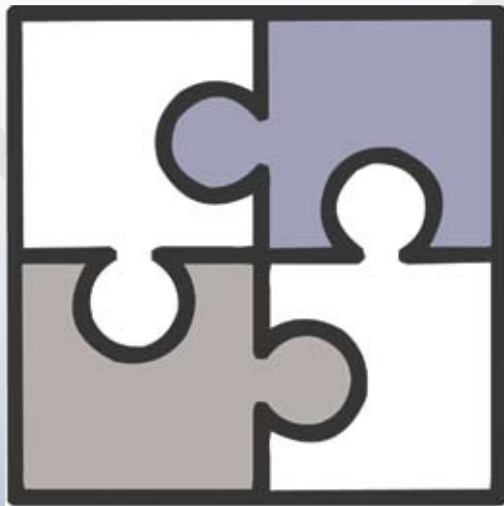




MAPSA

Michigan Association of Public School Academies

Effective School Planning for Long-Term Enrollment



Helping you put the
pieces together. . .

Michigan's Charter Schools

Achievement • Choice • Accountability



Michigan's Charter Schools

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Our mission is to provide leadership to advance quality and promote choice in education through a strong community of chartered public schools and their supporters, offering every Michigan child an opportunity to learn.

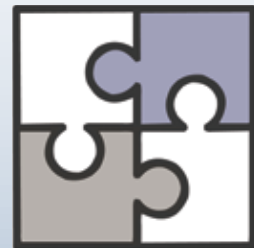
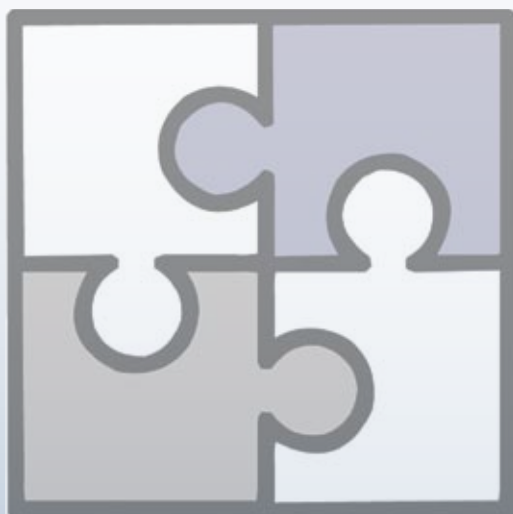


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Helping you put the
pieces together. . .

Effective School Planning for Long-Term Enrollment

The importance of marketing for charter schools

Schools tend to be big news makers in many communities. Television news and local newspapers are full of stories on the good, the bad, and the ugly things going on in the district. So you have to ask yourself, what do the folks in your community know about your school? Most likely, their knowledge comes from those newspaper articles and television stories, or what they hear from their friends. The

So you have to ask yourself, what do the folks in your community know about your school?

question then becomes do those sources tell the story you want told about your school?

It's important for you to take ownership of your message, because the reality is, you

have a brand whether you want one or not. Your brand is more than what your mission statement says you do, or what your board's goals are. It's what parents say to their friends, the stories the newspaper writes, and even what your staff has to say about working at your school. These are the messages that factor into a parent's decision to enroll children in a particular school.

That, of course, is the endgame for your marketing: **lead parents and students to your school to increase enrollment.**



Impact of enrollment

Your enrollment impacts so many areas of your program. Budget, is number one. If you don't have the students, you don't get the funds. Which means you can't have the staffing you want, you can't offer the expanded programs you—and your families—want, and you can't offer the extras such as clubs and sports your parents so often request.

Enrollment fluctuations also contribute to behavioral instability, lower test scores, and your school's ability to plan for the future. When you have a solid student population that is at your school for the right reasons, you're also more likely to avoid drops in enrollment throughout the year.

What sets charter schools apart?

Of course all schools face these issues, not just charter schools. Traditional public schools have certain advantages in attracting students: they tend to be the "neighborhood" school with busses servicing those areas. They are the default school and haven't, until lately, had to let families know about their programs. They're starting to, though. We've seen a huge increase in the marketing activities of traditional public schools, which is all the more reason charter schools need to make the right impression on the public.

The good news is charter schools have their own distinct marketing advantages. Charter schools are often run more efficiently than a public school and also have the ability to be more nimble in trying new things with their marketing strategy. Charters also don't have to try to fit dozens of schools into one marketing strategy.



All of this positions charter schools to handle challenges and make the most out of any opportunity.

And you need to start now. Create a plan that is comprehensive and realistic. You'll become more efficient in your communications, which helps you maximize your marketing budget. You'll no longer be simply reacting to events and circumstances, such as the need to bring in a dozen students in two days. You'll have in place a program that provides continuity of message, but is flexible enough to take advantage of those unforeseen challenges and opportunities.

Marketing schools is different than convincing someone to buy a couch or eat at the local pizza place.

The decision you're asking parents to make will affect their children for the rest of their lives. You need to give parents compelling—and accurate—reasons for making the decision to enroll at your school.



It's your story, be the one to tell it

Before you put a single dollar into marketing, you have to make the commitment that it's not enough just to get warm bodies in the seats. You have to attract students and families who are coming to your school because of the core mission of your school. For example, if your academy goals are to prepare students for college, you want to attract students who are dedicated to putting in the work necessary to achieve that goal.



Look at what is being communicated about your school. Are you letting others tell the story of your school? Look at what the public reads and hears? Are those stories really the story of your academy? If you aren't out there telling your story, someone else is. It's not enough for just the folks in the front office to be on board: you want everyone in your school, from teachers and parent groups to the members of school's Board, to know what you're all about.

