



ILLINOIS Focus



Ron Aguilera, President



ADVENTIST EDUCATION:

A DIFFERENCE MAKER

I am a product of Adventist Education. As I reflect on my experience, the difference maker was high school, or Academy, as it is called in Adventist circles. I also sent my children through the Adventist school system. It was worth every penny, and not just because they got a good education, but because it reinforced their Christian worldview and spiritual teachings.

A question I get often is “why should I send my child to an Adventist school?” Often, it comes in response to an education Sabbath sermon or discussion about where someone is sending their child to school. When I explain I am a product of Adventist education and how it has blessed me, I hear the argument that Adventist education is too expensive, or that it does not offer more of educational value than a public school. Others argue that some public schools provide a broader worldview and a tolerance of ideas and thinking that will enable our children to make better choices as they grow into adulthood. As I reflect on these and other arguments, I realize often we forget the eternal benefit and value of Adventist education. As I reflect on my Adventist education, and that of my children, I am reminded of four things.

One: Adventist schools are a place where children learn to love God. As Adventists, we value truth, integrity, and loyalty to God and His commandments. We teach about the love of God and the importance of loving our neighbors. Our schools strive to be relevant and caring to our community and the world in general.

Two: Adventist schools support families who want their children to know God and be in the Church. Unfortunately, some families believe

higher-than-average grades nationwide. This was the experience my children had at all levels of Adventist education. But even apart from academics, Adventist school staff strive to meet the needs of the individual student physically, mentally, and spiritually in a professional and positive manner. Both my children and I still talk about those teachers that had and are still having a positive effect in our lives.

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ISSUE FOCUS

EDUCATION

it is the school’s responsibility to take over the spiritual instruction when the child goes to school. But a parent’s responsibility of raising a child doesn’t end when the child walks out the door to attend school. It’s an ongoing responsibility. “Train up a child in the way he/she should go...” Proverbs 22:6 is directed at parents, but the school (and church) is a great partner in the spiritual development of a child.

Three: Adventist schools offer academic excellence. Formal Adventist education encompasses academic excellence. Statistics show that Adventist education results in

Four: Adventist schools help students develop healthy boundaries. Adventist schools strive for healthy boundaries, and work toward stopping all forms of bullying and unhealthy practices such as the use of drugs and alcohol. These boundaries are put in place in order to uphold the values and principles of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, many of them shared by the community as well.

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& MORE





Lori Aguilera,
Superintendent of Schools
Director of Special Education

SPECIAL EDUCATOR AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SERVICES IN THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE

In the Illinois Conference, as in all of the schools across North America, there are students who struggle with learning. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, some students have had to learn virtually from home which widened the learning gap. Students struggle with, not only their academics, like having difficulty with reading, understanding their math, and staying focused in class, but also some students have struggles with their mental health. Students have reported more anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideations. Here, in the Illinois Conference, we are trying to meet both the academic and mental health needs of all our students. We are pleased to be one of the only conferences across the North American Division to hire both a school psychologist and special educator to meet the growing needs of our students.

As a special educator, I feel blessed to be able to serve the teachers and students in the Illinois Conference. We have students who are diagnosed with dyslexia (a reading-based disability), dysgraphia (a writing disability), dyscalculia (a math disability), and ADHD. Teachers feel frustrated because while they want to help their struggling students, they do not know how or feel equipped. It is a blessing to be able to test the students to see if they have a learning disability and then write an

accommodation plan that gives tools and strategies to teachers to help support their struggling students.

Dyslexia is the number one disability we find in our Adventist schools. We were able to get an Orton-Gillingham program, a program recommended for students with dyslexia, for all of our schools. This program is needed to supplement the NAD reading program for every student that has dyslexia, but it helps all students. For example, if you were asked what letter you would use to spell a word that begins with the /k/ sound, you would say to use the letter C or K. But how would you choose which letter to use if you did not know the word? If you knew the rule that you use the letter C if the next letter is an a, o, u, or any consonant, or you would use the letter K if the next letters were an e, i, or y; then you would know when to use the letter C or K in spelling words that begin with the /k/ sound. For just the /K/ sound you could ask any first grader in the Illinois Conference, and they would know when to use the letter C or K at the beginning of a word or when to use the letters k, ck, ke, or just c at the end of a word. Because of this phonics program, all our students can learn the rules that govern our language which improves their reading and spelling. Besides the supplement to our reading program, we were also able to get the Lucy Calkins

writing program to improve writing skills and the TouchMath program to improve math skills for students with disabilities.

