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ACSI Leadership Network Meetings

Agenda

Welcome

Devotion & Prayer

2026 Sessions:

- Spiritual Formation
- Financial Sustainability
- Legal Landscape
- Health/High Capacity Teams

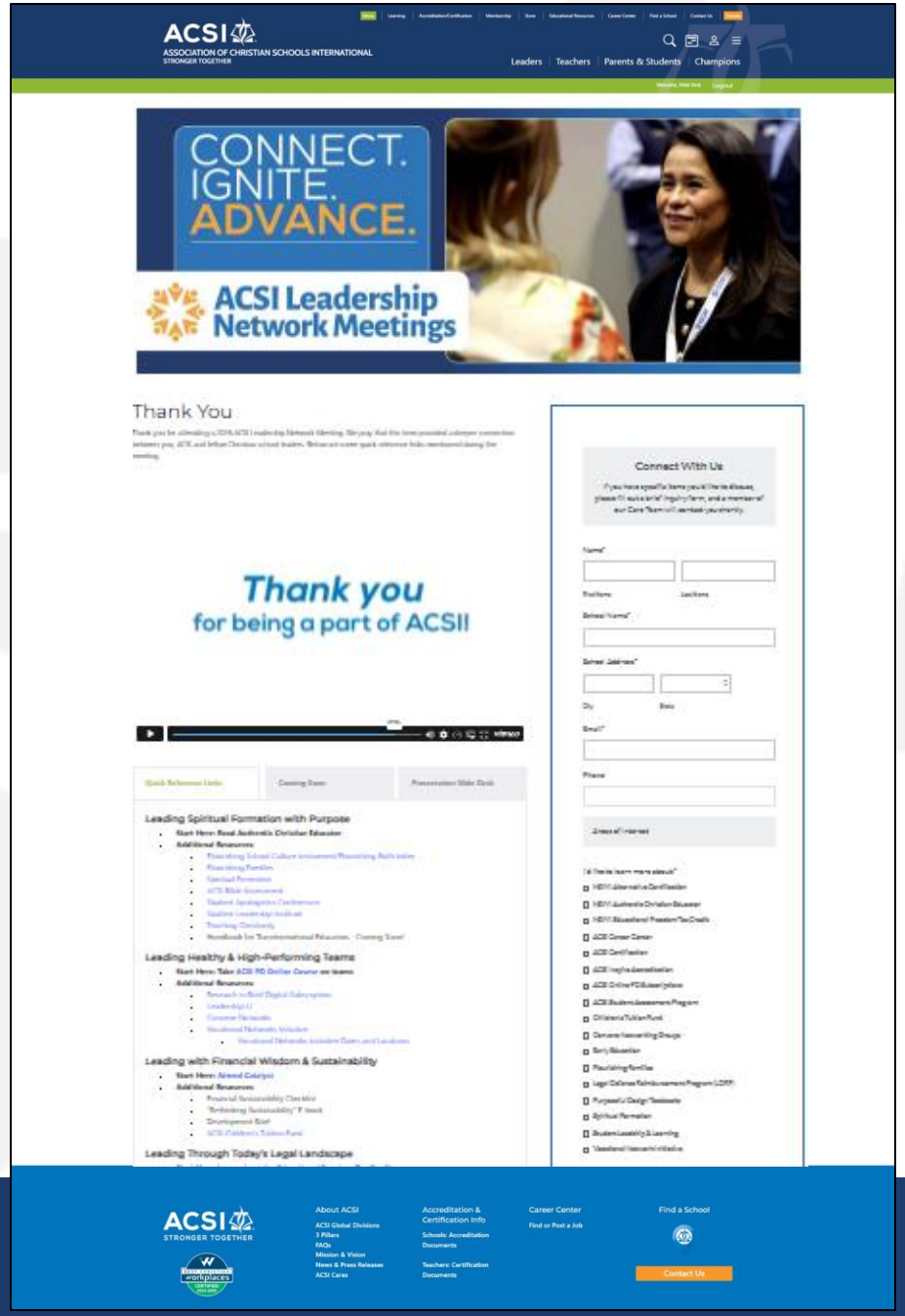


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2025-2026 Highlights



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Devotion & Prayer



Leading Spiritual Formation with Purpose



Develop an Intentional Plan for Your School Community

SPIRITUAL FORMATION





Scan to Learn More

Leading Spiritual Formation with Purpose

SPIRITUAL FORMATION is the hallmark of Christian education and the key factor that sets Christian education apart from all other forms of private or public education. For education to be authentically Christian, Spiritual Formation should be the driving force behind every other decision, program, plan, and evaluation.

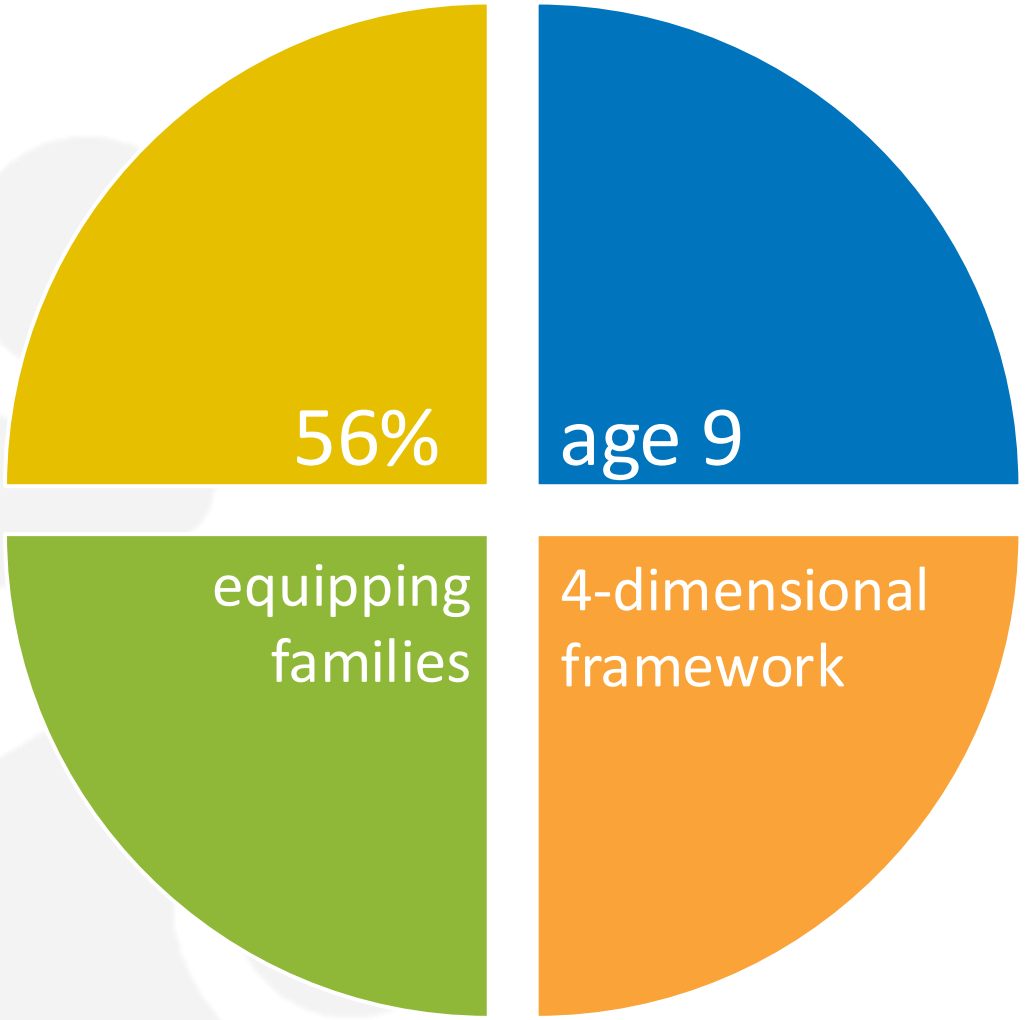
Biblical Foundations

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

- Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Research

- The Privatization Barrier
- The Critical Childhood Window
- The Role of the Family
- Multi-Dimensional Growth



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Spiritual Formation

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

- What practical steps could our school take to create greater alignment between the school, home, and church?
- Which of the five marks do you see strongest in your current practice, and which requires intentional growth?
- What does it look like to treat every subject, activity, and interaction as a discipleship opportunity?

