, have three grown children who are all members at Providence and who Chris and Angela classically educated using, among other things, the Tapestry of Grace curriculum. Then we have Dove Cohen, who's in the far back there.

Dove is husband to Christine and homeschool dad of four with five years of applied experience in the Classical Christian method. Professionally, Dove is a continuous improvement leader, dedicated to improving the functioning of organizations, teams, and individuals.

He earned his master's in business administration at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia and his bachelor's in history at Rutgers University honor program on a presidential scholarship, along with his Lean Six Sigma Green Belt at the Rutgers University School of Business.

And last, or no, two more. Then we have Susan Gimity. Susan is in the back on this side. Susan attained her bachelor's degree in education from Oral Roberts University in 1989, followed by a master's degree in education administration from Regent University.

Following a decade of teaching in the top private schools on the East Coast, Susan, along with her husband, Michael, have classically educated their four children. All four of the Gimity children, Michael, Madison, Nicholas, and Grace, graduated from the Veritas Scholars Academy and are now finishing dental school, working as a grammar school educator, playing collegiate golf while studying electrical engineering and in college, respectively.

[11 : 35] In addition to serving on the Midwest Parent Educators Board, Susan has authored three educational books and directed a substantial homeschool co-op. And last, but very much not least, is my husband, Mike, whose 12 years in the California public school system left him wishing that he'd never have to read another book or write anything in his life.

But in God's grace, he attended Patrick Henry College and developed a love for learning and for seeking justice and mercy and knew that he'd like to educate his own children in a way that would give them the same loves far earlier in life.

Mike went to law school at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, where, this is me writing, this is not Mike, he graduated number four in his class, worked for the top litigation firm in D.C.

and a U.S. Senator on the Senate Judiciary Committee. He's now in private practice at an international litigation firm in Kansas City. Now, as you can tell, this is a really impressive crew that's come together, that the Lord has brought together to start the school.

And I honestly couldn't have imagined a more apt team to get this school going. As noted on the slide, we have a combination, I'm so sorry, David, if you can go back one, we have a combination of voting and ex-sificio non-voting members on our board.

[12 : 45] That's really based on the stage of life that people are at and whether they're able to commit to a term of service. But under our bylaws, we're required to maintain at least one-third, but no more than half, permanent directors.

We made that decision as a decision to make sure that the school adheres to its mission, its vision, and its philosophy of education for the long term. So Dottie and Chris are serving as the term members, and I will be serving as the permanent member.

I'll flag, too, that while each of our founding members is a member here at Providence Community Church, that's very much a result of circumstance and not design. We're looking forward to expanding, growing, and partnering with churches from around the area to have a representative portion in our leadership and certainly in our student body, too.

This team has been hard at work starting in June. We've been meeting weekly or bi-weekly to establish bylaws, to establish all of our governing documents. We're a non-profit corporation under Kansas law.

We're not formally affiliated with Providence in any way, but we're our separate entity. And Lord willing, we will soon be a 501c3 as well. I really have full confidence in this group that they will keep us on mission and that we will adhere to our founding documents, and I'm really grateful for the wisdom that they're bringing to the project.

[13 : 57] I'm happy to provide a copy of our bylaws, but one of the aspects of our bylaws is that we're required to always have a strategic plan in place. This is our vision for the next few years of Knox. We'll open this fall for grades K through three and then continue expanding with that top class until we're a full K through 12 school.

Ultimately, as soon as we hit the K through 12 status, we'll be able to pursue accreditation with one of the two private groups that accredit classical Christian schools.

We are members of both of these already, which it holds us to certain curriculum standards and gives some accountability there. And then we'll be meeting here at Providence Community Church for at least the first two years of our school, thanks to Chris's generosity.

So let's dive in to the three defining attributes of our school. We are unapologetically and thoroughly a Christ-centered, classical, collaborative school.

Now, each of these pillars is mission critical for us. We could not accomplish our mission if we were to drop any one of these pillars. So we'll start with classical, and I'll give you a heads up that this is the longest portion, so please don't be alarmed when it's going for a little while.

[15 : 05] And I also know that many of you have kindergartners, and even if you don't have a rising kindergartner, your children are relatively young. So not only is the educational format a really important decision early, but certainly the educational methodology.

So we're spending quite a bit of time on classical to hopefully give you some information as to why we think that the classical methodology is a really worthy choice for Christian parents. So as an initial matter, it is really clear in today's day and age that something is gravely wrong.

We can go to the next slide, David. That something's really wrong with the way that we are educating students in America. We can and will talk a great deal about what's off methodologically in the approach today and why classical education is enormously successful at training academically excellent students, but even setting aside the academic issues, you don't have to dig very deep to uncover that our society has lost any sense of common value system, a moral fabric that would hold the society together and a shared understanding of what is needed for humans to really flourish in this world.

