



Archdiocese
of
Louisville

School Improvement
Planning Document

Appendix B

Miscellaneous Documents

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MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement posits the belief that a Catholic school has the potential to change positively and significantly the lives of the students who attend. It provides a clear sense of direction and should answer the following questions:

Who are we?
Why do we exist?
Whom do we serve?
What are we here to do together?
What is the business of our business?

Other characteristics of good mission statements:

1. It is brief – less than 50 words and should fit into an 8” x 10” picture frame. It is memorized easily and people within the school will know it.
2. It is engaging, broad, and inspirational.
3. It is written in a paragraph form and is not merely a listing of characteristics of the school.
4. It addresses the Catholic Identity of the school, the student, and the educational program offered.
5. It reflects the beliefs and values of the constituencies of the institution.
6. It is reviewed and revised on a periodic basis. (every 3 – 5 years)

VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement reflects the desires and hopes for the school and its students five years from the present. It should answer the following questions:

What do we hope to become?

If we are true to our purpose now, what might we become at some point in the future?

Other characteristics of good vision statements:

1. It presents a realistic, credible, attractive future for the school – one that is better and more desirable in significant ways than existing conditions.
2. It is based on relevant background information and research; based upon information and analysis of the mission, values, beliefs of the school community.
3. It is a visual image of the mission; a specific description of what the school will be like when the mission is accomplished.
4. It is written in clear, practical and concrete terms.
5. It is focused on clarifying direction and priorities.
6. It is easy to communicate.

One suggested procedure for developing the mission and vision statements is for the faculty to write the first draft of each statement.

- Individually each teacher develops a written response to each of the areas addressed in the mission and vision statements.
- In groups of 4, responses are shared and the group lists 3 items for each of the above areas.
- Two faculty members agree to write the first drafts.
- Drafts are revised by the entire faculty.
- The revised drafts go to the SIP Committee for revision and/or acceptance.
- The statements are approved by the school board.

EXIT INTERVIEW

Student Name _____ **Date** _____

Grade at time of withdrawal _____

Name of school student will enter _____

Reason(s) for withdrawal. (Please check all that apply.)

- _____ tuition concern
- _____ moved out of area
- _____ student/parent did not get along with teacher(s)/administration
- _____ student did not get along with classmates; student did not have friends at school
- _____ student's academic performance was poor
- _____ concern regarding academic curriculum
- _____ concern regarding discipline policies/procedures
- _____ other – please specify

Please rate the following aspects of the school using a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being the most satisfied and 4 being most dissatisfied, or NA (not applicable).

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ Curriculum (general content) | |
| _____ Fine Arts (Music and Art) | _____ Religion |
| _____ Foreign Language | _____ Science |
| _____ Language Arts/Reading | _____ Social Studies |
| _____ Mathematics | _____ Technology |
-
- _____ Challenge of curriculum (too hard/too easy)
 - _____ Teachers
 - _____ Administration
 - _____ Facilities
 - _____ Extra-curricular activities (excluding sports)
 - _____ School's ability/willingness to accommodate special needs
 - _____ Communication to parents
 - _____ Counseling program
 - _____ Technology

**SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN
TO THIS SCHOOL
(MAIL)**

This school is doing some long-range planning, and we have developed a short survey for parishioners. It would be very much appreciated if you would take a few moments to complete this questionnaire.

Number of children in your family under the age of 13 _____

Ages of children in your family under the age of 13 _____

Number of children in your family under the age of 13 in our school _____

If your children are in our school will they be returning next year? _____ Yes _____ No

If your children are not in our school or if they will not be returning to our next year:

1. Why? _____

2. Would you consider a Catholic education for your child at our school next year? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please share your name, address, and phone so that we can follow up with further information:

3. Why do you choose not to use the school ministry? (Please check all that apply.)

a. _____ Inconvenient Why?

b. _____ Finances

Would you consider sending your child to this school if financial assistance could be provided? _____ Yes _____ No

**SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN
TO *THIS* SCHOOL
(MAIL)
(continued)**

c. _____ Problems with the school: (Please explain.)

d. _____ Other (Please explain.)

