

Word of mouth is the best! Encourage parents, parishioners, faculty and anyone connected with the school to become an ambassador for the school and promote the school whenever possible.

General marketing

- Hire or appoint a development director to assist in development efforts.
- Establish a development committee, student and parent ambassadors to help promote the school.
- All contacts or messages should have a friendly and welcoming tone. Ensure that an answering machine or voice mail is used whenever the phones can not be answered by a live person. An answering machine or voice mail is critical for taking calls throughout the summer and when school is not in session. Someone should be responsible for checking incoming calls so they can be followed up in a timely manner.
- Make sure all inquires are documented and contact information is recorded and all calls are followed through.
- Remember to market for image, students and dollars.
- Attract the attention of busy reporters by making your email subject line compelling.
- Develop a marketing/enrollment management plan that would include numerous strategies (see the following lists of suggestions but be creative the possibilities are endless). Establish a Marketing Committee. Monitor the effectiveness of your marketing efforts on a regular basis and adapt as necessary. Please send a copy of your marketing/enrollment management plan and future updates to bburris@dio.org

Promotional materials

- All promotional materials should look as professional as the budget allows and should have all your school's contact information prominently displayed, including area code and website. Create a school brochure, fact sheet and FAQ for all interested families and new parishioners. Promotional material should have a consistent and distinctive school logo. Proof read everything before it is distributed.
 - Send preschool brochure to any parishioner with a child two years and older, along with a welcome letter and invitation to an open house.
 - Kindergarten brochure should be sent to your preschool families along with area day cares, preschools, pediatricians, libraries and Realtors.
 - Send all school brochure to parish families (including PSR), feeder schools, pediatricians, libraries, Realtors, chamber of commerce, welcome wagons, grocery stores, businesses and tourist centers. (Don't forget to include parish highlights as often people are shopping around for a parish to join.)
 - Include \$500 tuition tax credit information on all K-12 promotional materials. (Promotional material for prospective parents should breakdown the true cost of tuition, net of the tuition tax credit, with a breakdown of cost by day, hour and by number of students in family)
 - Develop a frequently asked question sheet that answers key enrollment questions.
 - Give all newly registered parishioners (if they have school age children or not) a copy of the school brochure or fact sheet.
 - Create and distribute an all school or classroom targeted promotional DVD to all prospective families.
 - Publish your Mission Statement on all promotional material.

Open houses or school tours for prospective parents:

- Make sure there is proper signage on the school and neighboring streets.
- Ensure visitor parking is available.
- The building and grounds should be clean and well maintained. You only have one chance to make a good first impression.
- Post a welcome to the school family sign at the entrance or on a bulleting board for all families you know will be touring the school.
- Make sure security protocol is practiced during school tours.
- Develop an Event Planning Guide and Event Publicity Checklist.
- Bring prospective parents in to visit the class their child will be attending. Ask the class to tell the parents why they should send their child to this school and what they like best about the school.
- Distribute the suggested pocket folder with school brochure/fact sheet/FAQ/DVD etc.
- Gather the contact information for anyone calling or visiting the school.
- Send a “thank you for visiting the school” note to both the parent and the student that visits the school and follow up with a phone call to see if you can answer any questions they may have.

Prospective families:

- Know your data, know their need and know a 30 second elevator speech on the school.
- Create and maintain a dynamic web site with a focus on the prospective parent. Make sure the school is linked to the parish and diocesan websites. Notify the diocese anytime you change your email or web site address. Post current fact sheet, school brochure, FAQ and DVD on your website. Host an on-line inquiry form to gather contact information.
- Ask each prospective parent how they heard about the school and what they are most interested in knowing about the school.
- Consider social networking. Recent organization survey respondents indicated that their organization use social networking - 74% are on Facebook, 46.5% are on YouTube and 43% twitter.
- Send a card to the newly baptized and annually until the child is of school age. Consider including a small tuition voucher with the yearly communication to be redeemed when the child enters kindergarten/first grade.
- Produce a pocket folder for interested families that includes a fact sheet/school brochure, tax credit information, tuition agreement, handbook, frequently asked question handout, DVD and past issues of the school newsletter.
- Create a power-point presentation/video/DVD that is shown at open-houses and school/parish functions.
- Host a “bring a friend to school day” for classes with a lower enrollment. (This works best on a day when the public school is off but your school is in session.)
- Insert grade specific teacher letters in the parish bulletin or send to prospective parents.
- Host “meet and greet”, open houses, school day tours and shadow visits.
- Send personalized special event invitations.
- Consider incentives for current families that bring in a “new” student.
- Contact prospective families on a regular basis with planned strategies that will invite and inform the families. Make personal contacts whenever possible.
- Have kindergartners send notes to preschoolers which say how fun K is and how much they are learning.

