

Diocese of Davenport Catholic Schools Marketing
Advancing the Mission of Catholic School Education in the Diocese of Davenport
“Catholic Schools are the responsibility of the entire Catholic Community”

The goal of the Diocese of Davenport Catholic Schools marketing plan and template, is to provide guidance to school personnel charged with the executing an enrollment management and marketing plan to address maintaining and growing enrollments, and develop resources. It is recommended that each Catholic school in the Diocese of Davenport have a marketing /enrollment management plan in place in an effort generate interest in our Catholic schools, inform potential families of what it has to offer, as well as educate potential donors. The task force that designed this document will also serve as a resource panel willing to help local Catholic schools with enrollment challenges.

The objective of our **Enrollment Management/ Marketing plan** is to strategically plan for the marketing management for the following reasons: to recruit prospective families on campus and get them enrolled, to plan retention strategies and to develop resources. It is a plan to sell the strengths of our schools. Beyond what is written in the plan it is all about first impressions and verifiable facts. Is the Catholic identity of the school visible from the street? Can visitors tell it is a Catholic school within 40 seconds of arrival?

The plan template will outline five major components: development of **Foundational documents** designed to tell the story of our local Catholic School, activities designed to **market** the school to prospective families including advantages of the local Catholic school compared to other educational options, examples of what can be done over the course of a year for the active **recruitment** of potential students, a focus on **retention** of existing families, and to develop sources for needed resources.

Marketing Basics

Marketing is more than just getting new students to attend your school. Marketing helps ensure the long term viability of the school. There are three areas in which to market your school that will build your school’s viability.

- Image
- Enrollment
- Resources

Marketing for image is the way we make our school identifiable and unique. Branding your school is the first step in marketing for image. Branding your school consists of consistent use of the school logo, colors, and all images that are associated with your school. A good example is Notre Dame University.

Marketing for Enrollment is what generally comes to mind when considering marketing. This main focus of this plan is marketing for enrollment. The two areas that make up enrollment are recruitment and retention. Recruitment is important in bringing new students into your school. Retention is keeping the students we already have. Retention is just as important as recruitment.

Marketing for Resources is important when building the financial resources of the school. This area of marketing reaches out beyond the school community. Areas involved in marketing for resources include grant sources, alumni, and wider community support through building endowments, securing grants, annual funds, and bequests.

Enrollment/Marketing Plan Template

I. Foundational Documents

The Foundational documents section provides prospective and existing parents a snapshot of what is important to the school and the purpose for why it exists. It further tells the history and the current state of the school. The foundational documents paint a picture of the value of Catholic education, the strengths and challenges of the local Catholic school faces.

The foundational documents form a contract with parents ensuring the value of a Catholic education. These documents should leave no doubt as to why the school exists, whom it serves, and how it serves its students and community. The foundational documents consist of the school's Philosophy, Mission, Vision, and Portrait of a Graduate at Graduation. A description of each of the documents follows, provided by a planning template.

Philosophy

The Catholic school philosophy identifies what the school is called to be. The essential elements of a Catholic school philosophy were articulated by Catholic Bishops in 1972 in a Pastoral on Catholic education entitled "To Teach as Jesus Did." A Catholic school philosophy essentially identifies that the school exists to "integrate elements of faith with the learning process."

Other elements of the Catholic school philosophy are:

- To educate for and teach Gospel values;
- To build community;
- To provide opportunities for prayer and worship;
- To educate and provide opportunities for service to others.

Additionally, the Catholic school philosophy suggests that Catholic schools exist to:

- Educate the whole child;
- Educate for global awareness;
- Educate for justice issues;
- Provide opportunities for community service learning.

Individual Catholic school philosophies are usually based upon and flow from philosophies and educational guidelines published by the archdiocesan or diocesan office of Catholic education and/or a particular religious community or institution. Since the philosophy is based on and describes the educational ministry of the Catholic Church, most Catholic school philosophy statements sound similar.

(CSM Letter, November 15, 2015)

Mission Statement

While the Catholic school philosophy describes what the school is called to be, the mission statement describes its purpose for existence. A mission statement is a compelling statement that describes what the school is called to do and so positions a school as unique among all other schools. Catholic school mission statements typically contain the following core elements:

- Why a school exists;
- Whom the school serves;
- What kind of academic program is offered;
- What values are held most important in the school
- Community.