4. What additional comments, suggestions, or feedback can you offer about the school?

Thank you for your time in answering our survey.

Name (Optional) _____

Please return to: _____

Deadline for return:

**SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO *THIS* SCHOOL
(TELEPHONE)**

(Suggested dialogue)

Mrs./Mr. _____, my name is Mrs./Mr. _____. I am a member of this parish and also have a child at our parish school.

We are doing some long-range planning for the school, and we have developed a short survey for parishioners.

Could I have a few moments of your time? ____ Yes ____ No

1. How many children do you have under the age of 13? ____

2. What are their ages? _____

3. Are any of the school-age children in this school? ____ Yes ____ No

(If the answer to question #3 is YES):

4. How many? ____

5. Will your children be returning next year? ____ Yes ____ No (*Go to question #9*)

(If the answer to question #3 is NO):

6. If no, why not?

7. Would you consider a Catholic education for your child at this school next year? ____ Yes
____ No

If they say yes, please indicate that you will follow up with an information packet and find out if they need any questions answered.

**SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO *THIS* SCHOOL
(TELEPHONE)
(continued)**

If they say no, please proceed to question #8:

8. Would you mind telling us the reasons so that we can know how to help you?

(Check one of the following answers or add any other reason)

a) _____ Inconvenient — Why?

b) _____ Finances — Would you consider sending your child this school if some financial assistance could be provided? _____ YES _____ NO

c) _____ Problems with the school *(Don't discuss the issue — just note the fact briefly.)*

d) _____ Not interested in Catholic school education — Please explain.

(list comments below)

(Please ask all families this last question.)

9. Do you have any additional comments, suggestions or feedback for the school?

Thank you for your time.

A PERSONAL CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

As a School Board Member:

- Do I subordinate my personal interests when the greater interest of the school is at stake?
- Do I accept and support majority decisions of the school board?
- Do I refrain from speaking or acting on education matters independent of the school board?

As a Leader:

- Do I suspend judgment until all the facts are available?
- Do I help identify problems?
- Do I have the ability to determine satisfactory solutions to problems?
- Do I accept ideas from others?
- Do I exhibit enthusiastic interest in the welfare of the school?

As a Member of an Organizational Team:

- Do I understand the necessity of leaving the administrative responsibility to the administrator(s)?
(i.e. Director of Religious Education, Principal)
- Do I support the administrator in his/her authorized functions?
- Do I listen?
- Do I assist others in working effectively?
- Do I accept criticism well?
- Do I maintain firm convictions?
- Do I share responsibility for school board decisions?

SCHOOL BOARD EVALUATION FORM

VERY GOOD

GOOD

SATISFACTORY

POOR

A. *PLANNING*

1. Members are notified in advance of meeting time and room.
2. There is a pre-arranged agenda.

B. *ORGANIZATION*

1. The meetings start and end on time.
2. Members confine remarks to relevant matters.
3. The chairperson summarizes main parts of the discussion.
4. The meetings move along at an appropriate pace.

C. *PARTICIPATION*

1. Members participate in discussions and voting.
2. Members participate in planning the agendas.
3. The chairperson made good use of questions.
4. The members are interested and attentive.

D. *ATMOSPHERE*

1. Everyone is present and on time.
2. There is an atmosphere of free expression.
3. People readily volunteer for committees.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Discuss and answer the following questions:

1. List the primary personnel involved in your public relations.

Have they been sufficiently in-serviced for the responsibilities they have?

If, not, what type of in-service do they need?

2. What do the questionnaires/surveys of the school's various constituencies indicate are the strengths of your public relations program?
3. What do the questionnaires/surveys of the school's various constituencies indicate are the weaknesses of your public relations program?
4. Who are your priority (internal and external) publics? How/how often are you in contact with each of them?

7 C's of PUBLIC RELATIONS

What is Public Relations:

There are many definitions for public relations. Ultimately a public relations program for a church or school communicates your ministry to those who may want your services, builds relationships with your publics, and communicates our mission as a church; the good news of Jesus Christ. The “seven Cs” below summarize the elements of effective communication and public relations.