Are you letting others tell the story of your school?

What defines your message?

So how do you create the message that is going to define your school?

First, review your board goals, your mission statement, your charter contract, school improvement plan and any other strategic planning material your school has developed.

Summarize those into 3 external points; that is, points that appeal to and address parents and students. Those points will be the basis for your message.

For example, if your goals and mission include:

- Increase parent participation
- Create consistent behavioral guidelines
- Increase student achievement



Your message to the public could be “a school where parents are always welcome and students excel in a safe learning environment”

This can become your marketing statement—not necessarily your slogan or branding statement, but a boiled-down, easy-to-remember mission for your marketing that will guide what you do from here on out. You may have heard this called the “elevator speech”: how you would describe something in the few seconds you would be in an elevator with someone.

Translating your message to the market

The next step is to create the actual slogan you would use in your marketing. A slogan is that catchy phrase that declares the marketing statement. It’s General Electric’s “we bring good things to life”, Bounties’ “the quicker picker-upper”, and Nike’s “just do it.”

So what is yours?

Let’s use our previous example—the marketing statement of “parents are always welcome and students excel in a safe learning environment.”

Here are a couple examples of slogans that could encompass that marketing mission statement:

- *Curious minds welcome here*
- *Free to learn*

Both of these impart the welcoming environment, the emphasis on learning, that curiosity is encouraged and opportunities are limitless.

In addition, you want to create a visual slogan, or a logo, for your school. This can be as complicated or as simple as you like—a graphic or simply a font style and defined colors.

Continuing with our previous example, and incorporating the feel and emotions of our slogan, the logo could be:



Taking it public

Now that you have developed the creative package, with your marketing statement in mind and your logo and slogan at the ready, it’s time to take it public.

Consistency

We’ve all seen an ad that instantly triggers as an ad for a particular business, even if you’ve never seen the ad before and you haven’t seen the logo. That’s because the company advertising has consistently stayed with a particular style in all of their advertising: the same color palette, the style of graphics, the type of music, the same font. Being consistent with your message and its style provides you with a recognizable structure that announces who you are without spending the time explaining it. No matter what vehicle you use, consistency helps you make an impression right away, you avoid confusion in your message, and you are constantly reinforcing the benefits you want to convey.

Budget

When it comes to marketing vehicles, the sky is no longer the limit: cyberspace advertising opens up a whole new realm of possibilities. Here’s one thing that will bring you back to earth: budget.

How you take your message public is largely determined by how much money you have to spend.

Your marketing budget needs to be realistic and reasonable within these terms, but also large enough to be effective.

Of course, the most important line items for your budget go directly to classroom and educational items for your students and staff.



As you develop your budget, consider your marketing needs and the following factors:

■ Where your school is located?

Urban/populated regions	Suburban/rural regions
Wide selection of media that will also more specifically target your neighborhoods	Limited media available and media choices cover a wide geographic area
High media rates	Reasonable media rates
Dense population in a smaller geographic area, so you reach more people in a smaller area	Population spread out over a wide geographic area
Market range of 5 to 8 miles	Market range could go 20 miles

■ How long your school has been open?

If you are an existing school, you already have an image in your community. If you have been able to cultivate the image you want, you can concentrate on using your marketing efforts, and money, to build on that image and share other positive aspects of your school. If not, you may need to spend some of your marketing efforts redefining your school. Additionally, if your school has had a rough patch—and the media has picked that up—you will need to spend extra effort on highlighting the positive accomplishments of your school.

If you are a new school, you will need to start from scratch, which takes a concentrated, committed effort of repeating your message, creating positive relationships with media, business leaders, and the community.



■ Combating outside forces

There are some factors out of our control. Assess what might be out there—competition, negative school news from other parts of the state, rising gas prices-- that could influence local thinking, the likelihood of reaching your enrollment goals, or cause you to designate funds for special needs.

■ Consider the effectiveness of incentives

Providing families with an enrollment incentive may be worthwhile. Make sure to include cost of the incentive, material used to communicate the incentive, and incentive distribution.

How much money should you budget for marketing?

One result of your marketing efforts is to lead to an increase in enrollment. Enrollment determines your total budget and it can determine this particular item in your budget. You can use a flat percentage—0.5% to 1%--of your overall per pupil funding, or you can factor your marketing budget based on your recruitment goal--\$100 to \$150 for each student. In both cases you should add a 10% cushion that allows you to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Setting your recruitment goal is different from setting your enrollment goal.

The recruitment goal is the number of new students you need to bring in to meet your enrollment goal. This number is more than taking the difference between last year's count and the new enrollment goal. You have to factor in non-returning students, plus put in a cushion for students who enroll, but don't show up for school or transfer before count day.



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How much money should you budget for marketing? . . . continued

Below are several examples of how this works for an existing school and for a new school:

■ Existing Schools

	Example
Enrollment goal	400
Minus current enrollment	<u>-342</u>
	58
Plus estimated number of students who will not return (include students graduating from your top grade)	<u>+48</u>
	106
Plus 10% of enrollment goal	<u>+40</u>
Total number of students to recruit:	146

■ New Schools

	Example
Enrollment goal	200
Minus committed students	<u>-75</u>
	125
Plus 10% of enrollment goal	<u>+20</u>
Total number of students to recruit:	145

It may also be helpful to break your numbers down by grade levels, particularly if your school offers K – 12 programs. You may find you have a greater need, for example, to recruit students in your lower elementary classes than in your sixth grade classes and this information can lead you to different advertising and marketing possibilities.



