

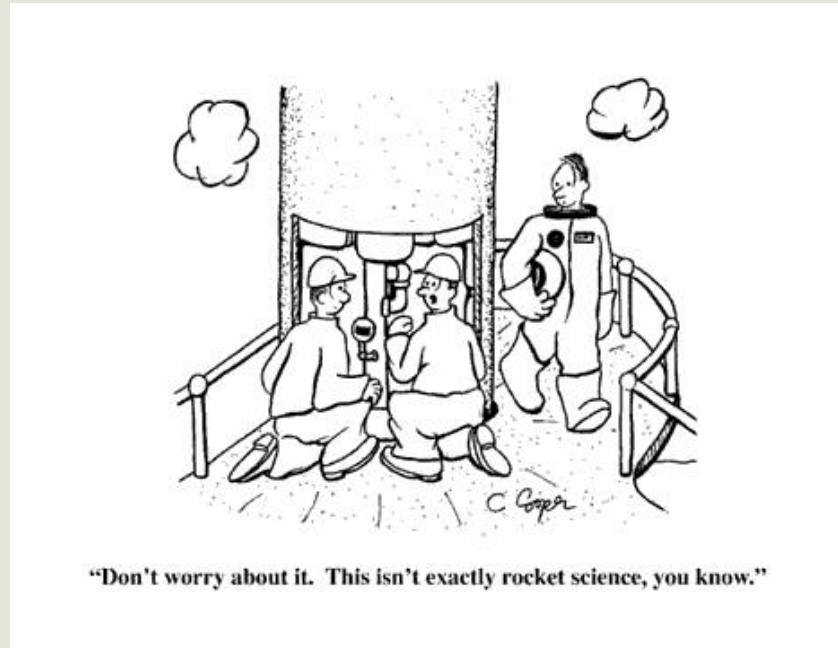
The background is a dark grey chalkboard with various white chalk sketches. On the left, there is a detailed drawing of a microscope. Above it, a globe of the Earth is sketched. Below the microscope, there are several rectangular shapes, possibly representing books or documents. In the bottom right corner, there are sketches of a percentage sign, an exclamation point, and a right-angle symbol. The overall theme is educational and scientific.

