CARDUS

EDUCATION SURVEY

Facilitator's Guide

For Administrators and Teachers

DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOL TOGETHER

CARDUS
EDUCATION SURVEY

A facilitated dialogue
based on the
Cardus Education Survey

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE as the participants arrive for the session.

Welcome the participants to this series of four facilitated discussions based on the Cardus Education Survey.

INVITE EACH PARTICIPANT TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES (if necessary), and to explain briefly their connection with your school and their interest in these sessions.

Welcome, Introductions and Overview

CARDUS
EDUCATION SURVEY

- Session 1: Identifying and Valuing Our Strengths
    - Discovering our strengths – imagining our future
- Session 2: Designing Our Future Together – Part 1
    - Focus on Spiritual Formation
- Session 3: Designing Our Future Together – Part 2
    - Focus on Cultural and Community Engagement
- Session 4: Designing Our Future Together – Part 3
    - Focus on Academic Development
    - Affirming our vision and plans for the future

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE, AND DISTRIBUTE THE SLIDE HANDOUT and note-taking booklet.

SAY, **"This is the first of four 90-minute dialogue sessions designed to help us reflect on results contained in the Cardus Education Survey, and to apply our insights to the improvement of the educational experience of our own school."**

BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THE CONTENT OF THE FOUR SESSIONS, along with any important logistical information (i.e. breaks, etc.)

SESSION 1:
IDENTIFYING AND VALUING OUR STRENGTHS

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"Let's take a few minutes to look at our approach to this important dialogue, and why we should first take time to identify and value our school's existing strengths."**

[Proceed to next page...]

Facilitator's Notes

PREPARING TO FACILITATE THESE SESSIONS

First, we want to offer a big thank-you for your willingness to facilitate this important dialogue. We believe that the process we have designed will equip you to lead your group through a meaningful, productive discussion of the educational efforts of your Christian school. Not only will you gain insight into the results of the Cardus Education Survey but, more importantly, you will generate ideas and plans that will significantly strengthen the performance of your school in the three key areas that are the focus of the survey: spiritual formation, cultural engagement, and academic development.

The most important thing you can do to prepare for these sessions is to become thoroughly familiar with the report itself. Read it through once on its own to get an overall sense of the research project and its findings. Then, review this guide, which includes all of the slides in the PowerPoint presentation, to familiarize yourself with how the findings have been summarized. The report's 'Background and Context' section is the primary source for the first part of Session 2. The report's 'Findings and Preliminary Analysis' chapter is the basis for the presentation material of the second part of Session 2, all of Session 3, and the first part of Session 4. The report's 'Discussion' chapter explores some of the deeper issues and unanswered questions raised by the findings. Take time to think about these as they may come up in your discussion.

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to 'walk you through' the process of facilitating a discussion with a group of administrators and teachers—the people most involved on the 'front lines' of creating the educational experience offered by your school. The instructions for this process are on the left-hand (even-numbered) pages, sequenced with the slides you will use with your group.

Pay close attention to the time allocations for each segment of each session. Do not let the discussion of the 'results' material take up too much time—these 'inputs' are primarily intended to seed a discussion that focuses on their implications for *your* school and your suggestions for improving its efforts in the three focus areas. If you don't have access to a projector, you can work with the handouts alone (attached). This guide and the handouts contain all of the slides in the presentation.

FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION

The questions we included on the slides are open-ended, designed to encourage comments and suggestions. Your main role in facilitating the discussion is to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute. Don't be afraid to cut some people off (politely, of course) if they are monopolizing the conversation. Invite quieter participants to contribute, particularly when you haven't heard from them on a given topic. Also, if you have more than ten participants, you may want to use small groups to ensure that everyone gets to speak. Plan your time carefully so these groups can report out.

> **PRINTING TIP:** This guide will work best inserted into a binder with even-numbered pages on the left and the Facilitator's Notes on the right, so that the slides, instructions and support information are easily available at a glance.

A Positive Dialogue About the Future of Our School

- Correcting what's going wrong
- Helping things go right
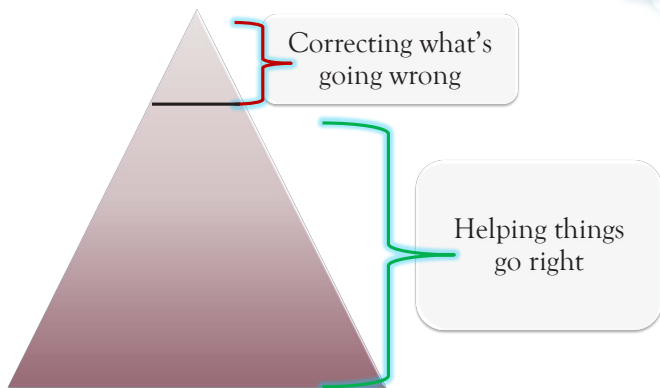
DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"For most of us, it is easier to focus on 'what's going wrong,' whether we're dealing with a child's misbehavior, an employee's poor performance, or a school's perceived shortcomings. What performance experts tell us, though, is that correction works best if we first build a foundation of 'helping things go right'."**

INVITE SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS TO SUGGEST ways that parents and supporters can do this in relation to our school.

Appreciative Inquiry – A Positive Approach

Traditional:
Problem-based
- Main steps in the process:
  - Focus on the problem
  - Conduct root cause analysis
  - Identify and assess solutions
  - Fix what's going wrong
  - Monitor corrective action
- Organizations – and the people in them – are seen as problems to be solved

Appreciative Inquiry:
Strength-based
- Main steps in the process:
  - Focus on the possibilities
  - Appreciate "what is"
  - Imagine "what might be"
  - Determine "what should be"
  - Create "what will be"
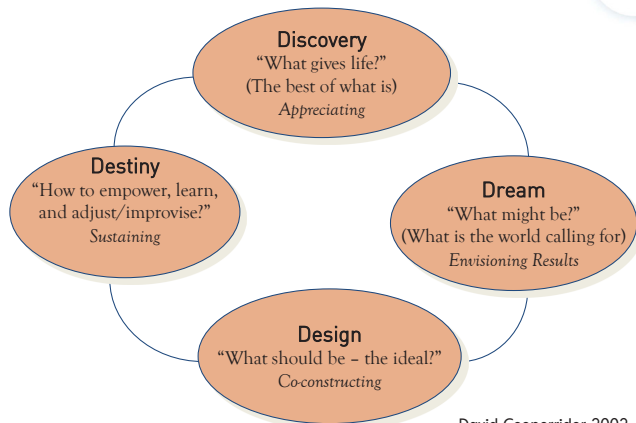- Organizations – and the people in them – are seen as assets to be nurtured

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"There is an approach, called 'Appreciative Inquiry,' that has proven very effective in helping groups such as this to create a positive, 'helping things go right' type of dialogue."**

USING THE SLIDE, EXPLAIN BRIEFLY the difference between traditional, problem- based discussion and the strength-based approach of Appreciative Inquiry.

