



# Word-of-Mouth Toolkit

Harnessing the Full Potential of Word-Of-Mouth Marketing  
to Expand the Enrollment Funnel



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This Word-Of-Mouth Toolkit is intended to guide admissions, marketing and communications teams in taking advantage of the full potential of word of mouth for purposes of recruitment.

# The Power of Word of Mouth in Recruitment

## Using Word-of-Mouth Strategies to Expand the Enrollment Funnel

Traditionally, mission-aligned families have been familiar with the value of an independent school education and have actively pursued it for their children on their own. Recently, increased competition and the rising cost of tuition have resulted in a need for independent schools to actively recruit prospective families and sell them on the benefits of an independent school education. Among the various marketing and recruitment strategies best-suited for independent schools, word-of-mouth marketing remains one of the most effective, affordable techniques available. However, many admissions offices have underinvested the time and planning needed to boost referrals through word of mouth, which has limited the potential of word of mouth in recruitment. This toolkit aims to help admissions teams to develop a structured approach to word of mouth in an effort to maximize its impact on recruitment.

## The Current State of Word of Mouth at Independent Schools

**Word of Mouth is a Powerful Recruitment Tool...**

**75%**

Of applicants for independent schools come through referrals from current families or families of alumni

**...But Schools Spend Little Time Developing this Tool**

**10%**

Of admissions teams' time is spent on fostering strategies for word-of-mouth referrals

**Investing additional time and effort into word-of-mouth strategies provides schools with a strong, unified message that is amplified through a powerful existing recruitment channel.**

## Key Elements to Developing a Structured Approach to Word of Mouth Included in this Toolkit



### **Tool #1**

*Word-of-Mouth Audit*

Complete the audit to assess your current use of word-of-mouth practices and identify appropriate word-of-mouth tools to expand the enrollment funnel



### **Tool #2**

*Clarifying Your School's Key Messaging*

Brainstorm ways to help parent ambassadors dispel misperceptions and convincingly describe the value of an education at your school



### **Tool #3**

*Net Promoter Score® Guide*

Implement a system that identifies all potential parent advocates and allows the admissions team to track parent sentiment towards the school



### **Tool #4**

*Parent Ambassador Network Guide*

Use a training guide to outline parent ambassador responsibilities and help ambassadors present a consistent and powerful message to prospective families



### **Tool #5**

*Exemplifying Value Proposition*

Distribute a resource to parent ambassadors that provides specific examples of how current families, faculty, and alumni experience the value of the school

# Word-of-Mouth Audit

## Questionnaire to Help You Navigate the Toolkit

This audit is designed to help you assess the effectiveness of your school's use of word of mouth for recruitment purposes and identify areas for improvement.

1. Read each statement and place a check in the box that best describes your current use of word-of-mouth practices.
2. Refer to the corresponding grey box to determine which tools would be most helpful for your school.

1

**Parents of currently-enrolled students are able to articulately speak to prospective families within their networks about our school to encourage them to apply.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree  
Nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-of-Mouth Strategies

Independent schools report that 75% of their applicants come from referrals; therefore it is important to strategize about how you can use current parents to increase the brand awareness of your school, address negative perceptions, and reiterate the value of an education at your school to prospective families.

✓ **If you selected a box that has a value of *less than 5*, see Tool #2: Parent Information Card on page X.**

2

**The marketing materials given to our current families to share with their friends, colleagues, and others in their networks provides information that promotes the value of the school's education, while also dispelling misconceptions.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree  
Nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-of-Mouth Strategies

Maintaining updated marketing resources that address not only the positive aspects of your school, but also negative perceptions ensures that parents are sharing a clear, comprehensive message about your school with prospects.

✓ **If you selected a box that has a value of *less than 5*, see Tool #2: Parent Information Card on page X.**

## Word-of-Mouth Audit (cont.)

3

**Our system for identifying parent ambassadors works to integrate diverse perspectives from within the school community, including parents who may not be vocal, but are still strong supporters of the school.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-of-Mouth Strategies

Having a system to identify parents ambassadors from various backgrounds ensures that diverse perspectives are communicated and reach broader networks of prospective mission-aligned families.