Distributing your budget

Once you have determined how much you have to spend, you need to create a plan or outline, typically covering a one-calendar-year period, of how you're going to spend it. The goal for any advertiser, and particularly for cash-starved schools, is to allocate your marketing dollars so you maximize their effect while promoting the message you want told.

As you start creating your plan, consider the following:

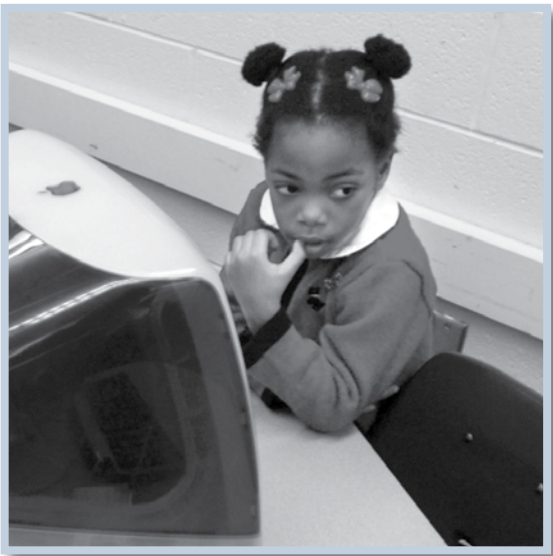
- Determine your enrollment periods—review peak enrollment times from years past.
- List enrollment activities—kindergarten round-up, spring open house, summer events. How do you promote these? What material do you use?
- Include community events—do you participate in parades, fairs, expos? What promotional items and information materials do you need?
- Define what will come out of marketing budget—for example, if you budget for the traditional marketing activities, then find out that activities such as the school carnival, a parent breakfast, or a program for a summer camp are to come out of the marketing budget, you will overspend or run short before the end of the budget year.



Press Release Tips

To get the word out, schools traditionally rely on press releases to the education reporters for the local media outlets. But we've seen how "quickly" those are picked up. Unless it's a headline-grabbing story, it doesn't garner much interest. Here are a few tips to maximize your press release's impact, and make it easier to send out information about the many good activities and accomplishments going on at your school.

Regardless of how much money you have available for marketing, there is one initial, cost-effective thing you can do to routinely herald your message and the activities going on at your school.



- Designate a system for sending out press releases. Assign a person or several people to be responsible for reviewing releases, sending them out, and following up.
- Get a good media list and send your release out in every way imaginable. Email it, fax it, hand deliver it – and after all that, call the reporter to follow up.
- Develop a relationship with your local reporters. When you have special events going on, include reporters on the invitation list.
- Use letterhead that features your school logo, slogan, colors, font-style.
- Make sure your release includes a powerful, provocative headline.
- Is your press release newsworthy? Ask yourself “where is the story” and write your release in a manner that has a broad appeal to the community.
- Tie your story to current events that are already getting a lot of press coverage.
- Cultivate media contacts who are not traditional education reporters—sports editors, food writers, and entertainment columnists. And don't forget your advertising rep –this person may be more inclined to help you get the good news story out there because they want you for a client. And certainly if you have spent money with that outlet, ask the sales person for help in putting a story through or getting coverage or an event.



Advertising vehicles

For decades the choices for advertising was fairly stable with broadcast, print, and direct mail as the go-to choices. The advent of cable and satellite threw in some new options, but the advertising environment remained fairly understandable. In recent years, new—and often baffling—media has presented itself in lightening speed: internet’s social networks, podcasts, and electronic billboards to name a few. And in the past few months traditional go-to media such as printed newspaper is becoming extinct. Whether you have the budget to do a full-scale marketing campaign that includes a variety of advertising vehicles, or you just want to run a single flight to promote a special event, it helps to understand the resources available.

Traditional advertising

Traditional channels for distributing your message include electronic media such as television and radio, print such as newspaper and magazines, billboards, direct mail and yellow pages. While these are the advertising vehicles with which we are most familiar and the media you may think of first when you want to advertise, evaluate these on how cost effective they will be for your school. A newspaper may reach all of your potential families, but its coverage area may also include geographic areas that will never be your target neighborhoods. And you’re paying for that. Television, even more so. There are times when special promotions will make these vehicles attractive and issues such as back-to-school editions are often attractively priced for schools.

For specifics on the different types of traditional advertising, refer to the chart at the back of this guide.

Non-traditional advertising

Non-traditional advertising has grown by 20% in the past year. And it’s no wonder: non-traditional methods can give you a relatively big bang for the buck, they help you stand out from the crowd, and you can pinpoint methods that are ideally suited to your niche. Keep your eyes open for opportunities and consider the possibilities they offer you. Often, a non-traditional method won’t, at first glance, appear as a marketing opportunity.

- For example, your local pizza shop may agree to put fliers on pizza boxes. Other businesses in your area might let you put up posters or leave brochures.
- Provide a promotional DVD and school literature to real estate agents to include as part of a welcome package for new families in the area.
- Bus advertising, either on busses themselves or at the bus stops, can be ideal, especially if you can pick specific routes and stops.
- Restaurant placemats can be a cost-effective way to reach a local audience.
- Movie theater advertising—on the screen or in the lobby—can reach an untapped and receptive audience.
- Seek out local colleges and universities. Find out if there are communications and websites that are available for faculty and staff and if there are ways that you could include your message.
- Local sports venues can offer lots of opportunities for message placement, sponsorships, and to have your school participate in activities.

In every case—non-traditional and traditional—let the person in charge of selling you the advertising or arranging the promotion know that you are a non-profit public school. Many outlets have non-profit rates or will provide bonus advertising for schools.