Four Stages of Appreciative Inquiry

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(The best of what is)
Appreciating

Dream
"What might be?"
(What is the world calling for)
Envisioning Results

Design
"What should be – the ideal?"
Co-constructing

Destiny
"How to empower, learn, and adjust/improvise?"
Sustaining

David Cooperrider 2002

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

USING THE SLIDE, EXPLAIN BRIEFLY the four stages of the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT OR ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE PROCEEDING.

Facilitator's Notes

THE 'PYRAMID' CONCEPT...

This powerful diagram comes from the Arbinger Institute, a leading source of communications training. Originally developed to help parents of 'problem teens' to shift their focus from constant criticism to building a positive relationship, the diagram has since been adapted to a wide range of relationship situations. When you present this slide, invite the participants to suggest how the concept could apply to important school issues such as classroom behavior management or teacher performance feedback, to help ground the concept in the world of a healthy, supportive school.

The 'base' of the pyramid—the 'helping things go right' part—includes a variety of positive relationship-building behaviors, like listening to different points of view, in order to 'earn the right to be heard.'

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY...

The Appreciative Inquiry model was developed by David Cooperrider, a professor at Case Western Reserve University. It was originally designed to help groups begin to prepare for collaboration by recognizing each other's unique strengths. The process, as it has evolved over three decades, has been successfully used by countless such groups to build relationships prior to beginning to act together. It is highly consistent with the concept of 'helping things go right.'

This model has been used extensively in schools and school systems to transform their approach to planning. To see examples of how this has been done, use your favorite search engine and enter the terms 'appreciative inquiry' and 'schools', and you'll find almost 300,000 'hits', including some of Cooperrider's own work in this area.

The process we'll be following in these discussions is based loosely on the AI model. This first session includes both Discovery and Dreaming exercises. Most of Sessions 2 through 4 is aimed at Design. The last part of Session 4 addresses the challenges of Destiny (sometimes called Delivery)—what it takes to translates our Dreams and Designs into reality.

Defining, Discovering, and Dreaming Together   (60 minutes)

Defining Our Focus - Three Core Purposes

- Spiritual Formation
  - More than just religious practices
  - A working definition
- Cultural and Community Engagement – definition
  - More than just knowledgeable critics
  - A working definition
- Academic Development
  - More than just educational attainment and academic performance
  - A working definition

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"The Cardus Education Survey focuses on the three domains of impact that are typically mentioned by Christian schools as being 'core purposes'."**

USING THE SLIDE, BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE these three domains of impact..

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO SUGGEST what might be part of a 'working definition' of each area.

Discovery – Who We Are at Our Best

- Where have we come from – what are our roots?
- Why are we here – what difference do we make?
- What about our school is worth celebrating – what makes us most proud?
- What enables us to be effective in fulfilling our mission?
- What most excites us about our future?

USING THE SLIDE, FACILITATE A BRIEF DISCUSSION about the past, present and future of our school. This is an opportunity to engage all participants in 'discovering' the uniqueness of our school—where it came from, why it was founded and what makes it great. Pay particular attention to bullet point three—what makes us most proud. Invite each participant to answer that question, and capture their responses on flip chart pages.

Dreaming – Imagining the Future of Our School

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"We're going to take a few minutes to dream about our school's future."**

EXPLAIN that Imagineering is what Disney designers do to create a new ride. They 'imagine' the intended participant experience from beginning to end, and then work to 'engineer' it.

Facilitator's Notes

THREE CORE PURPOSES...

Spiritual formation, cultural engagement and academic development—why have we chosen these three 'domains' of impact for Christian schools? The simple answer is that these are three areas commonly present in the 'promise' articulated by Christian schools. As such, they provide a useful framework within which to assess the degree to which these schools impact graduates in ways that fulfill that promise. Beyond this, however, they provide a powerful framework for understanding how education can equip graduates to live out their faith in ways that reflect the transformative power of the Gospel—to live as people who are salt and light in the world, not just well-behaved followers inside the walls of the church. Be sure to read the 'Background and Context' section of the full report to understand this framework more fully. Also, be sure that your group is aware of how these three focus areas are addressed in your own 'promise'—what you communicate to staff, parents, supporters and others about the difference you hope to make in the lives of your students and graduates.

DISCOVERY...

This one slide provides the first real opportunity to engage the participants in a discussion, the outcome of which isn't as important as getting them ALL talking. Be sure to draw out the quieter individuals.

FLIP-CHARTING...

A few tips here:
- Put a title on the page so you'll remember what it was about later
- Print legibly and large enough to be read from anywhere in the room
- As far as possible, stick with the contributor's words—if you feel you have to change them, suggest the change and ask permission
- Only add your points once everyone else has had the chance to contribute

IMAGINEERING...

This really is how the Disney folks design not only new rides but every aspect of the 'guest' experience. For example, the sign-posts in the waiting lines that tell you how long before it's your turn. They even changed their approach to ticketing—encouraging guests to buy in advance online—when they realized the negative experience of 'sticker shock' was not what they wanted their patrons focusing on when they arrived at the park. If you want to learn more, simply search for the term in your favorite search engine.

There's a useful summary at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Disney_Imagineering

Telling the Story of Our Success...

- We're attending the 20-year reunion of our high-school graduating class and telling our collective story...

- Where are we in our faith journey?
    - Growing spiritually and living out our faith day-by-day...

- How are we engaged in culture and community?
    - Serving, participating, and addressing important issues...

- What have we achieved academically and vocationally?
    - Excelling in learning, working, and leading...

