

*"Even though I'm an involved parent, there are great science experiments happening in my child's classroom that I didn't know about before. My only disappointment was that there was so much happening I wasn't able to see everything."*

Aloma Hughes  
Parent

Remember the two goals for your academic open house: 1) reminding current parents about why your school is great and 2) creating a high-energy atmosphere for potential parents to learn about your school. You are more likely to meet both of those goals when your open house is attended by the maximum number of happy, supportive people.

**Plan your activities to involve every student at the school--and make them fun.**

By having children perform, explain, guide or demonstrate you will likely entice both mom and dad, and grandparents, and perhaps a supportive friend or neighbor.

**Offer a substantial discount on their registration fee for anyone who attends, applies and pays the fee.**

Not only does this help attendance, but when you do this next year (in January or February) you will have better information for creating your draft budget in March.

Please note that applying does not mean completing all the registration materials (consent to treat, media release, etc.). It just means applying--filling out and turning in the one-page application form.

**Invite all local church members.**

Use this event as an excuse to make announcements at your constituent church(es). Highlight your school's strengths and mission. But also ask them to come see for themselves. Many older members may have a vision of your school based on when their children attended, or even when they attended.

Together with your staff, personally invite as many members as possible--especially thought-leaders in your community. These can be foyer conversations after church.

**Encourage people to invite friends.**

- Give prizes to students who bring a friend. Tell them, multiple times and in advance, that you will be doing this.

- Create an invitation parents can give to friends. This can be a postcard and should include your two best reasons someone should consider your school. Give these out copiously and often to parents.
- Give the same postcard to church members. Ask members to come and bring a friend.

### **Mail invitations to everyone you can think of...**

- **Everyone who has contacted the school.** (If you don't already have a system for getting these names and addresses, click here for a form and here for the system of using it.)
- **Everyone who has been referred to you.** (See the note above.)
- **All families with school-aged children in your constituent churches.** You and your staff should also invite these families personally.
- If your school has the budget for it, **consider mailing the postcard to a purchased mailing list for your community.** If you want to do this, please call me and we can talk about the specifics for your community.

### **Credits:**

Justine Leonie:

Thank you for your great ideas for 1) getting applications and fees for the following year early enough to use in building your budget, and 2) giving prizes to students who bring a friend.

**Binder tab:** September

(This year I am asking you to do this now, but in future years you should start in September with creating invitations and promoting your January/February open house.)

**School size:** All