✓ If you selected a box that has a value of *less than 5*, see **Tool #3: Net Promoter Score® Guide** on page X.

4

**Our school has a formal Parent Ambassador Network that is directed by the admissions team and has a clear and active role within the recruiting process.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-of-Mouth Strategies

Organizing a formal group of parent ambassadors with clear roles, responsibilities, and calls-to-action is a necessary step to maximize the potential of word of mouth for recruitment purposes.

✓ If you selected a box that has a value of *less than 5*, see **Tool #4: Parent Ambassador Network Guide** on page X.

5

**Our parent ambassadors have resources to support their conversations with skeptical prospective families.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-of-Mouth Strategies

Training parent ambassadors on how to handle tough questions from prospective parents enables them to share a clear message about your school's value even when faced with skeptics.

✓ If you selected a box that has a value of *less than 5*, see **Tool #4: Parent Ambassador Network Guide** on page X.

## Word-of-Mouth Audit (cont.)

6

Our parent ambassadors are able to provide prospective families with specific, concrete examples about how the educational experience at our school is unique.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-Of-Mouth Strategies

Sharing authentic, detailed stories that illustrate the value proposition of your school helps parent ambassadors to better communicate what makes your school different.

✓ If you selected a box that has a value *less than 5*, see Tool #5: Exemplifying Value Proposition on page X.

7

Our marketing and communications team has identified several key features of our school that we consistently message to prospective families (e.g. inquiry-based learning, maker spaces, STEM) that make us stand out from our competitors.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5

### Considerations and Next Steps for Improving Word-Of-Mouth Strategies

Providing resources that ensure your current families are able to discuss distinguishing features of your school with prospective families allows for more meaningful and memorable conversations about your school.

✓ If you selected a box that has a value *less than 5*, see the following:

- Tool #2: Parent Information Card on page X
- Tool #4: Parent Ambassador Network Guide on page X
- Tool #5: Exemplifying Value Proposition on page X

# Clarify Your School's Key Messaging

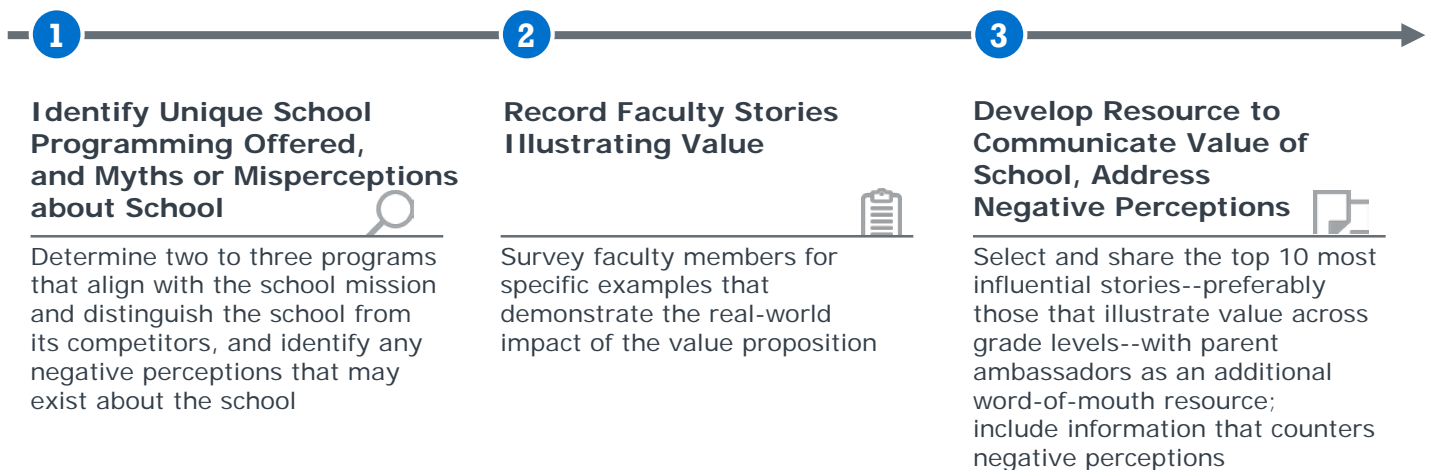
## Guide for Developing a Value Proposition Resource for Parent Ambassadors