Building a Robust Retention Program

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REMINDER

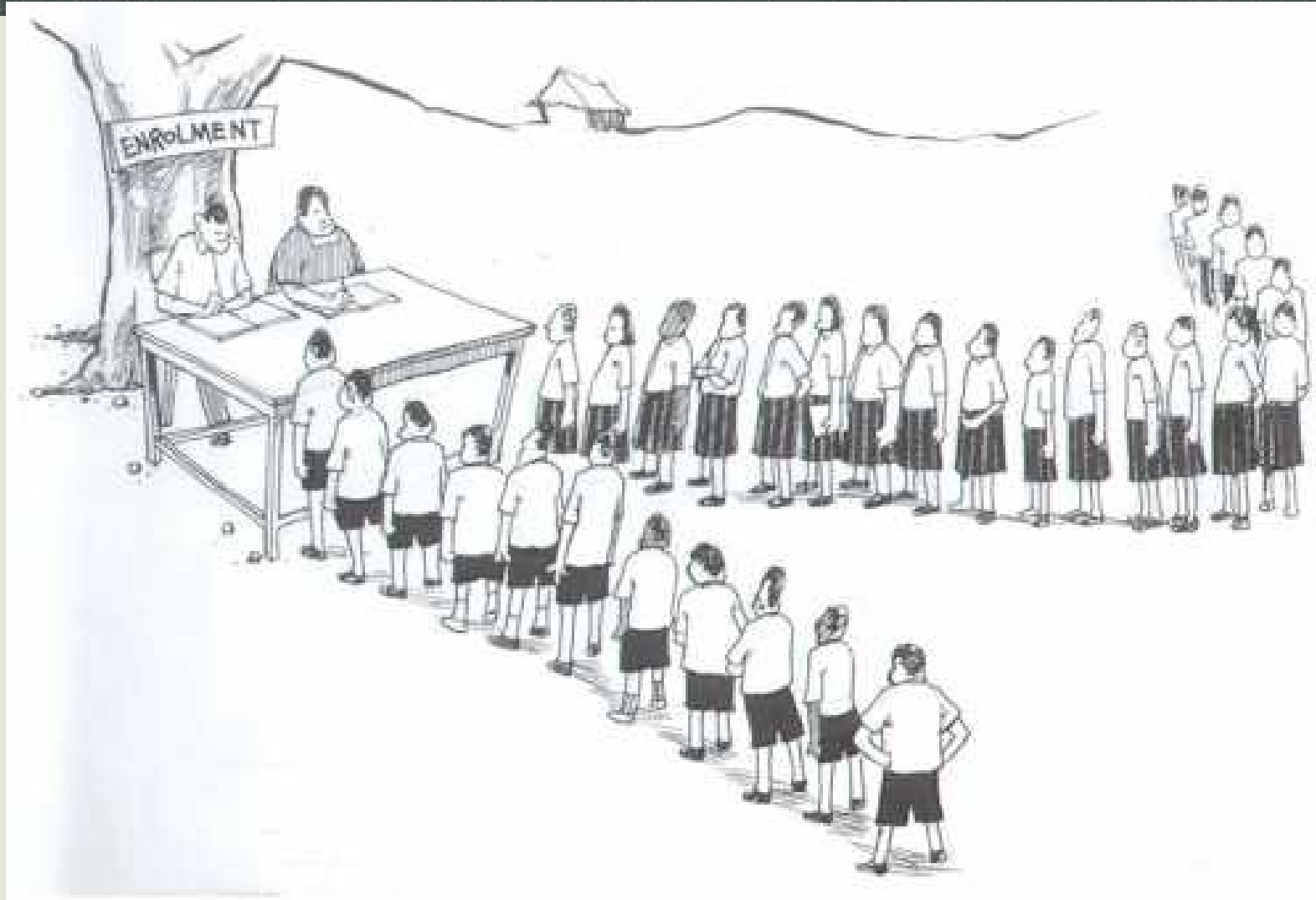


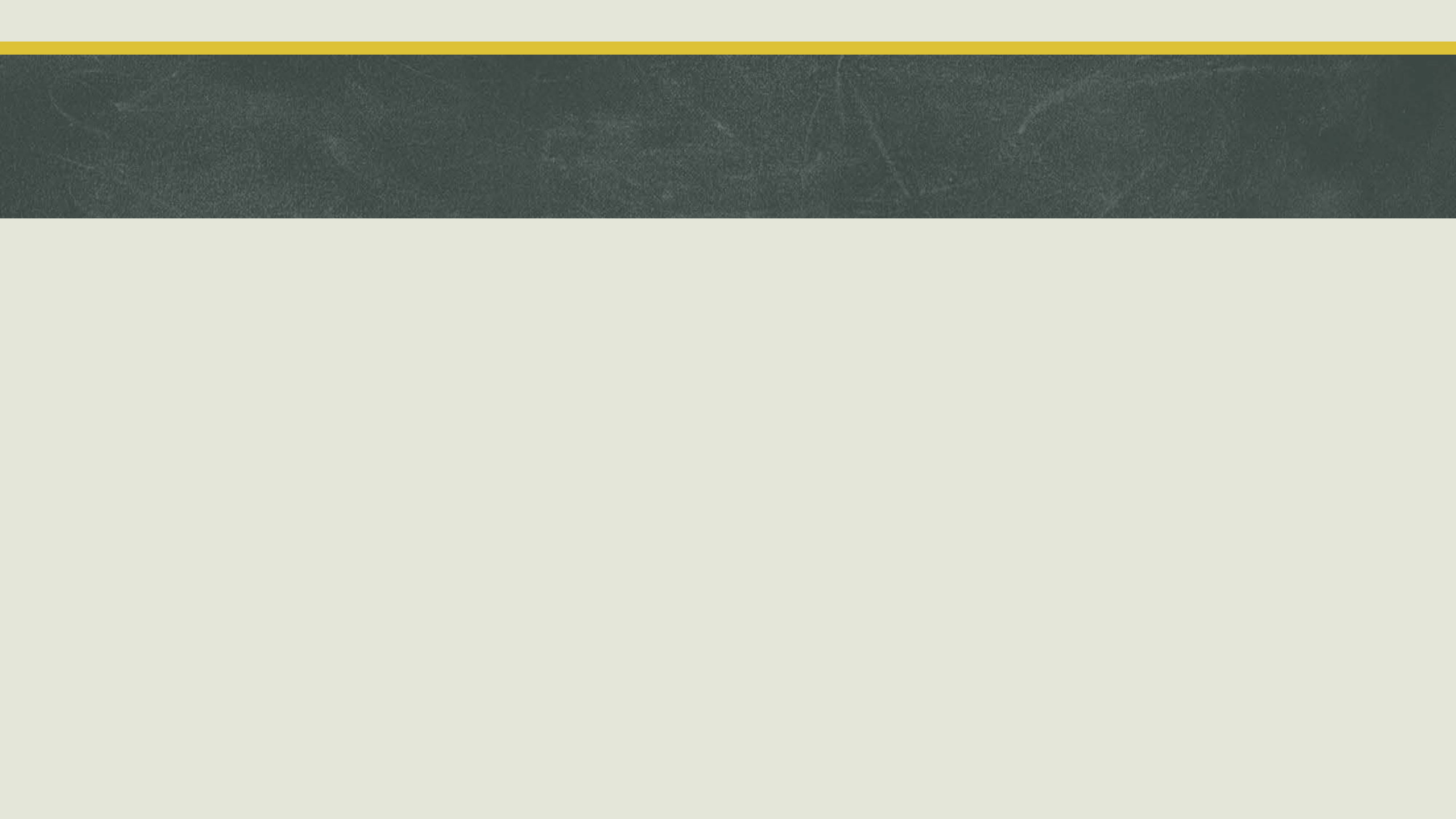
“Admissions is not rocket science, it’s just hard work.” – Dave Erdmann

Before we begin...

- I am not an expert!
- These “tips” are born of a concerted effort to engage our families and cultivate affirmation
- I encourage everyone to design and implement a program that is mission appropriate to YOUR school
- Consider each idea and evaluate the impact it can have on your community
- **ASK questions, SHARE ideas, and CASE**
 - There are many different approaches

Times have changed...





Retention & Importance

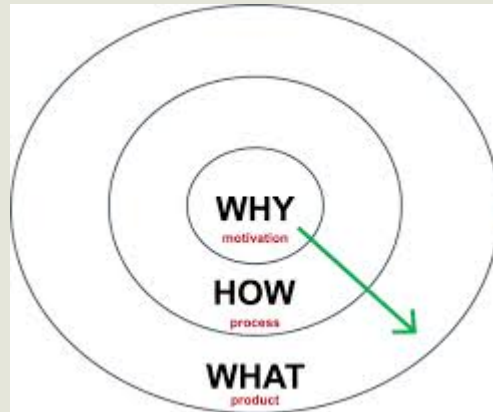
- A potential student for next year
- A future student for each grade in your school
- A future alumnus/a to serve as an “outcome”
- A potential parent ambassador and WoM facilitator
- Potential tuition revenue

Retention & Importance-The #'s

- Tuition Revenue (Kindergarten family)
 - 12 years x \$15,000 w/5% annual increase = **\$238,758**
- Replacement Cost
 - Admission/Marketing Budget / # of new students =
Replacement Cost
- Cost of Disgruntled Family

Things to Remember...