1. **Credibility** Communication starts with a climate of belief. The climate is built by performance on the part of the institution, reflecting an earnest desire to serve its publics. Receivers must have confidence in the sender and high regard for the source's competence.
2. **Context** Effective communication requires a supportive social environment. Mass media can only supplement the words and deeds of daily living.
3. **Content** The message must have meaning for receivers, and it must be compatible to their value system. People select those items of information that promise the greatest rewards. The content determines the audience.
4. **Clarity** The message must be put in simple terms. Words must mean the same to the receivers as they do to the sender. An organization must speak with one voice.
5. **Continuity and Consistency** Communication is an unending process. It requires repetition to achieve penetration. Repetition with variation contributes to both learning and persuasion. The story must be consistent.
6. **Channels** Established channels of communication should be used, channels that receivers use and respect. You can create new ones, but that can be time-consuming or expensive. Selective channels are called for in reaching target publics. People associate different values with different channels.
7. **Capability of Audience** Communications are most effective when they require the least amount of effort on the part of receivers. You must take into account an audience's prior knowledge, reading ability, etc.

From *Effective Public Relations, Eighth Edition*. Cutlip, Center, and Broom. 1999. Pages 424-425

PUBLIC RELATIONS TIPS

Communications Plan

A communications plan should answer the following questions:

- Why are we doing this? (Mission)
- What are we trying to achieve? (Purpose)
- Whom are we trying to reach? (Audience)
- What is the best way to reach those audiences? (Channel)
- What are we going to say to each audience? (Message)
- How are we going to do it? (Execution and Follow-up)
- Was it successful? (Evaluation)

Regular Surveys

Good communications planning requires research in order to understand and communicate effectively with the people you serve. There are many ways to conduct research, but you can determine perceptions about your school by using a regular survey instrument. (Several surveys are included in this document.) Make sure that you clearly define the audience and the purpose of the survey. Surveys should always be customized to properly address these factors.

Surveys should help you to determine the following :

1. What sets you apart from other schools?
2. Why did your parents choose your school?
3. Why do some parents (especially parishioners) not choose your school?
4. For what types of programs are parents looking for their children?
5. How do your constituencies rate your performance in these areas?

Audience, Channels and Evaluation

Communications planning also requires that you evaluate what you are doing. Are you reaching your target audiences? Is the message consistent? Is it being heard? Are you missing opportunities? In order to evaluate your communication, you need to ask the following questions:

1. What are your vehicles for communication with parents, students, alumni, larger community? (Please refer to the Communications Matrix which will help you determine which publics are reached by particular communication channels and help identify gaps in your communication.)
2. How often do you communicate with the different groups within your community? How often should you communicate with these groups?
3. Is your communication effective? (It is advisable to periodically evaluate newsletters, etc., to make sure they are achieving the goals you established for them.)
4. How can you get the word out more effectively about programs and events at your school through the use of free media? What do the media consider newsworthy?

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Public Relations materials should be created with the constituencies in mind. Your constituents include internal and external publics. Some examples of internal and external publics are printed below:

Examples of **Internal Publics**

- Pastor/Associate Pastor/Pastoral Administrator
- Pastoral Staff
- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
- Alumni
- School Board
- Past Principals
- PTO
- Volunteers
- Custodial and cafeteria staffs
- Founders
- Benefactors, donors
- Grandparents

Some examples of **External Publics**

- Parishioners without children in school
- Senior citizens
- Ethnic, fraternal organizations
- School neighbors
- Vendors
- OLFE (Office of Lifelong Formation and Education)
- Chancery
- Archbishop
- Area businesses
- Other local schools
- State legislators
- Media
- Foundations
- Service organizations
- County leaders

Although numerous communication channels exist, two of the most common are brochures and newsletters.

