

CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT + QUARTERLY +

An informational DIGEST to guide development personnel in the emerging field of development.

Volume XII, Edition 2

BOARDS OF EDUCATION, PARENTS AND DEVELOPMENT: ALL WORKING TOGETHER

Development is both a ministry and a management strategy. It is a process of being committed to the Gospel message through Catholic education and telling the story as well as building lasting, loving relationships based in faith and a common goal. A key element in the entire process is having parents, board, parent associations (PTG, Home and School, etc.) boosters and others working together to provide quality Catholic education not just to our own children but to other children including those that will follow years into the future.

Catholic schools are not "private schools" in the conventional sense. Although technically private, most Catholic schools are part of a larger body-the Catholic Church. Just as a parish, university, Catholic high school, Catholic Charities are also part of the Church. Most Catholic schools are part of the larger diocesan Church. Others may be owned and operated by a religious community of women or men. Still others may be incorporated Catholic schools serving at the "invitation" of the local bishop.

Therefore, it is important that all "publics" understand the culture of a faith community, the mission statement, philosophy and operate under a set of assumptions and expectations. In this way, we are all truly working together.

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

The four principles of development espoused by Msgr. John A. Flynn (1926-1997) reflect many of the same goals to which students, parents, boards, donors and other members of the community are committed.

- Quality Catholic education.
- Sound Business Management.
- Effective Public Relations attracts>
- People and Funding.

Catholic schools are schools of community: students, parents, teachers, pastors, parishioners, and broader Catholic community. They are also a means of evangelization and "missionary" work.

The Church provides a service that is necessary and appealing (education). That educational experience is an opportunity to evangelize through a learning and participatory process that is based in faith and is a quality "product."

The product is "quality Catholic education" -- the first principal of development -- and it is the key beginning point followed by "sound business management, effective public relations and inviting people and funding."

BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Boards of Education take their modeling from Canon Law (Church Law) which explains the role of Finance Councils and Pastoral Councils. These councils or boards are not boards of directors or separate corporations, they are "consultative" boards. They provide advice, guidance, participation and support through their work and respective subcommittee work.

Effective boards work through a process of "consensus" whereby the board works through policies and discusses them in a decision making process. Consensus is not unanimity but "general agreement" and board members can "support" decisions that are made although board members may not agree with every specific aspect of the decision.

The board should be active in working through the process to achieve the four principles of development. The same should be true of parents. See section on Role of Parents in Development.

You will note that many successful educational institutions are successful because of their boards. These schools will invite people to make a long term service commitment to its board and the board is a total board that works in areas such as strategic planning, physical plant and facilities, finance, public relations, development. Often times, Catholic elementary schools and some Catholic high schools are limited in their board structure. They hold interconnected relationships with local parishes or the diocese and therefore are not "private Catholic schools" with one governing board.

They actually have more than one board because Finance and Pastoral Councils indirectly govern them. This structure is both a strength and a weakness. The biggest weakness is in the area of development, mainly because development requires people of not only faith but of influence and affluence. In many cases, our Church board structures do not provide a board that is "home" to these types of lay leaders.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT

The board of education assists the school by participating in the formulation of school policies and in the setting of priorities. As previously mentioned, board is consultative in nature and works in a consensus building method in its work. Although consultative nature with limitations by virtue of the Code of Canon (Church) Law, the board "legislates" or sets priorities and the administrator "executes" or implements those policies.

It can be easily assumed that "development" would be a natural priority of a Catholic school. So the board of education should establish, approve and encourage development program efforts. Listed below are elements that would comprise the role of the board in development:

- draft a "Vision Statement" for the future of your Catholic institution, which states where the institution is going within the next five years and what resources are required.
- authorize a standing committee development committee to advance the mission and stability of the school.
- use or institute a strategic plan that advances an institutional vision; this will provide case building for your development program-accreditations and self studies will provide this important "case building" information.
- as a follow up create a "Development Plan" which states how the money will be raised to make the plan a reality: campaign, major gifts, endowment, planned giving, scholarships, development council, development staff, alumni, etc.
- invite a local college or university president or development director to address the board regarding a typical institutional strategic planning/visioning and major campaign cycle -- usually a five-year cycle.
- identify and report on capital and technology needs for the Catholic institution; recreate them as "gift options" with needs stated and priced out.
- conduct a comprehensive Annual Fund; add a "board calling night" to the phonathon within your Annual Fund.

ROLE OF PARENTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Parents, needless to say, are a very important spoke in the development wheel. They possess drive, enthusiasm energy and commitment which needs to be channeled and directed to benefit the school, their students, themselves and the broader faith community. Many of the most significant gifts the Catholic school will see in the future will be from parents of graduates-if continually cultivated and a habit of giving is created and nurtured.

Parents should be profiled and groomed to provide leadership in development. They can serve as chairpersons and leaders for the Annual Fund, Capital Campaign, Major Gifts, Planned Giving, etc.

Parents through the Board of Education, Home and School/PTO and parent leaders should be "oriented" toward understanding the mission, philosophy, goals and most importantly the expectations of the school.

Development for the Catholic school also gives the parents an opportunity to work with and learn from other "publics" that are also committed to the school: past parents, alumni/alumnae, parishioners, business leaders, clergy and religious as well as other donors and friends of the institution. It will provide for them a greater perspective and sense of community beyond just the educational experience and benefit for "their child."

Parents must be oriented from a "consumer mentality" with their understanding of Catholic education toward a "community mentality" where parents are part of a community of faith dedicated to an Catholic educational mission and funded through a ministry called development.

+*QUARTERLY*+ CHECKLIST

This edition's **+*QUARTERLY*+ CHECKLIST** include a number of marketing and development strategies related to parents and their role in development for your Catholic institution:

- **Orientation** -- conduct a program with required attendance for parents to orient them on issues such as assumptions you operate under, educational philosophy, expectations. Include cost per student information and expectations about charitable giving and involvement.
- The orientation will establish and "implied contract" with parents. It will lay out what is expected of them and what they can expect of you.
- **Annual Fund/Phonathon** -- conduct an annual fund that invites parents, alumni/alumnae, grandparents, friends, parishioners and business leaders getting people in the habit of giving. Annual Funds will help the parents retain the habit of giving long after their children have graduated.
- **Annual Fund Kick-Off/Social** -- when you conduct the Annual Fund, kick it off with a nice late afternoon/early evening social event that gives parents a chance to mix and hear about the goals for the Annual Fund.
- **Select Parent Interview** -- conduct parent donor interviews of a select number of parents. Select parents that have faith, influence and affluence. Outcomes of the interviews are leadership, vision and major gift financial support.
- **Home Focus Groups** -- conduct visioning and development cultivation sessions with parents hosted in the homes of parents; link it to your current strategic planning and ask their input and how the plan should be funded. This process can move them toward the need for major gifts, formal development and campaign planning.
- **Special Gifts** -- develop "gift options" for parents -- a more sophisticated wish list-more like proposals that encourage large gifts. Distribute at Christmas as a Christmas List.

Taking the initiative with boards, parents and parent support groups can have tremendous impact both immediate and long term.

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