

Dear Prospective PDE Parents,

Let me take a moment in the midst of decision making time to explain to you what PDE means to me. If you make a decision to join with the PDE program there are a few points of focus I must explain.

PDE is not an after thought for me. My entire educational career has been a journey to understand the learning process according to God's plan. Though PDE was advertised as an affordable alternative to normal Christian schooling I regard it as a breath of fresh air that allows and promotes a pedagogy (learning process) that more resembles what God intended and provides a learning atmosphere and opportunities that is difficult for a traditional approach to create. That's a pretty strong statement. Why?

To some restructuring of MCA means the old is past and the new is just a reduced program to get by until something better comes along. This is not the way I approach education, nor does this represent the God I serve. I do not frown on small beginnings if they are part of God's building project. This is how I look at these next years and why it is essential that I communicate where we are going, and how we will get there. In other words the next step in determining whether the PDE program will work for us is to determine if we have the same goals and objectives. I have chosen to explain both the philosophy and the program through a PDE anagram and the four relationships that God has established in His kingdom.

## PARENT DIRECTED EDUCATION

### **Parent:**

Agreement with the goal of the PDE philosophy is essential. But what is the expected role of the parent? Deut. 6 is clear when it gives a framework for parent involvement. Parents are to be directly involved with the learning process of their children. Whether this happens at a school facility or at home is not as important as the hands-on approach to each child's development. This is absolutely necessary for success. Parents, teacher, students must realize they are an essential cooperative school community and the health of that community depends on all of us.

### **Directed:**

Though the mastery core course is absolutely necessary for all students, PDE has a higher goal of directing and guiding each student into their giftings and callings. Since PDE curriculum and scheduling is structured to promote this end, students and parents are expected to initiate and participate in the

design of each child's educational plan. At each developmental stage, evaluation and assessment will be necessary to assure the anticipated outcomes. In others words, the mastery core courses are not the goal, they are one of the means in achieving the goal.

### **Education:**

Biblical framework for teaching.

In Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills, knowledge (facts or information) is at the low end of the spectrum. Analysis, syntheses and evaluation are at the higher end. Classroom instruction for Junior high and up must increasingly emphasize these characteristics to issue quality learning. A Project Learning (PL) approach is one model that has been successful in achieving this objective.

What are the goals of PDE education? PDE defines education through the four basic relationships in the Kingdom: God, Self, Others, and Creation. To this end PDE constructs the following Project Learning framework.

**God:** We are God's project. This cliché is overused and simplified, but for this application it fits. God reached out to us to reinstate a relationship with us that we destroyed by our rebellion. Now that relationship determines all other relationships. We are to honor Him in all that we do. We are to be "excellent in doing". We give God our best. We honor him by allowing Him to renew our minds through His word so that we can be His ambassadors in every area of life. This is called a Biblical Worldview. This relationship gives the ability through the Holy Spirit and the proper balance to correctly understand the other three (self, others, and creation).

**Others:** The Great commandment says to not only love God, but to love others as yourself. Another crucial part of PL is Service Learning (SL) a component which prevents us from becoming preoccupied with self. Phil. 2 says that HE, Jesus, did not regard equality with God something to be gained, but became a servant. Being like Christ has its fulfillment in our service to others, even the poor and needy. SL brings this emphasis to the forefront of the PDE curriculum and expects students to engage intentionally in ways to bless others and serve the community. Missions, local and foreign, tutoring, mentoring, community outreach and service are just a few ways to develop a Christ-like servant heart.

**Self:** God does expect us to have a Godly perspective of self. It sounds strange to ask if you have a good relationship with yourself, but society proves that our personally moral, psychological and physical growth is a basic component of good health. Luke 2 says that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature with God and man. Project Learning (PL) emphasizes the higher cognitive skills that prevent us from thinking too highly of ourselves by requiring students to go through a process which brings discernment to life issues. Wisdom becomes the goal, not just the accumulation of facts and information. A student becomes responsible for their educational outcome. Their ministerial, academic and vocational growth requires diligence and planning. This approach addresses the age old saying “ Why do I have to learn this, when will I ever use it.?” God has a plan for all of us and it should be exciting to know that we are taking clear steps toward that end.

The PL approach practically means that students will be involved in projects as a major part of the educational plan. Presentations, research, group activities, field research and trips, internships, independent study, mentorship, and ‘school to work’ are some examples.

**Creation:** Genesis 1 clearly states that man is to be a good steward of His creation. Outdoor Learning (OL) emphasizes an important aspect of God’s relationship with man; that is, to be co-heir and ruler on earth. Though marred by sin, under the redemptive work of Christ we are to occupy and promote the welfare of the communities and nations by providing Biblical solutions to contemporary problems. OL addresses the environmental issues of the day. The scope of topics and opportunities in the disciple seem endless. Students will also be instructed in creation evangelism. Romans 1: 19-21 states that the invisible attributes of God can be clearly seen through the things that have been made. As in the past through investigating many different environments, students will gain an understanding of God’s plan.

Conclusion: Education must be relationship based because God is a relational God. I hope this breakdown and explanation gives further insight into the PDE program.

In His Service,  
Paul Sontag