



Educational Philosophy

Rehoboth Christian School challenges its students to know the Triune God and equips them to love, serve and transform the world in His name. That mission statement guides what we do as an organization, both now and into the future.

As an institution of learning, we know that we accomplish that mission through the work of education, summed up in our motto: *Vigorously Academic. Beautifully Diverse. Thoroughly Christian.* That motto brings key ideas to light—the academic excellence to which we aspire, the diverse context of our school community, and the Christian training and faith formation we hope to provide.

Both of the statements above arise out of a set of core values—shared commitments that Rehoboth Christian School holds sacred to its identity, both now and in the future.

1. Academic - Believing that all students can learn, we admit and work with children whose abilities span the academic spectrum and strive for their growth. We don't allow students to slip through the cracks.
2. Diverse - This value is expressed throughout our educational philosophy, as our school has always primarily served the Native American community. Without a diverse context, education would be lacking at Rehoboth.
3. Christian - Our strongest descriptor, a Christian focus permeates all aspects of life and education at Rehoboth.
4. Communal - Long recognized and cherished by members of the Rehoboth community, our emphasis on welcoming, enfolding, and caring for our students and their families will always be a part of who we are.
5. Native Culture - Rehoboth respects Native culture and language and repents for periods of its history when that was not demonstrated. We embrace the tension of holding up Biblical Christian standards in conjunction with Native culture because ignoring that call would be devaluing the context in which our school educates students.

To accomplish the tasks of academic education and faith formation, Rehoboth Christian School has chosen a model called Teaching for Transformation (TFT) that speaks to both of those aspects of this important work. We believe that TFT's methodologies, when combined with a sensitivity toward and celebration of our diverse, native-forward school culture, yield the kind of mission-driven results we all desire. In TFT lingo, those results are called the "formation of a peculiar people" because Christians have a unique calling in this world.

TFT Academic Principles: The TFT framework borrows much from [Expeditionary Learning](#). The approach urges teachers to create a deep hope for their students. Depending on the situation, the school may want uniformity within deep hopes or opt for each teacher exploring their own. Another key principle for TFT is the use of Formational Learning EXperiences (FLEX) with students. FLEXes arise out of the curriculum to invite, nurture, and empower learners.

Finally, TFT schools are marked by essential practices that characterize day-to-day learning for students. Key terminology within TFT's Academic Principles includes:

- **Deep Hope:** A unique, overarching desire for each teacher that ties into the school's mission, the Big Story, their content, and the school's context.
- **FLEX:** Learning experiences marked by real work that meets the needs of real people. FLEXes are designed to:
 - Invite learners to explore their role in the Kingdom Story
 - Nurture learners' desire to become a peculiar people
 - Empower learners to practice their life's expression
- **Habits of Learning:** Qualities that teachers strive to model for and cultivate in their students
 - Curious Thinking - *We are creative and critical*
 - Gracious Communicating - *We are kind, specific, and helpful*
 - Courageous Designing - *We are resilient and rigorous*
 - Joy-Filled Collaborating - *We are grateful, playful, and reflective*
- **Celebration of Learning:** Teachers provide time and place for students to share learning and to give and receive feedback.
- **Commit to Try:** Teachers and learners grow by being willing to stretch themselves in a few key areas.
- **Learning Targets:** Whether for a course, a unit, a lesson, or a topic within a lesson, learning targets help to focus the learners and empower them to take charge of their learning.
- **Reflection:** Taking time to reflect builds metacognitive skills in students and furthers their learning, both personally and corporately, as they iterate and improve their skills.
- **Opening and Closing Circles:** Teachers intentionally build community and belonging amongst their students with specific activities to start and end a block of learning time.
- **Protocols and Teaching Practices:** These methods and tools ensure that teachers are taking the time to think about how to bring out the best in their students for desired results.

TFT Faith Formation Principles: TFT recognizes the uniqueness of Christian education with its terminology about the "Formation of a Peculiar People." As we mentor students on their journeys, our interactions will include practices to help them *know* their faith as well as *live* their faith. The notion of Storyline guides student's knowing, while FLEX and Throughlines guide their living.