New media

Another rapidly growing form of non-traditional advertising is new media marketing. Your school's website is the biggest platform for this type of marketing. Advertising messages have an extremely brief amount of time to make an impact on their intended audience. Billboard viewers don't have time to see a list of your school's programs. There's not enough time in a 30-second ad to talk about everything you offer. But you can leverage the benefits of these vehicles by including a powerful hook and a call to action to visit your website.

Your website then can serve as the hub of many other marketing activities. Websites allow you to put as much content as you like in many different formats—photos, video, podcasting, social networks, blogs downloadable content, RSS feeds, and eNewsletters are just a few of the media used to deliver content. Unlike billboards or print advertisement, marketing online has in-depth, immediate and measurable analytics available to track and measure what works and what doesn't work.



Here are ways you can make the most of your website and other new media options:

- Send a link to a promotional video about your school as a prerequisite to a face-to-face meeting. One school reduced the time needed for giving tours by 60% because parents that watched the video began arriving ready to enroll.
- There are so many wonderful personal and academic success stories that never get shared. Use a blog to make these stories available. Ask parents to write a blog post for the website, too.
- Add a photo gallery to your site that teachers can access and upload student artwork, photos of events.
- Archive every newsletter communication somewhere on your school's website.
- Try using an audio podcast to announce major news, address concerns, or inform parents about new developments. Podcasting creates an archive of information for future reference. Get students involved in the production. Don't be intimidated by new technology there are resources available to get you started.
- Instead of, or in addition to a Google ad word campaign look into purchasing adds on a social network such as Facebook or local chamber of commerce web site. These campaigns can be highly targeted and affordable.
- Send your Friday news letter out as an eNewsletter and keep an archive of past issues on your website.
- Involve students and parents in creating online content. You will make vocal fans of your school. These are your best sales people and brand builders.
- You can purchase email lists just as you do traditional mailing lists or build your own lists with school families, prospective families, community organizations, and businesses.

Soft marketing

The days are past when a school is strictly a neighborhood school. That's particularly true with charter schools. Your school has to make an effort to not only make its place in your geographic community, but create its own community within the school walls.

Search out activities in which your school can participate. Parades, festivals and community carnivals, and business expos are all activities you'll find in surrounding communities and all offer ways for you to participate. And just because you don't get a flier asking for your participation doesn't mean there's not a way for you to be involved. Seek out ways, look for opportunities and never be afraid to ask.

Also, take the initiative to create your own opportunities. For example, host community events. This is a highly effective way to make personal contact with your school's neighbors, have the time to speak one-on-one with families, have newcomers meet current school families and hear first-hand what they like about your school, and develop your place in the neighborhood.

With all of this, make sure you are maintaining the focus of your marketing message. As much as possible, have branding on the promotional materials you distribute—magnets, pencils, Frisbees, plus printed information. The activities you choose to participate in or initiate at your school should reflect your school's focus. If you are an environmental science school and you want to host a community event, you could have a Farmer's Market every Saturday in May. Or organize an energy night, where speakers come in to present families with tips for saving energy and money. If your focus is college prep, offer college financial aid seminars or partner with area colleges to host an academic fair.

Also, announce and document your participation in these events with a few photos, a blog post or a press release on your web site. Let the community know about the positive things you are doing.



Going from the outside in

We've covered how your marketing message goes out to the public, but disseminating the message internally is just as important.

Give your staff the tools and information so that they, too, can be effective school ambassadors.

- Evaluate what you do when someone—new and current families, board members, members of the community and media—asks about your school. Make sure you're following up in a timely manner.
- Make sure informed staff members are available to meet with new families.
- Do you have information readily available to give to prospects?
- Are you consistent in your process of communications?
- Are you the only source or are there others on your staff who can play important roles in communications?
- Do your teachers and staff have information they can distribute when they're out in public? Provide material they can share—you can put a lot of information about your school on something the size of a business card. One school created teacher branding kits so teachers understood the marketing message and how it tied into the school's overall mission. The kit provided materials they could use when they were communicating with families and talking with the general public.

Next, don't forget about your best sales force: satisfied school families! Encourage families to take your school's message to other families, churches, community centers, rec centers, and hairdressers. You could also consider providing families with incentives to bring in new families.

Build your marketing team

Whether the task falls to you or you have people within your school management company who do a lot of this work, creating and executing a comprehensive marketing plan can seem overwhelming. This is why we urge you to select a person within the school who will be your marketing czar. This person will be your school's contact on press releases, the liaison between your school and the management company or vendors, and can help organize soft marketing activities—the carnivals, community events, activities. Give this person not only the responsibility to handle marketing, but the authority to speak directly to other key players.

You'll need to work with your marketing czar to create your marketing plan and a system to communicate what's going on. Meet with your czar regularly, create an activities checklist and define how activities and information will be communicated with staff, parents, and other key players in your marketing.

There is a need to be nimble with many marketing efforts. Having a designated marketing czar, someone who knows the overall marketing picture and who has the authority to carry out activities, eliminates potential slowdowns.

Finally, don't be afraid to work with experts on your marketing needs. You don't need to commit to a full service agency, although you can. You can work with a graphic designer to develop a logo. Work with freelance writers to create marketing materials. Hire a web designer to set up your website. As long as you have the framework of your branding, others can incorporate that into any and all of your material. When working with multiple vendors, having a single contact person can also help to ensure your branding is being implemented consistently.