Roadblocks

Roadblock #1: Confusing Christian Schooling with Spiritual Formation

Roadblock #2: Fragmenting Faith and Learning

Roadblock #3: Busy but Not Formed

Roadblock #4: Underdeveloped Partnership with Home and Church

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

What roadblocks to spiritual formation do you encounter in your school?

Solutions

Solution #1: Recenter the Mission Around the AIM

Solution #2: Integrate Faith Across Every Discipline

Solution #3: Build a Culture of Biblical Hospitality

Solution #4: Strengthen the School-Home-Church Partnership

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

What solutions are currently working for your school in the area of spiritual formation?

Action Steps

Immediate Actions (Next 30 Days)

- Conduct a Spiritual Formation Audit
- Evaluate Every Program
- Survey Students

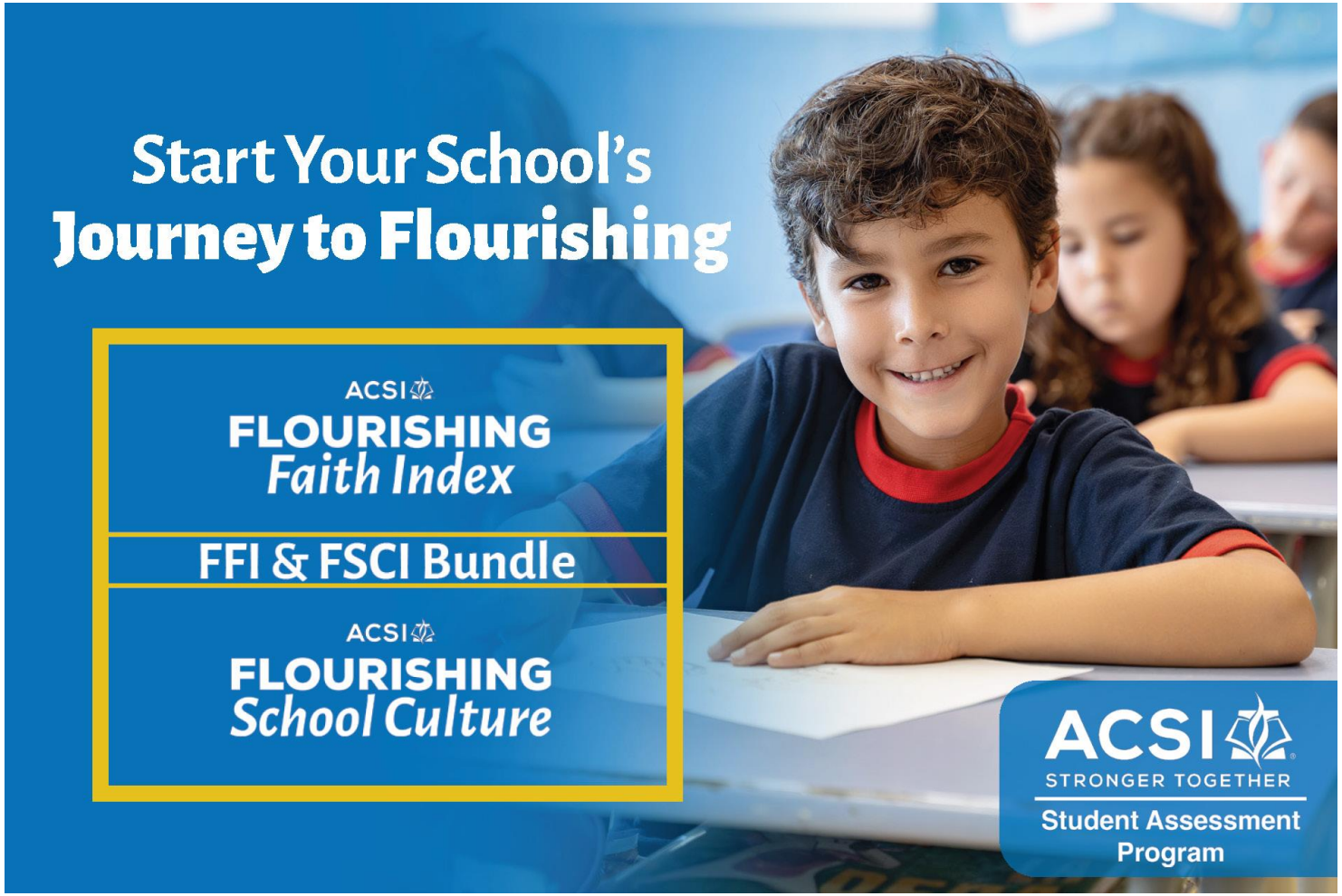
Mid-Term Actions (Next 6 Months)

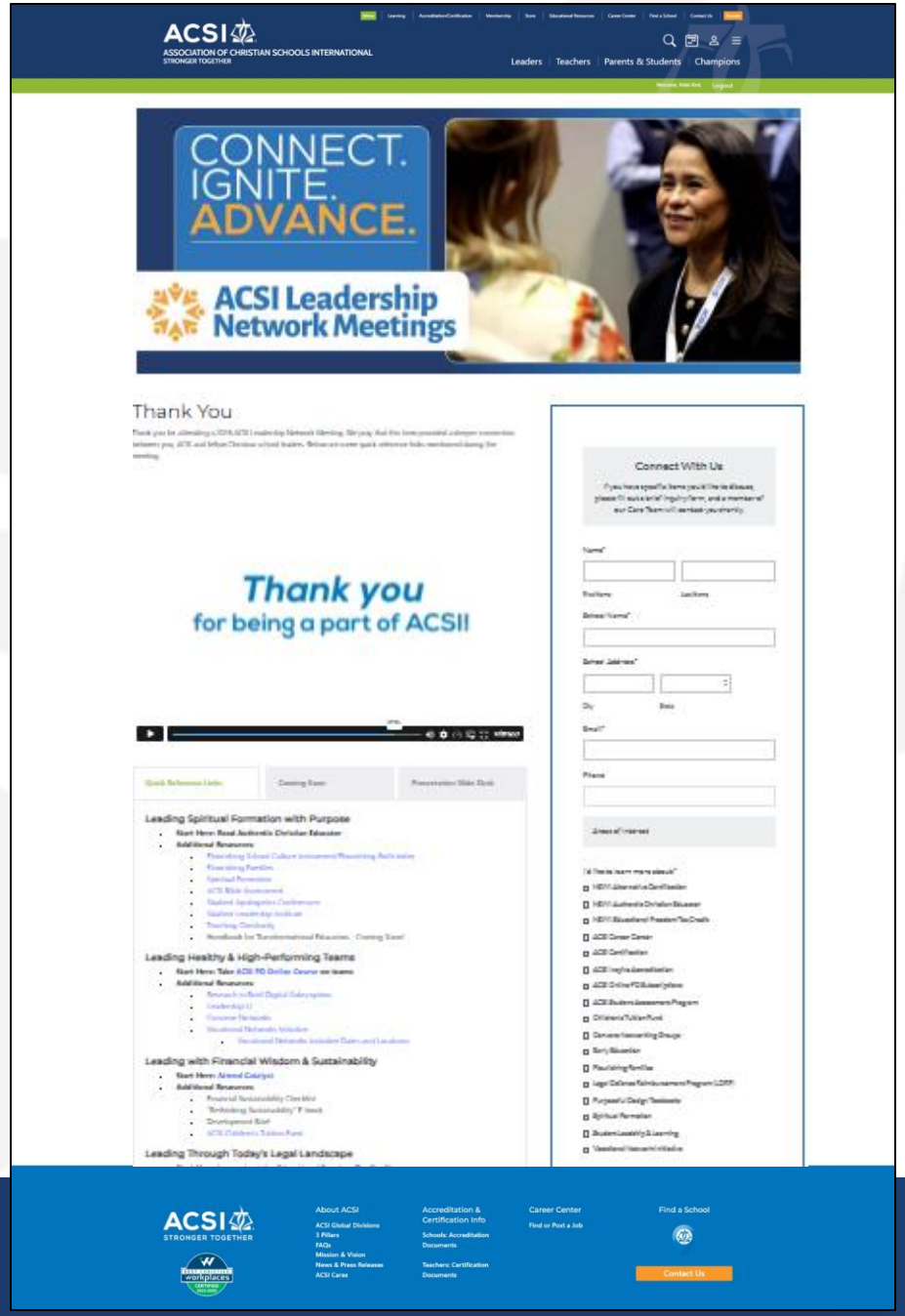
- Train Teachers in the Five Marks
- Develop Spiritual Formation Outcomes (see SF Journey Map)

Long-Term Actions (1–3 Years)

- Align Culture Around Formation
- Consider Formation, Not Just Achievement

Resources


Start Your School's
Journey to Flourishing
ACSI
FLOURISHING
Faith Index
FFI & FSCI Bundle
ACSI
FLOURISHING
School Culture
ACSI
STRONGER TOGETHER
Student Assessment
Program



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Leading Healthy & High-Performing Teams



Leading Healthy & High-Performing Teams

"You never accidently become a great team…It takes focus and intentionality and tenacity…On the best teams, every person on the team buys in and feels a deep sense of ownership."