- Relevance of “WHY” has never been more important



- Bank Account Approach
- Goal is to save one family at a time
- Program is not seasonal-Retention must be viewed as perpetual (attrition decisions are often made/started in the first few weeks of school)

Things to KNOW

- Attrition %
 - By grade level
 - Voluntary v. involuntary
 - Tuition Assistance v. FP
- Profile
 - Who are those who do not return? Are not successful?
- Historical Data v. National/Regional/Peer Norms

Overview

- #1 – Build Networks
- #2 – Coordinate “Student Celebration”
- #3 – Schedule Parent Socials/Gatherings
- #4 – “101” Events & Orientations
- #5 – “Look Ahead” Event
- #6 – State of School
- #7 – Retention Task Force (RTF)
- #8 – Transition Grade(s) Event(s)
- #9 – Celebrate Birthdays
- #10 – Solicit Feedback
- #11 – Cultivate “Storytellers”

#1 – Build Networks

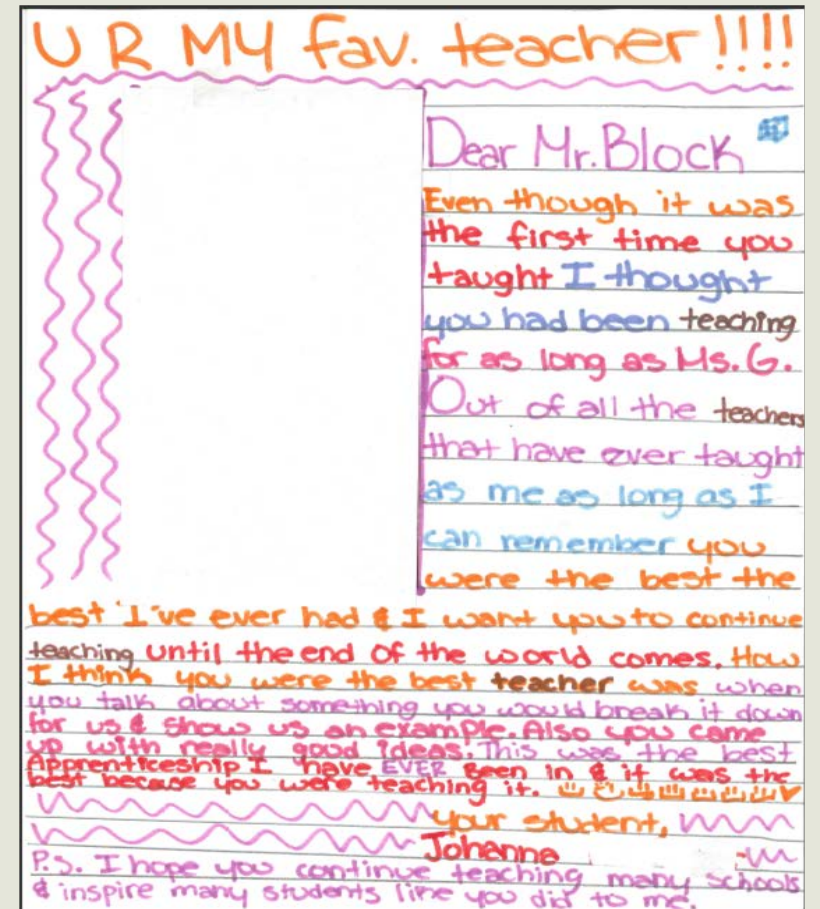
- Goal: Create an open line of communication
- Parents
 - Go beyond volunteering
 - Engage and inspire the group to be in the trenches
 - Provide resources to allow for identification of attrition risks
 - “assign” families to help strengthen the connection
 - Mavens, Connectors, and Salespeople (Gladwell)
- Faculty
 - Engaging v. telling
 - “Coffee & Conversation”/”Lunch and Learning”/”ABS” Days/Faculty Meetings/”Inreach”
 - Share news/articles from the marketplace
 - New faculty
 - Ambassador Program

