

**School Leaders Academy**



INSTITUTE FOR  
CATHOLIC LIBERAL  
EDUCATION

# Parent Formation and Engagement

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School Leadership Academy  
Webinar

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# OPENING PRAYER

**St. Therese, Flower of fervor and love, please intercede for us.  
Fill our hearts with your pure love of God.  
As we approach and celebrate your feast day,  
make us more aware of the goodness of  
God and how well He tends His garden.  
Instill in us your little way of doing  
ordinary things with extraordinary love.**

**Give us the heart of a child who wonders  
at life and embraces everything with loving enthusiasm.  
Teach us your delight in God's ways  
so that divine charity may blossom in our hearts.  
Little Flower of Jesus, bring our petitions (mention in silence here)  
before God, our Father.**

**With your confidence, we come before Jesus as God's children,  
because you are our heavenly friend.  
As we celebrate the Feast Day of your  
homecoming in heaven, continue to  
shower roses and grace upon us. Amen**



# School Leaders call to Renewing Catholic Schools

**Catholic Mission and Vision Alignment**

Faculty and Teachers

**Parents**

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Environment and Culture

# Church Teaching on Parents as Primary Educators

The family is “the first and fundamental school of social living,” therefore, there is a special duty to accept willingly and even to encourage opportunities for contact with the parents of students.

*Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, #34. Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.*

Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and societal education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs.

*Gravissimum Educationis, Pope Paul VI, 1965, #3*

# Church Teaching on Parents as Primary Educators

In the first place the Church's mission of education is in wonderful agreement with that of the family, for **both proceed from God**, and in a remarkably similar manner. God directly communicates to the family, in the natural order, fecundity, which is the principle of life, and hence also the principle of education to life, together with authority, the principle of order.

"The father according to the flesh has in a particular way a share in that principle which in a manner universal is found in God... The father is the principle of generation, of education and discipline and of everything that bears upon the perfecting of human life." [20] *St. Thomas*.

“The wisdom of the Church in this matter is expressed with precision and clearness in the Code of Canon Law, can. 1113: "Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well-being." [23]

*Divini Illius Magistri*, Pope Pius XI, 1929 #30-34

# Helping Parents Understand Their Role



1. Always encourage and promote the necessity of family prayer and quality time together
2. Use your mission statement or other primary collateral to communicate to parents what is expected of them. (Share Church teaching!)
3. Encourage your parents to engage in the school program- helping students learn poetry, attending Mass with their children, volunteering in the classroom.
4. Offer Parents' Night Out to encourage communal support and ways to further educate your parents
  - a. Book studies
  - b. Discussion groups

# Parents and Their Children

- Parents always want what is best for their children.
- The challenge of millennial parents:
  - Insecurities in parenting (technology!)
  - Insecurities in faith
- Restore the proper relationship of parent and child
  - Peer relationships have overcome parent relationships

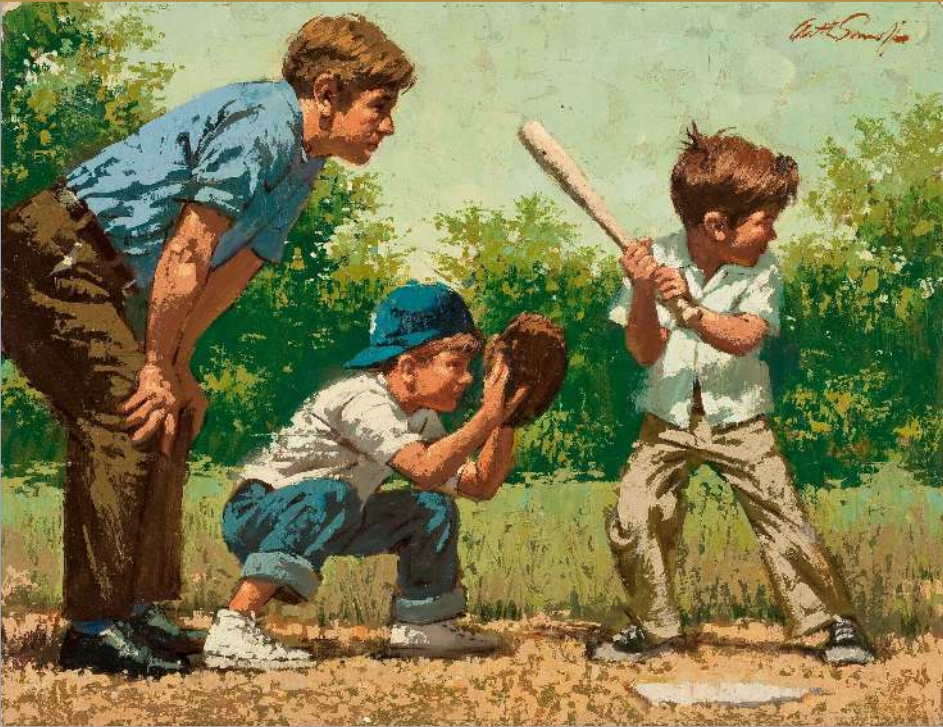
## Two recommendations from Dr. Sax:

