

Steve D. Whitaker, Ph.D.

Dr. Steve D. Whitaker serves as Head of School at The First Academy. Under his leadership, the school has experienced record growth - 1,133 students currently enrolled, organizational advancement and recently completed a capital campaign which included a new upper school facility, tennis center, lower school expansion, library renovation, and an athletic field house/pavilion. Since his arrival in 2003, the generous families of The First Academy have pledged/given in excess of \$18 million to advance the strategic plan.

The school is accredited by ACSI/SACS and is a charter member of the Council for Educational Standards and Accountability. In addition to a college acceptance rate of 100 percent, the academic profile of The First Academy is second to none. In 2009, the lower school was awarded the distinction of a National Blue Ribbon School. Passionate about the cultivation of Christian intellect, Dr. Whitaker recently led a local effort that brought together Christopher Hitchens and Dinesh D'Souza for what was called "The Great Faith Debate." The event was held at the University of Central Florida with nearly 5,000 in attendance.

Dr. Whitaker's background includes 20 years of experience as an administrator, coach, teacher and adjunct professor. In addition to a diverse public speaking career, Dr. Whitaker has written on a variety of topics including school culture, Christian living, generous giving and Biblical worldview issues.

After completing a bachelor's degree in South Florida, he received a Masters of Education from MidAmerica Nazarene University and a Master of Arts degree in Education from the University of Louisville. He also earned his Ph.D. from the University of Louisville in Higher Education Administration. He is married to Tricia Dawn and has three marvelous children (Amanda, Stephen, Jr. and Caleb). He enjoys playing golf with his boys and loves attending musical theatre with his girls.