Independent schools' academic and extracurricular programs have a great deal to offer students, and admissions teams often rely on traditional marketing materials to convey information about the positive educational experiences students can have at their school. However, these materials may not sufficiently help this value come to life for prospective families who have not already bought into the idea of an independent school education. Nor do these marketing materials typically tackle the myths and misperceptions that may prevent mission-aligned families from considering an independent school education. Admissions teams should consider how word of mouth can play a role in both conveying the value of an independent school education and addressing negative perceptions. Communicating about both of these can be one of the responsibilities of your parent ambassadors.

To support ambassadors in this process, admissions teams must first determine which aspects of the school to emphasize in messaging and what information could be used to challenge detractors' assumptions. As a next step, they should collect examples from faculty to illustrate the school's educational value in the classroom, and identify information and key facts about the school to help counter negative perceptions. Finally, this information should be strategically shared in a resource developed to support parent ambassadors.

**This tool is intended to help enrollment managers and marketing directors brainstorm how to develop a focused message about the school that parent ambassadors can share with prospective mission-aligned families via word of mouth.** An overview of the process, sample resource for parent ambassadors, and planning document are all provided.

### Process to Create a Document Communicating Your Value Proposition for Parent Ambassadors



# Sample Resource: Parent Information Card

## Harpeth Hall Designs Information Card to Deliver Key Messaging about School

Before you begin brainstorming with the help of our planning worksheet, we have provided you with an example of a parent ambassador resource created by Harpeth Hall. Harpeth Hall's admissions team created a 5x7 inch information card to share with parent ambassadors to help them deliver key messages about what Harpeth Hall has to offer. The card includes information to both promote the value of the school's education and address potential myths and misperceptions about Harpeth Hall, including student demographics, information about financial aid, facts about girls' schools, and details about school programming.

Review Harpeth Hall's parent information card as a sample resource by which to disseminate this information to parent ambassadors, then use the Strategic Messaging Planning Worksheet (pages 4-6) to brainstorm how best to communicate your school's unique educational value and address negative perceptions about your school to prospective families.

### Front of Harpeth Hall Information Card

The image shows the front of a parent information card for Harpeth Hall. The card is white with a green header box containing the school name. Below the header is the school's mission statement. The main body of the card is divided into several sections: 'Quick Facts' with two columns of bullet points, 'Why a girls' school?' with a small icon of a school building and a statistic, 'Girls' schools empower students to become bold leaders.' with another statistic, and 'Admission Contacts' with names and titles. At the bottom, there is contact information and the school's website. Five callout boxes with blue borders and lines pointing to specific parts of the card provide additional context:

- Callout 1 (Left):** Highlights information that may challenge prospects' perceptions about school, such as the student body's geographic and demographic diversity. (Points to the 'Student body represents' bullet point in the Quick Facts section.)
- Callout 2 (Left):** Connects school-specific offerings with metrics of student success. (Points to the 'Why a girls' school?' section.)
- Callout 3 (Right):** Showcases the availability of financial aid across levels of need. (Points to the 'Financial aid awards' bullet point in the Quick Facts section.)
- Callout 4 (Right):** Demonstrates the broader value of the school and its approach to education. (Points to the 'Girls' schools empower students...' section.)
- Callout 5 (Right):** Includes admissions team contact information, school address, and website to encourage follow up. (Points to the 'Admission Contacts' section.)



