

Communicate re-registration deadlines and fees

Starting communication now so parents are not surprised

“Here are seven surprises that should motivate you to start or add to an emergency fund.”

Holly Perez
US News and World Report

“You do not want to be number eight.”

Carol Tilstra Nash

Parents are never pleased about financial surprises (unless you are planning to hand them money). Tell them now what they can expect for re-registering their child.

This message assumes a series of choices for your schools, some of which I've talked about before, as follows.

Set a late January/early February deadline for re-enrolling

This timing is based on two external realities. Firstly, parents are considering school choice at this time of year. Secondly, your school is expected to submit a proposed budget (by March) and make hiring choices (by March or April). In order to meet these deadlines you need to know how many students you can expect the following year.

Your school board will need to support this. For information to present to them see “Get your school board on board” under the January menu in nccsda.com/education/marketing-corner>Ongoing and Monthly Tasks.

Give parents an incentive to commit at this time

Best practice for this is a tiered registration/enrollment fee. For example (and dates and numbers are only as an example), if a family re-enrolls and pays the registration fee by Jan. 31 the registration fee will be \$100, but if they re-enroll on Feb. 1 or later the registration fee will be \$200.

For details on why this difference see “Motivate parents to commit now for next school year” under the January menu in nccsda.com/education/marketing-corner>Ongoing and Monthly Tasks.

Communicate this many times between now and your deadline

I believe this truth to be self-evident: that parents will not be pleased with a three-digit financial surprise. So let's make sure they know what the re-enrollment fee will be, when it will be due and what it will be after the deadline.

And I further believe they will be more accepting if they understand why the school is setting the deadlines in January/February. So explain what your budgeting/hiring deadlines are.

Offer a way for them to contact you if this creates a financial hardship

It is a fact of life that January comes right after Christmas--and thus is already a time that many families find financially challenging. But this doesn't change the two external realities you need to deal with: family school choice timing and budget/hiring timing. So let's address those families who need help, rather than setting our planning cycle out of sync with most families and our school's need for responsible planning.

Yes, I realize this means you are assuming families will be pleased enough with your school to re-enroll. While we all need to be humble in learning and improving, we can still be confident and convey that confidence by smilingly expecting that parents will continue to want an excellent education in the nurturing Christian environment that is your school.

Delegating:

You can delegate writing the notes for your school newsletter and a parent email, as long as the person writing understands the rationale and is supportive. If they aren't it will show in their writing. The rest of it you will need to do yourself.

Binder tab: October

School size: All

Marketing process step:

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) What do families want?
- 3) What needs to change?
- 4) How do we tell our community?
- 5) How do we track results?