For students with ADHD, the second most common disability we find in our Adventist schools, we can provide flexible seating. Students can choose to do their work at their desk, a standing desk, on a wobble seat, an exercise ball, with movement band on their chair legs, laying down on a mat, or kneeling at a low table. Teachers give students choices where they can do their best learning, as some students require more movement to stay engaged.



If the student is still struggling after teachers have tried these best practices, then I can test them to determine if they have a learning disability and write an Individualized Education Plan. These outline specific strategies and accommodations that can be used in the classroom to target the individual needs of the student. It is our goal to meet all the needs of our students, even if they have a disability. I feel so proud to work in a conference that has also hired a school psychologist, Jerry Pine, to provide mental health services to our struggling students. Knowing that the longer these students remain in our Adventist schools, the more opportunity they have to connect with Jesus, which is the main goal of Adventist Education.

180 EVANGELISM



Pete Braman,
Ministerial Director

As the Conference Education Director stood before a sea of eager Adventist educators energized to begin the school year, he uttered these impactful words: "Congratulations, you are about to begin a 180 evangelistic series." These words are forever etched in my mind as the ultimate purpose and focus of Adventist education.

Ellen White shared that "in the highest sense the work of redemption and education are one" (Education, p.30). In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul shares that "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, pastors and teachers." The role of "pastor and teacher" are not separated. The pastor and teacher share a common challenge to disciple, train, and equip both children and adults alike. Helping students develop a personal, intimate, saving relationship with Jesus should be the highest aim of our schools.

Recently, as I was scrolling through Facebook, one post immediately grabbed my attention. It simply said that "Jerry spoke in church yesterday." Jerry was a long-time friend and classmate. Jerry went to our Adventist schools from grade school through high school. Following high school Jerry drifted far from God and the church. Fast forward 40 years, through a variety of struggles and hardships, Jerry

was sharing his conversion testimony (encouraged by the pastor) in a small rural church in Maine. With the COVID quarantine and bouts with depression, Jerry began to reflect on his life journey. He acknowledged the influence of a loving, praying mother, and how several teachers had disciplined him and modeled Jesus to him. During his testimony he affirmed the powerful influence that Adventist education had on his life. Adventist teachers were a significant part of his spiritual awakening. Jerry is now a devoted follower of Jesus. When home, church, and school are united together, the likelihood of staying connected to God and the church increases dramatically.

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION.

We sometimes form a limited view of evangelism as primarily an event. The greatest impact of Jesus' ministry (evangelism) was realized through relational connections and discipleship. Jesus spent most of His three and a half years of public ministry training His disciples. In one year alone, a teacher will spend 800 hours of discipling, training, and modeling to students. The most recent Valuegenesis study (2010) stated that "81% of all students indicated that attending an Adventist school was the most important factor that helped them develop their religious faith." From 2006-2015, 427,313 young people were baptized during the school year through Weeks of Prayer and baptismal classes, etc.

John Wesley Taylor wrote these words in the *Journal of Adventist Education* (April-June 2017, p. 39): "Adventist education is the longest, largest evangelistic event held by the Adventist Church. It is also one or the most effective." Not only is Adventist education vital to the faith development of our Adventist students, but many schools are intentional about reaching their communities with educational evangelism. Many have joined the Adventist church through school ministry. While Adventist education is a significant investment, studies reinforce the powerful impact of school evangelism for both joining, remaining, and serving in our church.





