

Why Should I Enroll My Child in First United Methodist School?

I want to encourage you to plan now to enroll (or re-enroll) your child(ren) in FUMS for this next school year. Seriously, you can't afford not to!

To me, the cost of not enrolling your child(ren) is too high a price to pay. Believe me, the real cost of not placing your child(ren) in FUMS will come in the months, if not years, to follow. I speak with certainty, since I too made that choice once in my life – to my deepest regret. I'll explain more upon request if you'd like to know the details. My story alone should convince you to find ways to keep your own child(ren) at FUMS.

What happens when a child leaves the Christian security, Godly love, consistent discipline, and academic challenge of FUMS? After talking with numerous parents over my own years of both private and public school teaching and administration, it is almost predictable the difference a Christian educational environment makes in a child's life. When a child is removed from a Christian school of such quality as FUMS...

1. The child experiences a sense of loss for our nurturing and qualified teachers, kind friends, and our caring atmosphere.
2. The child feels insecure, now having to re-prove him- or herself to whatever academic or social level they have already enjoyed at FUMS. A new challenge called "negative peer pressure" will attempt to persuade them to lower their standards in dress, manners, study habits, morality, and language to fit in with the crowd.
3. The academic advantage gained at FUMS quickly dissipates to the lowered standards of lessened expectations, little or no homework, larger classes, and the like. Even if "A" grades are obtained, one must question their validity when we know that the academic content and study requirements are lower, as are the standardized test results when compared to the national averages.

So, why do parents NOT re-enroll (or initially enroll) their children?

To name but a few, the following are the most often stated reasons during withdrawal debriefings:

1. Economics ~ "We can't afford it."
2. Academics ~ "I'm not going to pay for failure."
3. Discipline ~ "My child has never been in trouble." "That teacher picks on my child, doesn't have control of the class, is too strict," etc.

Note: Legitimate reasons such as moving, real economic disasters such as job loss, and the like are not under discussion here.

In brief, let me counter reasons 1-3 above with what I've found to be the case:

1. Economics: When first enrolled, many parents never really "counted the cost" as advised by God's Word. Parents naively believed that the new pay raise or job would provide a better lifestyle (new house, car, or technological gadgets) plus private school. God's economic priorities are found in Malachi 3:8-10 (Tithe the first-fruits to God.); Proverbs 22:6 ("Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."); Romans 13:8 ("Owe no man anything..."); Philippians 4:11, 19 (the secret of contentment and source of all needs is God); and 2 Corinthians 9:7 (God rewards cheerful givers.).

Parents, I am firmly convinced that if you follow God's priorities, you will be financially able to enroll and keep your children in FUMS. By reprioritizing your life, He will provide. Your child's whole development socially, spiritually, and academically may depend upon whether you buy a new or used car or none at all. Think of the real eternal and educational needs of your children before you buy temporal "stuff" and sacrifice their future. A bank loan for your child's education is a far better investment than for a new car, a bigger house, or another new gizmo!

Have you considered the “real” cost?

2. **Academics:** FUMS is unique when compared to other public and private schools. We actually require students to meet required grade academic standards. We do assign homework; we do expect it to be conscientiously completed and turned in on time; we do grade it for quality. Our standards for curriculum content and academic rigor, grade for grade, exceed national and state averages. This leaves many transfer students who come to us at a disadvantage that, with extra assistance, can be brought up to our advanced levels of instruction. Often tutoring is needed. A change in study habits is always needed to meet new academic requirements for the top-quality education that we provide. Without parental support, encouragement, and praise, a child might easily become discouraged by initially lower than expected grades or harder than previously experienced work, but that’s the price for a quality, nationally competitive education! If all students would “Study to show thyself approved unto God...” (II Timothy 3:15), academic achievement would not be a problem. Parents need to be patient until their child reaches their true potential. Only when challenged a bit beyond their reach can students achieve goals never before dreamed possible. In this arena, FUMS excels!