1. Command, don't ask.
2. Eat dinner with your kids.





# Parents and Their Children



“Adults who ground their parenting in a solid relationship with the child, parent intuitively. They do not have to resort to techniques or manuals but act from understanding and empathy. If we know how to be with our children and who to be for them, we need much less advice on what to do. Practical approaches emerge spontaneously from our own experience once the relationship has been restored.

The good news is that nature is on our side. Our children want to belong to us.”  
*Hold On to Your Kids; Why parents need to matter more than peers* Gordon Neufeld, Ph. D and Gabor Mate, M.D.

# Parents' Relationship to Students

- Relationship of parents to their student is often unbalanced,... the good news is that it always comes from good intention.
- Both students and parents need support in how to orient this relationship properly.  
(*Always* rely on Church teaching)
- Addressing this head on gives the opportunity for ongoing parent support and further buy in of the mission of the Church and the school.



# Parents' Relationship to Students

“After spending the better part of two decades micromanaging and choreographing playdates, dance practices, extra tutoring for standardized tests and college entrance exams, music lessons, martial arts, select soccer and travel baseball, track meets, art classes, language enrichment and all the rest, it should come as no surprise that the kids have only the vaguest idea of how to make decisions for themselves. All that many of them have ever had to do by age 18 is be dressed and in the car at the appointed hour.”

*The Vanishing American Adult*, page 46

**How does this change in High School?**



# Parents' Relationship to Teachers



The United States continues to underperform in academics. From 2000 to 2012 US has dropped significantly in ranking among other countries in academic achievement.

*\*The Collapse of Parenting page 82*

- Our goal is reestablish the alliance between parents and teachers.
  - Reclaim the nobility of teaching and the respect due to the vocation.
- Communication is critical in this relationship- the right kind of communication.
  - Teachers should set the expectation of student responsibility.
- Strong relationships allow for honest conversations.
  - Parent/ Teacher conferences should be sources of great conversations.

# Why the Change?

## According to Dr. Leonard Sax:

- Overinvestment in technology: “Americans waste an extraordinary amount of tax money on high-tech toys for teachers and students, most of which have no proven learning values whatsoever.”
- Overemphasis on sports: “Sports are embedded in American schools in a way they are not almost anywhere else. Yet this difference hardly comes up in domestic debates about America’s international mediocrity in education.”
- Low selectivity in teacher training: Being admitted to a teacher-training program in Finland is as prestigious as getting into medical school in the United States. In the United States, almost any high school graduate can qualify to become a teacher. Ripley writes, “Incredibly, at some U.S. colleges, students (have) to meet higher academic standards to play football than to become teachers.”

# Parents' Relationship to Administration



- The mission statement drives this relationship.
  - Mission fit families are critical.
- Trust, charity and integrity underpin successful relationships.
  - School leaders will set the tone for these relationships for better or worse.
- School leaders must take an active role in restoring proper authority to parents. Parents today are less comfortable asserting authority than parents in previous generations.

# Creating a Healthy Culture and Environment

- Create opportunities for parents to be involved in the school appropriately:
  - Help plan All Saints Day and feast day parties
  - Get involved in fundraising committee
  - Volunteer in classrooms for specific purposes
- Take parent concern and criticism to prayer.
- Never make decisions based on parents influence.
- Let your yes mean yes- be ok with not giving parents everything they come asking about.
- Lead with integrity- treat all parents the same.
- Keep clear boundaries.