– *Lance Witt, High Impact Teams:*

Where Healthy Meets High Performance

Biblical Foundations

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17

Research

- The best teams are not defined by talent. They are defined by trust.
- Engagement and well-being drive performance.
- Burnout is often hidden inside high-performing teams.
- Managers (Principals/Directors) have an outsized impact on team effectiveness.
- Clear expectations matter as much as relationships.

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Healthy & High-Capacity Teams

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

- How can leaders create greater clarity around expectations, success measures, and priorities so that people feel confident rather than fearful in their roles?
- What are some challenges that pull leaders' attention from their circle of control into their circle of concern, and how does that impact their effectiveness?
- What leadership situations most often require courage in our schools or organizations?

Roadblocks

Roadblock #1: Confusing Activity with Effectiveness

Roadblock #2: Lack of Trust

Roadblock #3: Unclear Expectations

Roadblock #4: Avoiding Difficult Conversations

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

What roadblocks to building high capacity, healthy teams do you encounter in your school?

Solutions

Solution #1: Create Relational Trust

Solution #2: Clarify Mission, Values, and Priorities

Solution #3: Build a Culture of Healthy Accountability

Solution #4: Normalize Healthy Conflict

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

What solutions are currently working for your school in the area of building high capacity, healthy teams?

Action Steps

Immediate Actions (Next 30 Days)

- Conduct a Team Health Assessment
- Audit Your Meetings
- Schedule One-on-One Conversations

Mid-Term Actions (Next 6 Months)

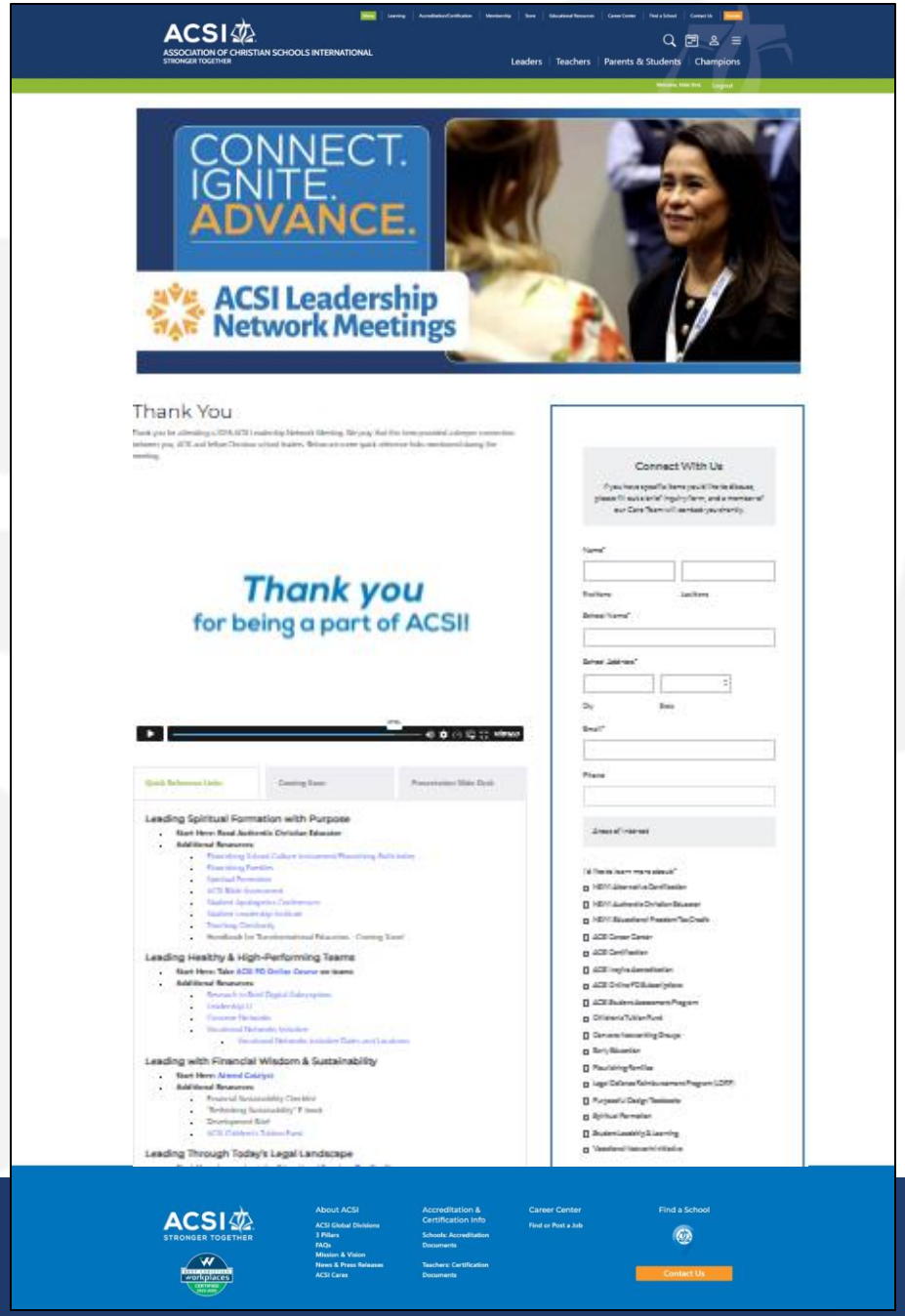
- Clarify Team Expectations
- Create a Team Covenant
- Develop Emerging Leaders & Strengthen Current Leaders

Long-Term Actions (1–3 Years)

- Build Systems that Support Health
- Measure Both Health and Performance

Resources


ACSI
Professional Development
ACSI Online PD
School Subscriptions Now Available
On Demand Learning For Christian Educators
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Leading with Financial Wisdom & Sustainability

Leading with Financial Wisdom & Sustainability

If your school's enrollment dropped by 10% next year, what would happen financially?

Would the school experience inconvenience, significant stress, or a financial crisis?

Are you operating a sustainable financial model or simply managing annual financial pressure?

Biblical Foundations

One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

Luke 16:10

Research

- Financial Sustainability Is One of the Greatest Challenges Facing Christian Schools
- Enrollment Alone Does Not Create Sustainability
- Human Capital Is Both the Greatest Asset and Greatest Expense
- Innovation Is Emerging as a Key Sustainability Strategy

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Financial Health

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

- How does your school currently communicate its unique story, mission, and impact to prospective families, current families, donors, and the broader community?
- Beyond tuition, what supplemental revenue streams are most important to your school's financial sustainability, and how effectively are they supporting your mission?
- How can schools create a coordinated fundraising strategy that maximizes donor engagement while minimizing competition among various school-affiliated groups?

Roadblocks

Roadblock #1: Overdependence on Tuition Revenue

Roadblock #2: Enrollment Challenges and Demographic Shifts

Roadblock #3: The Affordability Challenge

Roadblock #4: Rising Tuition Discounting and Financial Aid Pressure

Roadblocks (continued…)

Roadblock #5: Teacher Compensation and Staffing Costs

Roadblock #6: Insufficient Advancement Capacity

Roadblock #7: Limited Financial Innovation

Roadblock #8: Governance and Strategic Leadership Gaps

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

What roadblocks to financial health & sustainability do you encounter in your school?

Solutions

Solution #1: Diversify Revenue Streams

Solution #2: Build a Strategic Enrollment System

Solution #3: Create an Accessibility Strategy

Solution #4: Measure Net Tuition Revenue

Solutions

Solution #5: Invest in Faculty Sustainability

Solution #6: Build Advancement as a Strategic Function

Solution #7: Foster a Culture of Innovation

Solution #8: Strengthen Governance and Long-Range Planning

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

What solutions are currently working for your school in the area of financial health & sustainability?