Brochures

Purpose:	Inform the readers of the philosophy and mission of the school. Summarize and publicize what your school is about Provide reader an avenue for obtaining additional information (i.e. telephone, website, etc.) Recruitment (This could include recruiting for the school or for a special program/event.) Assist with stewardship efforts.
Information included:	Mission statement Services offered by the school The benefit of choosing your school Student and faculty achievements Unique elements of your school (i.e. paperless classrooms, state-of-the-art computer lab, etc.) Extracurricular activities Location and contact information
Published:	When needed
Skills needed:	Writing Desktop publishing Editing Photography
Steps to start:	Determine a budget Appoint an individual/committee to create the brochure Decide on a masthead Select paper quality Decide how to distribute the brochure and create a distribution database Determine how many copies to print Determine the life of your brochure or how often you will re-design the piece Find a printer that works on your time schedule and within your budget

Newsletters

Purpose:	Inform the readers of the philosophy and mission of the school. Acquaint the reader with personnel, activities, and goals of the school. Educate and inform the readers of current and long range plans for the school. Encourage involvement in and ownership of the school. Generate financial and human investments in the school.
Information included:	New programs, services Individual achievements (students and/or faculty) Employment anniversaries Promotion of special events Future plans/visions Historical articles Progress toward school goals Current success stories People profiles Alumni news/spotlights Holiday greetings
Published:	Typically 4 times per year
Skills needed:	Writing Desktop publishing Editing Photography
Steps to start:	Determine a budget Appoint an individual/committee to create the newsletter Decide on a masthead Select paper quality Decide how to distribute the newsletter and create a distribution database Determine how many copies to print Find a printer that works on your time schedule and within your budget

PUBLIC RELATIONS IDEAS

The following tactics, organized by audience, should be used to help your school gain a positive perception with its constituents.

Students

- Congratulatory cards to newborns within the parish (made by ** graders)
- Develop a slide/video program about the school to use with parents and community groups
- Birthday/post cards to students
- Friend of Education Award to retired educator, community person, parent, volunteer, organization, etc.
- Welcome Wagon for new students-school pencil supplies, etc., and information on the school (in a "kid form")
- Guest reader program
- PTO selling school supplies
- Involvement of community leaders in programs, etc.
- Open House
- "Here's an Idea" postcards for local community to make suggestions
- If applicable, keep a record of each child care child's birthday and send a personalized birthday card to each child's home
- If applicable, coordinate programs that bring students together with children enrolled at the child care. For instance, an afternoon where students read to the child care children

Parent/Family

- PTA/older students provide babysitting during P-T-S conferences and other school events
- Coordinate a parent's day/morning/afternoon off on a Saturday. On this day, provide child care either free or for a minimal charge. This will give parents the opportunity to run errands, etc. This may be especially effective around Christmas time
- Student ambassadors/buddies to conduct school tours for new families
- "Welcome Wagon" sponsored by PTO for new families (school supplies, items with school logo) – to also include welcome letters and/or telephone calls
- Periodic surveys to constituencies
- Volunteer Recognition ceremony
- Host a Parent Appreciation Day
- Develop a slide/video program about the school to use with parents and community groups
- Invite parents/grandparents to eat with their children periodically
- Principal coffees/breakfasts with parents
- Involvement of community leaders in programs, etc.
- Honor Roll letters/cards

- Parent programs re: homework, test-taking skills, TV viewing, etc.
- Analyze impressions upon prospective parents through follow-up and surveys
- PTO selling school supplies
- Friend of Education Award to retired educator, community person, parent, volunteer, organization, etc.
- Videotape school programs and make available/sell them to parents
- Guest reader program
- Open House
- “Here’s an Idea” postcards for local community to make suggestions
- If applicable, maintain a database of your school’s child care families and add these families to your school newsletter’s mailing list
- Include an announcement of school events in all existing communications vehicles (e.g., bulletins, newsletters, etc.)
- School parents host an informational coffee at their homes for other parents in the neighborhood with school-aged children
- Open school to people for self-guided tours during parish events like chili suppers or fish fries

Faculty/Staff

- Periodic surveys to constituencies
- Involve senior citizens/retired teachers as volunteers
- Send monthly newsletter to retired teachers, parishioners without children in school, and alumni
- Periodically survey receptionists/secretaries on the types of questions that are being asked most frequently
- Brainstorm ideas/activities to help honor support staff
- Open House
- “Here’s an Idea” postcards for local community to make suggestions
- Include an announcement of school events in all existing communications vehicles (e.g. bulletins, newsletters, etc.)