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"Let's imagine together that we're graduates of our school and we're attending our 20-year reunion. As we reminisce about our experience in school, we tell our collective story of the difference it made in our lives."**

USING THE THREE QUESTIONS ON THE SLIDE, INVITE EVERYONE TO SHARE the story they would hope our graduates would be telling. Encourage them to speak in the first person as if they were telling the story.

What difference will our graduates make?

- Spiritual Formation
    - Faith that shapes life decisions...

- Cultural and Community Engagement
    - Public participation that influences culture...

- Academic Development
    - Academic excellence that empowers leadership...

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, "Based on the story we've told together, how would we summarize the difference we expect our school to make in the lives of its graduates?"

CAPTURE THE GROUP'S IDEAS ON FLIP CHART PAGES and post these on the wall.

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE ANY INSIGHTS that particularly caught their attention during the Imagineering exercise or this follow-up discussion.

Creative Tension – Energizing Change

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

USING A RUBBER BAND, DEMONSTRATE THE CONCEPT OF CREATIVE TENSION.

SAY, **"Imagine my upper hand as our vision—the best of what we hope for in our school. Imagine my lower hand as our current reality—somewhere short of our vision. The tension caused by the distance between my hands produces the energy required to create change."**

THIS IS THE END OF SESSION 1

Facilitator's Notes

MAKING IMAGINEERING WORK...

The key to any Imagineering session is to keep people 'in the moment', which in this case means acting—and talking—as if they were graduates attending a 20-year reunion of their class. Start things off by providing an example such as, "Gee it's great to see you after all these years and to have a chance to talk about the good times we had in school. Remember how we all gave Mr. So-and-so a hard time in discipleship class! I only wish I could tell him now how much that helped me stay on track when my faith was tested in university." Encourage people to speak in the first person and as if twenty years had gone by and they were reflecting on the BEST of what they experienced. You'll be surprised at how powerful some of these comments will be. Remember—this is a chance for people to turn their longings into reality. Affirm them for doing so and you'll draw everyone deeper into the story.

DIFFERENCE MAKING...

This step in the process is to provide closure to the exercise, but also to capture the essence of what people have been sharing. Be sure to title this page with something like 'Our Graduates Make a Difference.'

REFLECTION AND WRAP-UP

As you bring a session to a close, it's usually a good idea to offer one last opportunity for participants to reflect on 'what stuck' with them from the exercise or discussion. This is also a great time to invite input from anyone who hasn't spoken up previously. Their comments are often 'hidden gems.'

CREATIVE TENSION...

One way to make this simple illustration even more powerful is to provide each person with an elastic band and have them stretch them as you deliver the punch-line of the exercise. That way they can feel the energy stored up the elastic band, and can imagine how the distance between vision and current reality can be energize change.

You can take the illustration deeper still by suggesting that there are three ways to reduce the tension: the ideal is to grow toward achieving the vision, but the others are to lower the vision or ignore current reality. This deeper insight can generate interesting later discussion if you introduce the idea here.

SESSION 2:
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER – PART 1

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE as the participants are getting settled.

ASK, **"How many of you have read the Executive Summary of the Cardus Education Survey report? How many have read the full report?"**

[Note: this will give you an idea of how much descriptive information you'll need to provide to ensure that your audience understands the context of the session.]

CES: Purpose

- To determine the alignment between the stated motivations and actual outcomes of Christian schooling

- Setting a benchmark for further study of Christian schooling

- Provide information to help
  - Parents make choices
  - School leaders make improvements
  - Donors assess the return on their investments
  - Policy-makers improve educational outcomes

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

USING THIS SLIDE, BRIEFLY EXPLAIN the purpose and rationale of the Cardus Education Survey.

SAY, **"In keeping with our commitment to an 'appreciative' approach, CES results are meant to focus discussion rather than serve as a critique. As such, it is an important tool for evaluation, decision-making and planning our Christian school's programs."**

CES: Approach

- State of the art research – unique in scope and approach
- A mixed-methods approach
  - A quantitative study of graduates (all schools) aged 24-39
    - The life directions of high school graduates
    - The goals, plans, and challenges of Christian schools
  - Qualitative studies
    - Cultural awareness and engagement, graduate beliefs and attitudes, race relations, and Christian school administrators
- Isolating the school effect
  - Public school graduates are the baseline
  - Raw scores to identify differences among graduates of Catholic, Protestant evangelical, private (non-religious), and home-schooled Christian schooling
  - Adjusted scores to spotlight the impact of the school itself

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"This survey is unique in its design and scope. Let's take a few moments to understand**

USING THIS SLIDE, EXPLAIN BRIEFLY the survey's approach.

SAY, **"By using sophisticated analysis models, the survey results show clearly the impact of Christian schools."**

DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER...

This session begins with an overview of the Cardus Education Survey. Again, all of the material on the slides is described in detail in the final report. Be sure to encourage everyone to read the full report in advance of your session. There is so much of value to anyone directly involved in providing Christian education that makes this a reasonable expectation. The information in the report's appendices is especially important for two reasons: first, it underscores the uniqueness of this particular study. Second, it provides a more complete framework in which to consider the findings themselves. For example, the descriptions of the qualitative studies suggest ways of exploring your school's experience more deeply in some very important areas.

Please note that you only have 30 minutes to cover the first segment of this session—the overview—so this is not the time to engage the group in a fulsome discussion.

EXPLANATION, PLEASE...

As you work through the overview, there are a few places where it makes sense to provide a fuller explanation than is included in the instructions on the left-hand pages:

• Alignment—in a nutshell, this research attempts to begin to answer the question of whether Christian schools achieve what they promise in the three focus areas

• Benchmark—this research has raised many questions that require further study and, we hope, has provided a useful framework in which to pursue these

• Application—this research is meant to be widely shared, discussed and applied—that means this is only one of many discussions that need to take place

• Mixed methods approach—much of the information in the report comes from a 'quantitative' study where responses from many individuals are tabulated and analyzed, but it also uses input from 'qualitative' studies that invited groups to share comments on specific aspects of each area of focus, providing possible explanations for certain quantitative findings

• What the results mean—in any quantitative research, it is important to be able to show how the results compare to some 'norm' (baseline, as it's called) and to show what impact a particular factor has on the results. In the quantitative study that forms the basis for this report, the responses of *public school graduates have been used to provide a baseline,* so that the results for Catholic, Protestant Christian, Private Non-religious, and Christian Home-schooled graduates are compared with that group, and therefore show how the results for those groups differ from the 'control' group.