New families to the school:

- Gather grandparent contact information and list of the families' talents or expertise
- Send a DVD to all new families that would highlight the entrance, technology lab, science lab, library, cafeteria, gymnasium, playground, classrooms etc.
- Host a social gathering for new families to the school.
- Form a welcome committee that will contact new families to drop off a plate of cookies, welcome letter and offer to answer any questions they might have.
- Have teachers send notes to new students.
- Encourage the teachers to be watchful of new students and help the new students integrate into the classroom.
- Six weeks into the school year send a letter to all new families thanking them for entrusting their child's education to your school and ask how their child is adjusting and if they have any questions or concerns.

Current families, faculty and staff:

- Maintain an up to date website with all the information parents need to be informed and involved in their child's education.
- Have the teacher send a note or DVD each summer to all the students that will be in their class in the fall. The classroom DVD would highlight the classroom and fun activities or projects from the previous school year.
- Have teachers send birthday cards to students.
- Have school board send birthday cards to faculty and staff.
- Distribute a yearly calendar of events and activities.
- Host "donuts with dad" or "mornings with moms" receptions with the principal.
- Post a "did you know section" in your communications to parents.
- Encourage parents, students and faculty/staff to wear spirit wear and school colors.
- Encourage faculty to attend meetings, socials and fundraising events.
- Conduct the suggested ISPD questionnaire twice a year to see how likely the parent would recommend your school to a family member, friend or colleague.
- Host a breakfast and induct 8th graders into the alumni association. Honor an alum at the ceremony. Let 8th graders know they will now be receiving the school's quarterly newsletter and encourage them to inform the school of significant changes/achievements in their lives. Invite the graduating 8th graders back yearly or at least during their Senior year of high school so they can have a class reunion/party/fun activities before they all go off in different directions for college.
- Encourage each teacher to "talk up" the teacher the students will have the next year.
- Bump students up to the next grade level for a day. Don't forget to have someone come in from the area Catholic high school to meet with your 8th graders.
- Ensure all teachers send regular communications to all adopt-a-class sponsors. Businesses will often display pictures and certificates for their patrons to see.
- Encourage faculty to write news releases.
- Host regular family nights for reading/movies or family fun picnics.
- Conduct computer workshops for adults in the evening.
- Conduct exit surveys to anyone leaving the school, including 8th grade students and their parents.
- Survey parents on what they like best about the school and for suggestions for how to increase enrollment/market the school.

- Survey upper grades to see what they like about the school and how the school can be improved.
- Personally contact every family that has not signed up during early registration.
- Track the number of students and the reasons they withdraw from the school.
- Ensure that a tuition assistance program is in place. Promote the tuition assistance process to all families.
- Post a detailed list of parent volunteer opportunities with a breakdown of specific duties.

Parish and community outreach:

- Conduct long-range planning or focus meetings/convocations.
- Update the school case statement and distribute as appropriate. Gather student, parent and alumni testimonials to use in case statement and other marketing materials.
- Send a quarterly electronic/paper newsletter to all parishioners, parents, alumni, grandparents, businesses and nearby churches without a school.
- Send a shorter monthly electronic newsletter to any email address you collect. National survey shows that individuals are 3 times more likely to donate to your school if they receive a monthly electronic newsletter (this would be a timely way to make announcements). Collect email address with every communication, annual fund envelope or at events.
- Have children actively participate in weekend liturgies, especially during Catholic Schools Week and your annual fund kick-off.
- Have parents and/or students speak at all the Masses during Catholic Schools Week and during your annual fund kick-off.
- Get your students visible in the community. Have articles in your local media hi-lighting activities, service projects and fundraisers.
- March in parades, exhibit at area Kidsfest and activities centered on children.
- Have a display at local shopping mall.
- Contact and invite PSR families into the school.
- Increase interaction of students in your school with students in the PSR program.
- Post school hi-lights or feature a teacher, class or student in a special “school corner” of the weekly church bulletin.
- Maintain an up-to-date school bulletin board at the entrance of your church and area churches without a school.
- Strengthen relationships with neighboring parishes that do not have a school and ask permission to promote the school to their parish community. Ask to speak at Masses at neighboring parishes during Catholic School Week and peak registration times.
- Secure a financial agreement with area parishes that do not have a school for their parishioners that attend your school.
- Market your school in the Catholic Times, local paper, TV, cable access television, radio and billboards.
- Secure signage on buses.
- Secure advertisement on lane dividers at your area grocery store checkout lanes.
- Place scroll messages on local news broadcasts and on local weather channels.
- Adhere eye catching stickers on the front page of the local newspaper or other community publications.
- Look for public service announcement opportunities throughout your community.