Even if you don't have much money to invest in marketing efforts, consider this: just as you have a brand whether you want one or not, you are engaging in marketing activities whether or not you realize it. Your website, newsletters, the enrollment packets you send out to interested families, your spring carnival, Kindergarten Round Up, basically all activities and communications are sending out messages beyond the factual information they present.

The key is to make every effort count.

By creating a comprehensive and focused message now, you will have the tools to take charge of your student recruitment, the ability to build on the good name of your school from year to year, and the confidence that your school is living up to its story.



Types of traditional advertising

<p>Television</p>	<p>Broadcast— wide-ranging, reaches broad audience. Target audience by programs selected. Expensive. Localized options and programming may not be widely available.</p> <p>Cable— Ability to target a more specific audience. Can be lower in price than broadcast. More local options and programming.</p> <p>You often need to plan in advance, particularly if you need to produce a commercial. Commercial production can also add significantly to the cost.</p>
<p>Radio</p>	<p>Can have a wide variety of local formats from which to choose your specific target audience. Becoming increasingly expensive, but deals can be found. Investigate opportunities to work with stations on promotions and to get bonus ads. Allows you to react quickly to place ads.</p> <p>Fairly inexpensive to produce commercial.</p>
<p>Newspaper</p>	<p>Options vary by community. Larger daily papers usually have wide coverage areas, although there are some localized and neighborhood editions of these papers. Readership is down and many newspapers are reducing the number of sections and editions they publish. Hard-copy advertising often comes with advertising and sponsorship on paper's website. Some communities have popular local weeklies that may provide a more cost-effective option.</p> <p>Most publications need less than a week's advance ad placement.</p> <p>Many papers will create ads at no extra cost or you can design your own ad.</p>
<p>Billboard</p>	<p>Can make a big splash and allow you to target a specific neighborhood. High frequency numbers. Must plan ahead—a month in many cases—and often have to commit to several months. Can be expensive and the artwork is usually extra.</p>
<p>Magazines</p>	<p>There are more community magazines in your area than you may realize. Investigate the options. Costs vary widely, so choose magazines and editions that compliment your message.</p> <p>Usually, you need to plan an issue or two in advance to meet their printing deadlines.</p> <p>Magazines can create an ad for you—often at no extra cost—or you can submit an ad that you (or an agency) have created.</p>
<p>Telephone directory ads</p>	<p>Handy to include your school among the list of others in the area. In most cases costly and provides you with zero flexibility—you place one ad that lasts for a year. Directories are now offering on-line listings as part of the ad package.</p>
<p>Website banner ads</p>	<p>Often part of another advertising package such as newspaper or radio, but you can also purchase separately.</p>

<p>Direct mail</p>	<p>Typical mailings are postcards and letters, but you have many other options to make your mailing stand out. Mailing list services let you specify recipients in terms of age, geographic locations, interests, and more categories.</p> <p>Depending on the type of mailing, a direct mail campaign can be done quickly to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, though using surface mail will take several days to arrive.</p> <p>Costs will depend on size and type of mailing. Factor in printing, mailing lists costs, postage, and handling in your total costs. You can take care of these steps yourself, or use a fulfillment house for this.</p>
<p>School signage School Newsletter School Website</p>	<p>Your school communications can play a big role in sending out your school's marketing message. Take advantage of these forums and be aware of opportunities to use them to share information not only with your current school families.</p>
<p>Yard Signs</p>	<p>A heavy concentration of yard signs is quite noticeable. You can have generic-message signs printed in bulk to get the best price and to use throughout the year. Enlist school families to put them in yards in neighborhoods around the school.</p>



Marketing resources

Email Roberta.delo@staples.com for a quote today! Staples Business Advantage	Features hundreds of customizable promotional items with discounts of up to 70% through the MAPSA program.
www.infousa.com	Easy navigation, offers various ways to create targeted mailing lists.
www.istockphoto.com	Purchase credits in bulk, then use on huge library of stock still and moving images. Most photos are under \$10.
www.rushimprint.com	When you need something at the last minute, they'll come through!
www.michiguide.com	Links to Michigan radio and television stations.
http://www.usnpl.com/minews.php	Links to Michigan newspapers.
http://quickfacts.census.gov	Demographic information by state, county, city
Email Roberta.delo@staples.com for a quote today! Staples Business Advantage	School uniforms or logo gear! Get your brand out into the community!

Marketing materials you should have on hand regardless of your budget

Print material

Reader-friendly information pieces such as brochures and small fliers that catch the reader's attention, provide at-a-glance information that is pertinent to your message, can fit into a standard envelope so that it's easy to display and distribute, and can be printed quickly and inexpensively.

Promotional items

Keep a supply of small items such as pencils, magnets, bag clips and note pads that you can give to prospective families, teachers can take to presentations, and your staff can use at events. Keep everything in one location that is easy to access and easy to inventory.

Business cards

Provide staff with a business card template that reflects your marketing message, slogan, logo, colors, and font style.

Teachers can customize with their name, preferred contact information and times when they are available.

Calendar of school activities

An up-to-date list of activities and enrollment events will help your staff anticipate functions and prepare in advance.

You should also have this printed on small cards to distribute to families that contact your school, include with press releases, leave at area businesses, post on community calendars.



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If you can imagine it, we can do it. Let Staples help you create the perfect items to match your marketing and promotional needs. We have more than 700,000 promotional products to choose from and our design services will get you exactly what you need. To view an even greater selection and possibly find some other great product ideas contact your dedicated account manager.



MAPSA

Michigan Association of Public School Academies



The secret marketing activities you may already be doing!

Marketing is about setting the stage for enrollment. Its purpose is to showcase the benefits and unique features of your school in a way that compels parents to take that next step of contacting you. The most effective way to do this is to send out a consistent message that specifically addresses your school's goals.

