



A Conversation with Superintendent, Bo Gutzwiller

1 The economy has significantly challenged many schools, both private and public, yet Foothill has remained strong. How do you explain this vibrancy?



While so many schools are eliminating programs due to budget cuts, here at Foothill we have maintained our co-curricular programs like sports, fine arts, music and drama, foreign language, computer classes, and library services. Not only that, we have also expanded our programs to include dance classes, instrumental band, and orchestra programs and upgraded our entire computer lab!

I attribute this vibrancy to a variety of factors, beginning with God's blessing on our school. We feel incredible momentum even during these fiscally challenging times. Steady enrollment in preschool through eighth grade and wise fiscal policies have been invaluable. Equally important has been the generosity of our parents who have embraced our mission and supported our school through the Annual Fund campaigns. We are a school family, committed to giving our children the best possible advantages a Christian education provides!

2 What expansions are being offered in the area of technology?



Technology is the preferred learning tool of this generation, so it is absolutely a top priority at FCS! We must equip our students with the computer skills they need to flourish in high school and beyond. For this to be possible, we have installed twenty-eight iMac computers in our computer lab that can handle the speed

and processing demands of internet streaming and classroom multi-media instruction. We offer full class instruction in the lab beginning at third grade with an emphasis on basics; from there, learning progresses to greater complexity at the junior high level, with courses like podcasting, videography, iMovie and Garage Band!

For every teacher to be on the cusp of this learning curve, we have equipped them with laptops so they can integrate technology into their lessons. We also purchased new curriculum that provides online textbooks, interactive lessons and study helps for students. With interactive "smart" boards, we have brought the world right into the classrooms of our 3rd thru 8th grade students.

3 The Transitional-K program is new this year. Can you tell us more about it and why it was started?

The California legislature got it right on this one! The Kindergarten Readiness Act (SB1381) will move the school entrance cut-off date from December 2 to September 1 (phased in one month per year for the next three years). Students with late birthdates will be eligible for a two year kindergarten experience often referred to as transitional kindergarten.

As a result, we decided to offer a transitional kindergarten this year. Our program allows children time to learn and grow in a smaller class setting with a curriculum that matches their developmental level. It provides them with an invaluable gift – the gift of time!

4 Foothill now offers a supplemental program to assist students who struggle with reading. What was required to launch the new Literacy Plus program this year?

Literacy Plus is a "pull-out" resource program for children who need specialized instruction in reading and/or writing. Our certified reading specialist conducts a diagnostic student assessment and collaborates very closely with teachers and parents to customize an educational plan for each struggling student. We have seen through the years that students who struggle mastering the basics of reading lag behind their peers and often never catch up. Many studies have now documented that the poor first-grade reader almost invariably con-

tinues to be a poor reader. Our goal, with Literacy Plus, is to "catch them before they fall!"



5 Foothill is known for its commitment to Fine Arts, Music and Drama. What are the new enhancements for this year's course electives?

I believe our Fine Arts program is well known because it is a key distinctive for our school. The new junior high dance elective and the after school dance program for kindergarten through fifth grade were welcomed additions, but the biggest news on campus has been the introduction of instrumental band and strings classes offered FREE to all of our fourth through eighth grade students! An incredible 86% of our upper elementary students have signed up for the instrumental music program! I honestly believe that a few short years from now, Foothill will become a magnet for musically gifted individuals.

6 How would you summarize your goals for Foothill Christian students?



A great school is one where the students say, "From here I can go anywhere!" Can you imagine the possibilities that await a graduate of FCS who can use computers like we use pencils and paper; who can play a musical instrument; speak another language; and love God with all their hearts, souls and minds? Before they even know what they're capable of, we dream big dreams for our kids and foster the qualities and skills that will help them flourish according to God's plan for their lives!