The mission statement is based on and reflective of the school philosophy. The mission statement is used to drive strategic planning, the design of the academic program, and institutional advancement and development initiatives, including marketing for image, enrollment, and resources. Mission should serve as the basis for formulating policy and making decisions. When a major decision has to be made, the decision makers should be asking: Does the action that will result from this decision further our mission? Is it consistent with who we are and what we do? Referring to the mission statement to make decisions in this manner can also help a school prioritize actions when resources are limited. The mission statement is most effective when it is developed through a facilitated process that engages representatives from all constituencies of the school. (CSM Letter, November 15, 2015)

Vision

A vision statement describes the ideal state that can be achieved in the future if resources are no obstacle. The vision should be inspiring, motivating, and far reaching, articulating what the school aspires to be in the future at its best. Typically determined by the school leadership, the vision statement should provide an aiming point for the future. A vision for a school is often attained through a strategic plan, one that is grounded in the school's mission and which defines strategies that further the school's mission. (CSM Letter, November 15, 2015)

Profile of the Graduate at Graduation

Every Catholic elementary, middle, and secondary school should be able to describe a successful graduate. The profile of the graduate at graduation represents the consensus of faculty, administration, and Board regarding essential expectations for student development and accomplishments. In general terms, the profile categorically enumerates characteristics of the ideal Catholic school graduate:

- Academically;
- Religiously;
- Spiritually;
- Socially;
- Physically.

Secondary schools will sometimes combine these categories in order to emphasize the growing importance of leadership and social awareness for the high school graduate. The profile of the graduate at graduation serves as both a description of the student who is a product of a Catholic school education and a measurement for parents and educators. This statement is founded in mission, an expression of vision, and a key element in marketing the school. Typically, the faculty and staff of a school play an instrumental role in creating the profile of the graduate. (CSM Letter, November 15, 2015)

Foundational Document Examples

Mission Statement:

St. Sample Catholic Elementary School provides a quality Catholic education for children from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds in the metropolitan community. Dedicated faculty and staff respect and encourage each individual learner to reach his or her potential spiritually by developing a strong relationship with God, academically by the valuing of lifelong learning, physically by embracing healthy living habits, and socially by growing as a self-disciplined member of the community and learning to serve others.

Vision Statement:

St. Sample Catholic School will be a faith and learning community recognized for its academic excellence, student-centered curriculum, enriching activities, and culturally rich environment.

Profile of the Graduate at Graduation:

Upon graduation, a St. Sample Catholic School graduate will:

Academically

- Excel academically and be well prepared for the challenges of high school;
- Be a creative and independent thinker;
- Use technology proficiently and responsibly.

Religiously

- Live and promote Catholic values;
- Understand Catholic faith traditions;
- Know prayers, catechism, and scripture

Spiritually

- Have begun to develop a lifelong relationship with God;
- Look for opportunities to provide service to others;
- Show respect for the beliefs of others.

Socially

- Respect self and others;
- Be a responsible and contributing member of the community;
- Have begun to develop a global perspective.

Physically

- Know the importance of good nutrition and exercise;
- Appreciate the gift of life;
- Demonstrate self-control.

(CSM Letter, November 15, 2015)

Action Steps/Definitions Foundational Documents	Contacts / Resources	Indicators of Progress (examples)	Persons / groups/funding Responsible	Timeline for completion
Evaluate/Create School Philosophy				
Evaluate/Create School Mission Statement				
Evaluate/Create School Vision Statement				
Evaluate/Create School Portrait of a Graduate and Graduation				
Additional Actions Steps Needed				

II. Establishment/Evaluation of a Public Relations/Marketing/Enrollment Committee

The local Catholic school should establish an enrollment committee to focus on the plan for enrollment management, marketing, recruitment, retention. In order to form an effective marketing committee thoughtful consideration should be given to the selection of the right people for the job. Leadership from the principal and pastor is essential, but to be most effective the committee needs additional people with specific skills and talents to participate in the development of the local plan, and to take responsibility for its implementation, evaluation and regular revision.

