



## GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Spring 2011

It's wonderful to see how **our school has matured** in many ways over the past four years. God's hand has introduced new families and new students to Little Rock Christian for His purposes. If you are relatively new to LRCA, you will be amazed to review an extensive inventory of advancements we have experienced by God's grace. Soon, I'll circulate a link to a Warrior memory book so we don't forget what God has done in our midst. Ebenezer!

In January, I communicated my desire to address **frequently asked questions** (FAQs). Where did February and March go? Lest April escape, let me seize this Golden Triangle to fulfill my word and share with you my thinking on the questions we have all asked.

Let me be clear to say, I am accountable to a devoted group of men and women who hold the school's enduring mission in trust - the LRCA Board of Trust. As your appointed servant-leader, I enthusiastically share my thinking on these strategic matters. But, ultimately, it is the will of the Lord and the board that shapes our future. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead and serve in the midst of that dynamic.

### Warrior FAQs 2011

- "How large does LRCA intend to become?"
  1. "Biggest" is not our objective. **Educational quality** is.
  2. For now, 1,400 students is a healthy critical mass for our broad, extensive programs in academics, arts and athletics.

3. Though there are space limitations to consider, an enrollment of 1,450 is conceivable over the next few years.
  4. As we continue to fulfill our mission, waiting lists are highly probable.
  5. Upper school grade levels may expand over the next few seasons to 135 per grade level.
  6. Lower school grade levels will offer student-teacher ratios ranging from 12-24 depending on the age. Three, four and five year classrooms are blessed with the support of a teacher's aide.
- **"We hear the school speak of 'selective admissions.' What does that mean? What are the school's criteria for admission?"**
    1. In January 2008, a new admissions policy was articulated. The prime driver for the new policy was (and remains) "**mission fit.**" Does the school's mission fit the family and does the family's mission fit the school? There are several ways we validate mission fit including:
      - Family testimony - one parent is expected to testify to a personal faith relationship with Jesus Christ.
      - School history - Principal recommendation, English teacher reference and general academic record, and, for 2011-12, a reading/math skills assessment.
      - Youth pastor - older students are asked for a youth pastor reference
      - Admissions interview: family and/or students will be asked what positive contribution they will make to our school's culture and witness.
    2. If an application is not clear, our Admissions committee enters the conversation and makes a recommendation. The Committee is comprised of a board representative, two parents, two principals, the Director of Admissions and the Director of Learner Services.
    3. With a focus on "mission-fit," not everyone who applies is admitted to LRCA. Of our 209 applicants last year, 49 students were regrettably denied acceptance.
    4. "Do we ever miss something or get fooled in the admissions process?"
      - Yes. Therefore, all new students are on automatic probation for 90 days to ensure mission fit. What this means is: at the end of 90 days, principals will review each new student's transition to LRCA - academically and behaviorally - and determine if the fit is mutually beneficial.
  - **"What does tuition pay for? How much does the school rely on gift income? Did our tuition pay for the new athletic field improvements?" "How can we give such value for the tuition we charge?"**

1. Our tuition is based on the cost of education, 70 cents of every dollar is directed to salaries and benefits for our staff.
  2. Since our tuition covers operating costs, we are not dependent on gift income to function; but, gift income allows us to move from **good to great**.
  3. People acquainted with other excellent schools testify to the value of a Little Rock Christian education. We attribute that value to a relentless focus on quality and stewardship. Accredited by ACSI, ANSAA ([www.ansaa.com](http://www.ansaa.com)) and AdvancED ([www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org)), we are also certified by the Council for Educational Standards and Accountability ([www.cesaschools.org](http://www.cesaschools.org)).
  4. Designated gifts improved our athletic fields as part of our master plan. No tuition was tapped for Warrior Field improvements or the new softball/baseball fields.
- **"What is the school's position on bullying? Is it effective?"**
    1. See our policy [http://www.littlerockchristian.com/resources/documents/10-11\\_Bullying-Policy.pdf](http://www.littlerockchristian.com/resources/documents/10-11_Bullying-Policy.pdf)
    2. **The policy is working.** Families testify that we are winning the cultural war. When community boundaries are tested in this area, consequences are severe.
  - **"Are Little Rock Christian students academically prepared for university?"**
    1. We are **first and foremost a school**. Our track record is clear. We serve with the end in mind and the end is a strong, engaging college placement. We boast a 99% placement record. The remaining 1% explores other pre-career options for a year before entering college.
    2. Our results speak volumes to the question of college readiness:
      - ACT scores
      - Duke TIP Scholars
      - College acceptance list
      - National Merit Finalists (16 in 3 years)
      - University of Arkansas Presidential and Chancellor scholarships
      - Alumni feedback
      - College Dean's Lists
      - Eight million in scholarship offers in 2010 (excluding M. Dyer's football offers)
      - State, regional and national accreditation
      - Extra instructional period per day not offered in other schools (Biblical Worldview)
    3. By the way, homework is based on instructional goals. The guiding principle behind the homework load is generally 10 minutes times the grade level (e.g.

