

Statement on the Church and Parents' Chosen Methods of Education

The Session of Midway PCA, Powder Springs, Georgia, wishes to encourage all its member and visitor families to pursue the best God-honoring means of education for their children. Accordingly, we believe:

1. That all parents are called by God to be involved in their childrens' education and discipleship (Dt. 6:6-8; Eph 6:4). We believe this to be a high calling and urge all parents to embrace their educational oversight role as a parental calling that is not shirked.
2. We equally recognize that members may validly choose to exercise this calling by employing and delegating parts or the whole of their childrens' discipleship and education (1 Cor. 12:7-8) to a variety of educational methods, including public schools, private schools, home schools, and Christian schools. Our members may even make different choices from these options for different children within their own families, depending on need and without any censure or stigma.
3. Since we view this as a set of choices governed by Scripture, Christian liberty, and sanctified prudence, we do not view any one educational method as inherently superior to the others (Acts 20:27; Gal. 5:1; 1 Cor. 10:23-24). There is, in our view, no single, superior educational choice. Each family must assess its own gifts, location, finances, season of life, in-home assistance, and other factors to decide what is best for it as it seeks the renewal of disciples' minds (Rom. 12:2-6). Counseling with elders and pastors on this subject is always welcome.
4. Hence, the role of the church is to support and equip its members (Eph. 2:14-22) in whatever educational choices they select. There is to be no discrimination between any educational method simply due to its nature. Furthermore, we urge each family to recognize the limitations and weaknesses of any chosen method and to seek to offset those weaknesses with biblical values (1 Thess. 5:21).
5. We invite all members who have taken vows to study the purity and peace of the church—noting that none of those vows contain any particular commitments to any educational method—to work for unity of the church (Eph. 4:1-7), even among peers who choose other options than one's own (Rom. 14:1-4). Recognizing the frequent tendency of committed believers to divide along these lines, we urge each member to be cautious either in criticizing another's choice or in looking down judgmentally on others' choices (Mat. 7:1-5; Phil. 2:1-3).
6. We further commend our youth and childrens' ministries, along with age appropriate Sunday School classes as helpful for youth discipleship. The Session uses persistent caution in calling and approving workers and employees in these areas, and thus we see value in biblically-led, age-segmented groups (2 Tim. 2:2), under the oversight of ordained ministers as a good for families and as helpful for integration into our church.
7. We call on all members to avoid fragmenting the church around such choices (Rom. 15:5-7). Moreover, parents should not expect that the church will subsidize their or others' educational choices.

8. At the same time, the Session believes that children may need counseling and correction from ordained leaders, regardless of educational method chosen (Rom. 3:23). That is to say, our goal is to present every believer as mature (Col. 1:28-29) and equipped to minister, serve, and lead in this life. Whether the area is academic, social, occupational, or financial, we hope to lead young people to grow in grace and have their characters developed as holistically as possible under the ministry of this church.

9. We wish to affirm the high value of all teachers (Eph. 4:11) and educators in our congregation. Whether in public, private, home, or Christian schools, we see this as a very high calling and thank God for all our teachers. We encourage all our gifted teachers to pursue such callings and bear witness for the Lord. The church's ordinary worship and ministry should equip teachers for such.

10. Finally, we conclude with an exhortation to encourage parents to prepare their children for a lifetime of learning and service so that they may be leaders in the community, business, and the church. Such excellent education and training is comprehensive and brings glory to God. The methods of obtaining these educational goals is left to parental wisdom, with liberty in the Lord.

We have committed ourselves to these goals, praying for God to bless our homes and build up the next generation.

Practical Questions that may be helpful in the decision-making process:

1. As a parent, do you realize that you are responsible for your child's development, education, and spiritual formation? At times, as I delegate out certain tasks to valued partners, how does my school choice agree with our family's values and our children's needs?
2. How is our chosen educational method able to prepare my child to be a godly, educated young adult who is equipped to fulfill his calling as a parent, spouse, wage earner, and servant in God's Kingdom?
3. Do I think the graduates of a particular school are appropriate and to be emulated? Have I researched and compared the educational outcomes to other methods?
4. Every school is weak in some area – what is my plan to shore up the weakness of my school choice? What involvement on my part is needed to augment this? Am I aware that sin affects every school? And will I devote myself to improving our chosen school?
5. What does an educated young person look like? To what degree is my school choice in line with this?
6. Where are my kindred-spirits? Where did the older families that I respect send their children? Have I spoken with them?
7. Have I spoken with families and graduates from my potential school choice? Am I fairly assessing an educational option, or am I going on second-hand information?
8. Are we preparing our children to face and stand firm in a world that is not friendly toward Christians? As they grow older, will they be prepared to interact with those who think and act differently? In addition to having a Christian worldview, are they challenged to excel in other areas? How will our children witness in the workplace through their vocation and work ethic?
9. Are my finances adequate to continue tithing to the church, as well as to provide not only for elementary education but also for secondary and advanced educational levels, if my child is capable?