

## August

<b>Guiding Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is enrollment management?</li><li>• Why is enrollment management important?</li><li>• What did we learn this August?</li><li>• What does retention look like in August?</li><li>• What does recruitment look like in August?</li></ul>	<b>August Action Items:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Compile and analyze data on new families</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on August and opportunities for growth</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Get feedback on application / enrollment process</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue inviting new families to enroll</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Touch base with ALL families</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize 12-month enrollment calendar</li></ul>
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### What is Enrollment Management?

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Enrollment management is the continuous process of prospect research; target marketing; engaging the community; recruiting students; managing family inquiries and student applications; making acceptance determinations; tracking the enrollment process; and retaining current families.

#### Components of Enrollment Management:

- **Research:** Collecting and analyzing internal and external data that impacts enrollment, student success, and the school's image.
- **Marketing:** The promotion of the school, including market research, advertising, branding, competitor analysis, social media marketing, strategic planning, SWOT analysis, and value proposition.
- **Community Engagement:** Building partnerships with parishes, child care centers, and businesses to extend the school's reach and brand awareness.
- **Recruitment:** Intentional efforts to bring in new families, to include marketing efforts and special events.
- **Inquiry:** When a prospective student shows interest in the school, leading to a discussion with the family, tour, and an invitation to apply.
- **Application:** The submission of initial paperwork from the prospective student, including recommendation letters.
- **Acceptance:** The process of considering an applicant and notifying them of acceptance. Not everyone who applies will be admitted to the school. Schools should make a *big deal* about being accepted.
- **Enrollment:** The submission of all other needed paperwork and records from the admitted student. This includes a financial aid application.
- **Retention:** Building meaningful relationships and keeping your present students and families enrolled at your school for the long-term.

## Apply It

Below is a list of *some* responsibilities of an enrollment manager. For each responsibility, identify if it is a part of *research, marketing, community engagement, recruitment, inquiry, application, acceptance, enrollment, or retention*. Responsibilities may fall under more than one category.

Responsibility	Enrollment Management Part
Schedule prospective family tour.	
Provide a prospective family with a tour.	
Mail thank-you letter following the tour.	
Hand out school information materials after Mass.	
Send out a survey to alumni to learn about their experience while attending the school.	
Conduct exit interviews with families not returning.	
Respond to emails or phone calls from prospective families.	
Reach out to new families following their first week at the school.	
Input enrollment paperwork information into the school database.	
Give application paperwork to the prospective family to complete.	
Give re-enrollment paperwork to current families to complete.	
Mail out birthday cards to current families.	
Mail out baptismal cards to families that recently had a child baptized in the parish.	
Distribute flyers to area day care centers and early learning centers.	

## Importance of Enrollment Management<sup>1</sup>

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Enrollment management plays a critical role in the sustainability of a school. Specifically, enrollment management is:

- Essential for revenue optimization
- Relevant, accurate data provides essential information for the school as a whole
- Marketing and enrollment practices that maximize the student and family's lifelong connection with your school help ensure their enthusiasm and cement the school's brand.
- Just as technology has transformed society, it is transforming enrollment management in ways that will improve your internal processes and connect your school community to the external world.
- When maintaining a systematic approach to managing enrollment — one that includes regular two-way communication — your school nurtures a more informed community that better serves students and families.

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<sup>1</sup> *The NAIS Enrollment Management Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for Independent Schools*

## Recruitment in August

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Take some time to reflect on what went well this month and what did not. Consider:

- How did the number of students on the first day of school compare to the number you *thought* you were going to have? Was there a difference? Why? Is there anything that could be done to improve the accuracy for next year?
- Did all new families attend orientation? Why or why not?
- Did all returning families come to the open house? Why or why not?
- Was there anything you had to do last-minute that you could do earlier next year?
- Was there specific paperwork or documents that families did not turn in? Or struggled to complete? How could this be avoided next year?
- Were there any recurring questions asked by parents?
- Was the pastor informed of events? Did he attend? Why or why not?

Consider surveying a few current families to ask for feedback on:

- Ease of application process
- Timeline of events (e.g. open house, first day of school)
- Ways the process could be improved for families
- Satisfaction with specific events (e.g. open house, new parent orientation)

You want to know as much as possible about your new families. This includes their previous experiences and how they ended up attending your school. This information should be gathered during the inquiry, application, and enrollment process:

- **The school each child attended last year:** *Are there patterns? What does your school have to offer that these schools do not? How can you reach more of these families?*
- **Why they were not satisfied with their previous school:** *How can you prevent this from happening at your school?*
- **How they heard about your school (the more specific, the better):** *Social media? Which platform? Parish? Which parish? A family? Which family?*
- **The reason(s) they chose to enroll at your school:** *Faith? Safety? Academics? Discipline? Class sizes? Curriculum?*

If you do not have this information, consider sending out a survey OR calling the family. It's your opportunity to learn what marketing efforts are working.

## Retention in August

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The school year may just have begun, but it is important to start building relationships *now*. This requires that the entire school - principal, secretary, teachers, enrollment manager - are all on board.

Before the first month of school is over, **every single family** should be called by someone at the school. It may be that the classroom teacher makes all of the phone calls. Or, depending on the number of students, other teachers (e.g. special education teacher, art teacher, etc.) might be asked to make phone calls, too.

*Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (your name). Is \_\_\_\_\_ (parent name) available? [Wait for response]. I wanted to call and see how your child's/children's first few weeks of school have been going. [Wait for response]. Do you have any questions that I can answer? [Wait for response]. We are so glad that your family is a part of our school community. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school office [if you are not the classroom teacher, add: or your child's classroom teacher].*

Prioritize new families, families that were on the fence about re-enrolling, followed by all other families.

**DOCUMENT** communication attempts on a shared platform so teachers, office staff, and administration can see who has been called and who hasn't. For each attempt made, communication logs should always include:

- **Who was called** (full name)
- **When the call was made** (date and time)
- **Who made the call** (staff name)
- **Result of the attempt:** spoke with mom, left message with grandma, inactive number, left voicemail
- **Notes from conversation:** questions, concerns, or any information that would be helpful for teachers to know (e.g. parents are getting divorced, child is struggling to make friends)
- **If any future communications need to be adjusted:** incorrect phone number, family only speaks Spanish (will need someone bilingual to call)

## Recruitment in August

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There is still time to bring in new families in August!

Ideas include:

- Publicize that *we still have room!* Interested in enrolling? Go to \_\_\_\_\_ (website).
- Use social media to highlight the exciting things happening in the school within the first few weeks. Pay special attention to those things that parents want to see and that public schools cannot offer. Examples include faith formation, small class sizes, teacher-student interactions.
- For families that left or for prospective families that did not enroll, consider following up with them, wishing them a great start of the school year and inviting them to reach out should there be anything your school can do for them. This creates an opportunity for dialogue should they change their mind.

If you have not already, you need to create a plan for recruitment. Ideally, this should have been done in the summer to ensure dates were put on the school calendar. Events should include:

- Discover Catholic Schools Week activities - it's not too early to do an Open House!
- National Catholic Schools Week and specific events (e.g. Sunday Kickoff Mass)
- Re-enrollment survey issued to current families
- Open enrollment begins for current families
- Open enrollment begins for new families
- Deadline for enrollment packets to be submitted
- Open House
- Speaking after Mass
- Community outreach opportunities (e.g. parades, fairs, festivals) - anywhere you can have a booth!
- Finalizing tuition amounts for publishing
- Shadow days
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