Items to be evaluated or considered when establishing a new committee are as follows:

- Membership - Membership should include key school personnel and parent/community volunteers. When considering membership.
- Needed skill sets - Some skills that are beneficial for those serving on the committee are photography, publishing, marketing, networking, graphic design and general knowledge of the school and parish community.
- Schedule - How frequently will the committee meet?
- Goals - The PR/Marketing Committee should be a working committee with specific goals to accomplish. Goals will be addressed in the next session.

Action Steps	Contacts / Resources	Indicators of Progress (examples)	Persons / groups/funding Responsible	Timeline for completion
Create or evaluate the current PR/Marketing/Enrollment Committee				
Committee Membership				
Committee Meeting Schedule Set				
Committee Goals				

III. PR/Marketing Goals

Marketing makes the school more visible in the community, informs potential families what it has to offer, and can aid in securing additional funding sources. Marketing communicates that the school community is proud of its product and committed to continued growth and improvement. Being the “best kept secret in the area” is not a desirable goal of marketing your school.

The message must be clear and consistent- Catholic education in general, and each local Catholic school in particular, is a superior educational choice as evidenced by measurable outcomes.

Action Steps	Contacts / Resources	Indicators of Progress (examples)	Persons / groups/funding Responsible	Timeline for completion
Collect Demographic Data				
Develop a recognizable brand/why is the education at our school worth more than the cost.				
Develop a comprehensive Communication Plan				
Develop a comprehensive Marketing Timeline				
Analyze enrollment trends including baptismal rates				
Enrollment target	Board			
Community Engagement				
Identify audiences to persuade				

IV. Recruitment

Recruitment efforts at our Catholic Schools are a strategic process of finding, attracting, and ultimately enrolling new families into the local Catholic Schools. Each school should establish a calendar of recruitment events for the year and employ proper follow-up to these events. Each day in a Catholic school should be considered an opportunity to recruit and every school event is perceived as a recruitment event. Most importantly the school community should project a welcoming attitude, keep track of families that show an interest in the school, and follow-up according to a plan.

Action Steps	Contacts / Resources	Indicators of Progress (examples)	Persons / groups/funding Responsible	Timeline for completion
Marketing pieces				
Focus on Entry Points (These vary depending on the school grade level configuration.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preschool ● Kindergarten ● 5th grade ● 6th grade ● 9th grade 				
Identify Catholic/potential students in a Geographic Region/ Identify Audiences to Persuade.				
Develop a Recruitment Calendar				
Develop Talking Points, Anticipate frequently asked questions and Promote School value and FAQ's/ Develop compelling reasons to attend your school.				

Display and Promote Spirit Wear Items				
Develop and Launch an effective Communication Plan with all stakeholders and potential audiences. The communication plan should consider print, social media, apps, websites, business partnerships.				
Bigs/Littles Activities				
Plan and Host Multiple Admission Events				
Communicate a responsible Tuition Strategy Available Financial Assistance				

V. Retention

The goal of retention efforts in Catholic schools should be to create a deeper loyalty among current parents who will remain at the school and become passionate advocates to prospective families. Every effort should be made at the local Catholic school to ensure that existing families are re-enrolling for next year. Retention is a strong measure of a family's satisfaction with the local Catholic school and a school must focus on retention as an important way to maintain the gains of the enrollment management plan. Happy parents are the number 1 recruiters for Catholic schools.

Action Steps	Contacts / Resources	Indicators of Progress (examples)	Persons / groups/funding Responsible	Timeline for completion
Solicit parent Feedback & measure satisfaction				
Engage current parents in Planned Communication & Retention Events				
Conduct Exit Interviews with departing families				
Communication Plan (parents and students)				
Available Financial Assistance				
Employ re-registration practices/Keep track and follow-up				

