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Master Plan Project

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Van Lunen Fellow, 2012-2013

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What I did:

Calgary Christian School is a Christian Alternative Program within a public school system from Preschool to Grade 12 serving 840 students in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The school was started 50 years ago, and now serves a widely interdenominational population with students from over 100 local churches. Our school has faced growth challenges for the past number of years, and did not have a formal process or program to address those needs. We needed a long range plan and projections that could support a model for this growth, including the space and culture changes that normally follow growth.

My project involves the Master Plan process and also address some of the concerns of culture shift within a school as it grows and becomes a new community. It will also address some of the ongoing challenges that occur with gathering, sharing, developing, growing and planning that we faced throughout the process.

What did I learn?

For many years, there had been small growth and challenges of funding that accompanied that growth. Vision and Mission were never an issue, as they have held strong in the belief and direction of the masses that send their children to school here. Since becoming an Alternative Program, we have watched our numbers steadily grow to the point where enrollment has become a capacity issue in some grades and waiting lists in others. The creation of the Master Plan and the subsequent building projects over the past four years have set the stage for a bold direction for the future, and also two major challenges. The concept of long range planning, stakeholder involvement, cultural considerations and clarity in communication were lessons that are still being learned.

What difference did it make?

- *Brought together a wide range of stakeholders to develop the wish lists for each campus
- *Created the need to develop long term population forecasts and budget vision
- *School population continues to grow, even beyond projections
- *Created the need for specific subcommittee to take the Master Plan concept and look forward outside the Executive Director role
- *Working on developing long term financial plans for projects
- *Beautified and created a showcase of the Elementary Campus and provided impact to long term families who will need to make choices about growth and direction.