Action Steps

Immediate Actions (Next 30 Days)

- Conduct a Financial Sustainability Audit
- Identify Your Greatest Financial Vulnerability
- Educate Your Board Where Needed

Mid-Term Actions (Next 6-12 Months)

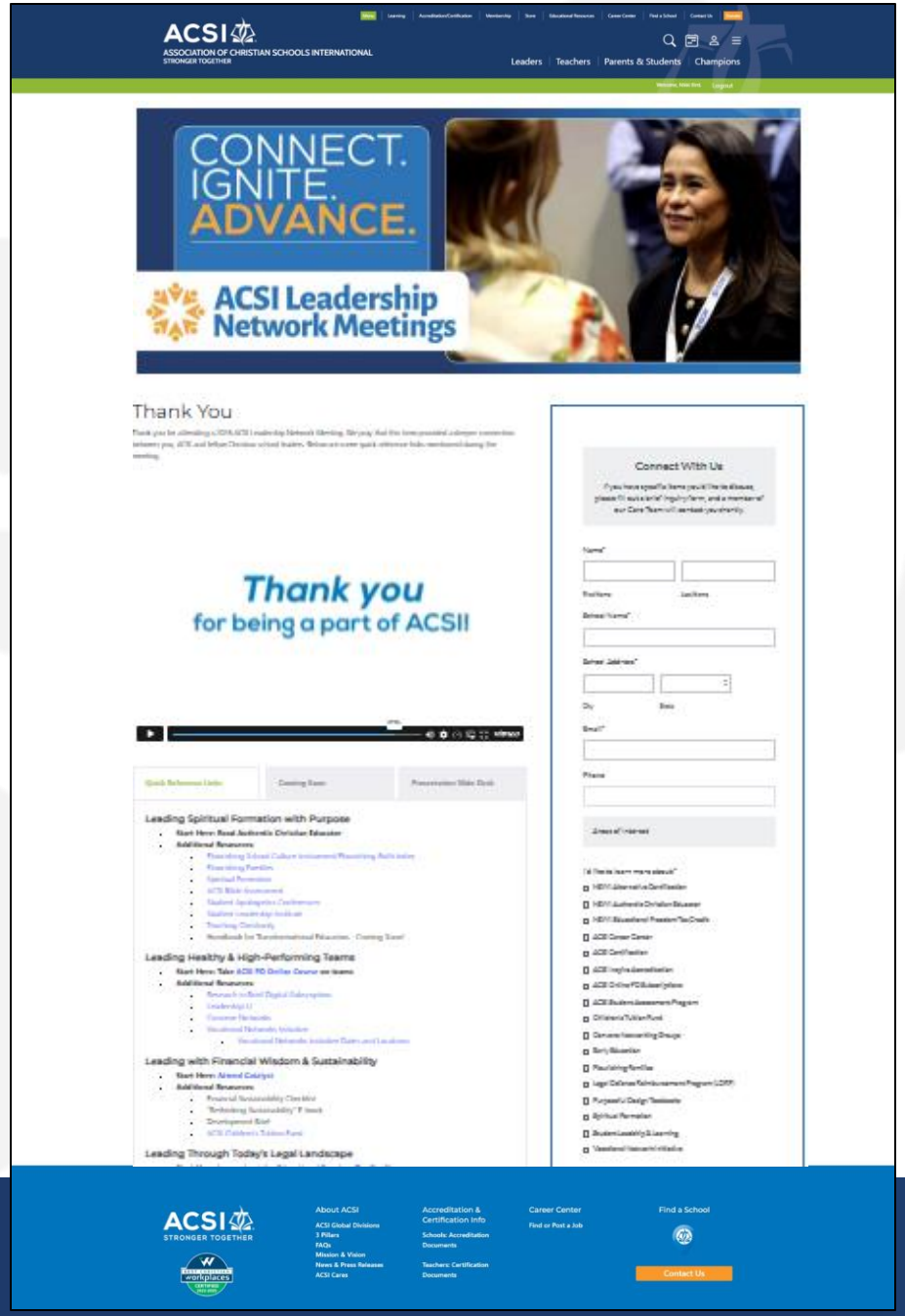
- Develop a Sustainability Dashboard
- Strengthen Advancement Infrastructure
- Explore New Revenue Opportunities

Long-Term Actions (1–5 Years)

- Build a Multi-Revenue Funding Model
- Create a 5-10 Year Sustainability Plan
- Define Financial Success Beyond the Budget

Resources


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Business and Leadership Summit
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Leading with Financial Wisdom & Sustainability Continued...

Mission Advancement Through Financial Stewardship

The ultimate measure of faithful stewardship is not simply what we preserve, but **what we enable**. Healthy finances are never the mission—they are what make the mission possible.

Mission Advancement Through Financial Stewardship



Mission Advancement



Access and Belonging



School Outcomes

Financial sustainability is not simply about balancing a budget—it is about stewarding resources in ways that advance mission, expand access, strengthen belonging, and sustain Christian education for future generations.

Financial Decisions Shape School Culture & Mission Advancement

Research consistently demonstrates that financial decisions influence far more than budgets—they shape **culture**, **access**, **belonging**, and long-term **institutional health**.

Financial assistance operates as a mission-embedded system in which institutional levers shape student and organizational outcomes.