• Isolating the school effect—in addition, sophisticated techniques have been used *to 'isolate' the impact the type of school alone* has on the results of the various groups. This makes it possible to remove the expected influence of parental background, church attendance, etc., in order to see just the impact of the school, which often is still significant, and therefore powerful in itself.

CES: General Findings

- Christian school graduates are ideal church members, who...
    - Form stable families
    - Give generously
    - Serve actively as volunteers in and through their churches
    - In other words, solid 'salt of the earth' citizens
- However... they are NOT 'world changers'
    - Most are not politically or culturally engaged, nor are they 'at war with culture'
- Two key questions worth considering...
    - Is our focus on the family skewing our message and undermining our active engagement outside our own walls?
    - Are we actually teaching compliance with a certain set of rules based on avoiding misbehavior?

More General Findings...

- Christian school graduates...
    - Are hopeful and optimistic about their lives and their futures
    - Have the tools to engage in relationships and for problem-solving
    - Are more thankful than their public school peers
    - Have a greater sense of direction in their lives

- However, there are other findings worth exploring...
    - Catholic and non-religious school graduates complete more years of education, and are more likely to attend 'elite' colleges

- Should Christian schools be aiming higher?
    - How can we nurture both faith and intellect?
    - How can we both contribute to, and shape, culture?

In the end...

"... the central question Christian school advocates might ask is
'*What is the purpose of Christian education?*'

Where the impact of Christian schools is not as significant as mission statements proclaim, we wonder if it is because schools are not both thinking deeply about how they might achieve these ends and committing to programming that would support such goals.

This research also asks:
'*Are the noble aims found in Christian schools' mission statements unfounded? If so, how can Christian schools respond?*

Do Christian schools really want to impact culture and society?'"

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"The survey results provide a fascinating—and largely positive—picture of the impact of Christian schools in the three areas on which it focused— spiritual formation, cultural and community engagement, and academic development."**

USING THIS SLIDE AND THE NEXT, BRIEFLY REVIEW the general findings of the survey.

[Take time on the final bullet point on each of these slides to reflect on the questions.]

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on the important questions raised in each.

At the end of the discussion of these two slides, ASK, **"What questions does this brief overview raise in relation to our school?"**

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

PAUSE FOR A FEW MOMENTS TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS to read the statement on the slide.

SAY, **"It is clear from the findings of the survey that Christian schools are achieving some important results. It is also clear that there is room for improvement in the three 'focus' areas. Let's take a closer look at each."**

Facilitator's Notes

GENERAL FINDINGS...

Again, you don't have a lot of time to cover these findings. We provide these as sort of a 'sneak peak' at some of the key issues to be explored more fully later on. On the other hand, do not just skip over this material—there are some powerful 'embedded questions.' For example, the first slide contrasts the 'ideal church member' descriptor for Christian school graduates to the 'NOT world changers' title suggested for the same group. These two points set up the two questions in the last bullet point on that slide. As the instructions suggest, take a few moments to 'let those questions land', and then to invite comment. Similarly, the first two points on the second slide should be used to set up the challenging questions of the third bullet.

TRANSITIONING TO THE IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF THE THREE FOCUS AREAS...

This initial overview should have raised some important questions in the minds of your participants. This final slide is meant to reinforce the importance of addressing these questions. We want to create a sense of urgency based on a desire to explore more fully, understand the issues, and develop robust plans for the future to ensure that your school delivers on its promise.

One difficulty you may encounter at this point is that most administrators and teachers seldom have the opportunity to look up from their day-to-day demands to scan the 'far shore.' You may need to acknowledge this at various points in the process, and to encourage the participants to take advantage of a rare opportunity to focus on bigger issues, deeper reflection and creating the future, as opposed to simply 'surviving the challenges of the present.' For some schools, that will be an easier task. So, be sensitive to discerning the reality of your school's present, and the issues that dominate everyone's thinking on a daily basis, and acknowledge these as well.

Spiritual Formation – National Results

- Christian school graduates...
  - Are more committed to the church
  - Practice spiritual disciplines more frequently
  - Give generously and feel obligated to tithe
  - Volunteer actively within the church
  - Follow the teachings of the church to a greater extent
  - Revere the church and its authority
  - Attend church more regularly
  - Believe that morality is unchanging and absolute
  - Believe the Bible is infallible
  - Believe that Jesus Christ if the only way to salvation
  - Rarely doubt their faith

Spiritual Formation – National Results
(cont'd)

- On the other hand, is it possible that Christian school graduates are...
  - more focused on 'pietism' as a result of a 'dictatorial approach to the study of the Bible, resulting in only a surface engagement and understanding of the whole of the Christian faith?'
  - If so, does this impact the development of the intellect as well as the desire to be engaged in culture and addressing its issues?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

USING THE SLIDE AND THE NEXT, BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE the major findings of the national-level results in the area of spiritual formation.

[Note: all of these findings are included, and described more fully, in the full survey report.]

SAY, **"The national results, as shown on the first slide, are pretty encouraging, but the second slide raises important questions."**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on the results on both slides.

Spiritual Formation: How are WE doing?

- If our school completed the survey, what do our results show?
- If our school has not completed the survey, what would we expect the results to show? How do we know this to be true?
- In either case, what does this tell us about how our school is doing in this area?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

Using this slide, INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on how they think our school's results would have compared.

[Note: if our school participated in the survey, take time to review a summary of the actual results.]

USE THE QUESTIONS ON THE SLIDE TO FACILITATE A DISCUSSION.

Facilitator's Notes

PROCESSING THE SURVEY FINDINGS...
The rest of this session, the next, and part of Session 4 follow a standard pattern:

- Step 1: Review the results from the national survey. For each of the three focus areas, these are summarized on two slides. The first slide summarizes the 'worth celebrating' findings, and the second summarizes the 'may need improvement' findings.
- Step 2: Review local results (real data if the school has participated in the survey), or imagine what they might be.
- Step 3: Identify your own school's 'success indicators' in that area, and begin to think about how to make improvements.