And this in particular is where classical education comes in. So to summarize the cornerstone of a classical Christian education approach, we might say this, our goal is to form the souls of our students to love what is good and to hate what is evil and to have the skills needed to tell the difference between what's good and evil throughout their lives.

Classical education is really in that way about imparting a way of life, a system of values that trains the next generation how they ought to live and how to think carefully, taking every idea captive and making it obedient to Christ.

[16 : 52] So our goal isn't solely to instill a bunch of information in our students. Our first and primary goal is that we would train students to love the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their mind and with all their strength.

So to understand how American education has gotten so off the rails and why classical education is a real timely antidote, the story has to go back hundreds or even thousands of years. In democratic Greece and classical Rome, education took a simple but consistent form of teaching students grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

The goal here was to impart a certain character and way of life and also to try to apprehend some ideals like goodness, truth, and beauty. Now, these educational efforts were really quite successful, sustaining democratic Greece for a time and then providing the common values and the intellectual framework for the rise of the Roman Republic over that time.

Now, if you're a bit familiar with what some of these classical thinkers thought or taught their students, you've probably been a little bit amazed at how close, but yet how far off, some of the pagan thinkers got to some really key ideas that we do know to be true about God.

But they were missing the work of Jesus Christ and the special revelation of the scripture. But after the revelation of the gospel through Jesus Christ and the growth of the early church, great Christian thinkers like Augustine and Boethius and St. Thomas Aquinas, revisited the educational successes of the Greeks and Romans.

[18 : 21] They jettisoned what was pagan and then adopted what was consistent with the gospel. So during this period of the early church and into the Middle Ages, you see the refining and distillation of what comes to be known as the seven classical liberal arts and also a centering of Christ or of education on Christ as the source and sustainer of all.

Theology emerges during this era as the queen of the sciences, the discipline without which you can't understand anything else. And you also see added to the four classical virtues that students were supposed to pursue, which were prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

Now that classical Christian framework was the predominant method of education for centuries, including up through the American founding and into the 19th century. Arguably, classical Christian education was the reason that at the founding of this country, you could throw a stone and hit a genius and that all of those geniuses were also seemingly working from a shared system of background knowledge and even values.

But as the Industrial Revolution gained steam and as philosophy pushed toward a view of the world in which Nietzsche would sum up by saying, we killed God, classical education began to erode.

Horace Mann, and then the man pictured here under the progressives, John Dewey, are most often associated with the onset of progressive and pragmatic educational methods that emphasized learning by doing and rejected classical methods like memorization or studying classical languages or extensive reading of the great books, all in the name of training students to be fit workers for the factory and for the rapidly evolving modern world.

[20 : 05] Some features of these new approaches to education might sound familiar to us today. They replaced basic instruction and phonics with whole language approaches to reading, replacing logic and rhetoric classes with self-expression without fault finding, dropping writing instruction based on imitating the masters in favor of individualistic creative approaches, changing history instruction from emphasizing the development of Western civilization to downplaying American history and presenting instead a smattering of world history.

That's your generic social studies class today. But most devastatingly, the progressive and pragmatic approaches rejected the absolute truths and virtues foundational to the classical Christian approach and became less concerned with forming the good character of their students than in preparing workers ready to be told instructions in the factory.

Today, the influence of these progressive educational methods is ubiquitous, even in many popular Christian curricula or even in Christian schools. So we see perhaps a glimpse of why things have devolved so quickly over the past 100 years, why academics are languishing with the rejection of excellence, but more importantly, why our moral fabric is ripping as we've divorced academic learning from foundational and absolute truth.

But there is great hope because classical education is alive and well and exponentially expanding across the country. We can go to the next slide. The movement traces back to when Dorothy Sayers, a British novelist and Latin scholar, wrote an essay called *The Lost Tools of Learning* in which she proposed, this was in the 1940s, and she proposed rejecting the already failing progressive methods and returning to the classical approaches.

The *National Review* republished that essay in the 1970s and a subscriber named Douglas Wilson would read the essay in that magazine and then write a really formative book called *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*.

[21 : 59] That book has inspired the formation of more than 475 classical Christian schools throughout the country. So we might say that while classical education is more than a thousand years old, it's reviving, while progressive education is already showing itself to be spent after nearly 100 years.

I hope that that history, I know lengthy, is helpful in providing some context for understanding the goals of a classical education. Our mission isn't merely to train students and workers who will just follow instructions.

It's to train students how to think and in particular, how to ask, seek, find, and treasure what's good and true and beautiful. And we hope that students will recognize their place in the redemptive story of history and live a life flourishing in this fallen but soon-to-be restored world.

So how do we do this? We do this in two ways, both in our educational methodology and in the content of our curriculum. In methodology, we use the trivium summarized by that little triangle-looking picture on the side which trains students that the world of words, which are learned through the subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, all lead us to the word himself, Jesus Christ, the truth.