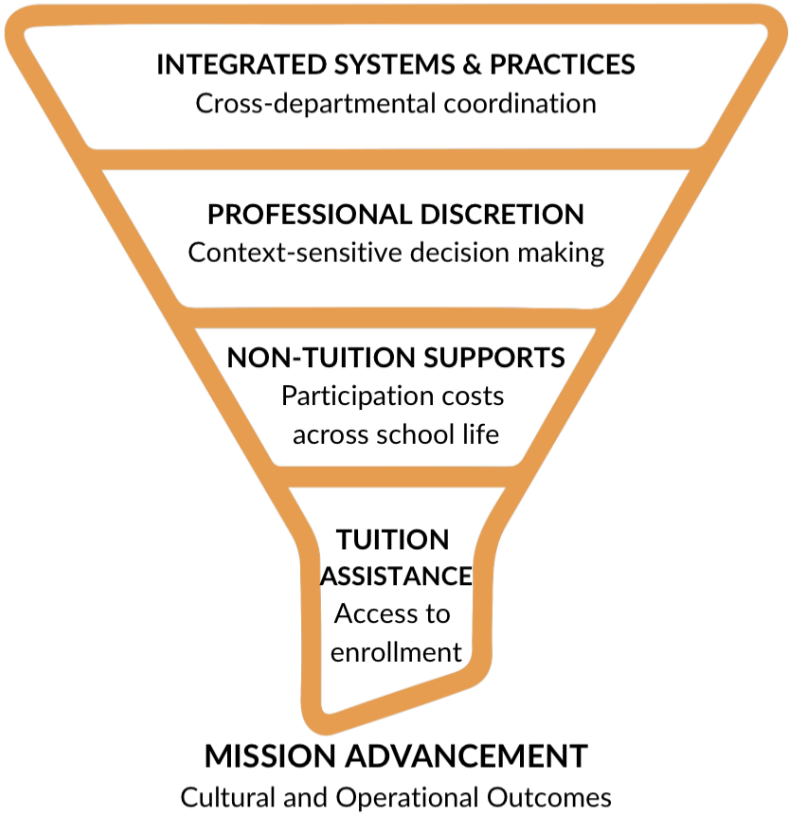


Financial Assistance is a Strategic System

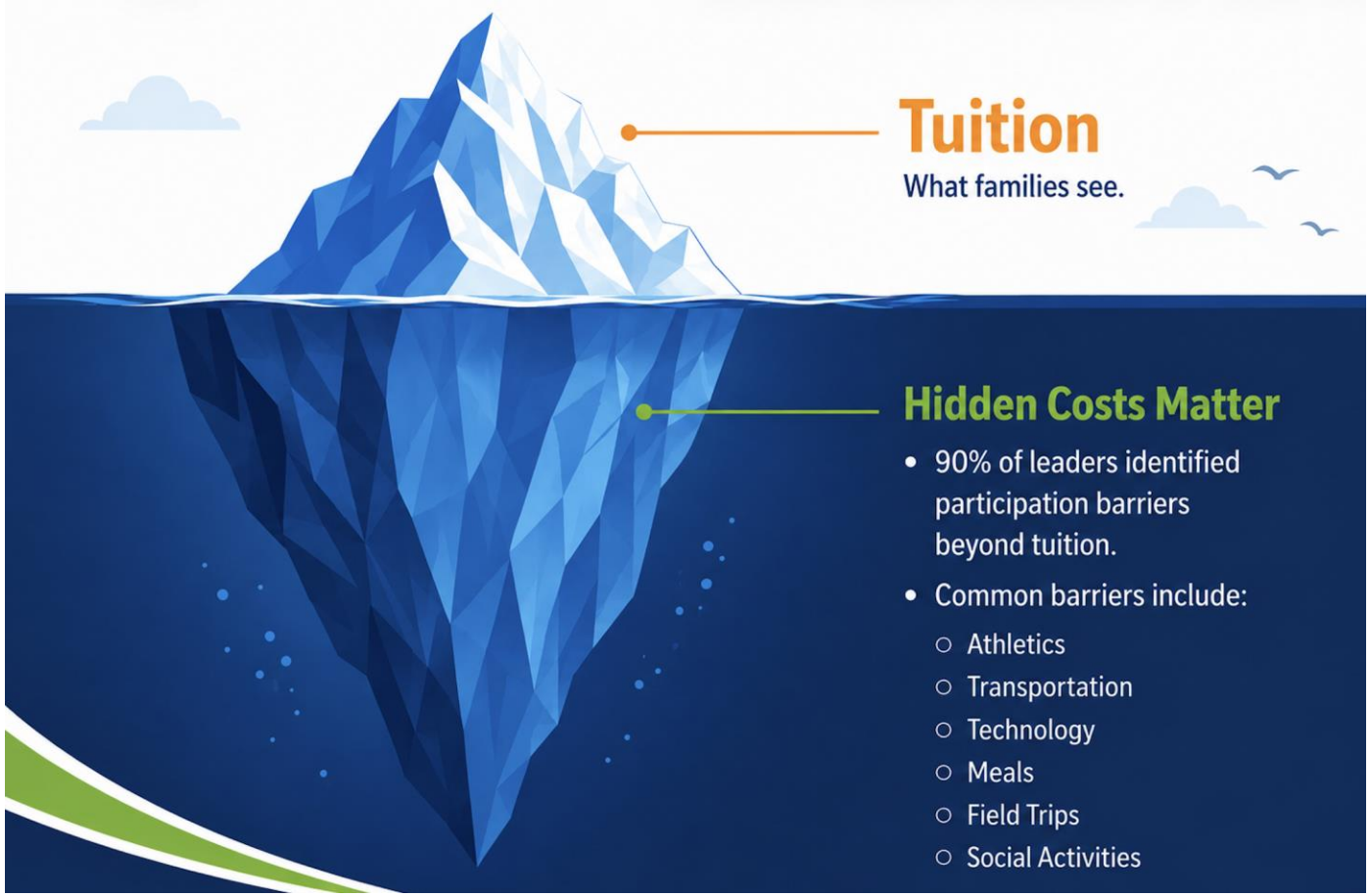
The strongest schools no longer think about financial assistance as a one-time award—they design integrated systems that remove barriers and advance mission.

Mission-Aligned Financial Assistance Includes:

- Tuition Assistance
- Non-Tuition Supports
- Professional Discretion
- Integrated School Systems



Tuition-only financial assistance does not ensure full student access or participation



"We were seeing kids opt out—not because they didn't want to participate, but because they couldn't afford to."
— Financial Aid Administrator

Financial Assistance Systems That Build Belonging

	REACTIVE ASSISTANCE DELIVERY	PROACTIVE ASSISTANCE DELIVERY
STEPS	• Tuition decision made • Participation costs emerge later • Family must request support • Repeated explanations by families required • Visibility of assistance status	• Families know full cost of tuition + participation • Participation costs addressed in advance • Support applied automatically • Transparent, front-loaded communication • Assistance delivered through back-end systems
OUTCOME	• Increased stigma • Quiet disengagement • Exclusion after enrollment	• Reduced emotional burdens • Normalized participation • Belonging by design

> ***"If we wait for families to ask, we've already waited too long."***
>
> *— Admissions Leader*

Shared Ownership

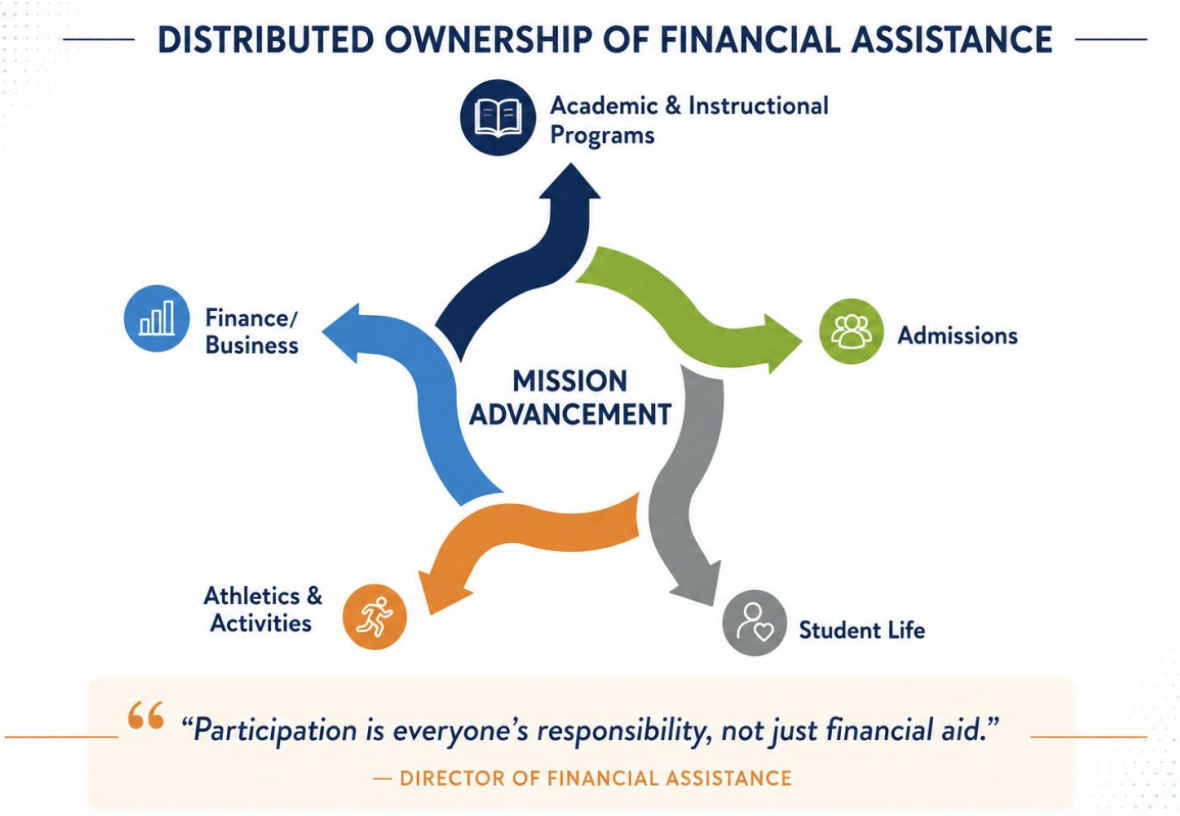
Student access should not belong to one office.

Shared ownership includes:

- Admissions
- Business Office
- Student Life
- Athletics & Activities
- Academic Leadership

When everyone owns access…

- ✓ Participation Increases
- ✓ Emergency Requests Decline
- ✓ Consistency Improves