You are probably engaging in more marketing activities than you realize. Your website, weekly newsletters, and your spring carnival - all of these send out messages about your school. Review the lists below: you may find areas you want to work on, but more likely you'll be surprised at how much marketing you're already doing! The key is to make sure that what you're doing supports your goals.

Parent communications

- Newsletters
- Letters from the Principal
- Website
- Mailers
- Signage
- Automated phone calls
- Other

Enrollment information

- Handbooks
- Enrollment forms
- Frequently-Asked-Questions
- National school listing websites (ie, greatschools.com)
- Other

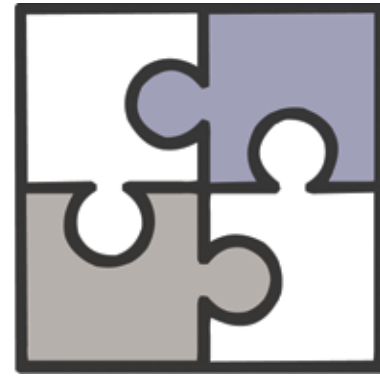
Open house/Round up activities

- Kindergarten Round-Up
- Spring Enrollment Open House
- Summer Activities
- Back-to-School Open House
- Communications from teachers
- Other



Community involvement

- Local Parades
- Expos
- Collaboration with Local Businesses
- Other



In-school activities

- Carnival
- Parent Information Nights
- Appreciation Events
- Awards and Recognition Ceremonies
- Education Fairs
- Parent Organizations
- Student Organizations
- Summer Camps
- Sports, Clubs, Academic Groups
- Other

Advertising

- Television
- Radio
- Newspaper and other print
- Websites (including social networks)
- Billboards
- Direct Mail
- Yard signs
- In-store fliers
- Posters
- Other

Use the information from this list as a reference as you review the other sections of the workbook.



Evaluating current marketing activities

Many of the activities you are currently doing can be beneficial in your student recruitment efforts. It helps to get a comprehensive overview of these activities. Review the list below, jot down descriptions and details to these activities and note things you could do in the future.

	Activity details	Possible changes
What is our school's mission statement? The school goals? Strategic Plan? School Improvement Plan? Other?	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Does our staff participate in community activities or educational opportunities away from the school?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
How is our staff active in the recruitment of new students and the return of current students?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
How do we communicate enrollment activities to our staff?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
How do we follow up with enrollment inquiries?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Do we contact families who used to attend our school?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
What activities help parents feel involved?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____



	Activity details	Possible changes
How do parents currently find out about our school?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
How do we use parent survey forms?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Does our enrollment form include a place for parents to state how they heard of our school and what influenced their decision?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Do we conduct exit interviews with parents who pull their children from the school?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
What information do we currently distribute to parents who inquire about our school?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
What factors influence enrollment?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
What times of the year do families typically enroll?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
What community groups does our school belong to or participate in?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
What activities are unique to our school or not shared by others in our community?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Have we received special awards, grants, recognition?	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____



Our marketing basics

Having information handy will make it easy to provide quick answers to media and marketers. Use this section to list details that will help you develop marketing activities and work with others.

	Activity details	Possible changes
What is our marketing statement?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
What is our enrollment goal?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
How many students do we expect to return?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Who is our target audience?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Who is our secondary audience?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Is there an audience we're missing?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
What successful advertising vehicles have we used in the past?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
What advertising activities have not been successful or efficient?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Who is responsible for marketing activities at our school? (school, parent group, management company)	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Who supervises marketing activities and those involved?	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Who are the internal staff members responsible for marketing? (include staff who put together an man events, organize open houses, etc)	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>



	Activity details	Possible changes
What types of media are available in our market?		
List of media contacts (include sales people, those to whom you send press releases, reporters you know)		
What are the key points our ads need to make?		
Does our headline relate to our message? How?		
In addition to addressing our stakeholders' needs and wants, are we communicating our school's own accomplishments? What are these accomplishments?		
Does our material include a call to action? (enroll now, join us at our open house...)		
Does our ad relate to the target audience?		
Are we specific in our claims and description of benefits?		
Are testimonials, if used, relevant and timely?		
Are we incorporating our brand throughout our material (enrollment forms, handbooks, letters home, etc)?		
Are we utilizing our website to the fullest advantage to appeal to prospective families?		
Are we keeping the website up-to-date with pictures and upcoming activities?		
Do we have a designated person in charge of our website? How is that person kept informed of upcoming activities and announcements?		
Do we have a current marketing plan? What period does it cover?		



Keys to a successful marketing plan

If you are developing an extensive branding campaign, possibly engaging an outside firm to do so, the following checklist can help you focus your marketing activities as you create your marketing plan, or to help you evaluate the upcoming activities scheduled in an existing plan.

Our marketing plan. . .	Y/N	Possible changes
Creates a long-term plan to educate and motivate the public on the unique quality of the school		
Provides on-going market research to identify areas for brand improvement		
Clearly delineates brand strategy to enable stakeholders to deliver the brand promise consistently		
Wins support for brand with stakeholders		
Provides evaluation methods		
Identifies key components that differentiate our school in the marketplace		
Discovers untapped areas for growth		
Creates visual and verbal symbols of brand excellence		
Allows for room to respond to changing marketplace, government regulations, cultural needs		
Embraces new avenues of marketing		
Is sensitive to budgetary, political, and cultural influences and consequences		
Achieves the ultimate goal of long-term high quality, enrollment gains, student retention, and program recognition		



Evaluate previous marketing activities

To be successful, marketing activities can achieve various goals and not all have to result in immediate increase in enrollment. Building long-term relationships with your community and with current family can result in significant long-term enrollment stability. List marketing activities enacted and classify activity in following categories.

