

FOUNDATIONS

What Makes Christian Education So Different?

For any school system to achieve its educational mission, being true to its *brand* is crucial. A school's brand is its identity. In the corporate WELS, it is *who we are* and *what we do*, not only in the eyes of our respective communities, but in our own eyes, . . . and hearts. That makes this a very important question—one that *Foundations* organizers were eager to address.



So, what is it that makes our particular brand of education so unique?

If you said the main difference between Christian schools and secular schools is the people, the climate, the curriculum, teacher training, the pedagogy, or the programs, you are only partly right. Many of the above features of Christian education are indeed different from their secular counterparts. But *Foundations* directs parents and Christian educators to something else that isn't always as clear or obvious as we would like. *Christian education* rests on the bedrock of Bible truth. God's Word permeates every aspect of our educational identity. This is the real difference-maker. Our schools and early childhood programs are, in fact, extensions of the church's ministry, which, by definition, occurs wherever God's Word is preached and taught.

In contrast, secular education is committed to presenting a human view of truth that does not align with Scripture. The climate, curriculum, training, pedagogy, and even the special programs offered in public schools are driven by a philosophy that replaces God's work with human endeavor and achievement. Jesus Christ is absent from the secular model. By law, public school teachers must refrain from teaching, motivating, or disciplining children from a faith-based perspective. They cannot lead their classes in prayer, teach from the Bible, apply law and gospel to behavioral issues, motivate children with the gospel, or make a public confession of faith.

Parents need to know about this distinction. *Foundations* creates opportunities to explain the difference by re-asserting our commitment to keeping Jesus and his Word at the heart of our model and by re-affirming the principle that the ongoing explicit and implicit teaching of biblical truth is what sets our brand of education apart from secular models.