# Sample Resource: Parent Information Card

## Back of Harpeth Hall Information Card

### Distinctive Programs

▶ **Winterim** For more than 45 years, upper school students have explored their intellectual horizons through experiential learning during Winterim, our three-week program in January.

• **Ninth and tenth graders remain on campus**, participating in more than 60 challenging, project-oriented classes in four areas: Fine Arts and Fitness, Humanities, STEM, and Global Perspectives.

• **Eleventh and twelfth graders** participate in internships or faculty-led international travel. Internship locations include Nashville, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and Chicago. Travel opportunities in the past two years have included Spain, Bonaire (Dutch West Indies), France, Uganda, Australia, Panama, Haiti, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Austria.

### ▶ **Scholars Engaged in Extending Knowledge Program (S.E.E.K.)**

Seventh and eighth graders with passion in almost any discipline are given the guidance and financial support necessary to pursue a year-long independent study of her choice. The finished product may include a publication, a performance, an original composition, or piece of art and is presented to the entire student body at the S.E.E.K. recognition assembly.

▶ **The Global Scholars Program** challenges upper school students to become effective and responsible global citizens by encouraging cross-cultural connections, developing interdisciplinary modes of thinking, and building empathy. Scholars explore global issues through student-directed conversations, written reflections, and dialogue with experts.

▶ **The Center for STEM Education for Girls** encompasses a STEM Summer Institute for Girls, STEM Think Tank and Conference for Girls, STEM Consortium, and STEM Professional Development Workshops and Consulting.

▶ **Leadership Program** Harpeth Hall's leadership development program sees every girl as a leader. Grounded in respect, integrity, individuality, goodness, and trust, girls hone their leadership skills through a variety of experiences, including public speaking, classroom presentations, on the athletic field, on stage, and in interactions with the greater community through service learning and internships.

Describes academic and extracurricular offerings unique to the school among competitors in the market

## Tips to Effectively Share a Parent Information Card



Distribute at the front office



Provide printed and PDF copies to parent ambassadors



Email or mail to current parents at the start of the year



Circulate at admissions team events

# Strategic Messaging Planning Worksheet



Admissions directors should use this worksheet as a thought exercise about what to communicate to prospective families about your school. The questions below will help you to brainstorm the information to include.

## 1 Share Key Characteristics of School Community

Include information that may challenge existing perceptions about your school community.

Percentage of families receiving financial aid at your school

Demographics of student population

Range of income levels of families receiving financial aid

Zip codes represented by study body

## 2 Identify Your Value Proposition

What programs/initiatives do you offer that distinguish you from other schools in the area (e.g. mandatory student wilderness experience)?

## 3 Identify Common Misperceptions

- What are the aspects of your reputation that you believe to be misaligned with your school community?
- What misperceptions are you trying to combat?

## 4 Address Common Misperceptions

What types of programs, initiatives, facts, or anecdotes counteract the negative misperceptions associated with your school?

## Strategic Messaging Planning Worksheet (cont.)

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### 5 Describe School-Specific Programming

Include descriptions of programs offered at your school that make your curriculum unique.

- Are there academic or extracurricular programs that are unique to your school?
- What initiatives or programs exist to ensure that students stay connected and contribute to the local and global community?

### 6 Detail the Impact of Your School's Education

- What are the attributes of the typical graduate at your school (e.g. global citizen)?
- What types of school initiatives, academic requirements, or teaching practices help to shape your students (e.g. participation in an international exchange program, community service requirement)?

# Student, Faculty Survey Planning Worksheet

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Consider the following ideas to help collect examples and stories about your school's value:

1. Create a short survey (no more than three questions) using Google Forms or Survey Monkey to record stories and anecdotes
2. Send the survey to at least two faculty members from each grade, covering different content areas
3. Select and compile the top ten stories that are detailed, memorable, and span across all grade-levels



## Sample Survey Questions for Faculty

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- How does your school emphasize the importance of using the Harkness method in the curriculum?
- How does the Harkness method improve the quality of your lessons?
- How does using the Harkness method differ from other teaching practices you have used at other schools where you have taught?
- Do you have any memorable examples, anecdotes to illustrate the impact of this method in the classroom?

