

## What is Development?

Development is a set of practices by a school that ensure a vision is realized and the mission is fulfilled.

In keeping with the values of our Catholic faith and traditions, development can be thought of as a ministry that invites people into the process of planning for success. Development practices all center around relationships that sustain us as individuals, and help our schools to grow and be vibrant and successful. Development helps create a culture of philanthropy within the school. Development promotes stewardship as a way of life. Good stewards help to celebrate and promote the school mission, vision and values, laying a strong foundation for success.

In a more institutional light, we can define development as the operations - group of tasks, processes and efforts - that help an organization to grow, meet the needs of the people it serves and achieve a vision of success. The word development too often has come to mean fund-raising, and those schools who focus only on this aspect of development do not enjoy the same level of success as those who treat development as a much more comprehensive process, involving the cultivation of **RELATIONSHIPS** within the school constituency. Proper relationships create the basis for a culture of philanthropy to emerge as an integral part of the school mission.

True and successful development is concerned with establishing a strategic plan, elevating the public relations effort, marketing the school, recruiting and retaining students, and securing support for the school in terms of human AND financial resources. This comprehensive approach is **STRATEGIC** in nature, with marketing, communication, recruitment, volunteer management, donor cultivation and fund-raising each occupying their place in a greater scheme of how to ensure the school's long-term success.

### **A Mature Development Effort**

Schools that demonstrate mature and effective development operations will be well positioned for success in the future. This means:

- Having a clear strategic direction;



- Managing all resources effectively and efficiently;
- Soliciting input from their constituents and focusing on their needs;
- Continuously improving service;
- Continuously cultivating relationships with their constituency;
- Having active, engaged and accountable leadership;
- Planning and managing communications;
- Assessing financial and strategic plans; and
- Targeting improvements.

A mature development effort begins with the premise that the school will be here 5 or 10 or 50 years from now and sets in motion a series of activities that will secure a successful future. Such an effort promotes and achieves high performance and a vibrant culture of philanthropy which helps to support and further the mission of the school. Schools portraying the following characteristics are better able to effectively grow a culture of philanthropy:

### **1. Strategic Direction**

Exemplary schools have a clear purpose and direction. They have thoughtfully and tactfully positioned themselves in a way that is clearly seen and readily understood by all key constituents. They embrace high-performance. These schools have a sense of energy that surrounds their mission, vision, and values. In partnership with their volunteer leadership, the administration has articulated a strategic plan and rationale that incorporates stated and measurable goals, budgets, and timetables.

### **2. Continuous Improvement**

Exemplary schools remain committed to continuous improvement, regardless of their past and current achievements and accolades, and such a philosophy is embraced by the school's leadership. The approach to high performance is embedded in the way the school operates – as part of the daily work of all administrators, staff and volunteers. It is driven by not only correcting problems at the source, but also by realizing opportunities to do a better job. Exemplary schools must:

- have clear goals regarding what to improve;
- make decisions based upon facts,



- regularly using measures and/or indicators;
- systematically plan, execute, and evaluate performance;
- and focus primarily on institutionalized processes as the way to achieve to better results.

### **3. Cultivating Relationships with all Constituents – Volunteers/ Donors/Parents/Teachers/Students**

Exemplary schools embrace a customer service focus in all activities. Meeting families' current requirements, anticipating their future needs, soliciting their input, and responding quickly to their feedback is fundamental to the way the school is run. Constituents – internal and external – are identified, their needs are regularly assessed, and services are provided based on the value they add from the constituent's perspective. Constituent satisfaction levels and trends are tracked and trigger a quick response. (Note that responsive is different from reactive.)

### **4. People Performance**

Exemplary schools have effective structures and quality employees, as well as institutional practices that foster both. They have created a work environment that is high in energy, as well as creative, trusting, and rewarding for all. People in these organizations work well in both organized and spontaneous team situations. All employees' behaviors, patterns of speech, and attitudes concerning success, service, excellence, quality, and team express and reflect values that are intrinsic to the mission of the institution.

### **5. Board Engagement and Leadership**

High-performing schools have boards that are deeply committed to the organization, expect and strive for excellence, and are actively engaged. They understand the primary strategic and operational issues facing the school at any time. They are used as an indispensable asset providing objectivity, oversight, balance, and independent perspective while **not** engaged in the daily functioning of the organization.

### **6. Financial Management**

High-performing schools have policies, systems and reporting practices in place that, over time, enhance the organization's financial stability, growth potential, and efficient use of resources.



## 7. Information Management

High-performing schools are built on a framework of information, data, and analysis. Information about constituents, performance, competition, and finances is essential to create outstanding performance. In these organizations, information is not only collected carefully and managed effectively, but is used regularly and strategically to connect to donors and target the flow of information. It enables the school to “tell your story” at the right time, right place and to the right person.

## 8. Communications Management

When a school effectively manages its internal and external communications, it maximizes the use of human resources to reach specific objectives. Developing and executing thoughtful communication strategies with the most appropriate communication tools positions the school to successfully raise funds and continuously improve the delivery of its mission.

## 9. Fundraising

Schools that enjoy consistent fundraising success embrace the task with confidence and energy. Confidence comes in having a case for support (your mission, vision, and why it is important) and strategies for results that are well understood by board members and staff. Energy is developed in having all key players in the school engaged in the fundraising process and program. These schools operate within a positive culture of philanthropy, wherein the behaviors, language, and attitudes of their people reflect a positive appreciation for fundraising and giving, and show that the philanthropic dimension of the school is an integral part of the institutional mission.

### Development vs. Fund-raising

Again, to describe development, we can show the contrast between development efforts and fund-raising efforts:

**Development:** Endowment funds, annual giving funds, corporate and foundation grants, major gifts, industry grants, planned giving, etc.

**Fund-raising:** Sally Foster, Bingo, car washes, auctions, festivals, contests, Jump rope for heart, special events, etc.





Fund-raising results usually are not enough to assure a school's success for the future, as they usually fund short-range projects. On the other hand, development results occur as the school receives large private donations on a consistent annual basis, has funding programmed for 5 to 10 years down the road, works from a clearly projected long-range strategic plan, and reports progress to all constituents and donors on an annual basis.

As one can see, development is a process, not a as series of tasks. Schools that embrace a creative and energetic approach to development will be able to build successful programs long into the future because they cultivate relationships with people who become good stewards of the school.