Your role in facilitating these discussions is to keep the focus on what the findings 'say', and not the data (or report charts) themselves. All of the results presented in the report are significant (in the sense of research validity) as they stand. While your results may differ, the national results are a useful starting point for a discussion about what's important to your school. If you have real data on your own school, then you can use it to identify areas for improvement OR to affirm areas of strength. In the end, that's what really matters, not a long discussion about individual findings or research methodology.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION...
It's important to understand each of the focus areas in ways that go beyond simplistic lists of behaviors or attitudes. Spiritual formation, for example, involves developing a 'worldview' that informs how one 'shows up' in the world. Some aspects of this are more readily captured than others. In the second slide summarizing the national results, the question raised is, in essence, "Do Christian school graduates develop spiritually beyond just the simplistic 'marks' of right belief and behavior?" In addition, your school's approach may be influenced by church/denomination expectations as well. It's important to identify these factors and to understand how they influence your particular approach.

OUR OWN RESULTS...
As part of the ongoing process of expanding this research, any school can choose to participate in the survey and, through this, receive its own comparative results. To do this, contact www.carduseducationsurvey.com.

If you do not have actual survey results to use in this part of the discussion, it is especially important that you have a reliable source of information available to explain what your school's approach is in this area. You'll need answers to questions like: Where is spiritual development taught in our curriculum? What content is included? How do we measure success? What impact are we having on our student's knowledge of their faith, and how they apply it in their lives? What do our graduates say about this?

Designing for Spiritual Formation in Our School's Future

- What success indicators matter most for our school?

- What can we build on to achieve these objectives?

- How will we know that we are making progress?

- What can we do to help make this a reality?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"Based on our discussion in the area of spiritual formation, what do we see are the implications for our own school?"**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO RESPOND to each question on the slide and capture their suggestions on flip-chart pages.

THIS IS THE END OF SESSION 2

Cultural Engagement: Survey Results and Implications   (60 minutes)

SESSION 3:
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER – PART 2

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE as the participants are settling in.

SAY, **"Next, we will turn our attention to the second of the three focus areas addressed in the Cardus Education Survey, 'Cultural and Community Engagement.'"**

Cultural Engagement – National Results

- Christian school graduates…
  - See themselves as well prepared to 'meet the world'
    - Having a strong sense of direction in their lives
    - Confident in their ability to navigate life's challenges
    - Hopeful of the future
    - Able to turn to God and Scripture to make decisions
    - Grateful for what they have (even when having lower income)
    - Prepared well to engage in meaningful relationships
    - Willing and able to develop interracial relationships
  - Stabilize communities through commitment to family
  - Serve as volunteers (in and through their churches, primarily)
  - Respect and comply with authority

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

USING THIS SLIDE AND THE NEXT, BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE the major findings of the national-level results in the area of cultural and community engagement.

CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT...

As with spiritual development, it is important to avoid focusing too narrowly in the area of cultural and community engagement. For many Christians, such a focus emphasizes the role of 'critic,' and for others the goal seems to be to remain 'separate' from the world.

The second national results slide in this series, however, raises important questions about whether Christian schools are preparing graduates to be 'in the world but not of it,' as Scripture challenges us to be. How will graduates learn to be 'salt and light' if they are not equipped to understand, and engage meaningfully with, the world? In that sense, addressing this area must go beyond 'talking about the world' or going on the occasional mission trip to a foreign country. Instead, it requires regular, 'hands on' engagement with the issues, needs, potential and opportunities for creating healthy change in the world.

Cultural Engagement – National Results (cont'd)

- On the other hand, Christian school graduates...
  - Are generally not culturally engaged in ways that would support the 'world changers' claim often made by their schools
    - Not actively involved in the political sphere
    - Not in relationships with people of power and influence
    - Not intellectually engaged with the arts
    - Not in relationships with more highly-educated people
- This raises important questions...
  - Are Christian school graduates too compliant and non-confrontational to be the kind of community leaders who can influence culture or stimulate change?
  - Are Christian schools too narrowly focused in this area, and/or ineffective in integrating practical engagement into the curriculum?

SAY, **"Again, the national results, as shown on the first slide, are pretty encouraging and, again, the second slide raises important questions."**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on the results on both slides.

Cultural Engagement: How are WE doing?

- If our school completed the survey, what do our results show?
- If our school has not completed the survey, what would we expect the results to show? How do we know this to be true?
- In either case, what does this tell us about how our school is doing in this area?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

Using this slide, INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on how they think our school's results would have compared.

[Note: if our school participated in the survey, take time to review a summary of the actual results.]

USE THE QUESTIONS ON THE SLIDE TO FACILITATE A DISCUSSION.

Designing for Cultural and Community Engagement in Our School's Future

- What success indicators matter most for our school?
- What can we build on to achieve these objectives?
- How will we know that we are making progress?
- What can we do to help make this a reality?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"Based on our discussion in the area of cultural and community engagement, what do we see are the implications for our own school?"**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO RESPOND to each question on the slide and capture their suggestions on flip-chart pages.

Facilitator's Notes

OUR OWN RESULTS...

Again, if you do not have actual survey results to use in your discussion, you'll need to ensure that you have information available that helps you answer some important questions about how your school addresses this area. You need to be able to answer the same kinds of questions as suggested for spiritual formation: Where is cultural and community engagement taught in our curriculum? What content is included? Is our focus on learning about culture and community 'from a distance', or do we provide 'hands on' experiences? How do we measure success? What impact are we having on our student's understanding of culture and community, and how to engage meaningfully with the world? What do our graduates say about this?

As with spiritual formation, a number of factors that determine how your school approaches this area, not the least of which are the expectations of parents, the church and/or the denomination with which you maintain close ties, and to which you feel a sense of accountability. How do these expectations influence your decisions regarding cultural and community engagement. Do you feel pressured either to maintain separation or, conversely, to engage deeply? What priority are you expected to give the 'wider world' over the 'local world?' What level and type of 'hands on' involvement is encouraged, or discouraged? What other constraints may prevent you from engaging students in certain experiences? And, in the end, what 'lessons' are students supposed to take from the engagement experiences in which they participate.

