



November 2009

## ***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.

[Print](#) a copy of this newsletter in PDF format.

### **It's that Time of the Year to Reflect on the Role of Secretaries and Support Staff in Your School's Enrollment Management**

**By John Cooper, ISPD Enrollment Specialist**

Secretaries and support staff play key roles in your Catholic school's Enrollment Management program. It is absolutely important that these staff members understand and embrace specific actions to strengthen enrollment in your school. Sharpen your Enrollment Management program today by using this issue of ***Enrollment Talk*** as a discussion point document with your secretaries and support staff.

#### **Three Essential Objectives That Should Be the Focus of Your Discussion with Staff:**

1. To improve the collection of prospective family data as well as how this information is shared within the school.
2. To improve the flow of communication to prospective families once contact has been made.
3. To improve the experience prospective families have when they walk in, telephone, email, or otherwise make contact with the school.

#### **The Following Actions Will Make Your Objectives a Reality:**

1. **Prospect information is key.**
  - o Schools should consistently use prospective family in-take forms whenever and however contact is made with the school.

- Decide on specific colored paper for the form and remain consistent with the color (bright colors are best because they are easier to spot on a crowded desk).
  - Place these in-take sheets by every telephone in the school. Make sure that every faculty and staff member in the school is given an explanation about the importance of completing these forms. They should know how to complete them. They should also know where to return the completed forms. Give each staff and faculty member several copies of the in-take forms and periodically make sure that they have not run out of the forms.
  - It is better to err on the side of completing the form more than once rather than assuming that someone else has already gotten or will get the information.
  - What you don't know about a prospect is often what can hurt you the most. As you are talking with prospects, take notes of your conversation and include those notes in an email or on a handwritten note to the person who handles your school's admission. Your role is often like that of a nurse who is talking to the patient about their symptoms. Probably the greatest enrollment symptom you will encounter is what we refer to as "financial fatigue."
- 2. Insure that prospect information sharing is taking place within your school and/or parish campus.**
- Determine a step-by-step procedure for sharing prospect data within the school. Just don't say that this information sharing will happen - talk about and identify how this is going to happen between offices within the school and/or parish.
- 3. Information packets need to make a positive impact.**
- Create or enhance the information packet that you currently distribute (in person or through mail) to prospective school families.
    - Since there are normally several pieces of information in the packet, it is best that some sort of pocket folder be used.
    - The packet should be logically organized e.g. you don't place the deposit form in front of the application for admission. It is recommended that one side of the folder be devoted to anything that promotes the school e.g. a brochure and the other side include the "nuts and bolts" pieces that relate to admission, registration, financial assistance, etc.
    - Stair step the pages inside the packet and use colored paper to differentiate pieces of information.
    - There should be a positive, signed letter from the principal/admissions director that is placed outside the folder (so as to not get overlooked when placed in one of the folder's pockets). When this packet is delivered via mail, please make sure to personalize the letter with the recipient's name and address.
    - Have information about your community close at hand (the local Chamber of Commerce can provide this) to include in the packet, if you know that the family is moving into the area.
- 4. The secretary is "the school" to the prospect at that first moment of contact.**
- The following will help you to best represent your school/parish:
    - Try not to sound or look stressed, even if you are.
    - Convey the message that you are there for the person with whom you are speaking.
    - Make sure that you collect their information e.g. use the in-take sheet.
    - Realize that you may have answered that same question a thousand times,

- but remember it is the first time for this particular person to have asked it.
- Be prepared to give as much information as possible. Have a good fact sheet or "cheat sheet" available that you can easily reference. This "cheat sheet" should be able to answer process questions as well as benefit questions.
- If your cheat sheet turns out to be several pages, use a table of contents page so that you can easily turn the page to the information.

**5. Be timely in responding to prospects.**

- Have information packets already together and ready to send (preferably the day the inquiry comes in).
- Only transfer someone when you know that the person you are transferring to is in the building. In other cases when the staff or faculty member is away from the building, tell the person that you will have someone get back with them. Follow through to make sure that the connection has occurred.
- For those administrators that typically schedule meetings with prospective families, it is suggested that you have access to their calendar so that you can go ahead and schedule a meeting. Playing phone tag with a "hot prospect" is risky.