Parishioners

- Senior citizens are given free admission to school events
- Volunteer Recognition ceremony
- Involve senior citizens/retired teachers as volunteers
- Guest reader program
- Send monthly newsletter to retired teachers, parishioners without children in school, and alumni.
- Open House

- Include announcements of school events in the parish bulletin.
- Devote a portion of the parish bulletin each week to school news
- Place school board minutes in the back of church for people to pick up
- Open school to people for self-guided tours during parish events like chili suppers or fish fries

Alumni

- Develop an alumni database, which is updated once a year.
- Have an alumni booth at parish picnics. "Lost" alumni may be "found" at this booth. In addition, the families of these alumni may also be able to share where they are now.
- Following up on what happened to your graduates
- Highlight "famous graduates" in school newsletter
- Friend of Education Award to retired educator, community person, parent, volunteer, organization, etc.
- Guest reader program
- Send monthly newsletter to retired teachers, parishioners without children in school and alumni.
- Alumni picnic/day
- Open House
- Include an announcement of school events in all existing communications vehicles (e.g., bulletins, newsletters, etc.)
- Engage alumni who are excelling to speak at the school, write an article for the school newsletter, or be present at the Open House.
- Develop a communications vehicle (e.g., web site or email) that alumni may use to give updates about themselves. Include a section with these updates in the school newsletter.
- Principal or other school spokesperson could speak at mass and ask for information about school alumni
- Open school to people for self-guided tours during parish events like chili suppers or fish fries

Community

- Realtor coffee and familiarization tours
- Letter to new families moving into area as reported in real estate transfer. Needs to be coordinated with parish
- School's mission printed on all written correspondence
- Develop a slide/video program about the school to use with parents and community groups
- Friend of Education Award to retired educator, community person, parent, volunteer organization, etc.
- Guest reader program

- Put annual reports, brochures, etc., in doctors'/dentists' offices, laundromats, and hair salons
- Place a school message on grocery store bags/carts
- Advertise school event in local paper
- Involvement of community leaders in programs, etc.
- Open House
- Send newsworthy events to the Communications Office, for inclusion in the monthly tip sheets
- Send announcements of school events that are open to the public to local print, television, and radio community calendars
- Create a promotional brochure and update it at least every 2-3 years. Develop a distribution plan for the brochures (e.g. direct mail, making it available at local businesses, etc.)
- Develop a personal relationship with child care directors and give them promotional materials to give prospective families
- Sponsor an Open House specifically for external audiences, or non-school families
- Open school to people for self-guided tours during parish events like chili suppers or fish fries

COMMUNICATIONS MATRIX
 Analyzes Publics and Channels of Communication
 for an Elementary School

AUDIENCES	Students	Parents	Faculty/Staff	Prospective Students/Families	Alumni	School Board Members	PTO	Parish Staff	Non-Parishioners	Area Businesses	News Media	General Public
CHANNELS:												
Annual Accountability Reports (Test scores, etc.)												
Catholic School Week Events												
E-mail Messages												
Media Tipsheets/Stories												
Open House												
Parish(es) Bulletin(s)												
Parish(es) Newsletter(s)												
Parish(es) Website(s)												
Pastor Communication(s)												
P-T-S Conferences												
Reunion/Alumni Events												
School Board Minutes												
School Directory												
School Handbook												
School Newsletter												
School Promo Brochures												
School Surveys (List each one you use)												
School Website												
School Weekly Folder Information												
Telephone Tree/Phone calls to Parents												
Thank-you Letters												
GAPS:												
OPPORTUNITIES:												

EVENT PLANNING

The first step toward successful events is good planning. Whatever the event, it will reflect on your image and membership. Listed below are the Program/Event Marketing Cycle and the Event Planning Checklist.