Storyline: A compelling vision of the Kingdom of God that helps students and teachers articulate how they see themselves living in God's Story. This is the "knowing" portion of faith formation. For Rehoboth Christian School, God's Story—found in the Bible—is summarized as "Bringing Shalom to Chaos." To frame that sentiment in more Navajo-forward language, we can say, "Bringing Hozho to Hochxo." If desired, each teacher/class can have its own storyline—a

succinct statement or tagline that summarizes how the course springs out of the Big Story. A storyline, whether for the whole school or for an individual class, has:

1. A Visual - *A place where it lives and is readily seen by students and teachers*
2. Practices & Rhythms - *Ways that people regularly interact with the storyline*

FLEX: Described above in the Academic Principles, FLEXes help form students' faith with action—having them *do* things that meet the real needs of real people, and thereby live into their Kingdom calling to bring Hozho-Shalom to Hochxo-Chaos.

Throughlines: This list of biblical roles helps students and teachers understand how to live as God's peculiar people. They mark the kinds of qualities/behaviors/practices that FLEXes are seeking to strengthen in students. These are Hozho-Shalom-bringing roles that each of us need to embody. To capture the unique context of Rehoboth Christian School's work, our throughlines embrace elements and images of native culture.

1. **Beauty Weavers:** We serve the Creator God, and we worship Him by also creating beauty for ourselves and others. We praise the Lord by noticing the glory embedded in the world around us and by weaving those expressions of love, balance, and flourishing into our own creations.
2. **Children of God:** We are part of God's family—both giving and receiving unconditional love. We build a strong relationship with our Creator through communication (prayer) and learning about Him (Bible). We worship the Lord by serving Him as partners to bring His Hozho-Shalom to the Hochxo-Chaos of the world.
3. **Community Builders:** The fullest expression of our being is in community, as the Triune God is in His very nature a community. Throughout God's Big Story, we see the command to welcome and enfold others—not just as friends or charity cases, but as equal people loved by our Creator.
4. **Creation Keepers:** The physical environments and creatures of the world were created *good* and are loved by God. As His partners, we must tend and care for creation so that it flourishes as the Lord intended and root out the practices in our lives that bring harm to that which God cherishes.
5. **Diversity Advocates:** Diversity is part of God's beautiful creation, and human diversity should not be glossed over or artificially harmonized. By understanding, celebrating, and promoting diversity as vital to the full expression of human community, we rehearse the Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven.
6. **Gospel Walkers:** The Good News is that God's Kingdom is here! Since the Kingdom comes when and where people do the will of the King, we live and walk by God's law—bringing Hozho-Shalom to Hochxo-Chaos with an eye for the marginalized.

7. **Justice Warriors:** Justice means setting things back in balance—the way they're supposed to be. We work hard to understand and expose injustice and the vulnerability it creates for its victims. We take steps to bring restoration to those situations and people.
8. **Living Images:** God made people *in His image*, which gives each of us inherent value. It also gives us a task—to demonstrate to the world what the character of God is like by serving as living pictures of His care and protection for others, especially the marginalized.
9. **Truth Seekers:** The Lord blessed us with minds to learn about Him, the world, and our place in it. Seeking the truth means wrestling with a variety of perspectives and using discernment to reflect on information and opinions to discover what is in step with the nature and will of God.
10. **Wells of Hope:** Hope is the light that shines in the darkness. It's not a wish, but rather a confidence that the Lord is who He says He is and that we can count on His faithful promises. That Hope, residing in us, needs to be passed on to others in word and deed, like the nourishing water from a well.

Intertwined Elements: As a school that arises out of a Reformed perspective, Rehoboth Christian does not believe that academic learning and faith formation are separate pursuits. Rather, they are intertwined, just as our faith as individual people weaves its way into all aspects of our lives—vocation, leisure, relationships, creative pursuits, physical activity, and more. Because we are whole people and not just brains on sticks, we know that both intellectual learning and faith formation touch all of who we are and that growth comes via experience, emotion, passion, and practice in addition to brain-based learning.

The methodology of TFT ties together academics with faith formation through the use of story and narrative. If we are to “See the story and live the story,” as the TFT motto proclaims, that will involve both understanding what’s going on and stepping into our roles within that narrative. By using the framework of Bringing Hozho-Shalom to Hochxo-Chaos, RCS teachers and students are able to ask within each subject area, “Where do we see Hochxo-Chaos in the world when it comes to this topic?” and further, “What knowledge and skills do we need to fulfill our role as God’s partners in bringing Hozho-Shalom to that Chaos?”

As a result, the Rehoboth community realizes that learning isn’t something done in a vacuum or just for the sake of being smart. There are far bigger stakes for us here. Everything we teach is another piece of equipping—another tool in the toolbox—for the tasks of Kingdom significance that the Lord has appointed us to do.