They're not ends in and of themselves but rather a way by which we better understand absolute truth because we know that knowledge alone puffs up. Then we, with respect to content, we use the seven classical liberal arts, coupled with extensive study and familiarity with the great books that give us a rich heritage of searching for higher things.

[23 : 33] The picture that's shown here is a famous picture depicting the seven classical liberal arts, grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and then arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and physics. Heading on to terms of classical content, classical education doesn't askew modern contributions but our foremost goal is to humbly learn from the millennia of teaching and questioning and insight from those who have come before us and then to be able to join them in what we call the great conversation in which humans have debated virtue and goodness and beauty throughout the millennia.

A very sad feature of progressive education today is that it's largely cast off the canon of works that until now, generations have loved and wanted to pass down to their children.

These are works that have uniquely inspired good character by showing us flaws in characters and stories that maybe we can recognize in ourselves or by giving us real great examples of true excellence.

But today, it's not uncommon for students to never read a book that's more than 50 years old. This is a tremendous disservice and a really rattling condition, I think, for our children because they have been, the opportunity to learn from where they've come and where their civilization has come is taken away from them when you take away those books.

And students have lost any sort of example of excellence that lives past the fleeting moment. So classical education gives students the chance to read the great books that have lasted and then learn from those great minds in history.

[25 : 07] This also accomplishes a key goal, which I've mentioned, is to order students' affections to love what's lovely and to hate what the Lord would hate. And all through this effort, we're seeking to instill those seven virtues, the four classical virtues and the three theological virtues that I mentioned earlier.

The pictures here represent a very small drop in the bucket of classical education, but you see, starting on the left, Beowulf, dropping down the adventures of Huckleberry Thin, obviously Uncle Tom's Cabin.

This center is Homer's Iliad, the Confessions of St. Augustine, Silas Marner by George Eliot, and the Pilgrim's Progress. Just a smattering of some of my favorites. In terms of the subjects we study in our classical education, what's best known as a liberal arts and sciences curriculum with a strong emphasis on the great books.

And so you see here a list that is really a comprehensive list. We don't expect that families at Knox Classical would add anything to this curriculum. Of course, as students get older, we'll add some additional subjects, most notably like logic, rhetoric, philosophy.

But for the early years, this is what you can expect. And as for theology, it's a study unto itself in terms of catechism and then deeper study as students advance through their education.

[26 : 24] But it's also the cornerstone and the thread running throughout every other subject because it's the queen of the sciences. It's what allows us to make sense of reality. So that's the classical content.

Let's go ahead and talk about classical methodology. You heard me refer briefly to the trivium when we looked at the triangle picture. The trivium, which are the three classical liberal arts comprising the world of words or grammar, logic, and rhetoric opposed to the other liberal arts that we think of as being the world of numbers.

So by grammar, we mean the acquisition of knowledge, the rules of the game, the facts of any discipline. It's your timeline and history. It's your definition of different words in science. It's the actual English grammar of the English language.

By logic, we mean the skills that you need to tell the difference between what's right and what's wrong or maybe even more importantly, the difference between what's right and what's almost right.

And then by rhetoric, we mean the ability to communicate persuasively and gracefully the things that we've learned. So the trivium arts are subjects unto themselves but they're also, and students at Knox will learn them as subjects unto themselves, but they're also the model by which we learn every other subject.

[27 : 38] And this is really largely thanks to Dorothy Sayers' creative thinking. This has a couple of advantages. First, it takes advantage of children's natural developmental stages. I don't know how many of you have a student who just, well, you all have students who are kind of the grammar age right now, but maybe you're amazed at your child's ability to learn.

My son has probably 700 baseball cards memorized. Like, that's just how it works in our family. But there's just a real ability of kids to soak up information in a way that's hard for me at my stage of life.

And then you have the logic stage when kids hit closer to middle school and are just eager to argue out every point. And then certainly when they hit the more high school age and are at a stage of life where they'd like to be able to persuade people to think and see things the way that they see them.

So this study or this approach to education takes advantage of those and doesn't pull against them. The other advantage of this is that this approach trains students how they're going to keep learning throughout their lives.

Basically, they're going to read new information, think through whether it's true, and then apply it to their lives or into their conversations. One other thing I wanted to emphasize and that I was thinking about this week is that at the grammar stage, really our goal is to develop super strong readers.

[28 : 54] So we're going to emphasize heavily phonics, spelling, reading at Knox because otherwise you can't learn new information. So that'll be the real emphasis of the grammar stage. Then we emphasize developing really careful thinkers at the logic stage.

And then finally, we really emphasize the development of good, solid writers and speakers. Now, as you can see from the graphics here, it's not that we never learn new facts or never learn new grammar when we're at the rhetoric stage or don't use any logical thinking at the grammar phase of education.