# LEGAL NOTES

Consequences of the Supreme Court decisions and how they affect our Catholic Schools. Just a few takeaways to share regarding the policies and programs and how integral they are to the Mission of the Church:

## **Handbooks:**

Faculty, Staff, Parent, Student. cp., Justice Alito

## **Job Descriptions:**

Ministerial responsibilities of all.

## **Holidays:**

Do you celebrate your religious feasts?

## **Marketing materials?**

## **Curriculum?**



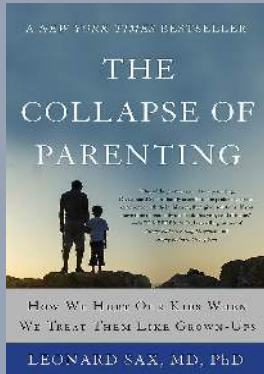
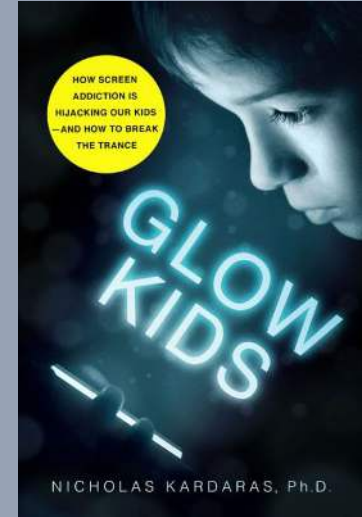
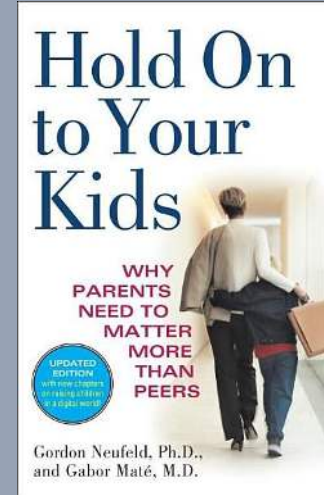
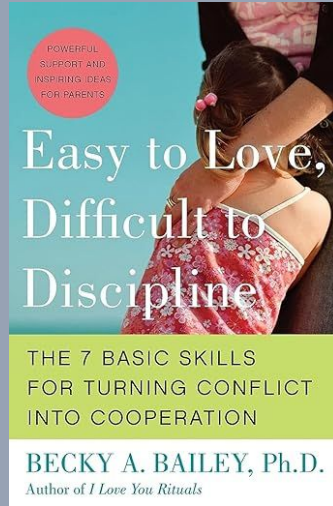
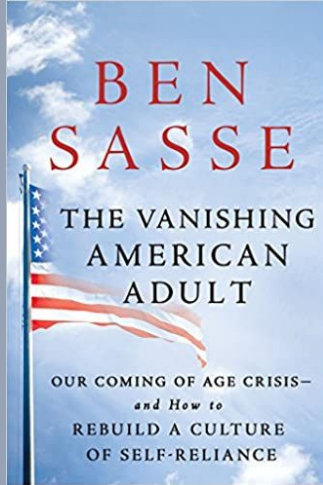


# In Summary....

- School leadership *must* focus on FAMILY FORMATION
- Parents are the primary educator of their children.
- This has explicit implications for school leadership- can be either positive or negative.
- Parents' relationship with students, teachers and administration is critical.
- School leaders set the tone for the right relationship of parents in the mission and culture of the school.
- Student formation succeeds when parents and school are in partnership.
- Relationship is KEY to partnering, from K *through* 12.



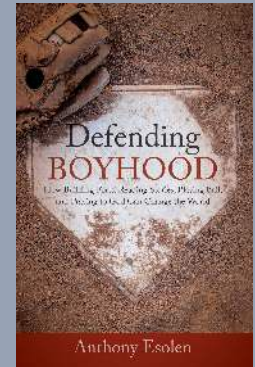
# Resources



<https://AquinasCollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/Parents.pdf>

[http://www.TheRealPresence.org/archives/Family/Family\\_028.htm](http://www.TheRealPresence.org/archives/Family/Family_028.htm)

[Dr. Arthur Hippler: The Boy Crisis | 2020 ICLE Online National Conference](#)



# Assignments:

- After reading the monthly assignments, write an educational school newsletter or parent communication sharing with parents their role as primary educators incorporating Church teaching
- Assess parent groups within your community: do they align with your mission? Are there actions that need to be taken to help restructure these groups to be a more positive addition to your community?

**Due on Oct 31**