Program/Event Marketing Cycle

I Assessment Phase (Why)

- Why are we doing it?
- How will the proposed program tie into our mission and goals? Why is it important?
- What will the program address? Are these needs being met any other way?
- What audiences will be reached? What are the characteristics of these audiences?
- How will we evaluate the success of this effort? What are the intended outcomes?
- What are the particulars of the program or event? (Date, place, time, speakers, etc.)
- Do we have the resources (human and financial) to carry this out?

II Planning Phase (Purpose, Audience, Channels, Message)

- Purpose: Include a statement about what you hope to achieve and why you are doing it.
- Audiences(s): Consider the characteristics of you audiences(s). Is the audience primarily internal or external?
- Channels (media/vehicles to get the message out): List all possible avenues for each audience. Remember informal channels. Remember to consider possible vehicles for an external audience, if appropriate.
- Message: Answer who, what, when, where, and why. Include at least one benefit to each audience.
- Action Plan: List all communication and event or program tasks. Establish committees where appropriate, and determine who is good to do what. Assign budget figures. Determine who else needs to be involved and what needs to be coordinated with other staff or committees at the school and/or parish.

III Follow-Up Phase (Action Plan)

- What needs to be done next?
- What materials need to be distributed?
- What volunteers need to be called?

IV Execution Phase (Action Plan)

- Event details
- Event hospitality

V Evaluation Phase

- What are the measurements of effectiveness?
- Did the program or event achieve its intended outcomes?
- What changes need to be made as a result of the evaluation?

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Publicity

- Assessment
- Message
- Media
- Communication materials (flyers, ads, posters, mailing)
- Contract news media
- New media materials
- Communications action plan
- Evaluation

Finance

- Budget (income/expense)
- Bookkeeping
- Liability Insurance
- Licensing
- Permits

Speakers

- Invitation
- Liaison
- Confirmation letter
- Photographs
- Biographies
- Who will introduce
- Honoraria
- What do they need reproduced
- Transportation
- Accommodations

Site

- Parking
- Security
- Housekeeping
- Signs to location of program/event
- Telephone
- Accessibility
- Decorations
- Restrooms: location, accessibility

Room Setup

- Conference style
- Theatre style
- Round tables and chairs

Audiovisuals/Equipment Requested

- Lectern
- Microphone
- Screen
- Projector (multimedia, slide, overhead)
- Laptop computer (programs required)
- Flip chart and markers
- CD/Cassette player
- TV/VCR/DVD
- Extension cords/three-prong adapter

(continued on next page)

(Event planning checklist continued)

Reservation

- Invitations
- Confirmation letters with directions to event
- Agendas
- Participants' materials (including evaluation form)
- Name badges
- Registration procedures on site
- Seating
- Tours
- Special needs
- Diet
- Handicap accessibility
- Child care facilities
- American sign language interpreters
- Follow-up materials

MEDIA

Who are the media?

The media are just like everyone else - different. Some are more inclined to publish church and school news than others. You must work to build relationships and credibility.

As a church, there are five principles that guide our dealings with the media:

1. **A Respect for Truth:** We always tell the truth. If we cannot comment fully on a situation, i.e., the questions include private, personal information about an individual, we explain why.
2. **A Respect for the Dignity (and Privacy) of Individual Persons:** We will gladly talk about policies, programs, or events but not about individual people, except to congratulate or express sympathy.
3. **A Respect for the Church:** We will speak positively and with confidence about the teaching and practice of the church.
4. **A Respect for the Media:** We will not take reporters or their editors for granted or try to "use" them. We will work to understand their principles (explicit or implicit) and to respond to their needs whenever this is possible.
5. **A Respect for Ourselves:** We will give ourselves every available advantage in dealing with the media. We will be pro-active and request clarifications, corrections, or opportunities to tell "our side of the story" whenever we think this is appropriate

What is News?

News is what journalists with a given publication or the station consider timely, interesting and important. The common saying that news is "man biting dog" (rather than the more common inverse situation) illustrates the elements that news editors are looking for. The following newsletter, "What is News" will help you determine what events, programs and other issues related to your school are newsworthy.

Communicating with the News Media

There are many methods of communicating with the news media. Some of the most common vehicles used by the Archdiocese of Louisville are community calendar announcements; media tip sheets, media advisories, and media releases.