## Collect Examples from the Classroom of School's Educational Value

Use the fields below to plan the survey you will design to collect examples and stories from faculty:

Survey Method (e.g. Google Forms, Survey Monkey):

Faculty Survey Question 1:

Faculty Survey Question 2:

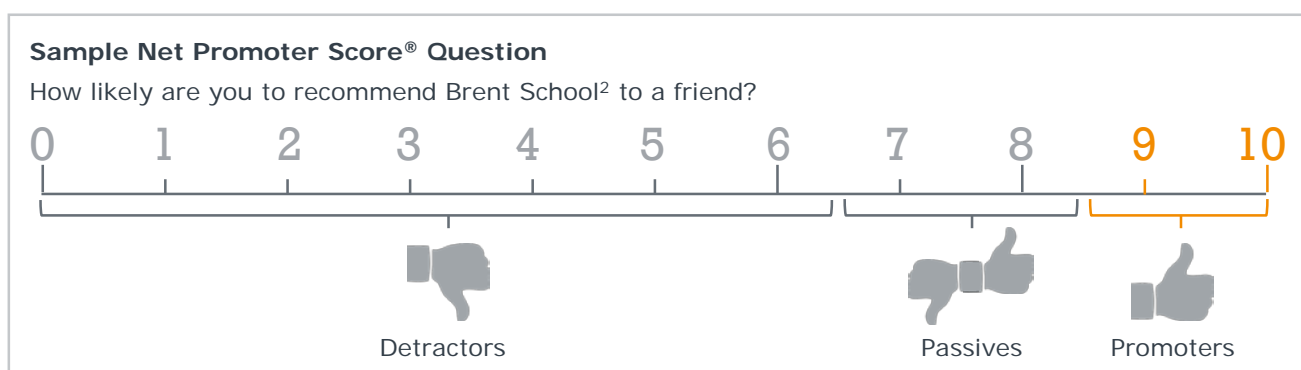
Faculty Survey Question 3:

# Identify Parent Advocates Using Net Promoter Scores®

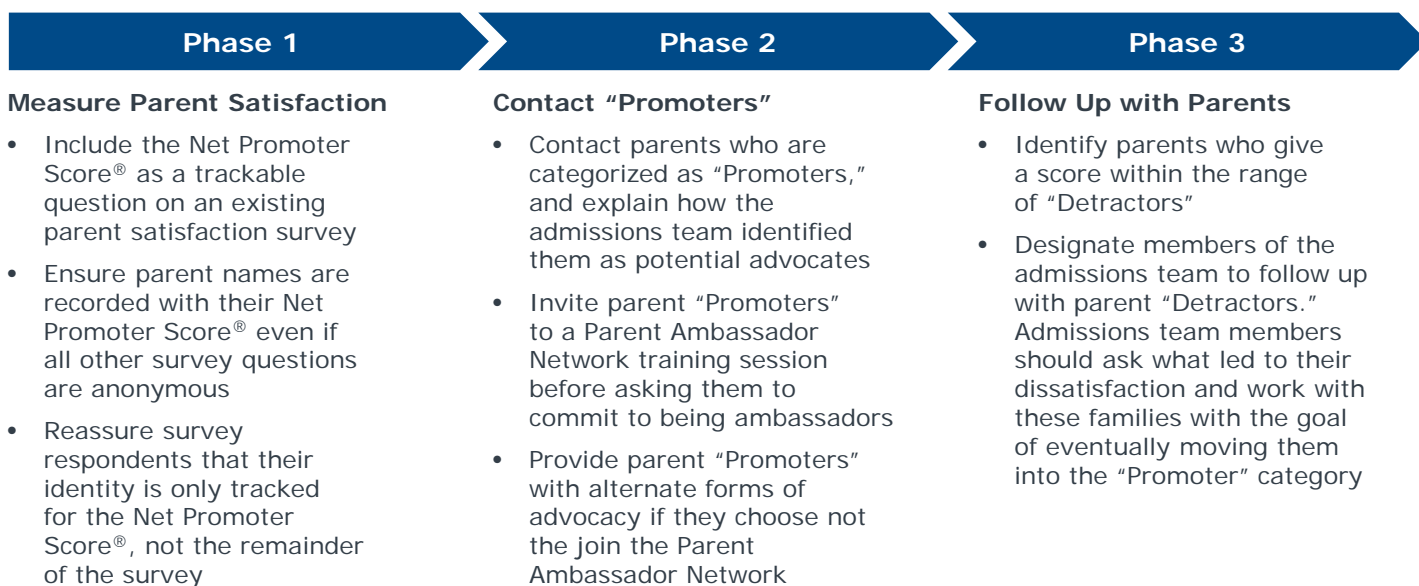
## Find Quiet Advocates to Expand the Parent Ambassador Network

