

January Spotlight Article:

The issue/topic of church membership for administrators, teachers, staff, and board members has been discussed for a number of years at Orange City Christian School. The bylaws require that to teach or lead at OCCS a person must be a member of a Reformed church. The founders of the school believed that this was the most effective way to ensure that the philosophy, mission, and foundational principles of the school would be maintained. Recently, the question has been asked, “Is this the most efficient and effective way to make sure that the school stays true to its Biblical and reformed heritage?” Or is there another way to secure the future of the school and faithfulness to its founding principles. During the spring of 2011 a survey was conducted asking the supporters of the school for their opinion about changing the church membership requirement at OCCS and then having an additional requirement that teachers and leaders sign a statement of faith or “form of subscription”. The survey results showed that 60 percent of the school supporters were in favor of this type of a change. The board believed that this was enough of a level of support to take some next steps on this topic. In the fall of 2011 a committee was appointed to produce two documents. The first would be a specific description of the new church membership requirement and the second would be the statement of faith or form of subscription. The committee consisted of eleven members. Each of the six Supporting churches provided a representative, the Partner Society provided a member, the Board was represented, the faculty and the administration were also represented. This committee met a number of times during the fall of 2011 and in January, 2012 submitted their two documents to the board. The board received and discussed these documents at the January, 2012 meeting and voted to submit the documents to the Society for a vote. The Society meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, February 20, 2012**. The board has also confirmed that eligible members are defined as current or former parents of the school and any one eighteen years or older who has made a financial contribution to the school. The board has also determined that in order for the by law change to occur the vote must receive a three-fourths (75 %) majority of members present and approved absentee ballots.

There are a number of reasons why this possible change is being presented to the Society. The major reason that this change is being suggested is the opinion that simply requiring that a teacher and leader is a member of certain type of church does not guarantee that the person holds the same foundational principles as Orange City Christian School. Requiring that teachers and leaders at OCCS be “members in good standing of a Bible-believing, Christian church whose teachings are compatible with the Orange City Christian School Mission Statement, Foundation Statement, and Statement of faith.” and requiring that the person sign the statement of faith/form of subscription, that gives details of OCCS’s Biblical and Reformed philosophy, will make certain that the foundational principles of OCCS will be maintained. A secondary reason this change is being considered is to reflect the changing church representation at OCCS. Over the last decade or so the number of churches represented at OCCS has increased. Though these churches may not have the word Reformed in their name, people who attend these churches and send their children to OCCS or desire to teach at OCCS do share the school’s Biblical world-view and philosophy of Christian education.

The Board encourages the members of the OCCS Society to attend this important meeting on February 20. Please note that enclosed in this addition of the Spotlight is a copy of the statement of faith/form of subscription that teachers and board members would be required to sign in order to teach or lead at OCCS. If you have questions about this proposal contact Gale Tien, Principal at Orange City Christian School.