



August 2007

## ***Catholic School Enrollment Talk***

ISPD is your Catholic School Enrollment Solution for maintaining and/or increasing the quantity, quality, or diversity of your elementary or secondary Catholic school enrollment.

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### **Issues Impacting Catholic School Enrollment**

**By John Cooper, ISPD Enrollment Specialist**

The new school year brings with it an opportunity to infuse new energy into your school's enrollment management effort. After working with thousands of administrators, faculty, staff, parents, students, and volunteers, we have found that important enrollment data is frequently lacking or non-existent.

Picture this scene in a medical doctor's office: You go in for a check-up and the nurse takes your blood pressure reading. She turns to you and says that your reading is 30 points higher than it should be. When the doctor comes in, you ask him if you should be concerned about your blood pressure. Your doctor looks at your chart to compare today's reading with previous blood pressure readings. Based on that comparison over time, your doctor is able to give you a better answer. What if your doctor turned to you and said, "We never recorded your previous readings so we really don't know what to make of your blood pressure score today". Most of us would be upset.

Data comparison and analysis is also important in assessing the health of your school's enrollment. It does not matter if your enrollment declined, remained flat, or increased - it is imperative that you spend time analyzing what the data is indicating. You need to know why you are up, why you are flat, or why you are down in enrollment. Comparing this year's enrollment data to previous year's data is the first place that you start.

#### **What kind of enrollment data are we referring to?**

- Number of Prospects.  
A prospect is someone who has not formally indicated an interest, but by virtue

of parish membership or being in an 8th grade feeder school, you determine they are likely to be interested.

- Number of Inquiries.  
An inquirer is someone who takes the time to say through various means that they are interested. Many elementary and high schools cannot tell you how many inquiries they have. If this inquiry information is not recorded and easily accessible, then follow-up with the inquiries is likely not taking place.
- Number of Applicants.  
An applicant is better than an inquirer because they are saying that they are more than just interested. It's unfortunate that many elementary and high schools don't fully appreciate the significance of an application.
- Number of Placement Test Takers.  
This is primarily used by high schools. Those who depend on placement tests as an indicator of how well they are doing should consider keeping track of how many sign up in advance of the test, how many just show up on test day, and what their applicant/enrollment yield is from those who take the test.
- Number of Accepts and Denies (if applicable).
- Number of Enrolled.  
Make sure that you only record those who have registered at a given point in time and not those who you think are going to register.
- Number who applied for tuition assistance.
- Number who were offered or denied tuition assistance.
- Average or median tuition assistance awarded broken down by income and number of dependents. Factor in other variables your school uses.
- Average or median income level (including other variables) where you were most successful converting a tuition assistance applicant into an enrolled student.
- Average or median income level (including other variables) where you were least successful converting a tuition assistance applicant into an enrolled student.
- Retention rate for each grade.  
Example: 1st grade to 2nd grade or 10th grade to 11th grade.
- Completion rate.  
Example: Of the kindergarteners who enter each year what % complete and graduate from 8th grade?

**Note:** It is important that you archive a weekly or at least monthly snapshot of this data. At peak times of the year, it is preferred that you do a weekly snapshot of activity. You can get by with monthly snapshots during times of slower enrollment activity. More to the point, knowing how many inquiries you have today for 2008-09 is good, but it is more strategic to also know how many inquiries you had on this date last year. For data like average financial assistance awards, it is fine to have yearly

snapshots available.

If keeping this type of data sounds more like corporate America than a Catholic school, then maybe the business world has something we should model. Remember the Gospels are filled with passages where Jesus talks about being prepared and keeping watch. Maintaining this data, analyzing it, and sharing it (where appropriate) are vital steps in your school's enrollment management program.

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## This Month's Survey Question

ISPD would like your feedback in the form of answering an enrollment related survey question. Our on-line survey question is powered by [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and results will be shared with you next month.

Here's this month's question:

***"Does your school record enrollment related data? If so, what types of data does it record and maintain? Does your school take the time to evaluate and analyze this data?"***

[Click Here to take survey](#)

## July Survey Results

***"Have you ever had a meeting with your school secretarial staff to discuss their role in managing enrollment?"***

58.3 % said yes.  
41.7 % said no.

***"If you are a parish school, has your school and parish secretarial staffs ever gotten together to discuss their role in managing both school enrollment and/or parish affiliation?"***

12.5 % said yes.  
87.5 % said no.

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## 69.8% Report an Enrollment Increase in Their School

Several weeks ago we launched a satisfaction survey (focusing on the impact of our enrollment services) patterned after the approach used in the book *The Ultimate Question*. If you are not familiar with this approach to measuring satisfaction, our June newsletter provides details ([June 2007 ET Archive](#)).

Given the trend today of declining enrollment, we were excited to see that 69.8 % of

those who completed the on-line survey reported an enrollment increase since their participation in a Catholic School Enrollment Solutions (CSES) program. Of this number, 45.8 % indicated an increase between 0-5 %. The first CSES workshop was launched in October 2005.

**The Ultimate Question that we asked was:**

*"If you have attended a Catholic School Enrollment Solutions workshop or presentation, would you recommend it to colleagues and friends?"* Please rate your response on a scale with 0 meaning "not at all likely", 5 meaning "neutral", and 10 meaning "extremely likely".

**The response thus far has been:**

- 10 - 52.9 %
- 9 - 21.6 %
- 8 - 13.7 %
- 7 - 5.9 %
- 6 - 2 %
- 5 - 3.9 %
- 4 - 0 %
- 3 - 0 %
- 2 - 0 %
- 1 - 0 %
- 0 - 0 %

- [Our survey is still open if you'd like to participate.](#)

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## Spiritual Thought

As we begin a new school year, it might be helpful if we heed the words of Fred Rogers from his book *The World According to Mister Rogers*. In it he says, "If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person." Profound words from a very holy man!

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## Fall 2007 Workshops for Schools

*Dynamic presenters share proven strategies and discuss Catholic school enrollment issues during one and two day seminars. These workshops are conveniently held across the country at an affordable price of \$69-\$250 .*

*We hope you'll join us soon!*

[Register on-line](#)

*or call us today at 1-800-299-2393*

**TOPICS INCLUDE:**

- Catholic School Enrollment Solutions - Strategies That Deliver Immediate Results
- Best First Steps to Take in Beginning Your Catholic Development Efforts
- Best First Steps / The Annual Fund
- Capital Campaigns That Produce Results
- Long Range Planning
- Customer Service in Your Catholic School
- Catholic School Enrollment Solutions - Strategies for Catholic School Enrollment Growth

### **ISPD Also Conducts On-Site Workshops**

Offered to Catholic schools and parishes within a single diocese, these workshops are designed to meet your specific needs.

- [Check Here for Fall 2007 Schedule and More Information on ISPD Development Training Workshops](#)

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