Net Promoter Scores®<sup>1</sup> use one basic question to measure the overall satisfaction of a customer: “What is the likelihood that you would recommend company X to a friend or colleague?” With a single score, companies are able to gauge their performance among current customers as well as their potential for growth within the market.

By asking this question of parents, schools can similarly collect valuable data on the level of satisfaction of their parent community. In doing so, they can use Net Promoter Scores to categorize parents as “Promoters,” “Passives,” or “Detractors” based on a 10-point scale. Parents who score a 9 or 10 are considered to be “Promoters,” which indicates their higher likelihood of recommending the school to friends and colleagues. Knowledge of parents’ Net Promoter Scores® ensures that the admissions office knows which “Promoters” to invite to the Parent Ambassador Network, allowing all advocates to be identified, even parents who are less vocal in their appreciation of the school.



## How to Use Net Promoter Scores®



1) Net Promoter Score is a registered trademark of Bain & Company, Inc., Fred Reichheld and Satmetrix Systems, Inc.

2) Pseudonym

\*Net Promoter System – Net Promoter System Home,\* Bain & Company, <http://www.netpromotersystem.com/index.aspx>.

# Guide to Create a Parent Ambassador Training Guide

A Parent Ambassador Network is an essential component of independent school admissions teams' approach to word-of-mouth marketing. With a strong network of parents, word of mouth becomes schools' most influential recruitment strategy, as parents are often willing and ready to market the school within their social and professional networks. However, a lack of guidance for parent ambassadors may prevent admissions teams from maximizing the full potential of word-of-mouth marketing. To ensure the effectiveness of parent ambassadors' messaging, admissions teams need to provide them with proper training by creating a guide that clearly establishes roles, expectations, and guidance for parent ambassadors.

The purpose of this tool is to assist enrollment managers in creating a training guide that empowers new and existing parent ambassadors to effectively communicate with prospective families.


## Building a Parent Ambassador Network Guide

### Key Components of a Parent Ambassador Network Guide

Include the following four elements in a comprehensive training guide to prepare parent ambassadors for their role in the recruitment process:

**1**


#### Establish Parent Ambassador Responsibilities



- Outline roles and expectations for parent ambassadors
- Establish goals for the Parent Ambassador Network in the recruitment process

**2**


#### Provide School 'At-A-Glance' Quick Facts



- Ensure consistent knowledge of basic facts about the school, such as average class size, total number of students enrolled, and mission statement

**3**


#### Communicate the Value Proposition



- Describe the unique value proposition of the school
- List common questions about school programming (e.g. describing how the Harkness method is used in classes)

**4**

#### Prepare Ambassadors for Difficult Questions



- Prepare parent ambassadors for difficult questions from skeptical prospective families (e.g. how does the school make sure that families can afford tuition?)