FORTUNATE SON

Jerry Pine,
School Psychologist

My mom is a wise woman. Case in point is the very creative solution she employed in order to settle the every day war my sister and I engaged in during snack time many years ago. Apparently, dividing up six cookies between the two of us was easy. But settling the squabble as to who had the larger portion of an evenly divided bottle of soft drink? Well, that was another matter altogether. I would complain that my sister's "half" of the 16 ounce soft drink was larger than my half. Debra, my sister, would strongly disagree. She would maintain that it was she who received the smaller portion. Since perception is always shaped by the lenses a person wears in life, neither of us could be right.



So what was my mom's solution to end this daily conflict? I was to be responsible for filling the two identical glasses with pop, and my sister would then choose which glass she wanted. "Elegant" is the first word that comes to my mind whenever I think about her solution to the conflict. I was likely 12 or so at the time, and that experience has stuck with me for 50 years

now. It's part of my personal and professional life.

Here is just one takeaway from the experience: people often have an extraordinary capacity for solving their own problems. However, sometimes a different point of view can be valuable in overcoming obstacles. The Great Soda Pop War that raged every day between the two of us was a problem for my mom as well as for us. The solution required "buy-in" from all parties

believe me, just ask my wife. Jesus even acknowledged a version of this dynamic when he said, "...A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home" (Mark 6:4, NIV). That seemingly common aversion to unwanted advice, counsel, or input can be a good thing too. Like I said, people often have an extraordinary capacity for solving their own problems. Sadly, if we presume to "solve" problems for others, we run the real risk of cheating them out of opportunities for growth. That is, the

“WE NEED TO ASK THE
RIGHT QUESTIONS.”

concerned. Yes, Debra and I were directed to engage in a certain course of action. Mom was not asking. However, my sister and I still bought into the solution. We accepted her "counsel." As a result, that particular conflict ended then and there.

When it comes to adult-to-adult interactions, there is a significant caveat regarding "counseling" others. We have to do something different other than offer solutions. We need to ask the right questions. That is, a different point of view that is rarely appreciated unless it is asked for. You likely already know this to be true, but if you don't

ability to brainstorm solution and the ability to subsequently fully profit from successes and failures. The added benefit is ownership of the solution.

I'm happy to report that my sister and I no longer fight...not even over soda pop. I am fortunate to have her as my sister. But please don't tell her I said so. I'll never hear the end of it. I'm also happy to report that my mom is still a very wise woman... and I am a most fortunate son.

Pastor Luis Eguiluz



EDUCACIÓN ADVENTISTA: ¿GASTO O INVERSIÓN?

Muchos nos hemos hecho estas preguntas. ¿Porqué es tan cara la educación adventista?, ¿Porqué tiene que tener un costo la educación cristiana?, ¿Es la educación adventista un gasto o una inversión?

La Educación adventista como inversión

Elena G. de White, en el libro *La Educación*, p. 196, dice: "Ninguna tarea que se nos haya encomendado es tan importante como la de la educación de los

jóvenes, y toda inversión que requiera su correcta realización será dinero bien empleado".

Desde todo punto de vista, la educación de nuestros jóvenes es por lejos la más importante tarea que Dios nos ha encomendado, en ellos tenemos la continuidad del liderazgo de la iglesia. Por lo tanto, todos los recursos que destinemos para llevar a cabo esta misión es una inversión que dará sus frutos.

Como padres tenemos que valorar la educación que queremos que nuestros hijos reciban, recordando que no solo deben recibir conocimientos sino también valores y principios.

La Educación y los recursos

Reconocemos también que no es fácil para muchos conseguir los recursos financieros para los pagos de las mensualidades, pero confiamos en el Señor y

coordinemos con la escuela y la iglesia para encontrar los medios que nos permitan poner a nuestros hijos en una escuela adventista que los forme integralmente.

Todo esfuerzo puesto en nuestros hijos relacionado con su formación y desarrollo tanto físico, mental y espiritual es una inversión. Valoremos la educación adventista porque con esto estamos cumpliendo nuestra parte en la obra de prepararlos en cooperación con la iglesia y la escuela.