Appendix

Samples of Marketing Activities

- Football players attend morning mass at local parish on Fridays in shirts and ties etc. Any school group worshipping as a school community at the local parish will inform and impress.
- Basketball team attending mass together at local parish on Sunday
- Speak at parishes
- Work with your staff to understand the importance of projecting that they are part of a positive and focused school culture and environment. Provide staff with a brief, one-page “talking points” document that highlights the key information that you would like staff to share in a consistent manner.
- Remember that a parent’s first point of contact, along with the enthusiasm of staff and students, plays a critical role in making a decision about your school.
- Student teacher success stories
- Make sure your campus is clean.
- Provide students the opportunity to brainstorm, develop and implement marketing strategies for your school. A valuable hands-on learning experience.
- Follow up tours with phone call and/or written communication.
- Pick a lane...be known for something
- Press releases about good news to local media outlets.
- In your school/parent/Faith community presentations, include students and or parents who can speak to positive experiences they have had in your school.
- Focus your conversations around student achievement (and don’t just talk about test scores- talk about ways in which your school works with students to achieve. Promote such things as student support services, extracurricular activities, parent/Faith community support groups etc.
- Professionally produced brochure
- Ensure everyone is involved in marketing your school.
- Yard signs
- Promotional items: Practical items with school logos or slogans, things that students would use every day (i.e. pens. Pencils, notepads, etc.).
- Bumper stickers
- Marketing materials that describe your school’s product and model in other words, your school mission statement, what is special about your school, and your school’s approach to student success?
- Develop and distribute a school packet that includes a brochure of your school that provides highlights in a very user friendly manner.
- Make sure it includes your website URL. List names and phone numbers of parents that would be willing to field call from prospective parents.
- Have teachers, parents and students make a bulleted list of things that make your school special.

- Take pictures of students engaging in learning activities and programs you want to promote. A picture is worth more than a 1,000 words.
- Update your school's website with current programs, tour dates and times.
- Websites-content is everything. Well written and organized content with easy to follow links to other information and catchy photos are extremely valuable.
- Press releases about school service projects
- Direct mailing of flyers
- Branded spirit wear items
- Social media advertising
- Use church bulletins to convey information about activities and opportunities at the school.
- Send articles and pictures to the most local news source and the Catholic Messenger.
- Develop positive relationships with every parent, key parishioners, the parish staff, civic leaders, local business owners, local preschools, day care centers, and churches (both Catholic and non-Catholic without aa school)
- Print media including parish bulletins
- Functional and interactive school websites
- Speakers for parish events
- Thank you notes to parish finance council for supporting the school from students
- Invitations to special liturgies, school tours, student performances, Catholic Schools Week events, annual open house, schedule for regular school tours

Samples of Recruitment Activities

- Parish family fun night at the school
- Share support and transition opportunities for new families-parent/student ambassador etc.
- Carnival on school grounds in early August
- Create a safe environment for every student
- Teachers should show excellent teaching, deep faith and care for each student. Word of Mouth marketing is effective.
- Christmas cards to all parish four year olds signed by current school students
- Kindergarten roundup posters all over town
- Half price tuition for kindergarten year
- Colleges give an automatic \$1,000, \$5,000 off tuition to all Catholic High School graduates.
- College that gives free room and board to graduates of a Catholic High school
- TV commercials
- Establish shadow days.
- Give name plate to front office staff (Director of First Impressions)

- Communicate to all audiences when teachers, students, alumna, pastor, etc. Earn awards.
- Nominate teachers and schools for awards (Blue Ribbon Schools)
- Visit all preschools and leave materials
- Gifts from the school at Baptism (Future (school mascot) and date Cups, bibs, puzzles

Samples of Retention Activities

- Grandparent lunch
- Aftercare/Before care
- Parish school fun run
- Provide new families with mentors and prayer partners
- Address reasons children leave your schools.
- Free snow cones at registration
- Student ambassadors to guide parents in the registration process
- Sophie with the priest or principal
- Boo Hoo or Yippy Skippy coffee for kindergarten parents the first day of school
- Welcome back mass for all families and students
- Mass and special orientation for new families
- New student breakfast
- Pair new families with parent ambassadors
- Have students show new students to lockers and classroom at Back to School or Unpack the Backpack night.
- Student Ambassadors invite new student to join their lunch group the first week of school
- Student ambassadors wear ambassador shirt the first five days of school to assist new students
- School mascot on street corner welcoming new families the first day of school
- Pastor introduces all new students at the first all school mass

Various of Resources

Alliance for Catholic Education at Notre Dame <https://ace.nd.edu/about/the-alliance-for-catholic-education>

Catholic School Management <http://www.catholicschoolmgmt.com/>

Grow School Enrollment <http://growschoolenrollment.com/>

National Catholic Education Association www.ncea.org