List activities in left column, then rate each activity on effectiveness on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest.

Marketing activity	Increase enrollment	Build community partnerships	Improve parent communications	Current student retention	Positive media coverage

Suggestions for improving activities: _____

Suggestions for additional activities: _____

Marketing Materials

What changes would we like on current print materials? _____

What additional print materials would we like? _____

What additional promotional materials would we need? _____

Staff Assistance

Were the various marketing activities an effective use of our staff? _____

Do we have staff members with special skills or connections that would benefit our marketing efforts? _____

How can parents help us with our marketing efforts? _____



Glossary of media and advertising terms

This glossary will help you decipher what your media reps are talking about and help you sound like a pro yourself!

A

Adjacency--A commercial or program that immediately follows or precedes another on the same TV station.

Air Date--The first broadcast of a commercial; also refers to the exact date of a particular TV or radio program.

Availability ("avails")--The commercial position in a program or between programs on a given station or network available for purchase by an advertiser.

Average Frequency --The number of times the average person or household is exposed to an advertising schedule. It is always derived from Gross Rating Points and Reach.

Average Quarter-Hour Rating (AQH) --The average number of persons listening for at least five minutes during a fifteen minute period (a quarter hour).

B

Best Time Available (BTA)--Commercials which are scheduled by the station to run at the best available time after all other sponsor commitments are met.

Billboard--For broadcast, a brief announcement, usually 3, 5, or 10 seconds in length, and usually earned by advertising paying extra for the program being ordered. For outdoor, it's an outdoor advertising display.

Banner-- A banner is an advertisement in the form of a graphic image that typically runs across a Web page or is positioned in a margin or other space reserved for ads.

Bleed--A term used for print advertising that extends all the way to the edge of the page with no margin.

Bonus--Additional commercials given to an advertiser, usually at no charge, in return for a paid schedule.

C

Call to Action—Advertising copy that asks the viewer/reader to take an action such as visit or buy.

Campaign --A specific advertising effort on behalf of a particular product or service which extends for a specified period of time.

Circulation--The total number of distributed copies of a publication at a specified time. Also, in broadcast, the total number of households within the station's coverage area.

Clickthrough--A clickthrough is what is counted by the sponsoring site as a result of an ad click.

Column Inch --A unit of newspaper space one column wide and one inch deep (14 agate lines).

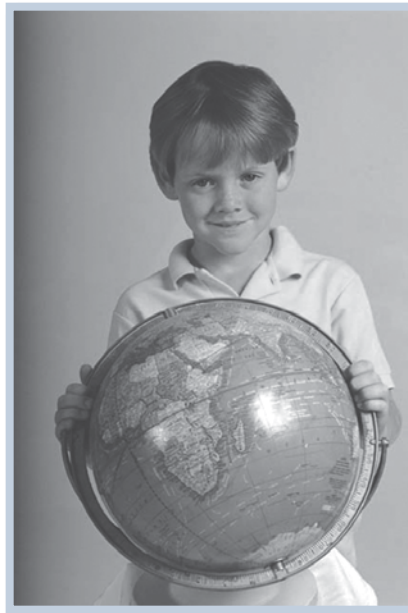
Cost Per Point (CPP) --The cost of reaching one percent of the target audience within a specified geographic area.

Cost Per Thousand (CPM)--The cost of reaching 1,000 homes or individuals with a specific advertising message.

Coverage Area--The geographic area within which a signal from an originating station can be received.

Cume (cumulative audience)--The total number of different persons listening for at least five minutes during a specified daypart.

Cume Rating --The Cume Persons audience expressed as a percentage of all persons estimated to be in the specified demographic group.



D

Daily Estimate Circulation (DEC's)--This is an outdoor terms used to give an average estimate of traffic driving by a particular outdoor board on any given day.

Daypart--The time segments that divide up each day based on programming.

Deadline--The date by which all advertising must be ordered from the specific media vehicle in order to secure the dates/times/positions requested.

Demographics --Audience composition based on various socioeconomic characteristics such as age, sex, income, education, household size, occupation, etc.

Designated Market Area (DMA) --The DMA is composed of sampling units (counties or geographically split counties) designated and updated annually by Nielsen Media Research.

Direct Response Advertising--Direct response refers to any advertising that has a built-in call to action to elicit a response within a define period of time after the exposure to the announcement.

Discrepancy--Situation where commercial does not run as ordered or do not run at all.

Double Truck--A newspaper ad unit that uses two facing full pages includes the gutter or fold.

Duplication --The number or percent of the target audience in one media vehicle also exposed to another vehicle.

E

Effective Reach--The average number of people that will hear a commercial at least three times during a campaign.

Efficiency--The relationship of media cost to audience delivery.

Encapsulated PostScript (EPS)—Format for graphics that allow user to manipulate the file.

Equal Distribution/Rotation--Ensuring that commercials are scheduled to run in a broad time period or combination of time periods, getting equally distributed across each time period.

Exclusivity--An agreement whereby a media vehicle agrees to run no advertising directly competitive to the advertiser purchasing the media vehicle or program.

Exposure--A person's physical contact with an advertising medium or message. It can be visual and/or an audio form.

F

First Refusal--The opportunity for an advertiser to extend sponsorship rights of a program or vehicle before it is offered to another advertiser.

Fixed Position--A commercial scheduled to run at a precise time, or a commercial scheduled to run within specific programming content.