Maestros que no conocen la verdad

Por otro lado, Elena G de White también nos advierte que "la educación corriente del mundo no puede resistir la prueba de la Palabra de Dios" (CM, p. 387). Y esto es serio, porque el tema de la educación tiene consecuencias permanentes, White sigue diciendo que "los adventistas no deben colocarse bajo el consejo y la instrucción de maestros que no conocen la verdad para este tiempo. La obra de amoldar y modelar las mentes no debe ser dejada a hombres que no sean guiados por el Espíritu de Dios". Estas declaraciones son fuertes y debemos tomarlas muy en serio.

Propósito de la verdadera educación

"El gran propósito de toda la

educación y disciplina de la vida, es volver al hombre a la armonía con Dios; elevar y ennoblecer de tal manera su naturaleza moral, que pueda volver a reflejar la imagen de su Creador" (CM, p. 48).

Que gran labor, lograr que el hombre caído y sin esperanza encuentre en Cristo su ejemplo y pueda volver a estar en armonía con su Creador. Que nuestra naturaleza moral sea ennoblecida, que fortalezcamos nuestra espiritualidad, que desarrollemos nuestros dones y talentos para el servicio de Dios y su obra, que reflejemos la imagen de Dios en nuestro carácter.

El ejemplo supremo es Jesús. Toda educación que viene de lo alto tiene este principio básico: prepararnos para el cielo.

La educación y el carácter

La edificación del carácter de nuestros hijos debe ser una tarea impostergable, nuestra prioridad, nuestra primera misión. La pureza de carácter es un asunto de interés capital. Estamos en un mundo donde la influencia del mal está pululando en el ambiente. Por lo tanto, la influencia de Cristo debe florecer, el Espíritu Santo debe ser el guiador y la Palabra de Dios la norma de conducta a seguir.

CONTINUACIÓN EN LA PÁGINA 8

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

Education Department



STAR POWER

This year, **Hinsdale Adventist Academy** inducted **nine** new members (yellow stoles) into their chapter, The Difference Makers, of the National Honor Society (NHS). These students exemplify the 4 pillars of the National Honor Society, Scholarship, Leadership, Character, and Service.

The NHS chapter is very active in the community working with Amita Hinsdale Hospital for their At Home Health Care Clinic, Working with the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and volunteering for the Hot Chocolate Run in Chicago.



WELCOME TO THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE

HELLO
my name is



HEIDI DAVIS

Position: 5th-8th Grade Teacher
School: Hinsdale Adventist Academy

Heidi has accepted the position to teach 5th 8th grade Language Arts at Hinsdale Adventist Academy. As she is a recent graduate of Andrews University, she is excited to begin her teaching journey at Hinsdale Adventist Academy. Heidi is originally from the East Coast, but has had the opportunity to live in and visit other countries throughout her life. Even though this will be her first year of teaching, she has an abundance of teaching experience from being a student missionary, summer camp staff, tutor, and student teacher. Some things that she enjoys are traveling, hiking, running, and cooking. She is excited to join the team at Hinsdale and see how God will bless this next school year.

HELLO
my name is



PASTOR ELY V. MAGTANONG

Position: District: Pastor
School: Morton Grove Filipino-American SDA Church
Chicago Filipino-American SDA Church

Left to right: Amy (wife) and Ely

Pastor Eliseo "Ely" Viyar Magtanong, "begged from our Lord of the harvest to throw him out where the harvest is truly great" (Luke 10:2). The Lord answered his prayer and led him to serve two Filipino-American churches in Illinois. He came all the way from Florida where he served as a chaplain at AdventHealth Waterman. He began his pastoral ministry in the Philippines in 1984 and was given a privilege to pastor churches in Canada, Florida and Virginia. Amy, his wife of 37 years, gladly moved in with him. They are blessed with four adult kids named Elaine, Junior, Emelyn, and Allie Mae.

He is very passionate about witnessing the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ being justified and sanctified with His righteousness, actively involved in His Mission until He comes.