3. **Discipline:** Here is where the true test of parenting comes to the surface. Students’ rights over parents’ rights seem to, many times, be the law of the land. Many times, I ask myself of parents, “Who is in charge in this home?” Disrespect toward adult leadership and authority is becoming rampant in our world, and the influence of the media toward such disrespect is most prevalent. We educational leaders at FUMS are constantly striving to instill in your child respect and honor for those in authority who desire to keep them safe, to educate them, and to expect the best of them. Let me assure you that FUMS’ teachers and staff are all followers of Jesus Christ and confess Him as their Lord and Savior. Each one has sacrificially accepted a position at FUMS to emulate Christ – the Master Teacher – and believe that they are given the special gift and calling of teaching from God. I know of no FUMS teacher who does not love your child(ren) in the Lord. Through Christ, they love your children, but they will not approve of any destructive behavior, attitudes, or language. Without loving discipline and high expectations, there can be no self-improvement or self-discipline.

Why then, First United Methodist School?

- Because FUMS’ educational program is Christ-centered. Students’ are taught from a Christian perspective.
- Because FUMS provides your child with a complete education, involving the whole child ~ spiritually, mentally, and physically.
- Because FUMS is an extension of the Christian home and enables parents to fulfill God’s directive for them to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- Because FUMS provides a sound and superior education permeated with the Word of God.
- Because FUMS’ standards for morality, respect, and discipline are scripturally based.
- Because FUMS will provide wholesome social contacts and positive peer pressure.
- Because FUMS will prepare your children for furthering their education and to be productive citizens for our world.
- Because FUMS’ teachers and staff have all professed Christ as their Lord and Savior and are gifted of God to teach your children His whole truth, grace, and love by the example of Christ’s life and by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit.
- Because all of FUMS’ classroom teachers are college graduates in their content areas, are fully certified and qualified to provide a superior education to your children.
- Because FUMS is fully accredited and accountable for superior standards in all areas.
- Because FUMS is building a loving Christian school and developing your child’s Christian character and academic excellence to the glory of God and in direct response to parental needs. We are an extension of your home.
- Because when students graduate from FUMS, they are ready to face the many challenges of life.

- Because both public and private schools throughout our area are thrilled to receive our graduates because they are so well prepared in academics, work ethics, and Christian character.
- Because, on average, our students test 14 months over the national average in standardized tests.
- Because, currently, we have alumni who have been middle and high school valedictorians and science fair first place winners. They are veterinarians, geneticists, educators, journalists, lawyers, city manager, medical professionals, and other business professionals. We currently have six alumni in law school and others in medical school.

***When Our Parents Were Asked Why They Have Chosen First United Methodist School
Over All Other Schools in Our Area, Here's What They Said:***

- Accredited through Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools; Gold Seal Preschool
- Classroom teachers have bachelor's degrees & certified in grade/subject areas.
- Certified specialty area instruction staff—Computer, Art, Music, P.E. & Library
- Rigorous academic standards; SATs 14 months above national average
- Weekly, engaging, and age-appropriate chapel services; regular humanitarian service projects
- Daily interactive Bible classes; Christian emphasis throughout the curriculum
- Small class size; teacher aides; individual attention
- Accelerated Reader program & awards
- Experiential supplemental education through field trips and special events
- Warm, family atmosphere; exceptional hospitality
- Active Parent-Teacher Fellowship and parent volunteers
- Dynamic school-sponsored family events
- Over 75% of former students graduate in top 10% of high school class; over 80% of former students attend college.
- Extended day child care and tutoring available

With re-enrollment and new enrollment projected to near capacity for this coming fall, you need to ensure space in a class for your child(ren) by a commitment now to avoid the anticipated rush.

May God guide your decision to re-enroll or newly enroll your child(ren) in FUMS at any cost and over any priority.

Remember: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

In Christ's Love and Service,

Dr. Richelle Wagner Sampl, FUMS Principal