It's just that those are the emphases of the education at those various stages. We'll go on to say a brief word about why Latin. In this day and age, I think that this is helpful to talk about, though it is interesting that about 100 years ago, no one would have questioned that learning Latin was very important to be a well-educated person.

But I'll offer a couple of highlights for a day and age that it's not as commonly understood. The first is that the knowledge of Latin vocabulary and grammar really unlocks the English language.

80% of our multi-syllable words in English are derived from the Latin. And if you think of many even modern technological terms, even take something like computer. That's a Latin-derived word.

[30 : 06] So we're still actively using Latin in the fields today. And on the grammar front, I had some Latin and Greek root training when I was growing up, but once I got to college and took four semesters of Latin, that really changed the way that I've understood English grammar from that time forward.

And I think that's a really beneficial thing that our Knox Classical students will experience. Beyond that, it's really hard to say that Latin is a dead language when multiple modern languages, including Spanish, French, Italian, Romanian, and Portuguese, all draw substantially from Latin.

I found this to be the case I went on a couple of mission trips to Romania in college, and it blew my mind that I could understand during church services the passages being read or the songs up on the screen just because of some Latin skills from college.

So that's a really cool thing, too. The last two of these relate heavily to our little weightlifter here on this slide, in that especially at the later stages of Latin, it's really a workout for your brain to do careful Latin translation.

But at the earliest stages where all of your students would be jumping in, kids seem to love learning Latin, and the curriculum that we've chosen is a tremendous amount of fun. It's my boy's favorite subject.

[31 : 19] So there's a real benefit to starting this study and reaping the benefits that we've talked about early in life, like our students will at Knox Classical. But I will say that as parents who maybe don't have any exposure to Latin, don't worry.

In all things at Knox Classical School, our goal is to come alongside parents and partner with them and equip them to learn alongside their students and to teach them well.

So you'd be well taken care of. Okay, well, after all of this, maybe you're thinking, all this is great, but does this approach to education really work? Is this truly the fix to all of the problems from the headlines you showed at the beginning?

Now, of course, nothing is guaranteed in life, but I can tell you with great joy that yes, classical Christian education works measured by any standard.

That's why I'm here. That's why my husband and I have chosen this educational approach for our sons. That's why our board is here. And to make this more tangible, though, I'd like to walk you through the results of a study that the Association of Classical Christian Schools participated in about five years ago.

[32 : 25] The sociology department at Notre Dame University ran a study assessing various different metrics of graduates from six different educational backgrounds. They looked at public, non-religious private, Catholic private, evangelical private, religious homeschooling, and classical Christian schools.

They controlled for other influences on students, including church background and family-related conditions. And some of the results are as follows. So you can view all of the results of this study if you follow this QR code, and I'd encourage you to do so.

It's also available on our website. But to summarize, in most of the categories assessed, those were preparedness for college and career, life outlook, Christian life and commitment, independent thinking, and social influence, it's really not even close.

ACCS alumni are significantly exceeding alumni of the other five models. In academics, as you see here, ACCS alums are exceeding the next highest category by more than 15% in college and career readiness.

Their standardized test scores are markedly higher in every area, but especially in reading and writing. And their total reading after school is miles above the next category too.

[33 : 41] But far more important than the academic side of things is whether classical Christian schools are fostering the spiritual development of their students, and the results are noteworthy here too. The vast majority of ACCS alumni are actively engaged in their faith, as you see from the middle box there.

And additionally, while ACCS alums are similar to other Protestants in pursuing spiritual fulfillment, their attitudes about suffering and whether the Lord is sovereign over their suffering and has a purpose for it, their goals, their views about the problems that they face in life, and their thankfulness stand apart.

They also talk about God more with their families, eat together more, and pray together more. Again, I'd encourage you to look at the whole report, but I think that a real life example is also very helpful.

So I'm going to invite Susan Gemity, one of our board members, to share about her experience in classically educating her children all the way through 12th grade. Thank you, Katie.

So I am Susan Gemity, and she shared a little bit about my bio at the beginning, but 20 years ago, I was sitting in your shoes. I had a five-year-old, three-year-old, one-year-old, and a newborn trying to figure out what I was going to do with my sweet little kids, the ones I dearly loved, and what I was going to do for their education.

[35 : 04] My own experiences started a long time ago. I'm a teacher by trade. As she mentioned, I taught at super fancy prep schools on the East Coast for about a decade, and all the while, we were trying to start our own family, and after almost 10 years of infertility, the Lord finally blessed us with our oldest, Michael, and we moved back to Kansas City, which is where I'm from, and we raised the family here.

And when I think about my education, I actually went to a Christian school here in Kansas City and graduated from there, and I was kind of considered the smart kid in the class, 4.0, blah, blah. The bottom line was I was a good memorizer and I was highly organized, which yielded pristine grades.

But when I decided to homeschool my own kids, I thought I wanted something more, but I wasn't sure what that more was, and that's when I was sitting in your shoes 20 years ago. And that more came across a few different people that I'm like, what is this classical education stuff?