5th grade should have 50 minutes of homework per night). Wednesday night should be homework free.

- **"Academically, is there an area of immediate concern?"**
  1. **Yes.** We seek **higher math achievement** from our students. I appointed a math curriculum task force to recommend strategies to accomplish that goal. The driving belief behind the list of recommendations is math "mastery." Math mastery is a step-by-step, practice-driven mode of doing math where students aim to demonstrate mastery in each level of math skill before advancing to a higher level. Merely doing homework, participating in class and passing chapter tests is not enough. Like you, we want our students to understand math, demonstrate proficiency and to advance as far along as possible on the road to math success. Teacher support and challenge go hand in hand with math mastery. By providing you with a strong math coach (teacher), we can jointly help your child be accountable to press on toward the goal of learning to think and problem-solve mathematically.
  2. **Another area we intend to strengthen is digital learning.** From instruction in computer applications to new avenues of digital learning, we are working to expand our potential and achievement.
  
- **"OK, but are Little Rock Christian students prepared *spiritually* for university?"**
  1. Every day we pray that each student encounters Jesus at LRCA. From that encounter, we pray that each student will know Him and become a citizen of the Kingdom of God. This is our prayer: "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and established and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, *just as you were instructed*, and overflowing with gratitude." (Col 2:6-7)
  2. Occasionally, someone will ask me if I really believe we have 1,400 followers of Christ on campus. Like you, I know students on campus who do not know Him. But, every board member and staff member at LRCA loves God, belongs to Jesus, professes our statement of faith and is here to serve. The vast majority of our families aim to follow Christ and raise godly children. In tandem with a strong church and a God-fearing school, we believe **our students have the best opportunity to thrive in preparation for adult responsibilities** as followers of Christ.
  3. They have the foundation we are commanded to provide in Proverbs 22:6 - "train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." (NASV) **We pray that teenage hearts glow for Jesus** as they make the transition to college. Many alumni testify every year that biblical

worldview proves its value during their freshman year of college. The rigor of this class and the anchor of biblical truth pay dividends. We always pray with you that the world, the flesh and the devil will never snare our children. We must trust that the Lord holds our children in the palm of his hand and the Evil One will be powerless to snatch them, long-term, from His grip. (John 10:28)

4. As part of our fruitful college guidance services, we are eager to help our students choose the **best college fit** for their continued spiritual development.
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- **"How are we working to improve a Warrior education even more?"**
    1. The board of trust and I have devoted ourselves this year to mapping strategic pathways to **educational preeminence**. Over the course of one year, we gathered input from a palette of stakeholders: LRCA focus groups, external accreditation teams, internal surveys, board analysis, educational research, community leaders, Kingdom leaders, etc.
    2. We aim to push deeper, be stronger and press higher. Institutional and educational objectives and targets will be shared with our constituents as the promise of the next three years unfolds.
  
  - **"In what ways is Jesus alive and well on campus?"**
    1. Since we are preparing seasoned ambassadors, not breeding spiritual test-tube babies, **we will see varying degrees of commitment to Jesus among our students**. They range from age 3 to age 18. In the Old Testament, our children would not be old enough to fight the battle. Each year, we witness students choosing Christ and making decisions to be His ambassador through mission opportunities, friendships and life.
    2. As Christians, **in preparation for the spiritual warfare of life**, we teach, equip and empower our students with love, grace, obedience, truth, humility, honor, excellence, justice, nobility and the value of a good reputation. **Learning these things takes time, practice and prayer**. Teaching these things - every day - "trains" your children to fulfill their God-given purpose. We thank God - every day -for the servants among us who devote themselves to this ministry all day, every day.
  
  - **"What about students and parents who do not know Christ yet?"**
    1. Jesus says, "Allow both to live together until the harvest." Sometimes, in pulling up weeds, the real plants are damaged. There will be times at school when we draw a line of law; other times, we will draw a line of grace. **Pray for**

**our wisdom and discernment** to know how to redemptively administrate love and righteousness in a fallen world. (Matt 13:30)

Enthusiastically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary B. Arnold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Gary B. Arnold  
Your Head of School

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