



FLORIDA CONSORTIUM *of* PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Marketing Your New Charter School

Develop Your Marketing Plan

- Create a specific plan and timeline
- Advertise the educational goals and uniqueness of your charter school
- Reach a variety of target populations by disseminating information and registration information in your local neighborhood and throughout Broward County

Develop Well-Written, Well-Designed Publicity Materials

- Brochures
- Website
- Newspaper and magazine advertisements
- Press releases for news publications (free advertising if articles are printed)
- Notices to be posted in public areas
- Postcards
- TV and radio public service ads

Marketing Strategies

- Consider purchasing a mailing list for targeting the population you wish to serve by location, demographics, etc.
- Hold open houses and public meetings in centrally located sites (civic centers or at the school site, if possible) where parents can learn about your school
- Mail postcards to your target households with dates of open houses and registration dates; saturate your market
- Notify local newspapers, television and radio stations of meeting dates
- Create brochures with tear-off cards that can be mailed in for additional information
- Place ads in all news publications serving targeted areas
- Place ads in local parenting magazines (*Parenting Today*)
- Contact your TV and radio stations to place public service ads
- Write articles (press releases) on your new school; include contact information
- Sponsor booths at local events, such as concerts, flea markets and fairs
- Call the managers of local malls to set up an information and registration booth on the weekends
- Identify new parents who can serve as promoters of your school; they may also be the first members of a strong parent organization
- Offer parent volunteer hours to parents who can bring in new students
- Target neighborhoods where under-performing, overcrowded schools are located
- Obtain mailing lists of families with children enrolled in under-performing neighborhood schools

Drop brochures off at the following locations:

Grocery stores
Fast food restaurants
Banks
Gas stations
Strip malls
Restaurants
Community Centers
Boys and Girls' Clubs
Real estate agencies
Pediatricians' offices
Churches
Convenience stores
Colleges and universities
Technical colleges
Housing development offices
Hospitals
Day care centers
Community recreation centers
Local flea markets
Local businesses
Pet stores
Book stores
Centers for the arts
Furniture outlets
Drug stores
Large chain stores

- Set up a telephone bank. Hire a few people (or enlist volunteers) to make phone calls for 3 hours a day to publicize the school. The best time is between 5:30 and 8:30 PM, daily, and from 11:00 to 2:00 on Saturday. Offer new parents volunteer hours for making calls.
- Make appointments at local churches to speak about your school (bring brochures)
- Become friendly with the principal of the nearest public school that may serve as a feeder school to yours
- Have parents and employees give out brochures at local supermarkets and libraries (get permission first)
- Post notices in local preschools
- Post notices and brochures at local apartment buildings
- Ask local businesses to contribute door prizes for open houses

Be Prepared to Register Students

- Set up a separate telephone extension with a message that provides all critical information to parents interested in registering their child. Here's a sample message:

"Thank you for calling XYZ Charter School, located at ADDRESS." State the school's vision and describe its unique characteristics. "Your call is important to us. Please leave your name and phone number and we will return your call as soon as possible. Our school is scheduled to open on DATE. We are now accepting registrations for grades X-X." Provide specific instructions for registration.

- Return all phone calls promptly
- Keep a log of calls
- Direct callers to locations where they can pick up a school brochure or mail them a brochure
- Advise callers that applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, with the possibility of a lottery system
- Include all critical information on registration and school policies on the website

Establish an Organized Registration Process

- Send parents a list of the documents they need to bring with them in order to register their children, such as birth certificate, prior school records, up-to-date blue and yellow medical forms, 2 proofs of residency, and language survey.
- Use the Broward County Public Schools registration form
- Create a well-designed database to record information on registered students,
- Consider purchasing a Student Information System (SIS). Complete installation and training before students begin registering.
- The database should include:
 - ✓ The complete names of parents/guardians
 - ✓ Name of student
 - ✓ Age/Birth date
 - ✓ Grade applying for
 - ✓ Correct mailing address
 - ✓ Telephone numbers - home, cell
 - ✓ Name and address of last school attended
 - ✓ IEP information, if any
- Record the actual date of receipt of application as they are received
- Create a waiting list when the desired numbers for each grade level are reached
- Use a lottery selection process to assure fairness
- Once a child is registered, call the parent to confirm and answer any questions

Find more resources like these for your new charter school at the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools' website, www.floridacharterschools.org.

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