



INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

*Bringing People, Process, and Ministry Together to Build the
Kingdom of God.*

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Enrollment Talk

Resolve to Thrive -- Enrollment Management Resolutions for 2012

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Say hello to 2012. The new year is upon us. Let's embrace the opportunities.

As ISPD has witnessed and taught for many years now, excellent schools have a vision. This dynamic vision is based upon an honest assessment of the school, quality leadership, an innovative plan and measurable outcomes. An enduring guide to school decision-making, this roadmap represents the best we hope to become, coupled with a series of strategic actions that intend to produce a desired result.

The strategic plan has the ability to engage and inspire people, as well as build confidence and sustain trust. Throughout all levels of the school, from administration to board members to faculty to parents to alumni and other stakeholders, this vision serves as a driving force for innovation, creativity and positive change.

Being a school of excellence requires a daily and monthly commitment to this articulated, common vision.

A key component in the strategic plan is Enrollment Management – *the heartbeat of the school*. The management of enrollment represents all activities that allow the school to project a positive and proactive image – attracting and retaining new families. Thus, some key questions emerge:

- What is the current state of your Enrollment Management process?

- Do you understand the local educational marketplace?
- Have you determined your competitive advantage?
- Have you been meeting your enrollment goals?
- Do you cultivate a culture of true customer service?
- Do faculty and staff members see themselves as school ambassadors?
- What barriers are currently in place that prevent the school from achieving your enrollment goals?
- How can you identify these barriers and strategically move beyond them?
- How can you fully utilize electronic and social media?
- What is your Enrollment Management Plan for 2012?

The answers to these questions are intended to produce a response – the decision to make some needed changes. Please consider the following Enrollment Management resolutions for 2012:

- **Resolution #1:**
Make Enrollment Management the Schools #1 Priority.
 Every aspect of the school impacts enrollment. From the physical plant to the front office to discipline to the curriculum to communication to how people are treated on the website – all of this forms an impression. This impression must be favorable. All decisions and daily activity translate into our ability to be a school of excellence – and attract new families.
- **Resolution #2:**
Understand the Educational Marketplace.
 In order to be successful in Enrollment Management, school leaders must be aware of the current state of the educational marketplace – both locally and nationally. There are other educational choices. Parents are looking at public schools, private schools, charter schools, etc. We must prevail as the *BEST* choice.
- **Resolution #3:**
Gather All Enrollment and Marketing Data – Market, Traffic, etc.
 In understanding the educational marketplace, school leaders must collect all data and information that will assist in creating a responsive and effective Enrollment Management Plan – demographic data, neighborhood activity, baptismal records, real estate filings and holdings, local business climate and forecast, past enrollment trends, the state of local schools, etc.

- **Resolution #4:**
Promote Your Competitive Advantage.
 In the crowded educational marketplace, all school marketing should be centered on the unique benefits that are offered by your Catholic school. This is your competitive advantage. You are a school of excellence – illustrate the benefits. These benefits must be based on your mission and core values. Tell the story!
- **Resolution #5:**
Work From the Inside Out, Rather Than the Outside In.
 The success of your school begins – and ends – with the faculty and staff. Excellence happens on the inside and shows on the outside. If there are challenges, they must be addressed by the people that live and work in the building. Success is demonstrated in the hallways, classrooms and spaces of the school building. The inside also means that we must have our heart and soul in it.
- **Resolution #6:**
Analyze Tuition & Financial Assistance.
 With our reliance on tuition as the main funding source of the school, Catholic school leaders must constantly be aware of cost and financial matters. Areas to analyze include: ten year financial trends, new sources of revenue, school fundraising, applications for financial aid, those awarded financial aid, assessment of family financial fatigue, process to award financial aid, and the true value of a Catholic education.
- **Resolution #7:**
Eliminate the Office of Enrollment Prevention – *Remove Barriers.*
 Obviously, this resolution provides humor, while being thought-provoking. Are there areas of our school that are preventing parents from enrolling their children? What are our barriers to success? What is our image in the marketplace? Do we see the value of cultivating a customer-centered culture? Let's identify these barriers and create a plan to build upon our strengths, seek opportunities and eliminate threats.
- **Resolution #8:**
Embrace Customer Service – *Here to Serve, Make Your Day!*
 Excellent Catholic schools see their mission as service – serving, students, parents and the Church. Seeing the value of customer service is a critical step to enrollment success. In resolving to embrace customer service, you must identify the customer and their needs. The articulated goal is to exceed their expectations and

make their day. School leaders must also illustrate the benefits and reward desired behavior – creating good cultural habits.

- **Resolution #9:**

Build the Enrollment Management Team.

In your school community, with board members, faculty, staff, parents, parishioners, alumni and friends, there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise just waiting for your invitation. This group of 15-18 talented people create and execute the Enrollment Management Plan. Monthly meetings are professional, productive and seek to advance every aspect of the enrollment effort. There are clear goals and a monthly action plan.

- **Resolution #10:**

What You Don't Know WILL Hurt You -- Ask Questions, Seek Input & Improve.

In order to be successful in Enrollment Management, it is important to see the importance on ongoing evaluation and feedback. Where are the signs of quality in your school? Are your parents satisfied? How can you create raving fans and the *Good News Network*? ISPD recommends that you conduct parent surveys and input sessions on a regular basis. Activate school ambassador teams to spread positive word of mouth and utilize the school's strategic plan as a mechanism for continuous improvement.

- **Resolution #11:**

Change is the Only Constant -- Embrace Positive Change.

From the moment the school opened its doors, things were changing. The issue is not change; the key factor is the management of positive change. Embracing change as the norm is critical to your success. Schools of excellence anticipate and prepare for the future. Where is the school going over the next one-three-five years? Let's build on our strengths, boldly address our weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and eliminate our threats.

- **Resolution #12:**

Get Moving! Expect Success!

The decision to get moving is the most important resolution you can make – just get moving! Begin the conversation about the value of customer service and the need to be strategic, deliberate and intentional about our enrollment efforts. Surround yourself with good, like-minded people and your plans will take shape. It is the law of attraction. What we place our attention on tends to come to life. Intention, willingness and a workable plan are powerful tools.

Break the process down into a series of steps and tasks. Be open to new ideas and expertise – success will come.

So, resolve to thrive, what a wonderful decision. All movements begin with a decision. Successful Enrollment Management is a series of carefully orchestrated actions that result in a favorable reputation and the ability to attract and retain families. It must happen every minute, every day and every month.

All of us at ISPD wish you a wonderful Catholic Schools Week. May this week be a time of celebration – honoring the rich and heroic mission of Catholic schools.

Oh, the possibilities!

Spiritual Thought

Feeling Alive: Dear God, what a glorious feeling to know that Your spirit is alive and well within me. Your energizing presence is surging throughout my body and renewing me and making me well.

It is wonderful to be alive.

Throughout the day, I give thanks to God for my ability to think and work. I remain thankful for my physical body – a work of art by God.

It is my hope to bring to this life a spirit of joy and love. Give me the words and actions to uplift those around me – to be an example of the beauty of God's spirit within me.

Oh, the wonder of God's spirit inside of me!