Finally, I got my head around it, and that is what we did with our four kids all the way through. I could tell you about the full-ride academic scholarships all four of them got, \$30,000 plus a year, blah, blah, blah.

I could tell you about this, that, and the other, but what I really want to tell you is I have four adult children who love God, who have learned to think critically, they can write persuasively, and they can speak winsomely most of the time.

[36 : 25] So that is really the goal of classical education, and that is what I am here to say. It does work.

And as Katie pointed out, you know, in a world that's really in a meltdown, essentially, we can be building and training young leaders to do more.

Let's break down those three things. The first one is to think critically. As young kids, your kids will start, as she mentioned, memorizing many things, which will be a foundation, but when they get to middle school, they'll be taking things like logic.

My youngest said one of the most interesting things that I have heard. She was probably 14-ish at the time, and she said, Mom, taking logic rewired my brain, and your middle schooler, someday, it will be just in the blink of an eye, trust me, your middle schoolers will become ones who are going to become the great negotiators in your home, but they will have skills to do it.

And I love that about the thinking critically. Then the writing. As classically educated kids, your students will write, write, and more write.

[37 : 37] And let's forget about chat, GPT, AI, that can maybe do it on its own. Trust me, it really can't. So one example is my younger son. He was applying for a scholarship at his college, and it was a timed exam of questions, and that he was going to be graded upon those, and scholarships would be then doled out.

And because classically educated kids learn to think and synthesize versus my education, I was learning when the Parthenon was built and what general won the Battle of Yorktown.

I can grab my phone and Google any of those answers in one second. But classically educated kids are going to learn how to think and then synthesize a lot of information, and that is what Nicholas did on this application because he was doing that in his sleep for years.

So when he came to 18 to fill out this application, it was like, this is so easy, and it was timed, and so he was used to thinking quickly on the spot. That particular scholarship application yielded favorable results, and that resulted in a full ride.

15 students out of 1,000 received that. Again, this is not because my kids are perfect. Trust me, they're not. They have plenty of warts. But they have learned to think, write, and speak. Lastly, the speaking part.

[39 : 03] My younger daughter, my older daughter just recently got married, and my younger daughter was her maid of honor. This was six months ago. And at the rehearsal dinner, my younger daughter gave the maid of honor speech.

And I was not involved. I did not proof it. I did not help with it. I did not suggest it. I just sat there. And prior to Grace delivering her maid of honor speech at the age of 18 to a crowd of 100 and something, the groom's best man, who was about 10 years older, 28 years old-ish, gave his speech, which was very lackluster.

It is what it is. And Grace gets up there and literally knocks it out of the park. Again, not because my kids are perfect, but they've done this. Grace took two years of rhetoric. That little chart she showed you, two full years of rhetoric where she was delivering speeches every single week.

Some were ones that she had planned, like Katie did, and many of them were extemporaneous. So she did beautifully. I probably had four families come to me after that rehearsal dinner saying, whatever you're doing for your education, I'm going to start doing.

That was Grace. So I'm here to say you are at a crossroads a little bit trying to decide what you are going to be, what story you're going to be sharing when you're in my shoes.

[40 : 23] And all I'm here to say is for us, classical education really was that magic bullet. I'm here to say. And it's been a beautiful journey. And I hope that in whatever way, whether it's Knox or in your own way, you'll figure out a way to integrate it in.

Thanks. Thank you, Susan. I always find that encouraging. And I hope you all do too. We'll go on now.

We kind of wrapped up the classical pillar. We'll talk now about the Christ-centered pillar of our educational philosophy. Our goal at Knox is to disciple followers of Christ.

And that's going to be the motivator and the guiding light for our teachers and our administrators and how they instruct students and how they correct too when that's needed. We've talked about this, but we desire to form the affections of our students based on what God loves and what God hates and develop godly character through that effort.

Students need really good examples to follow. And so a non-negotiable for us is that our faculty and administrators will be walking with the Lord and wholeheartedly and unabashedly adhering to our statement of faith.

[41 : 34] As part of our daily routines at Knox Classical, we'll have morning and afternoon assemblies marked by prayer and singing of hymns, communal recitation of scripture and catechism and more.

But then in our curriculum, another aspect in which we're seeking to be Christ-centered, we hold first and foremost to the fact that Christ is preeminent, that he declared himself Lord through his resurrection.

And so we start from the premise that through him all things were made and in him all things hold together. That principle will animate everything that we do, even as our approach to education follows the classical tradition.

But that's why when you hear me talk about the classical tradition, we can't divorce the Christian aspect of that from the classical approach because Christ Jesus holds that all together. We revere the Bible as the greatest of the great books and we will study it as such, allowing its truth to provide the plumb line by which we measure the rightness of all other ideas and to provide the framework by which we can cohesively and comprehensively understand all the other subjects.

