



Collaborating (*not competing*) for Student Enrollment Growth

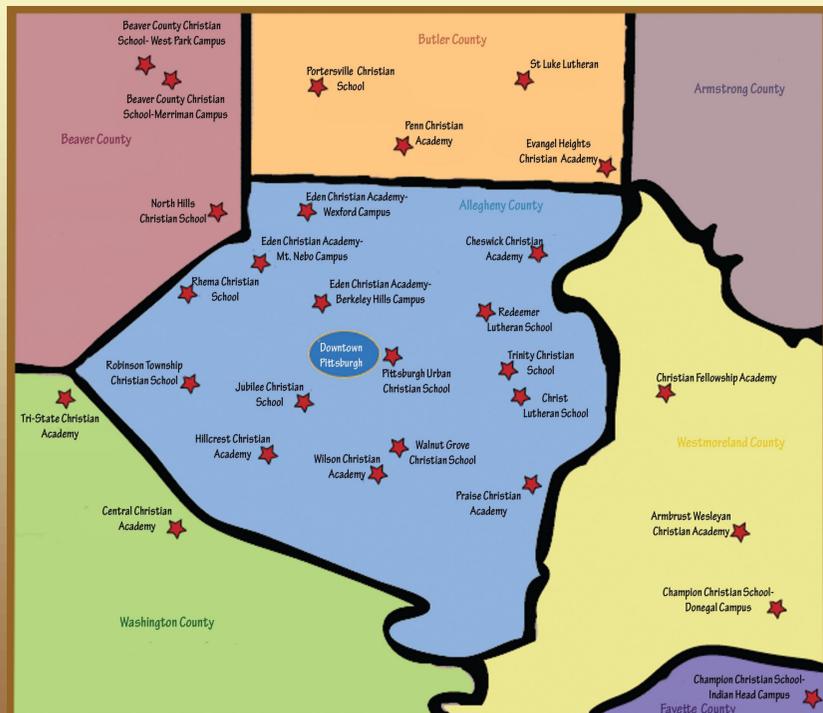
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania ■ Sam Siple, Coordinator

Project Summary

To meet the mounting challenges of healthy student enrollment and maximizing limited marketing dollars, a consortium of Christian schools in the Greater Pittsburgh area has been assembled.

This collaborative approach to advertising provides cost-effective, appropriate marketplace saturation, promoting the benefits of Christian education to a targeted (mission fit) audience. Prospective parents are directed to a website map showing participant schools and linking to their websites for further exploration.

Other opportunities for cooperation among the regional schools have emerged for greater efficiencies.



Project Results

- Invitation to 55 Christian schools in the region
- Initial website launched with 12 schools on the map
- Currently 24 schools are consortium members, pooling \$68,000 annually
- PittsburghChristianSchools.net has steady presence with all local Christian (and some mainstream) media
- Consortium also reaches out through sponsorships and on-site displays
- Marketing message serves as awareness for Christian schools, addresses common misconceptions or objections, and provides parent testimonials in a call to action
- Schools are reporting increases to their website traffic directed from hyperlinks of PittsburghChristianSchools.net
- Schools are highly satisfied with program, citing enrollment growth or stabilization of declining admissions
- Administrators now have a forum for mutual support and idea sharing
- Collaboration is evolving into other efforts such as bulk purchasing, risk management, employee health care, grant seeking, pooled corporate scholarship support



What We Have Learned

- As Christian schools, there is more that unites us than divides us
- A spirit of cooperation and trust is essential
- Regardless of size, each school must be strategic about enrollment and make resource commitment to marketing
- More can be achieved collectively than any one school could achieve individually
- Parents (as customers) need to accept Christian education in general before they will choose any particular school, which is mostly based on proximity to home
- Limit advertising to fewer media outlets with a greater frequency of consistent messaging
- Must establish clear criteria for participation
- Next development is structure as 501(c)(3) organization to leverage other opportunities