Gayle R. Renken
St. Timothy's Christian Academy
Evangelical Lutheran Education Association
San Jose, California
gayle.renken@stlcsj.org

In her ten years as principal of St. Timothy’s Christian Academy in San Jose, California, Gayle R. Renken has been at the forefront of change. Her first major accomplishment was achieving accreditation for St. Timothy’s in 2009. She spearheaded LEAP, a “school within a school” model for enhancing the education of students with language-based special needs, utilizing best practices in the academic remediation of dyslexia in one-on-one and small-group instructional formats, along with integrated general education alongside peers without dyslexia. This program has assisted over 100 students since its inception. Through innovations like transitioning from grade-level-based to ability-level-based math groups for third-to-fifth graders, Renken has seen math scores improve significantly. Renken has dramatically updated the school’s technological capacity, acquiring iPads for all grades and implementing a Project Based Learning (PBL)pilot program where multi-age student groups research and present on a topic using technology each week. Parent involvement is an integral part of the PBL program. Embracing the concept of “servant leadership,” Renken balances leadership with management duties to create an atmosphere where all feel valued and respected, using her role as principal to empower staff to step up and share leadership and control when appropriate. Renken holds a B.S. in Elementary Education from Valparaiso University and an M.A. in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University.