Academic Development – National Results

- Christian school graduates...
  - Feel better prepared for college than graduates of other schools
  - Are four times as likely to attend a Protestant Christian university than a non-religious university
- On the other hand, they...
  - Have fewer Advanced Placement courses available to them
  - Achieve lower SAT scores
  - Are less likely to gain admission to high-ranking colleges
  - Attend less selective (and perhaps less demanding) colleges
  - Complete fewer years of education and advanced degrees

Academic Development – National Results (cont'd)

- This raises important questions...
  - Do parents choose Christian schools more for their focus on faith development than academic excellence?
  - Are Christian schools watering down their academic programs in order to focus more on faith development?
  - Are Christian schools offering a rigorous enough curriculum, particularly in terms of preparing graduates for college?
  - Should Christian schools be promoting selective, high-ranking colleges outside the religious sphere?
  - Realistically, can Christian schools achieve excellence in all three domains: spiritual formation, cultural engagement and academic development, and do so in an integrated way?

Academic Development: How are WE doing?

- If our school completed the survey, what do our results show?

- If our school has not completed the survey, what would we expect the results to show? How do we know this to be true?

- In either case, what does this tell us about how our school is doing in this area?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

USING THE SLIDE AND THE NEXT, BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE the major findings of the national-level results in the area of academic development.

SAY, **"Once again, the national results, as shown on the first slide, are pretty encouraging and, again, the second slide raises important questions."**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on the results on both slides.

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

Using this slide, INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT on how they think our school's results would have compared.

[Note: if our school participated in the survey, take time to review a summary of the actual results.]

USE THE QUESTIONS ON THE SLIDE TO FACILITATE A DISCUSSION.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT...

Again, an important area of exploration here is to go beyond what constitutes a good 'basic' education, and to examine how Christian schools can deliver academically, equipping graduates to succeed at the highest levels of academic achievement. Do SAT scores matter? Is it important to offer more AQ courses? Should gaining entrance to more selective (and non-religious) schools be promoted for our 'best and brightest?'

The second slide challenges what some people believe is an 'anti-intellectual' bias in some Christian schools. It also poses an important question about the importance of not only excelling in all three areas—spiritual formation, cultural engagement, and academic development—but in providing a fully integrated educational experience where each informs the other.

OUR OWN RESULTS...

Again, if you do not have access to your own survey results, then you need to ensure that your group has access to comparable information in order to talk about how your school is performing in this area. Some key questions here include: What courses are included in our curriculum, and at what levels? What AP courses do we offer? What do we promote as appropriate options for higher education, and how? How do we measure academic success? What impact are we having on our students' readiness for college or employment upon graduation? What do our graduates say about this?

We acknowledge that this is an area in which many schools experience significant tension: a desire to enrich the academic offerings, but significant resource constraints; a desire to prepare graduates for whatever further education they might choose to pursue versus a subtle pressure to steer graduates to certain 'preferred' colleges. What unique expectations and pressures must you deal with in your school environment?

Academic Development: Implications   (30 minutes)

SESSION 4:
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER – PART 3

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE as the participants are settling in.

SAY, **"Now it's time to focus on the implications of the third area of Christian school impact addressed in the Cardus Educational Survey, 'Academic Development'."**

[Note: Briefly review the national and local results presented at the end of the previous session, if necessary.]

Designing for Academic Development in Our School's Future

- What success indicators matter most for our school?

- What can we build on to achieve these objectives?

- How will we know that we are making progress?

- What can we do to help make this a reality?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"Based on our discussion in the area of cultural and community engagement, what do we see are the implications for our own school?"**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO RESPOND to each question on the slide, as before. Capture their suggestions on flip-chart pages and post these on the wall.

Redefining Our Core—Delivering on Our Promise   (60 minutes)

Redefining Our Core – Who We Will Become

- Spiritual formation priorities...

- Cultural and community engagement priorities...

- Academic development priorities...

- Integration priorities...

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"It's time to identify the key priorities for future development of our school as identified through our discussion of the Cardus Educational Survey results."**

Using the slide headings, INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO LIST their most important recommendations for future development.

REDEFINING OUR CORE—DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISE...

The final hour of this series of sessions is devoted to summarizing, prioritizing, and operationalizing the fruit of your discussion. Think of this as a 'bookend' to the Imagineering exercise from Session 1. Your goals are to review the suggestions from the discussions of the three focus areas, to identify your most important priorities for future action, and to talk about how to increase integration of all aspects of the school's learning experience. In this first part of the closing discussion, you want to paint a rich picture of what that experience will be like for future graduates.

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES...

You may well have many more ideas than you can realistically implement. If this is the case, consider using a prioritization tool like 'Dot-mocracy', where each participant has a limited number of colored dots to identify their top choices on each list.

Delivering on Our Promise:
How We Will Move Forward Together

- Who are our key stakeholders and what do they expect, and have to offer?
- Who needs to be at what 'tables' for planning and decision-making?
- Who will take the lead in turning our priorities into effective action plans?
- What needs to change? What should we start, stop, continue, or improve?
- What opportunities are there for our key stakeholders to help turn our dreams into reality?
- How will we monitor our progress?

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"The priorities we have identified will only be achieved through the collaborative effort of a number of important stakeholders—groups and individuals whose contributions are essential to our future success."**

USING THE SLIDE HEADINGS, INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO LIST RECOMMENDATIONS for who to engage in the process of creating the future for our school, and how they can best contribute.

In closing...

"What if Christian schools would inspire students to develop a "whole gospel" mindset--

reverence for creation,
acknowledgment of the fall,
worship of the Redeemer,
and a taste for restoration--

rather than a more narrowly focused understanding of Biblical roles as husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers?

What if students were better equipped to navigate the varied path of cultural change?"

Cardus Education Survey Report

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"This has been a very important discussion regarding the future of our school. Thank you all for your participation, and for your affirmation of our common purposes. As we close this discussion, let's take a few moments to reflect on this challenge from the Cardus Education Survey report."**

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE, AS THEY FEEL LED, ANY FINAL COMMENTS they want to make regarding the process or the ideas that have emerged.

We'd love to hear from you...

Please visit go.cardus.ca/curriculumfeedback (no 'www.') to respond.