### How to Use this Tool



Use the *Creating a Parent Ambassador Network Guide Planning Document* to develop the training manual content

Pages 16-17



View Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Training Guide for an example of how to structure your guide

Pages 19-29

# Parent Ambassador Guide Planning Document

Complete the planning document below before creating your Parent Ambassador Training Guide. Use the questions under each section below to help you brainstorm content to include in the guide.

## 1 Establish Parent Ambassador Responsibilities

Determine the role you want your Parent Ambassador Network to play within the recruiting process.

Consider the following as you brainstorm:

- What is the primary role of the Parent Ambassador Network (e.g. generating leads, volunteering at open-house events)?
- Will parent ambassadors be responsible for following up with families they recruit? At what point in the recruitment process does their role end?
- Are there other responsibilities parent ambassadors should take on (e.g. calling or meeting with accepted families)?

## 2 Provide School At-A-Glance Quick Facts

Fill in key information about your school below:

Number of total students enrolled; percentage of students who receive financial aid:

Percentage of students who speak a second language at home:

Demographic breakdown of student population:

Ranges of financial aid awarded by income level:

What is the school's mission?

What are the transportation options available for students (e.g. shuttle service, public transportation, carpool)?

## Parent Ambassador Guide Planning Document (cont.)

### 3 Communicate the Value Proposition

Discuss the programming offered at your school that differentiates you from neighboring schools.

*Consider the following:*

- *List out the unique offerings your school provides (e.g. athletic options, range of course offerings, after-school activities, clubs). Also include information about your campus and facilities.*
- *How are these different from those of other schools in the area (including independent, public, charter and magnet)?*

### 4 Prepare Ambassadors for Difficult Questions

Anticipate questions asked by skeptical mission-aligned families who have not yet bought into the idea of an independent school education for their child.

- *How diverse is your school? What steps is your school taking to increase student and faculty diversity?*
- *How does your school handle discussions about differing political ideology?*
- *Isn't it only low-income families who receive financial aid? How much aid is available for families making six-figure salaries?*
- *Is there an elitist attitude or narrow perspective among students and parents? How do you expose students to different perspectives and life experiences?*



# Sample Resources: Parent Ambassador Network Guide, Custom Message Toolkit

## Episcopal Academy, Trevor Day School Create Helpful Tools for Enhancing Parent Word of Mouth

In addition to the four tools provided in this Word-of-Mouth Toolkit, we have also included two sample resources that provide helpful examples of how schools can support their parent ambassadors to spread important messages about their schools.

### Resource #1: Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide



This guide provides detailed information to help train new parent ambassadors and support existing parent ambassadors at Episcopal Academy in sharing key messages about the school. The guide helps to clarify the parent ambassador role and responsibilities, shares key facts about the school, details important information about the school's value, and prepares parent ambassadors for difficult questions from prospective parents.

We recommend reviewing this resource after using *Tool #4: Parent Ambassador Network Guide*.

*Resource #1 found on pages 19-29*

### Resource #2: Trevor Day School's Custom Message Toolkit



In an effort to provide concrete examples about its educational value—specifically its use of inquiry-based learning—Trevor Day School decided to collect and disseminate authentic examples of inquiry-based learning in different grade levels. The custom message toolkit provided showcases 20 examples that parents can cite when speaking to prospective families.

We recommend reviewing this resource after using *Tool #2: Key Message Development Tool*.

*Resource #2 found on pages 30-31*

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide

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## Introduction: The Parent/Alumni Admission Network & Its Rationale

Our Admission Office has established a disarmingly simple but strategically crucial means of increasing the school's admission traffic. The program acts on some advanced thinking about how to deal with the unique marketing constraints of independent schools.

### Understanding why the program is vital

In a National Association of Independent School (NAIS) Parent Survey, researchers asked how parents learn about and select independent schools. Their findings were decisive. Personal networks were the key method of choice for parents seeking information about independent schools. **In fact, 79.4 percent indicated that they used "friends, other parents, or alumni" when selecting potential schools and completing the admission process.** The PAN program acts on this reality.