HELLO
my name is



VIVIAN RAIMUNDO

Position: 5-6 Grade Teacher
School: Hinsdale Adventist Academy

Vivian is the new 5th and 6th grade homeroom teacher at Hinsdale Adventist Academy. She is a recent graduate from Andrews University with a Music Education major with emphasis in voice and a minor in Spanish for Education. Prior to her time at HAA, Vivian was student-teaching at Berrien Springs Public Schools. She served as an assistant girls' dean at Ozark Adventist Academy and has worked at summer camps as a Program Director and Camp Counselor.

Vivian's passion for education is influenced by her great teachers. She hopes to share the love of Jesus in her classroom, inspire students to love learning, and help them become the best version of themselves. Vivian's favorite Bible verse, Psalms 13:6, reminds her to be grateful for God's never ending blessings: "I will sing the Lord's praise for he has been good to me."

HELLO
my name is



JEAN VALDENEGRO

Position: Teacher/Principal
School: Marion Adventist Academy

Left to right: David (husband), Rose (mom), and Jean

Jean has taught over 25 years in elementary education. She graduated from Union College in Nebraska with a BS degree in Elementary Education and an AS degree in Office Management. She earned her Masters in Education in Texas at Southwestern Adventist University. She has taught in California, Alabama, Missouri, Kansas, Texas, and spent 3 years as a missionary teacher on the island of Saipan. She has worked with Pre-School ages 18 months and up, and both early and middle elementary school ages up through 8th grade. In several schools, she also served as Principal or Head Teacher. She worked on a Curriculum Committee in the Mid-American Union, and helped pilot the Globetrotter Curriculum. Jean loves seeing the children's faces light up when they learn something new. For Jean, it has also been a privilege to work with children from many different countries, as they teach her many things about places that she may never visit. She and her husband, David, met in California, and have been married 9 years.

“ADVENTIST EDUCATION: A DIFFERENCE MAKER” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When a child attends an Adventist school, they associate with other youth of similar faith and beliefs. Friendships are begun that can last a lifetime. In fact, both our Ministerial Director and Executive Secretary are individuals with whom I began a friendship in an Adventist school, and they have been a spiritual influence throughout my life.

These are just some of the reasons why I believe parents should do all they can to send their children to Adventist schools. I believe it's worth the drive, it's worth the financial expenditure, and it's worth my child's earthly education and eternal well-being. Looking back, I am thankful for the commitment my parents made to send me to Adventist schools and am glad I did the same for my children. Consider it! You won't regret it!

“EDUCACIÓN ADVENTISTA: ¿GASTO O INVERSIÓN?” CONTINUACIÓN DE LA PÁGINA 5**Edificando para la eternidad**

“Padres, maestros, estudiantes, recordad que estáis edificando para la eternidad. Cuidad que vuestro fundamento este seguro; luego edificad firmemente, y con esfuerzo perseverante, pero en amabilidad, mansedumbre y amor” (CM, p. 62).

Mientras avance el tiempo y no acerquemos al fin de la historia del mundo, será más peligroso tener a nuestros hijos en escuelas del mundo donde no se invoque el nombre de Dios, donde las leyes de los hombres sean las que prevalezcan y donde se inculquen enseñanzas mundanas y prácticas que atentan contra nuestros principios. Nuestra responsabilidad es que nuestros hijos se preparen para el cielo. Esta es la mejor inversión.

La educación y el servicio

Elena de White nos dice también que “el verdadero objeto de la educación es formar hombres y mujeres idóneos para servir, desarrollar y poner en ejercicio activo todas sus facultades” (EC, 465). Esto significa que debemos preparar a nuestros jóvenes para el servicio, como dijo el escritor indio Tagore y lo repitió la madre María Teresa de Calcuta, “el que no vive para servir, no sirve para vivir”. Nuestra misión se basa en el servicio. El empatizar, la compasión, el compartir y ayudar a los demás es parte de la formación que deben recibir nuestros hijos en un mundo carente de amor. Invirtamos en nuestros hijos.



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