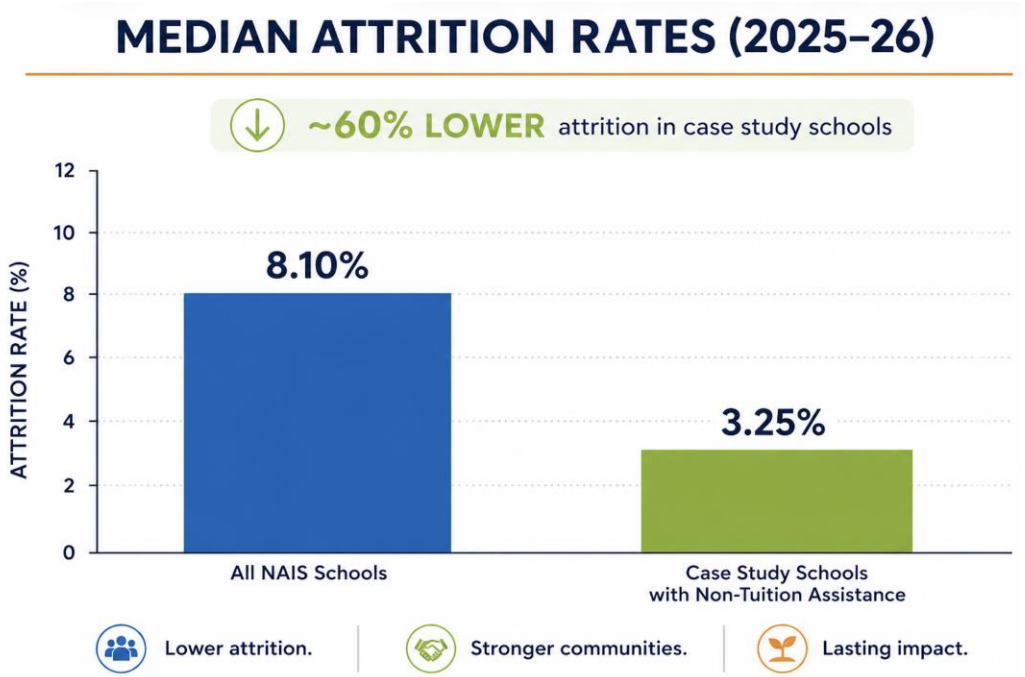


Mission-Aligned Financial Systems Strengthen Sustainability

The healthiest schools viewed financial assistance as an investment in mission — not simply an expense.

Research showed:

- Better retention
- Greater enrollment stability
- Fewer financial withdrawals
- Sustainability and accessibility can reinforce one another



From Financial Aid to Mission Advancement

SHIFT YOUR THINKING

FROM		TO
Tuition Assistance	→	Integrated Financial Systems
Enrollment	→	Full Participation
Reactive Assistance	→	Proactive Support
Department Ownership	→	Shared Leadership
Annual Budgeting	→	Long-Term Mission Stewardship

The research points to one central conclusion: schools achieve the greatest impact when financial assistance is viewed as a strategic system that advances mission, expands access, strengthens belonging, and supports long-term sustainability.

LEADERSHIP ACTION PLAN

START:

- Engage leadership team
- Review current processes
- Identify participation barriers

STRENGTHEN:

- Expand non-tuition supports
- Reduce "ask moments"
- Measure student participation and belonging

Mission Aligned Financial Assistance Toolkit

Engagement Questions / Table Talk

Reflect on your school's current approach to financial stewardship and mission advancement.

Which research finding resonated most with your leadership context and why?

Where do participation barriers exist beyond tuition at your school?

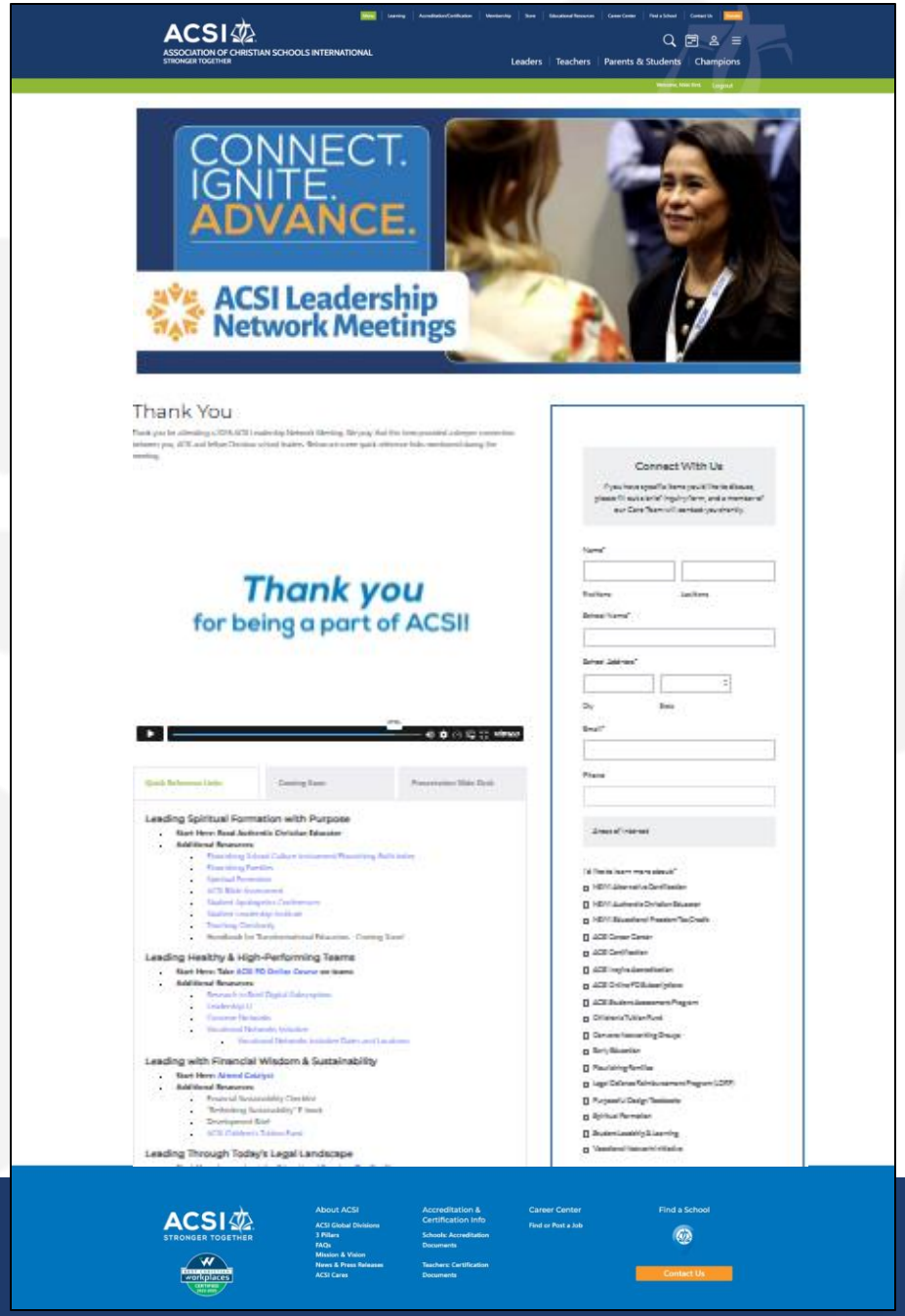
If financial assistance became everyone's responsibility, not just one department's, what would change?

What's one practice your school is doing well that others at your table could learn from?

What's one practical step your leadership team could take this year to strengthen access, belonging, and long-term sustainability?

Resources


MISSION-ALIGNED
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TOOLKIT
Advancing Mission Through Strategic Financial Assistance
Prepared by
Melissa Haber
Kati Melton
Doctor of Education Capstone
Peabody College | Vanderbilt University
2026
In partnership with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)



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Leading Through Today's Legal Landscape



Biblical Foundations

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.

Psalm 89:14, NIV

ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor. Isaiah 61:3, NIV

Education Freedom Tax Credit



1. Give Your $1,700 Contribution



2. Offset Your Federal Tax Liability



3. Students Receive Scholarships

A national opportunity begins January 2027.

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Contributions Must Flow Through Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs)….Partners & Contributors Must Choose Wisely



Alignment | Marketing | Compliance | Technology | Service | Support

ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

Why Choose the ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

- **Mission Focused**

  Singularly focused on advancing Christian education

- **Experience**

  For over 25 years, CTF has provided scholarships through state tax credit programs across the U.S. We operate in all 50 states.

- **School Friendly Approach**

  Local school marketing support + national advertising campaign. Simple family scholarship applications & school reporting through trusted technology platforms. Scholarship dollars applied directly to students' school cost of attendance. CTF teams works with schools to maximize total scholarship dollars to students. Unrestricted grant to partner schools.

ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

Why Choose the ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

- **Mission Focused**

  Singularly focused on advancing Christian education, leading families to follow Jesus Christ and making a positive impact on the world.

- **Experience**

  For over 25 years, CTF has provided scholarships through state tax credit programs across the U.S. We operate in all 50 states. We bring scalable technology, an experienced team, and audited, compliant processes, along with strong retention among both schools and contributors.

ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

How It Works



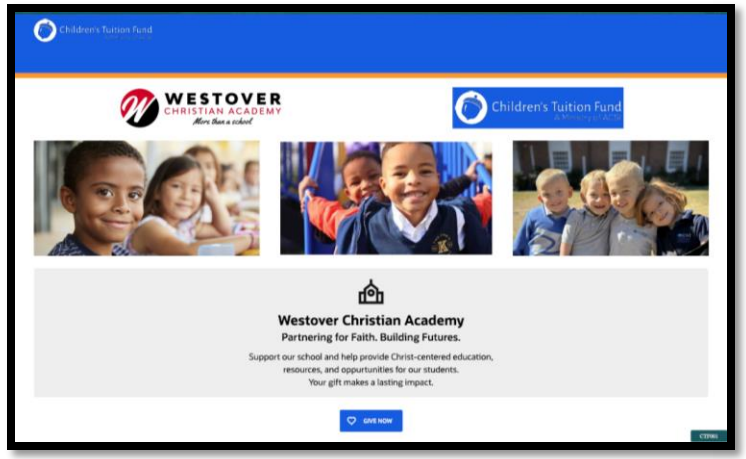
ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

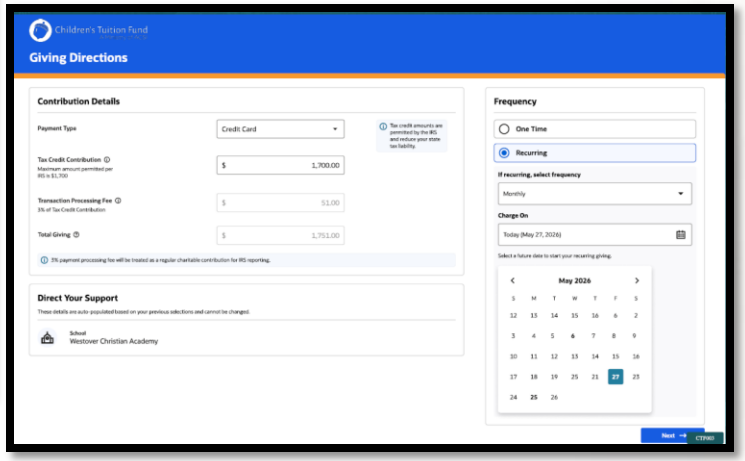
Why Choose the ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

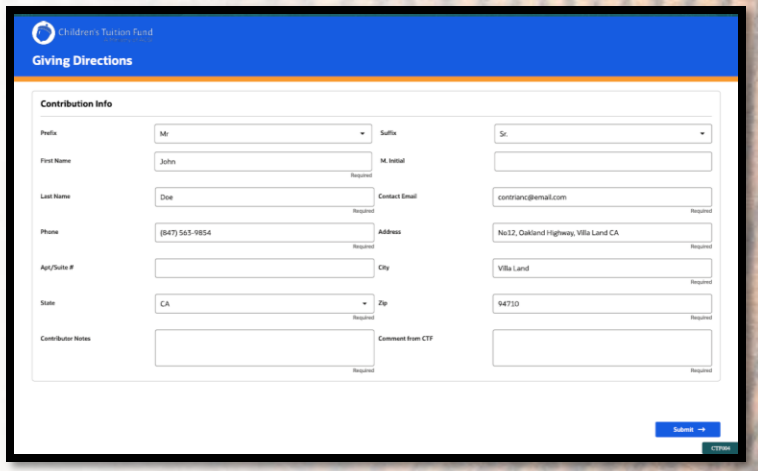
- **School Friendly Focused Approach**

  Customized School Giving Portal

  Schools will receive a branded giving portal (desktop and mobile friendly user experiences) to solicit their constituents. All contributions made through this portal are designated specifically for scholarships for your students.







ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

Your Outcomes

- More students
- Greater access
- Stronger donor base
- Scalable, long-term growth



ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

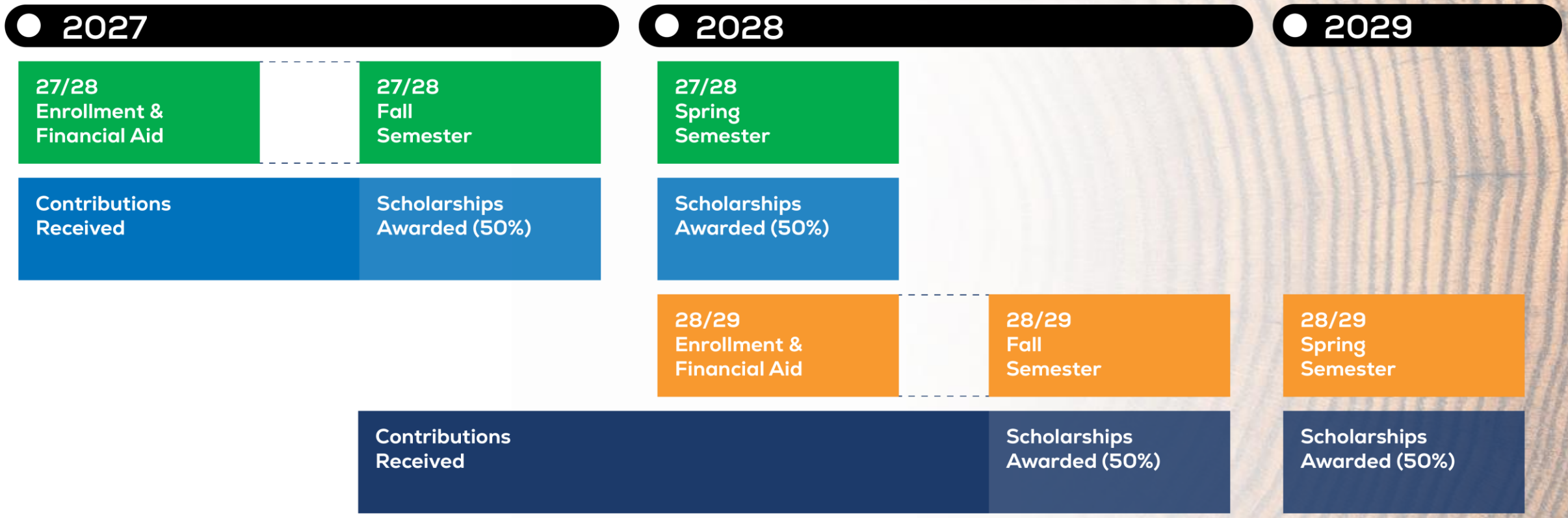
Timing is Everything…

1. Select your school's SGO
2. Launch your school's campaign Fall 2026
3. Be ready for contributions January 2027

Move early. Lead the future.

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Scholarship Awards Aligned With School Operating Rhythm



ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

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ACSI Children's Tuition Fund

Leading Through Today's Legal Landscape Continued…

Opportunities don't exist in a vacuum—they exist within an environment. And wise leaders don't just seize opportunities; they understand and steward the environment that makes those opportunities possible.

What We Have Done

- ACSI and our member schools were instrumental in passing the Education Freedom Tax Credit (EFTC) in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).
- As the bill worked its way through the legislative process, we worked with Committees and the Speakers office to ensure religious schools were protected.
- We have met with the Treasury Department to ensure the regulations were as beneficial as possible to Christian schools and the maximum number of students can benefit from the program.

Our Work Continues

- One the OBBBA passed, we have worked around the clock to further improve the EFTC.
  - We hosted our first ever staff briefing with 30 Hill offices.
  - We meet with the relevant committees and Members weekly.
  - We coordinate with our coalition partners to ensure a unified message.



Women's Sports and Title IX

West Virginia v. B.P.J. and Little v. Hecox

- Decided by the Supreme Court on June 30.
- Facts: Idaho and West Virginia asked the Court to rule on their ability to enforce their state laws on allowing only women to compete in women's sports.
- Ruling: the Court ruled 9-0 that Title IX and 6-3 that the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment allow the state to enforce their state laws on this issue.
- Implications:
  - This has been handed back to the individual states to figure out.
  - Title IX cannot be used to punish states or schools that follow Idaho and WV.

School Choice Challenges

St. Mary Catholic Parish v. Roy

- Will be argued before the Supreme Court this Fall.
- Facts: CO preschool choice program excluded Catholic school for SOGI policies applied to students and parents. The federal court upheld Colorado's exclusion of the school not as against religion but as a generally allowed public policy-driven limit.