And then we'll provide a robust set of biblical materials for students to memorize and return to over and over, knowing that the things that they're going to memorize in these early years in particular of education will, Lord willing, stick with them throughout their lives.

[42 : 55] We'll go on to talk about why we've chosen to be a collaborative school. There are many really successful five-day classical schools, but we've chosen the collaborative model for several reasons.

The first is that we believe it makes it easier for parents to remain the primary responsible party for the training and instruction of their students. Deuteronomy 6 requires parents to teach the scripture at all times and in all contexts, and ensuring that our parents are actively involved in the academic education of their children gives parents more opportunity to do just that.

I mean, I know that's a reason that many of you might have been inclined to homeschool in the first place, but if you're anything like me, as I indicated earlier, despite your diligent efforts to try to pick out curriculum each year and plan lessons as often as you can, it can be really hard to execute that super well on a week-to-week basis when you're responsible for a lot of other things in the home.

So what a collaborative approach offers is the very best of traditional schooling, the devotion and commitment of a classroom teacher who introduces new material and plans assignments and issues report cards, along with a team of homeschool giants like Susan and Chris and Dottie to be able to help you select curricula, but also giving parents three days a week to be the primary instructor and influence in their children's lives.

The other thing that's really important to us as a board is that the two-day classroom model allows us to keep tuition prices as low as possible, meaning that this education is more widely available and attainable to more families who desire it.

[44 : 31] So how will this work in practice? This is a summary. By Friday night, you would have detailed assignments that your classroom teachers would post and that would be available to you.

You can prepare for the week ahead over the weekend, and then on Mondays and Wednesdays, students would attend classes here at Providence from about 8.15 to 3.30. We would welcome families to join us for those morning and afternoon assemblies that I mentioned as a real time of unity and a congregational time among our community to come together to worship the Lord and focus on Him.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, you would complete home assignments from the assignment sheets that your teachers have provided, and at least through fourth grade, students will have Fridays as kind of a flex day. Teachers may give some supplemental assignments or some things that need done here and there, but in general, those are days preserved for your family to use however you see fit for extracurricular activities, family time, travel, whatever would really enrich your family's rhythms and education.

I mentioned this earlier, but families will receive report cards from their teachers. In general, teachers will take care of the big kind of macro grading, like assigning semester or quarterly grades, and parents would pretty much just be grading like math assignments for the day.

Talking about our campus days as we move on, these are fully-fledged school days. So mom and dad are off for the day. It's not a co-op model. We don't expect parents to be here. We earnestly desire parents' prayer during the school day, and we will ask for parental volunteers from time to time for different things.

[46 : 06] But Mondays and Wednesdays are days that your students will be at school, and you're free to do whatever it is that the Lord has called you to do with that day. Focusing for a moment on the small classrooms, which will really be a key distinctive of our school, and then also the community aspect, which is really special.

There are really deep friendships that get fostered through an education that's focused on thinking through big ideas and reading the same books and debating those ideas together. To this day, some of my closest friendships are friendships that I made while in college and in classical kinds of classes.

And so we really hope that our students at Knox will foster friendships that would push each other not only toward learning more, but certainly toward being disciples of Jesus. Art and music studies will be here.

You can always supplement in those areas, but we will do art and music here as well. And we look forward to giving students a real sense of pride and community in the school by having events on a regular basis, things like book parties where they can act out the books that they've read or big communal events like a Greek Olympics when we've studied the Olympics.

On to the home days point. The goal here is that you would have, be freed up to really enjoy the learning process with your children rather than devoting a lot of your time and energy to having to sit down and plan out the assignments that you're doing each week.

[47 : 29] One of our distinguishing qualities too, even among collaborative schools, is that we really have a heart for integrating studies across grade levels. Meaning that, say, your sixth grader one day at Knox would be studying the same events in history as your second grader.

That does a couple of things. It streamlines your lessons at home, but it also gives older students an opportunity to serve younger students in your family. It gives younger students an opportunity to learn from older students.

And so that's something that is being a guiding principle in how we develop our curriculum. The Friday Flex Day gives you a bit of breathing room in your week. That's not to say, though, that the curriculum is watered down.

Our campus days will be very efficient. Our teachers will be very skilled at putting in a lot of material in a short time while keeping kids engaged and enjoying it. And then on the home days, you will be amazed at how much you can accomplish in a shorter amount of time through working through your students' assignment each day.

And I think students find it rewarding to know that with hard work and with diligence, they can be free for the day once they've finished their school and they're not just stuck in a classroom until a certain time every day.

[48 : 36] This gives you a rough estimate of what you might expect based on schools that are also using a two-day model. So that's about the time that you could expect to spend on the home days with your students. We'll go on now to a preview of an assignment sheet.

When it comes to assignments, I know you can't read all of this, but this is just intended to give you an idea of the detail that your teachers would provide to guide you in your efforts with your students at home.

