**Is this the right school for your son?**

by Kevin Davern, Head of School

*This year marks Mr. Davern’s 30th working in a boy’s school and his 18th as Head of School for The Avalon School.*

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**THE RIGHT SIZE AND PERSONAL ORIENTATION**

Will my son be known there? Is the school so large that he will be a mere face and a name floating down a crowded hallway? Or will he be in a place where the teachers know him personally, know his strengths, weaknesses, and interests? Teachers that know your son are more likely to inspire him to do the work to develop himself.

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**THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FAMILY**

Is this a school that will work with you and for you as parents? Many schools see parents as a necessary evil. Other schools treat them as the enemy. A good school recognizes and embraces the reality that mothers and fathers are the child’s primary educators. In fact, schools exist to help mothers and fathers educate their children.

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**THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE VISION AND THE PROGRAM**

Does the school select works of literature that will inspire your son to live a noble life and develop a life-long habit of reading? Will he know Odysseus, Aragorn, Henry V, and Thomas More? Does the school feature a grounding in history, so your son will be less prone to thinking things were always as they are now? Will he know the good aspects of our heritage as well as the bad? of George Washington Frederick Douglass, Pope John Paul the Great?

Does the school have an authentic Christian orientation? Is it committed to being faithful to what Christ taught, even those teachings that are important but sometimes unpopular? Does the school see, as GK Chesterton said, that it is the Church that prevents a Christian from being a mere creature of his or her age?

How does the school harness the amazing energy and vitality of growing boys? Will your son’s urge to compete be put to good use in the classroom? If he is a younger student, will he have a daily gym class that is outside in fresh air and sunshine whenever possible and have the chance to move around throughout the day?
THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF MASCULINITY

Does the school have an authentic vision of what a man is and what a man should be? Does it see sexuality as a gift given at birth? Does it recognize the inherent hardwired psychological differences between boys and girls? Is the school’s overall program one that will help your son build up his strengths and develop an authentic spirit of service (which is the purpose of those strengths)? Is the school oriented to the ultimate end of the human person, that is Heaven?

THE RIGHT TEACHERS TO IMPLEMENT THE VISION

What kind of teachers work in the school? Are they knowledgeable? Do they genuinely love their subjects? Are they the type of people you would like to work with your son every day? Will they take a personal interest in him, and model the attributes that your son ought to have someday? Are they hard-working, cheerful, and generous?

THE RIGHT SENSE OF AFFORDABILITY

Can you afford to send your son to a school like this? What is the tuition? Is it exorbitant due to amenities that your son cannot take with him when he graduates? Would you be investing in a facility more than in a program to develop your son’s mind and habits? Avalon, like most independent schools, gives a large amount of financial aid to families that qualify.

Can you afford not to send your son to a school like this?
It takes less effort to start a good habit than to undo a bad habit and replace it with a good one later. Your son’s more formative years are the best time to have him in a school that will lay a solid academic foundation and help him instill the habits that will lead to a fulfilling life.