Fixed Rate--The rate charged for a fixed position commercial (see fixed position), usually a non pre-emptible rate.

Flight--A scheduling tactic that alternates period of advertising activity with period of no activity.

Flow Chart--A calendar which tracks media activity over time, usually a year.

Frequency--The average number of times an accumulated audience has the opportunity to be exposed to advertisements, a particular program, or program schedule, within a measured period of time. This is the average number of times your spot will be heard.

G

Gross Impressions --The total number of impressions or exposures made by a schedule.

Gross Rating Points (GRP's)--The sum of all rating points in a schedule.

Guarantee--A commitment to the advertiser by a medium that should audience deliver fall short of what was estimated, the advertiser will receive bonus advertising to meet the expected CPM or GRP's.

Gutter--The blank space between margins of facing pages of a publication.

H

Heavy-Up--An increase in advertising activity for a limited period of time.

Hiatus--Period in a campaign when an advertiser's schedule is suspended for a short period of time, after which the schedule resumes.



I
Impressions--Counting term for how many times an ad is shown to an individual in a given period.

Index--A comparison between the market composition and the target composition. It is a measure of concentration or likelihood. It tells us whether a specific group is more or less likely to meet a given criteria.

Insertion Order--An order given by the station or agency to confirm placement of media.

Island Position --A print advertisement surrounded completely by editorial.

J
JPEG – A commonly used method of compression of photographic images.

L
Line Rate --The cost per agate line for newspapers.

Live Read--A specific commercial type where the announcement is read “live” on-air by a station personality.

M
Makegood--Comparable commercial time or space given to an advertiser to no additional cost when advertising is pre-empted, omitted or airs in an unfit condition.

Media Plan-- A plan developed with the sole purpose of determining media mix, dollar allocation and weight levels that will result in a direct correlation to the media buy.

N
Net Cost--Advertising rates which do not include advertising agency commission and/or include discounts.

Net Reach--The total number of unduplicated persons reached by a radio or TV schedule. Unduplicated means this is a CUME based statistic.

O
Optimum Effective Scheduling (OES)--OES represents a philosophy of buying and scheduling commercials that is designed to reach the majority of a radio station’s cume audience three or more times in a week by distributing commercials evenly Monday through Sunday from 6am to Midnight.

P
Portable Document Format (PDF)—Publications typically request graphics and photos to be submitted in this Adobe format.

Penetration--The degree to which a medium or vehicle has coverage in a specific area. Can also refer to the effectiveness of advertising’s impact on consumers.

Political Rate--Stations are required to provide discounted rates for advertisements aired by candidates under certain circumstances during the prescribed “windows” before primary and general elections.

Post Buy Analysis --An analysis of schedule performance after it runs’ offers a means of measuring a media buy as run versus goal or original estimate of achievement.

Pre-emption --An omission of an announcement from a previously confirmed schedule; the advertisers is either offered a make-good or takes a credit.

Pre-emptible --Refers to a class of commercial announcements that are usually purchased at a lower rate with the understanding that the placement may be changed by the station as other commercials are subsequently sold at higher prices.

PVT/PUT (Persons Viewing or Using Television)--The percent of individual viewing all television stations during a specific time period, indicating total viewing to TV in general, not to a specific program or station.



R

Rate Card --A statement by a medium showing advertising costs, issue dates, program names, closing dates, requirements, cancellation dates, etc.

Rating--The Average Quarter Hour rating or the Cume rating is the (AQH persons or Cume persons) estimate expressed as a percentage of the demo population.

Reach--The number of unduplicated households or people exposed to a program, group of programs or an advertiser's schedule over a specific time period.

Remnant Space --Space sold at reduced prices at the last minute when another advertiser cancels or changes their schedule and creates open space.

Run of Press or Run of Paper (ROP) --A newspaper insertion for which an exact position is not requested, but left to the newspaper's discretion.

Run of Schedule (ROS)--ROS commercials are scheduled to run across multiple dayparts within a broad daypart parameter.

S

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)--The process to improve ranking in search engine results.

Share--The percentage of those listening to radio or watching TV on a particular station.

Showing--A group of outdoor boards which provide a certain percent coverage of a market, usually purchased in increments of 25 (a #25 showing, a #50 showing, a #75 showing, a #100 showing)

Sponsorship --The purchase of more than one commercial within a program, usually at a premium rate. Can include bonus time via billboards, or exclusivity of advertising within the brand's product category, or all of the above.

Sweeps --The four 4-week periods when all TV markets are measured by Nielsen and Arbitron for station viewing and demographic information. Sweep months are February, May, July & November.

Syndicated Program--A program that is produced for national distribution, but which is shown on individual local stations rather than on a national network.

T

Tabloid--A newspaper measuring about 5-6 columns wide by 200 lines deep, about 2/3 the size of a standard newspaper.

Target Demo --The age and characteristic make-up of the group deemed to be targeted for reach by the media campaign.

Time Spent Listening (TSL) --How long the average listener is tuned in to a station.

Traffic --Written instructions provided to that media to direct them as to what commercial/ad they are to run over a given time period.

Total Audience Plan (TAP) --TAP plans are usually a rotating schedule that places announcement in a pattern that utilizes all station dayparts for maximum station audience exposure.

Total Survey Area (TSA) --A geographic area term; includes metro area and any additional counties where a statistically significant amount of viewing can be attributed to stations originating in the metro area.

U

Unit--A unit is one commercial message regardless of length.

Glossary compiled
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Thank you to our affiliate members that dedicated their
time to providing you with this resource.

Their commitment is appreciated!

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