School Choice Challenges

Crosspoint Church v. Makin

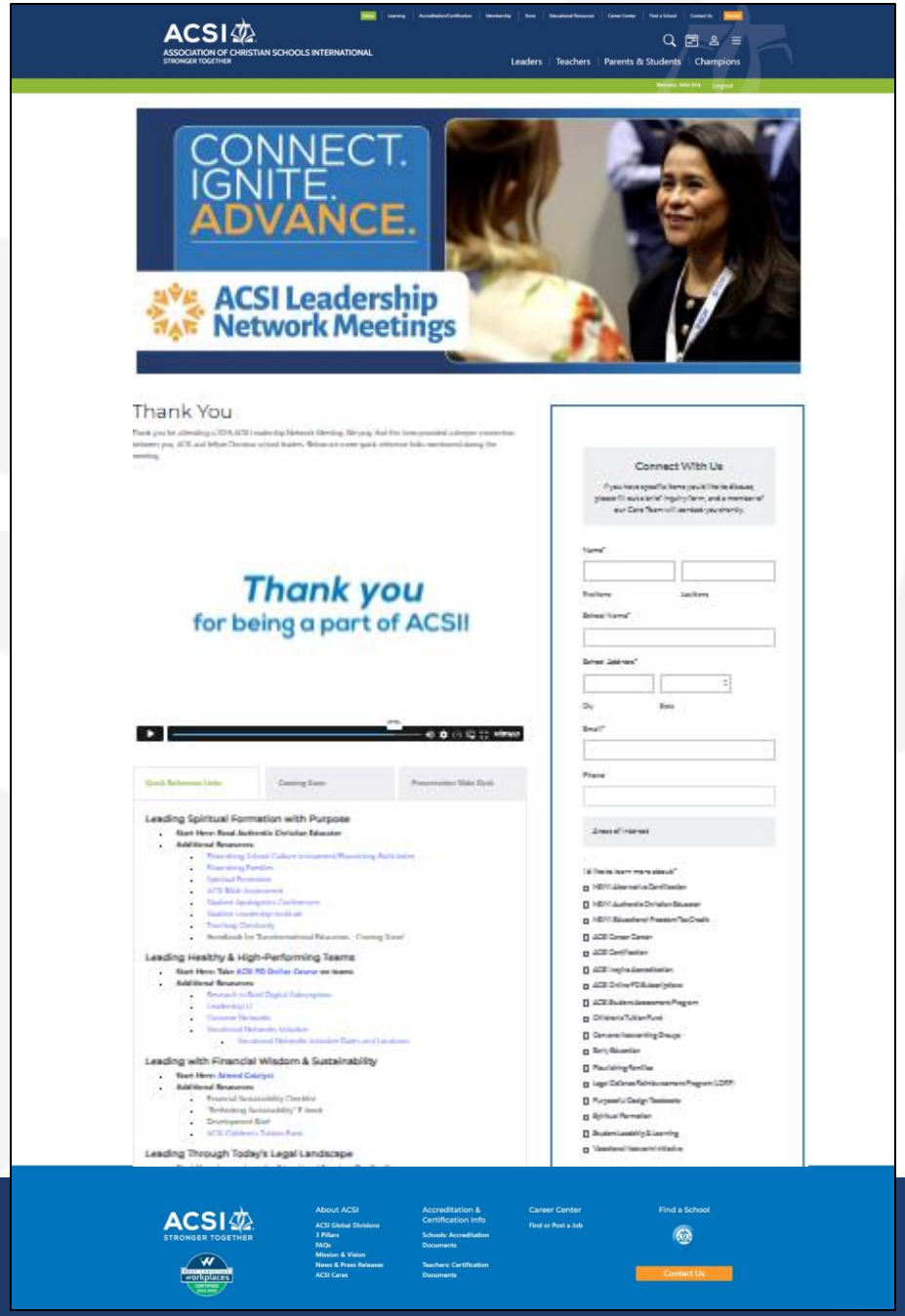
- In July, case was decided against Bangor Christian School (BCS) in the 1st Circuit. Expect the ruling to be appealed.
- Facts: BCS sought to participate in Maine's choice program but did not as it believed the school's SOGI religious beliefs would violate Maine's Human Rights Act that the school would now be subject to if it participated. Court ruled the state could require such limitations because they were not religiously biased but generally applicable.

School Choice Challenges

- Implications to watch for:
  - State-level choice and funding programs may come with more conditions if these rulings stand. Standards that may exclude religious programs altogether.
  - The decision may hinge on whether religious targeting can be shown or whether a good-faith case for the law to be generally applied to all for public policy goals.
  - In other words, some negative impact on religious education may be allowed if the law generally impacts everyone without targeting anyone.
  - The state will be allowed some level of policing a school's conduct vs. excluding a school based on its religious identity.
  - It's important to note we don't know how this will play out as of yet as each case is still in process but losses for religious education thus far.

Resources


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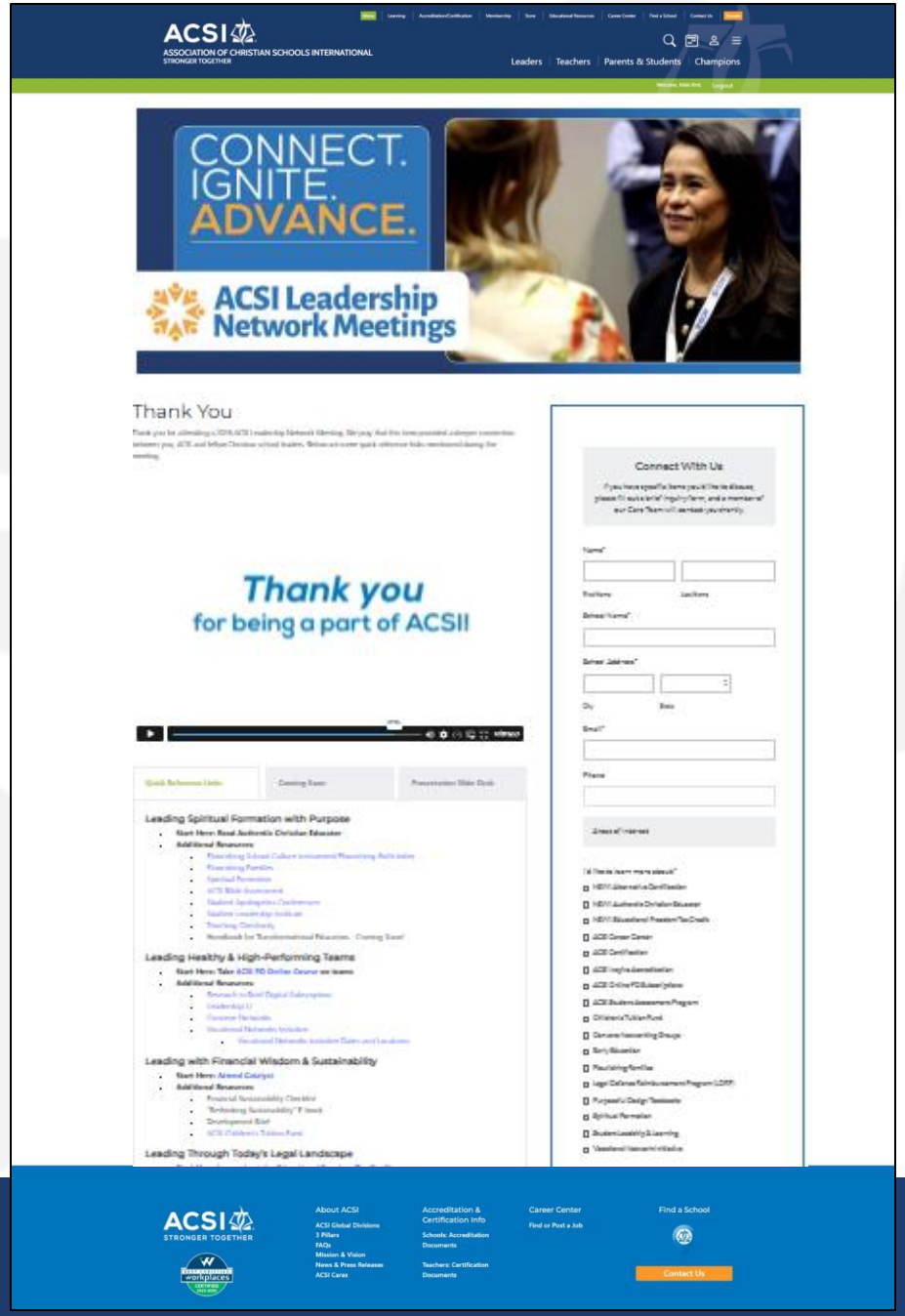
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