

STOP, LOOK and LEARN

Robyn Jacks DuBose, Principal
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran School, Chicago, IL
Jim McKenzie, Consultant



Overview

St. Paul Lutheran School has been a staple in the Grand Crossing community since 1889. Enrollment has fluctuated over years from inception of only 14 students to as many as 100 students in 2006. The last couple of year's enrollment has hovered between 60-65 students; this is a concern for me as the school leader. There are many factors that contribute to the low enrollment; however the key ones were; the economy (job loss or underemployment) and virtually no real presence within the community.

What Did I did

Consulted with Jim McKenzie

I met with St. Paul Board of Christian Education to discuss my concerns with our lack of presence within the community, student retention and recruitment. The Board agreed that something needed to be done. We discussed a strategic marketing plan in which the board gave their blessing for me to create.

In October, I reached out to Jim McKenzie and with his help we developed a plan of action to:

- Revise current website - to create an online presence for St. Paul School.
- Overhaul Facebook - to use Facebook to advertise strategically to new families.
- Word-of-Mouth – use current families to make referrals to your school.

What I learned

- I learned that we were mission minded and marketing a commodity. We were not unique.
- St. Paul Lutheran School was missing some key opportunities to tell its story.
- I had to become a transformational thinker and create a new vision/mission statement.
- I revised our social media page, organized a parent ambassador club, became a more visible presence within the community, and started hosting weekly open houses for prospective families.
- Parent referral works

The difference

- We are transitioning from the mission mindset to a visionary one.
- We have increased our community networking circle.
- Social Media presence has increased tremendously
- Improved re-enrollment statistics by 19%