We will also encourage our teachers to offer you additional ways that you could go deeper if you want to as the parents you're in charge and retain the control to keep drilling down if you have a student that really wants to learn more about the history that you did this week or would like to go further with math in some way.

And so we'll make sure that we provide those ideas for your family to keep benefiting from too. Now we're really getting ready to land the plane here, but we're going to take a moment to talk about our curriculum selections in particular.

These are all in the back available for you to flip through and preview. And if you have any questions about the selections, please head to the back after this to ask and talk with Dottie and Susan.

[49 : 38] We'll start with the Tapestry of Grace curriculum. At the top, I mentioned it earlier, this is the thing that got Dottie off of being a STEM powerhouse and really focusing on history and literature for her younger students.

Tapestry of Grace is a curriculum that covers the humanities. It covers history, geography, literature, Bible, and fine arts history. And it combines really some of the best aspects of classical education, but also some ideas from Charlotte Mason that I think are valuable.

But it's first and foremost committed to the preeminence of Christ Jesus. It's written as a cycle curriculum. So there are four separate years of the curriculum with assignments pegged to each developmental stage of the student.

So there's a lower grammar, an upper grammar, a logic stage, and a rhetoric stage. And the idea is that over the course of your child's education, they would revisit the same material and cycles, but go deeper each time, building on the levels of learning.

The kindergartners are going to start with an introductory version of the curriculum called the primer. And it's really a joy. It's also designed to help parents who are first-time homeschooling parents to kind of get their legs under them.

[50 : 45] And it's got a really practical, encouraging book on that that comes with the primer. Tapestries is a really robust curriculum, but we've got a lot of experience to implement it well. And it's really nicely suited for a collaborative setting because it is pretty beefy when you look at it just yourself.

But with teachers to help guide you through that, I think our students will benefit really well by watching how it weaves the macro study of history into the particular experiences of people through literature that literature gives you an insight into.

And in all those things, seeing how the Lord is at work throughout history. Our science curriculum is somewhat similar in the cycle approach. It's called elemental science. We will start next year with everyone being on biology, and then we go through earth science, chemistry, and physics in the subsequent years.

And then the kindergartners, again, will do a really fun intro overview that covers a wide variety of subjects. The asterisks here just indicate the things that are the integrated parts of our curriculum.

And at the same time, too, everyone is going to have similar foundational memory work. So all of our students will have memorized the same Veritas timeline that covers 160 events to have kind of the guideposts for them to put all of their history events on as they keep going.

[51 : 59] They'll have similar catechism memory that they're all working on. Going down to Singapore math. Singapore math is an approach to math that's concerned not only with teaching students how to do math and just to memorize math facts, although they do, but with really giving students a deep grasp of how and why math works the way that it does, and hopefully giving them an appreciation for the order that our God has put into his creation.

Handwriting without tears is an OT-approved handwriting curriculum. Our students at Knoxville start with manuscript and then transition to cursive around second grade. And then spell to read and write is a, or spell to write and read.

Did I say that right? Spell to write and read is a really rigorous phonics curriculum that's going to guide our students all the way into even their logic years, too, to help our students become the strongest readers and spellers possible.

Now, all of these selections are, of course, subject to review and refinement, but I will encourage you that this is a list compiled by people who have a collective decades of experience in classical Christian home education, particularly in the home context, so they know what they're doing, and I'm really blessed that my kids get to benefit from their wisdom and insight here.

When we talk about tuition and fees, which we will do on the next slide here, I'll reiterate our heart that our desire over the long term is to both make this educational attainable, education attainable for as many people as possible while also paying our teachers well enough that they can make a long-term commitment to Knox.

[53 : 26] So these numbers reflect really careful planning to ensure that we are financially stable and responsible with the resources God has given us. And they were also calibrated based on tuition for similar programs in the area, so we think that this is competitive and will offer really tremendous values for our families at Knox.

I'll emphasize that the enrollment fee plus tuition number covers everything that students will need with the exception of like their uniforms and their basic school supplies, pencils, paper, and such. This also covers your books, so you're not responsible for buying separate books.

And our heart, too, is that especially for texts like works of literature or something, that we will give students their books so that they can start to build a library of their own great works to have. I'm about to open the floor for questions, but we'll walk through the admissions process here for just a minute.

Here's the timeline. Y'all have already completed the first step in our admissions process, which is to attend an info meeting like you have today. Later this afternoon or evening, you'll receive an email from us with links to our application.

It has a few different components. In particular, everyone fills out one family application and then a student application for each student. Once you've paid your application fee, which you do online, we'll email you to let you know that the application is complete and then we'll start reviewing the application.

[54 : 42] We are reviewing applications on a rolling basis and I will say that we have quite a few applications already for kindergarten, so if you have a kindergartner and you're interested, please consider applying sooner rather than later.

