



INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

Bringing People, Process, and Ministry Together to Build the

Kingdom of God.

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Enrollment Talk

by

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“It Takes Resolve and Elizabeth Fox Has It!”

Your average Catholic school has many enrollment challenges facing it today. Managing enrollment takes resolve. Those persons who are responsible for managing enrollment in our schools must have a spirit of resolve to recruit and retain students. Five minutes into meeting workshop attendee Elizabeth (Liz) Fox this past Friday, I knew that she had enrollment management resolve.

What led me to this conclusion within minutes of meeting her? First, she traveled **2,413 miles** to attend the workshop! Second, she was hired as the development director at an elementary school and within days of being hired she realized the school’s enrollment had to grow. Third, she rattled off a list of things that she had already done in relation to enrollment since starting her new position in April. I’ve met so many persons working on enrollment over the years that I can just sense the type of can-do attitude that it takes to make a difference.

Enrollment management is serious business. The future of your school depends on it. There are 101 obstacles that stand in the way of your school getting from point A to B. The only way that your school can move forward is for key (paid and volunteer) individuals to have the kind of resolve that lets nothing stand in the way. By the way, Liz created an implementation plan before the workshop had ended. She identified a month-by-month to-do list filled with resolve!

Prepare a Fact Sheet for Your School

As your school heads into a new year, make sure that staff, faculty and members of your enrollment team have an easy-to-access list of key “facts” about your school. Create a “cheat sheet” that they can easily refer to at a moments notice. There is so much key information about your school that the fact sheet will probably turn into a small booklet. When it is multiple pages, make sure to open the booklet with a table of contents. The table of contents will help people to quickly flip to the right section of information.

It’s a lot of information to initially compile, but most of the information does not change from year to year. Let it become a work in progress as there will always be information

to add to it. You sometimes only get one chance to make a good impression. The level of detailed information that is provided in a first encounter can often determine the level of relationship that is formed.

Sample List of Topics to Cover in a Catholic School Fact Sheet/Booklet

KEY POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT

- What makes the school unique? (Top 3 things)
- Benefits of spiritual development? (Top 3 specific things)
- Benefits of academic excellence (Top 3 specific things)
- School values (Name the core values that the school intends to instill.)
- Come up with an opening statement for times when a conversation begins with the person asking an open-ended question like, “Can you tell me about your school?”

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Contact information (complete listing of any and all contacts, job titles, phone number, and email address)

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

- Entrance exams (mainly for high schools, but could be for elementary schools)
- Shadow days
- Access to calendars of those who meet with prospective families (so that you can schedule that appointment while you have the person on the phone)

TUITION COST

- Tuition Cost (Begin with 10 or 12 month payment then share the overall price.)
- Financial Aid (including overall amount given out in previous year, percentage who apply, percentage who are awarded, average award, step by step process for applying)
- Payment Options (Including percentage who use 10 or 12 month payment plan...bottom line, know what the payment options are and make sure to mention it even if they don't bring it up.)

MEASURING SUCCESS

- Standardized Test Scores (Strategize with your principal and faculty about how you explain test score results and/or how your school measures academic and religious education success.)
- Awards your school has received (things like Blue Ribbon designation, accrediting bodies that have accredited your school)
- # of community service hours
- College scholarships received (how many students and the overall amount)
- Percentage of those who go to college (examples of where they go)
- High school graduation rate

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

- Curriculum (general overview of what will be covered in each grade)
- Information on Principal
- Information on Faculty (including teacher degrees and credentials)

FAITH AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Faith formation (examples)
- Sacramental preparation

SERVICES

- Transportation
- Before and After Childcare Program
- Title 1 Reading programs
- Tutoring services
- Counseling services
- Daycare options
- Breakfast/lunch program
- Technology (how many computers, something about the operating system etc...)
- Diverse student needs (special needs accommodations...not too in-depth...don't want to commit the school verbally to an accommodation it can't provide)
- Bilingual services
- AP class offerings (for high schools)
- Pre-school Info
- Latchkey info

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Athletics
- Service project descriptions
- Listing of extra-curricular activities

DEMOGRAPHICS AND DIVERSITY

- Average class size
- Student/teacher ratio
- Know the make-up of the school's student body
- Percentage of non-Catholics

PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Parent involvement opportunities
- Parent groups

POLICIES

- Uniform policy
- Expectations regarding participation in religious activities for non-Catholics

SAFETY

- Safety measures that are in place

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & AFFILIATION

- Definition of Parish School (What does it mean to be a parish sponsored school?)
- Parish membership (info in case they ask about joining the parish)
- Mass schedule

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Partnerships with businesses

Spiritual Thought

Speaking of resolution, St. Ignatius of Loyola is a spiritual hero who epitomized what it means to have resolve. We celebrate his feast day on July 31. The following prayer probably represents his total surrender to serving the mission. His famous prayer reads,

“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess.

You have given all to me. To you, O Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it wholly according to your will.

Give me your love and your grace, for this is sufficient for me.” Amen.