**6. Insure a great walk-in experience.**

- Check calendars of those who will be hosting prospective families each morning upon arrival. Post a welcome sign on the entrance door to school with name of those coming for a visit that day (assuming that they have scheduled a visit ahead of time).
- Offer visitors something to drink (and eat if possible).
- Make sure to have information on them e.g. name, address, phone number, email address, and other additional information that is normally taken when a prospect calls on the phone. Don't assume that the school already has their contact information on file.
- Give them a nice packet of information about your school. If they are from out of town, make sure that you have information about the area from the local Chamber of Commerce.
- Work with your principal or admissions coordinator to insure that the visit includes contact with faculty and student ambassadors. Every visitor should receive a tour of the school.
- **Have a sit down meeting with principal and/or admissions person to "script out" how you want the prospective family visit to go from start to finish.**

**7. Plan for the tough and challenging days at the school.**

- Have a meeting to discuss the various scenarios that occur during a typical workday that may prevent some of these actions from taking place. Talk about how to prioritize these actions and how to adjust them on those difficult and busy school days.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Spiritual Thought

**In working for a Catholic school or parish, we work for the Body of Christ.** Many people struggle to find meaning in their work in the secular world. We are fortunate to be surrounded by meaningful work that relates to our Catholic faith. We are surrounded by the grace of God. We are also challenged to approach our work with this profound realization.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ISPD 2010 Mardi Gras Development School



In case you haven't heard, we are bringing back the most popular three day workshop ISPD has ever introduced - the ISPD Mardi Gras Development School - which will be held at De La Salle High School on February 3, 4 and 5, 2010.

The ISPD Development School will have many advantages:

- At a Catholic high school located directly on St. Charles Avenue on the streetcar line
- Numerous hotels up and down the streetcar line where attendees can stay and simply ride the streetcar to De La Salle High School
- Over 15 courses on Catholic Development, Advancement, People Engagement and Total Stewardship
- Many presenters - ISPD associates and guest presenters from throughout the country
- Mardi Gras parades beginning the day the Development School is over
- Park bench sessions with presenters
- ISPD socials
- Networking luncheon
- Special Cajun/Creole outdoor cookout the night before - Tuesday, February 2nd from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM - chartered bus service provided
- Plus much more

Make your plans & mark your calendar for a great time in New Orleans!

- [Click here for more details & list of courses on Mardi Gras Development School](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## ISPD Webinars & Webcasts

ISPD now offers \$39 sixty minute Webinars on Catholic Development.

Listed here are our upcoming Webinars:

- **"Enrollment Management: Attracting and Retaining Students in Your Catholic School"**  
November 18, 2009
- **"25 Ways to Engage People into the Life of Your Catholic Institution"**  
December 8, 2009
- **"Organizing and Implementing the Total Stewardship Process"**  
January 14, 2010
- **"How to Invite the Gifts"**  
February 22, 2010
- **"Getting Your Parish and/or School Ready for a Capital Campaign"**  
March 9, 2010
- **"Integrating Total Quality and Customer Service into Your Catholic Development Efforts"**  
April 22, 2010
- **"Hosting a Gift Reception"**  
May 5, 2010
- **"How to Effectively Host Input Sessions and Town Hall Meetings"**  
June 8, 2010

ISPD is pleased to partner with the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) to host a new series of 60 minute webcasts on various Catholic Development topics throughout the academic year. These webcasts will be particularly useful for Board members, committee members, school administrators, pastors, and superintendents.

Upcoming NCEA/ISPD Webcasts include:

- **"How to Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Retain Students and Increase Enrollment: The Board's Role"**  
November 30, 2009
- [Please visit our website for Webinar & Webcast details & online registration](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Fall 2009 Development Workshops

### ISPD Workshops Delve Into Depth

One day workshops presented by ISPD offer Catholic leaders throughout the country an in-depth experience on a specific topic. For more than twenty years, ISPD has been this country's leader in offering process-driven workshops that are practical, affordable, and interactive. 98% of all ISPD workshops receive a rating of 4 or 5 (out of a 1-5 rating system) by those in attendance. Please visit our web site at [www.ispd.com](http://www.ispd.com) for the latest information and also to register on line.

### 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. Please contact us for details.

- [Check Here for More Information on ISPD Development Workshops and Online Registration](#)
- [Click here for more information on Topical Enrollment Management Workshops](#)

ISPD - Bringing people, process and ministry together to build the Kingdom of God

[www.ISPD.com](http://www.ISPD.com)



Visit our web site for free resources and valuable information. The Institute of School and Parish Development (ISPD) is a national, Catholic development consulting firm created to serve Catholic schools, parishes and dioceses in the areas of planning, marketing, fund-raising, and resource development.

E-mail: [ispd@aol.com](mailto:ispd@aol.com)  
Phone: 800-299-2393  
Website: <http://www.ispd.com>

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think could benefit from this information. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please contact us.

@Copyright 2005-2009 ISPD: Institute of School and Parish Development, Inc. This document or any portion thereof may not be reproduced in any format whatsoever without the written, expressed consent of the Institute of School and Parish Development.

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to [ispd@bellsouth.net](mailto:ispd@bellsouth.net) by [ispd@bellsouth.net](mailto:ispd@bellsouth.net).  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Institute of School & Parish Development | 2713 Athania Parkway | Suite 200 | Metairie | LA | 70002