We'll do a family interview with families, which is basically just a time to get to know you since Knox Classical is partnering with parents and we want to make sure that we've answered any questions that you have about that relationship and then we ask for a short student academic assessment basically just to give your students teacher information about their strengths and weaknesses for the upcoming year.

You'll have all of the application rules in the email that we send you to, but I will flag that because we're starting to fill up our kindergarten class, once you've received an offer of admission from us, you have two weeks to pay your enrollment fee to secure the place for your child in that class.

You can still pay that enrollment fee up through May 1st. We just can't guarantee a spot in the class past that two-week period. So let me know if you have any questions about that. Now, I said we're going to email this, so how do you get the application email?

Make sure you fill out the form that we were showing from the QR code at the beginning of this time. We'll put it back up on the screen at the end, but we need that. We need you to fill out that form so that we know that you are here today and we can send you the application.

[55 : 59] With that, I hope that this has been inspiring to you, at least even if Knox Classical isn't the best fit for your family. I hope that this has just been an encouragement, that your diligence to educate your children in a way that honors the Lord, we pray, will not be in vain.

His word doesn't return vain, and I know that he will be faithful as you all seek to raise your children well. But let's open the floor for questions if you have anything global, and if not, please feel free to come ask any of the board members if you have particular questions.

Yes? On the slide that you mentioned how much work at home will be in the future in the middle, if you've got two videos that will be a little later next year, would that be combined sometime?

Like, do you overlap that, or would that be separate from the hour and a half? Great question. I think that you can anticipate that you would probably be on the, in the total, you would be on the upper end of the ranges if you imagine saying, okay, here's your math work for the day, here's your math work.

But you don't need to think of it as like stacking two together. You would be able to work with your students together. And especially with the history, it is very common too that we will have history assignments, for example, or science assignments that they would do together.

[57:11] And that's, again, the key of that integration. Anything else? Great question. Yes? Yes? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. we are um we are open to considering additional kindergarten classes in particular if there's if there appears to be a need for it right now our plan is to just have one per grade um but we're open to whatever the lord would have us do on that front yes we will have recess and the plan will be to have outdoor recess on any days that the weather permits um our our focus on the campus days isn't to be it'll probably be like a 30 minute window our focus here is to make sure that these are really robust academic days so then that those three days at home can be available for whatever extra um kind of formal PE things or if you want to do extracurricular sports that families would like to incorporate on those days yes we have not we have some candidates that we are considering but we haven't extended any offers yet there during the day the building will be completely locked down and the board is developing our policies for how we will make sure that we've got we're doing best practices for things like moving from here to the car line to pick up and drop off students but the building will be locked down during the day anything else yes right so for our kindergartners our academic our assessment is really um it's a yes and no my child can do these things kind of assessment that that just kind of give us a gauge of where your child is at so it's simple things like does your child recognize their name when written does your child know some colors can they sit for 10 to 15 minutes can they follow multiple instructions in a row um and so so that's what we're looking at for kindergartners if there was a situation where where your child wasn't able to accomplish a lot of the objectives um dottie or susan might talk with you a little bit about what might make sense to best serve your child for the coming year but that's what we're gauging there just those kind of skills um in the far back yes and i'll get you we intend to hire a classroom teacher for each class um unless for some reason say like second and third have very low enrollment then we would hire one teacher to teach second and third together i don't anticipate that that's going to be the case we already have several third graders um but one for each classroom and then we would like to hire an art and a music teacher as well i think that they might find that there's a bit of a difference in what their days look like and in the emphases particularly on things like drilling memorization and such but no matter the background kids do seem to transition well into this model and especially at these early years this is a good time to come in when it comes to things like latin and such too all of our students this first year it'll be at a really easy on ramp for latin so there's no there's no prior experience expected in that particular area either yes we certainly have thought about it we anticipate that our focus at knox in part because there are so many great opportunities for homeschool families in this area and in kansas would be to stay focused on the academic side of things um but that'll be up for debate maybe we'll have at least a cross-country team since we can just send them out in the parking lot to run and such anything else and we're taking mascot submissions that's it's harder than you think it is we thought first a scottish ox because of like john knox and we're like no that's a little it's a little bulky

and slow and not so good yes almost none um so we have if you go to our website on our home page we've made available our family handbook which has our particular technology policy too in these early grades technology won't be in the classrooms at all and i honestly wouldn't anticipate that it will be at the upper grades either of course students will be able to type their assignments and do research and that kind of thing but it's not a part of the classical education anything else that we can talk about here yes that's right we have a whole level downstairs that um it will be dedicated to knox we are and we're working on remodeling that a little bit just to make sure the students have really nice spaces and it's going to be lovely for them but that's where things will take places downstairs we'll do our morning and afternoon assemblies in this room each day great questions is there anything else well thank you all very much for your attention and your thoughtfulness we're all here ready to answer any questions that you have um and may god bless you as you keep thinking about educational choices for your children for next year