#1 – Build Networks, cont'd

- Students
 - Face it...students know more than we do!
 - Student Lunches
 - What did we do well?
 - Where can we get better?
 - Recommendations for future new students
 - Engage the group in a genuine relationship
- Alumni
 - They are our “outcomes”
 - A formal program can work--presents different challenges than parents

#2 – Coordinate Student Celebration

- Communication is what we do best
- Consider the impact...
 - Little things that make our community stronger
- Consider the celebration to be “affirmation”
 - Affirm why the family chose to enroll
- Coordination is critical and time consuming



#2 – Coordinate Student Celebration, cont'd

- Example

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith,

I do not teach Johnny, but I wanted to let you know that I witnessed him help little Susie when she fell yesterday in the hallway. He did not know anyone was watching, but I was so impressed by his care and concern for a classmate. These small acts of kindness make our community such a special place and I cannot thank you enough for entrusting us with Johnny's education. He has made us a stronger school and I look forward to the opportunity to teach him in the future.

Sincerely,

Michael Buble

#3 – Parent Socials/Gatherings

- Find opportunities for your families to gather in celebration
 - Without an agenda!
- Take opportunity to “listen” and “share”
- Great opportunity to “thank” your parents and to celebrate the community
- Consider this approach for “class bonding”
 - Critical to get new students and families connected
- To Consider:
 - Resources
 - Time
 - Money
 - School Mission/Philosophy
 - Alcohol
 - Segmented
 - By Division
 - Message
 - Welcome & Highlights

#4 – “101” Events & Orientation

- Opportunity to ensure transition into the community is a smooth one
 - Timing – Summer? Multiple events at different times of day
- Consider creating a “Roadmap” for parents to use
 - Go beyond dates & logistics – speak to traditions, etc...
- Use feedback from previous cohorts of new families
 - Where did they feel comfortable with transition
 - What could have been done better/differently

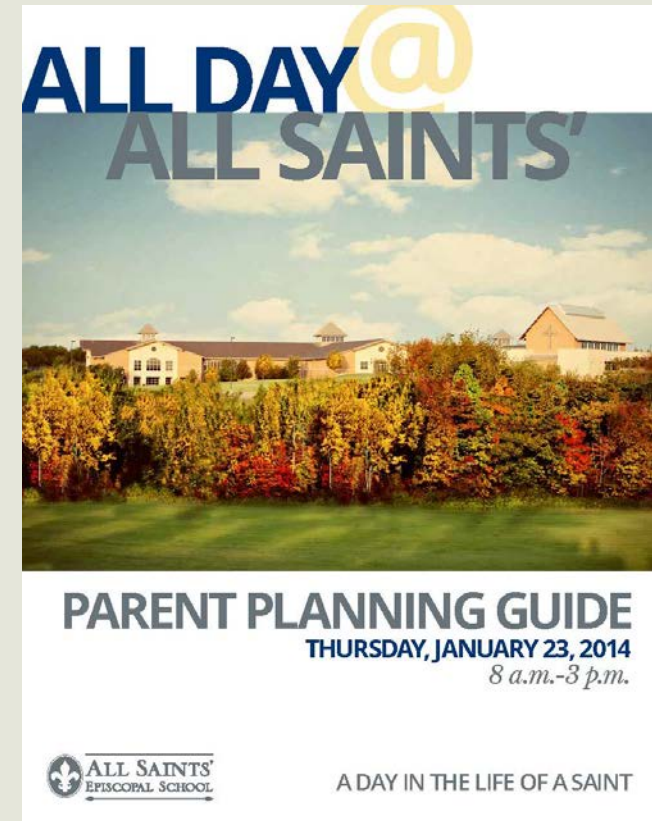
Student “Camps” – Large % become attrits during first few weeks

New Student Lunches/Gatherings

- Define the goal and work backwards
 - What do you need the families to leave these events knowing/feeling

#5 – “Sneak Peek” / “Look Ahead”

- Designed to “pull back the curtain”
- Different than an Open House – not staged
- Families have freedom to “design” their own schedule
 - Visit as many classes as schedule allows
- Showcases the dynamic and inspiring faculty
- Showcases the innovative programs offered



#5 – “Sneak Peek” / “Look Ahead”, cont’d

- Most importantly...



