

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND CHANGE FACTORS

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What I did:

St. John's Lutheran Church and School has had a strong tradition and rich heritage in the Marysville community. The church was found in 1838 and the school in 1843. For the past several years there has been a sense of stagnation and status quo. The congregation appears to be content going through the motions. There had been modest attempts by the Pastors to begin casting a vision but it was greeted with little buy in. St. John's school enrollment has been in between 236 and 281 for the past 7 years. During the 2013/2014 school year that number was at 246. I felt it was time to move St. John's Lutheran School in a new direction.

With the assistance of Consultants Don and Kevin, we created a strategic planning team with a kickoff event on November 5 & 6. As a result of the S.P.E. The following immediate action was taken:

- I created dashboards of successes were created (a one page story or "Stats Page" as well as postcards)
- I formed an Ambassadors group
- I implemented an "exceptional school campaign"
- I reconfigured the annual open house to a "Family and Friends Night" instituted automatic re-enrollment
- I created a monthly coffee talk specific to certain grades
- We created a core value system for St. John's
- We created a purpose statement
- Most importantly we created a plan for the future with measurable goals and objectives to be completed over the next several years

What did I learn?

Christian education should be the first option when it comes to educating every child. Administrators must provide a road map for the future of the schools they are leading. I learned that creating a plan/casting a vision helps solidify who you are, what you are about, and what makes you stand out from the rest. I learned that creating vision and planning for the future generates excitement and sparks positive conversations. I learned that it is the role of the administrator to effectively communicate the plan and put information in the hands of the school and church families because they are eager to share information to others outside of the school. In a nutshell – tell your story!

What difference did it make?

The difference has been astounding. The planning has created enthusiasm, quotes to use, and testimonials to use, materials and information to tell the St. John's story. People are positive and are sharing St. John's with others. The major difference has shown up in the enrollment. This school year ended with an enrollment of 241 (5 down from the start of the year) due to 5 students moving out of town during the year. The projected enrollment for the 2014/2015 school year is on tracking to be between 285 and 290. Additionally, the need to add a temporary modular for addition space has been approved and in the process of being set up for use.