- Host Realtor open house and distribute school brochures and/or fact sheets. Encourage Realtors to post your contact information on a school's section on their website. (This can also be done with bankers or area businesses.)
- Post your contact information on area websites: i.e.: Chamber of Commerce, welcome wagon, Realtors, newspaper, banking institutions and area businesses.
- Distribute bumper stickers and yard signs that are bold and eye-catching.
- Distribute promotional items i.e. pencils, stickers, magnets with school contact information.
- Get students involved in your parish, writing to shut-ins and nursing homes residents.
- Host summer or weekend programs that will bring area students into your school.
- Communicate regularly with area preschool parents and teachers. If preschools will not distribute material ask them to display a sign up sheet for parents who would like to receive information.
- Distribute a periodic newsletter to area preschoolers that is focused on activities in the primary grades.
- Send postcards/mailing to new families in the neighborhood. (Contact a realtor that informs you when someone moves into your neighborhood or purchase a "new moves" list for your feeder zip codes from a direct mail list provider.)
- Purchase mailing list for families in your area.
- Have a school booth or brochures available anytime you have people gathered at the school i.e. parish festival/picnic, bazaar, trivia nights, dinner auctions, bingo, voting site, sporting events, musical productions etc.
- Host all school/decade/individual alumni reunions.
- Host a Christmas or Easter breakfast for toddlers.
- Celebrate major school anniversaries.
- Post fresh messages on your lighted sign or marquee.
- Post school messages on bank's message marquee.
- Ask businesses to promote your school fundraisers on the bottom of their printed receipts.
- Distribute promotional door hangers to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Conduct story time outreach to feeder schools.
- Know the neighbors surrounding the school. Make every effort to be on good terms with your neighbors.
- If a student, alum or a supporter of the school is highlighted in the paper, send them a copy with a congratulatory card.
- Send a card to the families of deceased alums or supporters of the school.
- Design bookmarks or postcards that can be handed out after Mass or mailed to prospects.

High school:

- Create a junior mascot club for students from the area feeder schools.
- Communicate regularly with area middle school teachers.
- Create a coloring book unique to your school that you distribute to your feeder schools.
- Distribute a kid friendly newsletter to area middle school students. Highlight success stories of students from that feeder school that currently attend your school.
- Visit feeder schools on a regular basis.
- Contacting/hosting events throughout each school year for all grade levels of the feeder schools.
- Ensure that administration periodically attends feeder schools parent meetings, sporting events, graduation and other events throughout the school year.
- Invite area students to school fine arts performances and athletic events.
- Create a buddy system or pen pal program with area feeder schools.
- Increase contact with children in the area PSR programs. Consider periodically sending high school students to assist in the PSR programs and activities.
- Contact/survey parents of students that were accepted to your school but did not attend.
- Send congratulations card to feeder school students that make significant achievements.
- Survey 7th & 8th grade students and parents to ask them what major determining factors influence their decision on what high school they will attend.
- Report success stories back to feeder schools how their students did at your high school. Report how many students in National Honor Society, top 10%, ACT scores, involved in extra curricular activities and how many went on to college.
- Coordinate with area libraries so current students can read to younger children at the library. Be sure to target special events at the libraries.
- Interact with local community groups (sports, service, churches, park programs, business and civic leaders).
- Host social gatherings, dances and tournaments for all feeder schools.
- Volunteer to visit the 8th grade class when the school is doing a “bump to the next grade day.”