Facilitates a “look ahead” mindset

#6 – State of the School



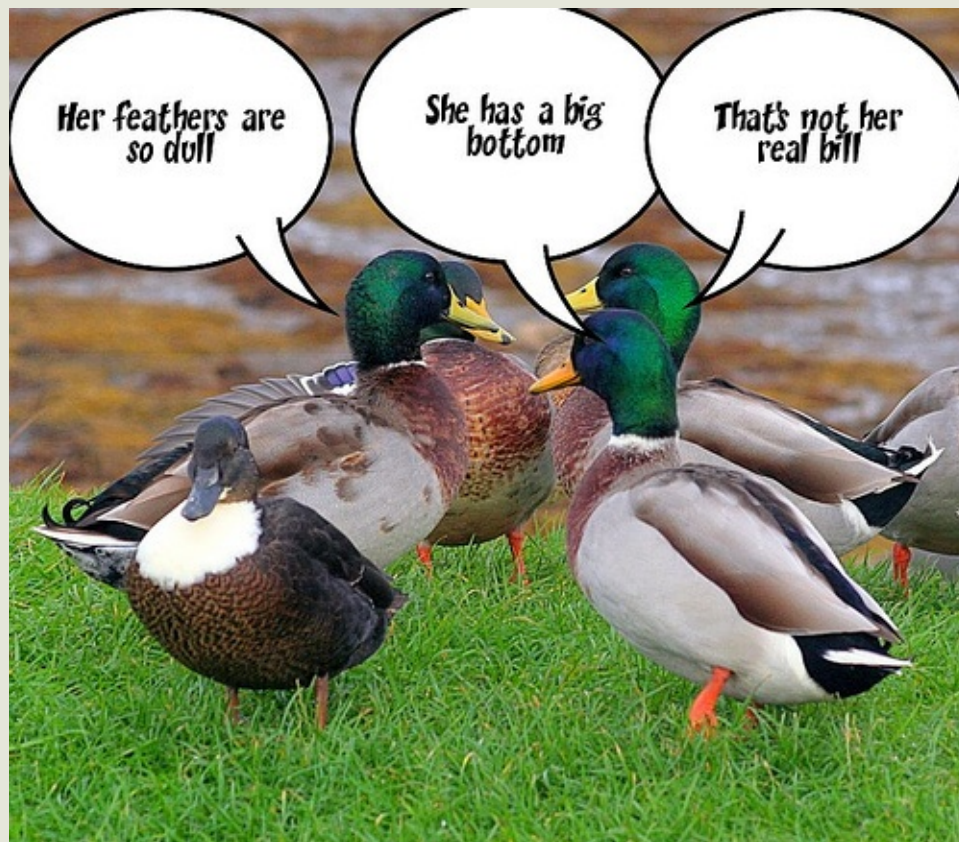
#6 – State of School, cont'd

- Serves the same purpose as the *State of the Union*
- Some schools choose a letter
- Event can be more engaging
 - Opportunity to capture on video (share?)
- Goal is to provide a more in-depth look as to health of the school
 - Go beyond highlights
 - Share financial information
 - Peer School Analysis
 - Plans for the future
 - Areas for improvement

#7 – Retention Task Force

- Identify trends
 - Are students leaving at certain grades
 - Are “certain” students leaving—a particular profile of student
- Identify possible attrition risks
- Discuss opportunities to strengthen connection between school and family
- Determine the best way to organize this group
 - By division
 - One group
- Invite faculty to participate
- Identify faculty who can disseminate information according
 - Critical Retention Moments

#7 – RTF, Cont'd



#8 – Transition Grade(s)