Questions include:
- Is there a gap between your school's vision and its current reality?
- Is your school aiming to produce world changers? Is it doing so?
- Did your group recommend changes to your school's program?

Your contribution is important. Thank you!

DISPLAY THIS SLIDE.

SAY, **"The leaders of this project, at Cardus, would appreciate it if we could take a few minutes to complete a brief questionnaire that will provide feedback to them on our discussions."**

CLOSE THE DISCUSSION IN PRAYER, AS APPROPRIATE IN YOUR SETTING.

Facilitator's Notes

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER...

The focus of this part of the final discussion is to ensure that ALL key stakeholders have a way of making a contribution to the future success of the school. No 'agenda for change' is complete without this step. Be sure to identify individuals or groups that might not be among the most obvious contributors (e.g. the business community, grandparents, the students themselves, former graduates with specific areas of expertise or influence, community leaders, social service agencies, service clubs, just to mention a few.)

You may be tempted to try to 'keep this all in-house,' particularly if your school has not typically involved certain stakeholders in decision-making and planning. We think that's a mistake—you need to hear different perspectives, the fresh ideas and, more important, the committed support of a wide range of people who share your desire to make your school the best it can be. The key is to provide opportunities for input—for these voices to be heard—and to not be afraid that this means losing control of the important work that only you can do.

The most important voices you need to hear are those of parents, without whose commitment and support you would have no school. Open the doors and open your minds to the wisdom they bring to the task of educating the young people entrusted to their care. If you haven't done so already, help to arrange a dialogue like this for parents and other supporters, and incorporate their unique insights, dreams, and desires into a 'master plan' for creating a future for your school that everyone wants to see become a reality. Your graduates will thank you for that, both in words and in lives well lived.

WRAPPING UP...

Every group will be different, but all participants will share one thing in common—the desire to be part of making a difference in the lives of your schools students and graduates. Be sure to thank them for their commitment, to affirm what has been accomplished in these few hours together, and to invite them to continue to provide support through prayer, giving, and getting actively involved.

FEEDBACK TO CARDUS...

This report is just a beginning. In fact the survey process itself is ongoing. Be sure to provide feedback through the various evaluation forms and channels provided.

FINALLY, THANK YOU FOR SERVING IN THIS IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP CAPACITY.

go.cardus.ca/curriculumfeedback
(no www.)

CARDUS
EDUCATION SURVEY

DESIGNING THE FUTURE
OF OUR SCHOOL TOGETHER

A facilitated dialogue
based on the
Cardus Education Survey

Welcome, Introductions and Overview

CARDUS
EDUCATION SURVEY

- Session 1: Identifying and Valuing Our Strengths
    - Discovering our strengths – imagining our future
- Session 2: Designing Our Future Together – Part 1
    - Focus on Spiritual Formation
- Session 3: Designing Our Future Together – Part 2
    - Focus on Cultural and Community Engagement
- Session 4: Designing Our Future Together – Part 3
    - Focus on Academic Development
    - Affirming our vision and plans for the future

SESSION 1:
IDENTIFYING AND VALUING OUR STRENGTHS

A Positive Dialogue About the
Future of Our School
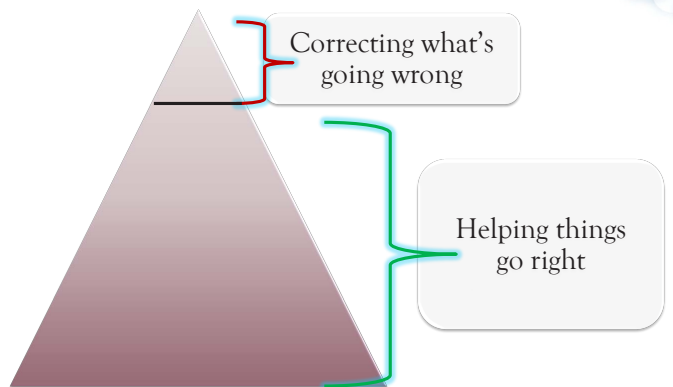
CARDUS
EDUCATION SURVEY

Correcting what's
going wrong

Helping things
go right

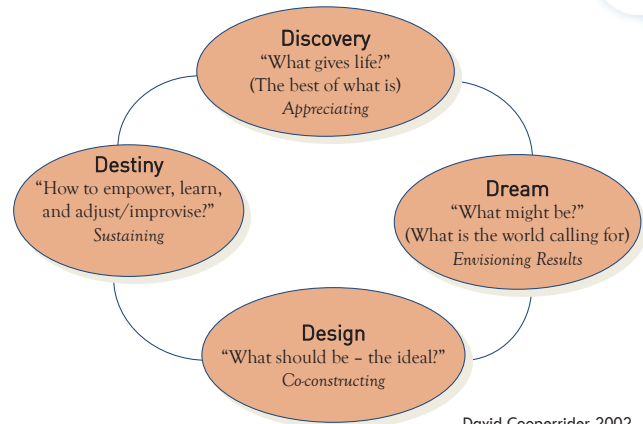## Appreciative Inquiry – A Positive Approach

Traditional:
Problem-based

- Main steps in the process:
  - Focus on the problem
  - Conduct root cause analysis
  - Identify and assess solutions
  - Fix what's going wrong
  - Monitor corrective action
- Organizations – and the people in them – are seen as problems to be solved

Appreciative Inquiry:
Strength-based

- Main steps in the process:
  - Focus on the possibilities
  - Appreciate "what is"
  - Imagine "what might be"
  - Determine "what should be"
  - Create "what will be"
- Organizations – and the people in them – are seen as assets to be nurtured

Four Stages of Appreciative Inquiry

Discovery
"What gives life?"
(The best of what is)
Appreciating

Dream
"What might be?"
(What is the world calling for)
Envisioning Results

Design
"What should be – the ideal?"
Co-constructing

Destiny
"How to empower, learn, and adjust/improvise?"
Sustaining

David Cooperrider 2002

Defining Our Focus - Three Core Purposes

- Spiritual Formation
  - More than just religious practices
  - A working definition
- Cultural and Community Engagement – definition
  - More than just knowledgeable critics
  - A working definition
- Academic Development
  - More than just educational attainment and academic performance
  - A working definition

Discovery – Who We Are at Our Best

- Where have we come from – what are our roots?
- Why are we here – what difference do we make?
- What about our school is worth celebrating – what makes us most proud?
- What enables us to be effective in fulfilling our mission?
- What most excites us about our future?