- Facilitate the “look ahead” mindset
 - Recognizing the “passages” all students have the opportunity to experience
- Event specific for students or parents
 - Step Up Day
 - Information Coffee
 - Preview Night
- Chance to highlight the “journey”
- Chance to showcase the faculty who will be directly involved
- Opportunity to highlight distinctive programs

#8 – Transition Grade(s), Cont'd

- Ultimately, we want to illustrate that no other program can compare



#9 – Celebrate Birthdays

- Each and every student should receive a birthday card
 - Easiest way to ensure ALL students are recognized
- Illustrates that we care and that we KNOW the child and family
- Much better than a trophy
 - Trophy sales have risen to approximately \$3 Billion annually
 - Argument against is that “birthday is not earned”
- School-Wide Effort
 - Put a plan in place
 - Use database to serve as reminders
 - Have cards signed and envelopes labeled in advance

#10 – Solicit Feedback

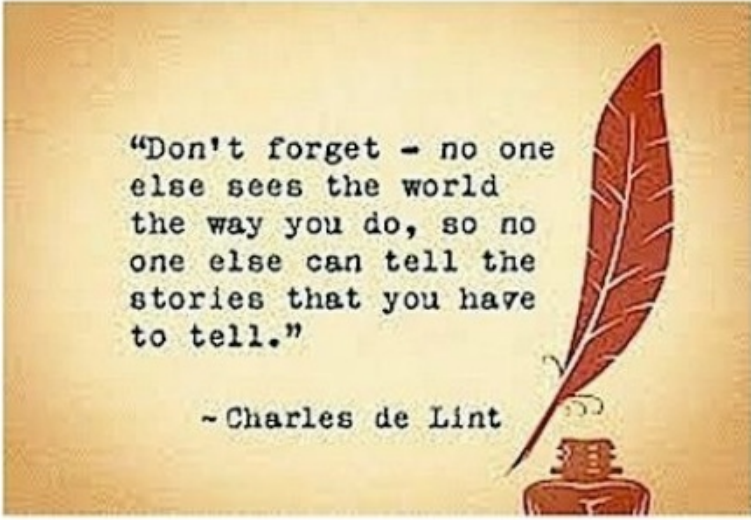
- Importance of school-wide evaluation
- Acknowledges we are not “resting on our laurels”
- Engages our community in an ongoing conversation
- Creates an opportunity to see who we are through a different lens
- Sets the tone for “looking in the mirror”

DO NOT solicit if you are not willing to listen, or if you are not willing to act*

#10 – Solicit Feedback, Cont'd

- Surveys
 - New Students
 - Attrition
 - Declined Offer of Admission
 - Entire Community
 - Student Engagement
- Focus Groups
 - By Grade
 - By Division
 - Held offsite (if appropriate)
- Informal Conversations
 - Active listening – be intentional

#11 - Cultivate “Storytellers”



“Don't forget - no one else sees the world the way you do, so no one else can tell the stories that you have to tell.”

~ Charles de Lint

The image features a quote by Charles de Lint on a textured, light brown background. To the right of the text is a detailed illustration of a quill pen resting in a small, dark inkwell. The quill is a rich reddish-brown color with visible feather texture.

#11 – Cultivate “Storytellers”

- Everyone in the community must carry the DNA of the school
 - Embrace a culture of “storytelling”
- “People don’t buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it.” – Sinek
- Clarity of Mission, Vision, and Outcome statements
- Facilitate ongoing conversation—schedule opportunities and invite community to engage in the conversation
- Stories must be strategic and authentic
- Listen and reflect

Create a PLAN

- Lay it out (Enrollment Management Plan?)
 - Use a calendar
 - Set timelines & deadlines
 - Identify those involved
- Be strategic
 - Set qualitative and quantitative goals
- Be inclusive
 - Invite constituents to get involved
 - Solicit ideas
- Be intentional
 - One family at a time
- Write, evaluate, rewrite, evaluate, rewrite...



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