Dreaming – Imagining the Future of Our School

Telling the Story of Our Success...

- We're attending the 20-year reunion of our high-school graduating class and telling our collective story...
- Where are we in our faith journey?
  - Growing spiritually and living out our faith day-by-day...
- How are we engaged in culture and community?
  - Serving, participating, and addressing important issues...
- What have we achieved academically and vocationally?
  - Excelling in learning, working, and leading...

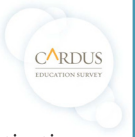## What difference will our graduates make?

- Spiritual Formation
  - Faith that shapes life decisions...

- Cultural and Community Engagement
  - Public participation that influences culture...

- Academic Development
  - Academic excellence that empowers leadership...

Creative Tension – Energizing Change

SESSION 2:
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER – PART 1

CES: Purpose

- To determine the alignment between the stated motivations and actual outcomes of Christian schooling

- Setting a benchmark for further study of Christian schooling

- Provide information to help
  - Parents make choices
  - School leaders make improvements
  - Donors assess the return on their investments
  - Policy-makers improve educational outcomes

CES: Approach

- State of the art research – unique in scope and approach
- A mixed-methods approach
  - A quantitative study of graduates (all schools) aged 24-39
    - The life directions of high school graduates
    - The goals, plans, and challenges of Christian schools
  - Qualitative studies
    - Cultural awareness and engagement, graduate beliefs and attitudes, race relations, and Christian school administrators
- Isolating the school effect
  - Public school graduates are the baseline
  - Raw scores to identify differences among graduates of Catholic, Protestant evangelical, private (non-religious), and home-schooled Christian schooling
  - Adjusted scores to spotlight the impact of the school itself

CES: General Findings

- Christian school graduates are ideal church members, who...
  - Form stable families
  - Give generously
  - Serve actively as volunteers in and through their churches
  - In other words, solid 'salt of the earth' citizens
- However... they are NOT 'world changers'
  - Most are not politically or culturally engaged, nor are they 'at war with culture'
- Two key questions worth considering...
  - Is our focus on the family skewing our message and undermining our active engagement outside our own walls?
  - Are we actually teaching compliance with a certain set of rules based on avoiding misbehavior?

More General Findings...

- Christian school graduates...
  - Are hopeful and optimistic about their lives and their futures
  - Have the tools to engage in relationships and for problem-solving
  - Are more thankful than their public school peers
  - Have a greater sense of direction in their lives

- However, there are other findings worth exploring...
  - Catholic and non-religious school graduates complete more years of education, and are more likely to attend 'elite' colleges

- Should Christian schools be aiming higher?
  - How can we nurture both faith and intellect?
  - How can we both contribute to, and shape, culture?

In the end...

"... the central question Christian school advocates might ask is *'What is the purpose of Christian education?'*

Where the impact of Christian schools is not as significant as mission statements proclaim, we wonder if it is because schools are not both thinking deeply about how they might achieve these ends and committing to programming that would support such goals.

This research also asks:
'Are the noble aims found in Christian schools' mission statements unfounded? If so, how can Christian schools respond?

Do Christian schools really want to impact culture and society?'"

Spiritual Formation – National Results

- Christian school graduates...
  - Are more committed to the church
  - Practice spiritual disciplines more frequently
  - Give generously and feel obligated to tithe
  - Volunteer actively within the church
  - Follow the teachings of the church to a greater extent
  - Revere the church and its authority
  - Attend church more regularly
  - Believe that morality is unchanging and absolute
  - Believe the Bible is infallible
  - Believe that Jesus Christ if the only way to salvation
  - Rarely doubt their faith

Spiritual Formation – National Results
(cont'd)

- On the other hand, is it possible that Christian school graduates are...
  - more focused on 'pietism' as a result of a 'dictatorial approach to the study of the Bible, resulting in only a surface engagement and understanding of the whole of the Christian faith?'
  - If so, does this impact the development of the intellect as well as the desire to be engaged in culture and addressing its issues?

Spiritual Formation: How are WE doing?

- If our school completed the survey, what do our results show?

- If our school has not completed the survey, what would we expect the results to show? How do we know this to be true?

- In either case, what does this tell us about how our school is doing in this area?

Designing for Spiritual Formation in Our School's Future

- What success indicators matter most for our school?

- What can we build on to achieve these objectives?

- How will we know that we are making progress?

- What can we do to help make this a reality?

SESSION 3:
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER – PART 2

Cultural Engagement – National Results

- Christian school graduates...
  - See themselves as well prepared to 'meet the world'
    - Having a strong sense of direction in their lives
    - Confident in their ability to navigate life's challenges
    - Hopeful of the future
    - Able to turn to God and Scripture to make decisions
    - Grateful for what they have (even when having lower income)
    - Prepared well to engage in meaningful relationships
    - Willing and able to develop interracial relationships
  - Stabilize communities through commitment to family
  - Serve as volunteers (in and through their churches, primarily)
  - Respect and comply with authority

Cultural Engagement – National Results
(cont'd)

CARDUS EDUCATION SURVEY

- On the other hand, Christian school graduates...
  - Are generally not culturally engaged in ways that would support the 'world changers' claim often made by their schools
    - Not actively involved in the political sphere
    - Not in relationships with people of power and influence
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Cultural Engagement: How are WE doing?

CARDUS EDUCATION SURVEY

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Designing for Cultural and Community Engagement in Our School's Future

CARDUS EDUCATION SURVEY

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Academic Development – National Results

CARDUS EDUCATION SURVEY

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SESSION 4:
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER – PART 3

Designing for Academic Development in Our School's Future

- What success indicators matter most for our school?

- What can we build on to achieve these objectives?

- How will we know that we are making progress?

- What can we do to help make this a reality?

Redefining Our Core – Who We Will Become

- Spiritual formation priorities...

- Cultural and community engagement priorities...

- Academic development priorities...

- Integration priorities...

Delivering on Our Promise: How We Will Move Forward Together

- Who are our key stakeholders and what do they expect, and have to offer?
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Your contribution is important. Thank you!

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