There are three key stages families pass through in admission. The hardest stage to influence is the **pre-inquiry to visit stage**. This stage occurs *before* the website, view book, admission coffees, open houses, visits, tours, and/or playdays can impact families - - in short, before our professional contact work can begin. The PAN is focused on this stage exclusively.

Why?

The answer has to do with what it takes for a non-traditional family to decide to switch from public school to private school.

Particularly in our region, most families (even full pay families) are non-traditional. They are **not typically familiar with private school** and they are **usually public school graduates themselves**.

These dual circumstances mean the following -- a decision to *inquire* will almost *never* be influenced by commercial messages.

For an MBA or anyone, this begs the question—why is this true? For non-traditional families, the decision to even consider a switch to private school asks the family to change not just their willingness to pay tuition, but in fact ***the fundamental values and views they have held close to them their entire adult lives***. In short, non-traditional families are being asked to reject their own past and pay for something they find foreign and occasionally even distasteful.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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The good news is that they can be convinced to inquire. For you to understand how these families make that decision, we ask you to recall for a moment when you may have decided to inquire (particularly those of you unfamiliar at the time with private schools). Odds are strong that you did not inquire because of an ad, but rather through word of mouth.

This word of mouth contact is often the advice of a friend, a relative, or a faculty member. The common thread, of course, is a personal conversation with someone you trust, and not an ad in the paper or on the radio or an admission representative, unless you knew someone in our office personally.

The purpose of the Alumni and Parent Network is to act on these limitations at one very narrow stage of the process. It is our belief and hope, that with your help, we can become a model for private schools in the US, and an even more interesting and vibrant school for area children.

## **How Were You Picked?**

PAN volunteers were offered a role according to the following criteria:

- High energy, deep loyalty to the school and a profound faith in the school's core strengths.
- An expected knack for persuasively articulating the school's key benefits, attributes and advantages
- Affiliation with organizations, clubs, work circumstances or after school programs through which they can identify and communicate in confidence with families whose children are a proper match for our school
- Suitable geographic distribution across the 6 counties
- Relationships across different age groups

## **What will be required?**

Participation is fairly easy and straightforward. Once you have attended a training session and informally identified (for yourself) a few potential interested families, all that is required is, over the course of your day-to-day and week-to-week lives, shifting conversations (with those naturally-interested families) to education, until you feel they are ready to be nudged toward an inquiry.

I would emphasize strongly that at that stage (once a family has inquired), our office would take on its professional role, and the task of the PAN member (with that family) would be complete. What we know (and what NAIS confirms) is that once folks visit, they typically fall in love. It is getting them to visit that requires a trusted friend.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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## The EA Parent Admission Network Guidebook

### I. Introduction

All area families gain from understanding more about educational options.

We hope you can feel comfortable self-advocating with the quiet knowledge that EA opens wonderful doors for young people and that every family can benefit from understanding what is available for their children. This document aspires to accomplish the following:

- Allow you the tools to self-advocate and gently explain the rationale for a visit.
- Affirm what is strong and good about The Episcopal Academy.
- Provide specific answers to the toughest issues parents weigh as they consider schools.

At our opening meeting we will reach out for your suggestions, and we have left a space for notes in the back for you to reference and use. Also, if you receive a question that does not appear on this list, please let us know. We'd like to know your thoughts about it and are happy to share our ideas, experiences and research with you.

### II. The Advantages of The Episcopal Academy

**For families committed to independent school, we offer a *coeducational experience* at perhaps the strongest school in the area.** Students today live in an increasingly global and diverse world and diversity begins with coeducation. The world and the workplace are not gender specific and school is the right place for boys and girls to learn to work and to play together. Character, sociability and grace are connected to learning to engage and collaborate with the broadest possible range of motivated peers.

**While many schools can claim a badge of excellence, few have as long a *history of delivering extraordinary results* as EA. We have *rigorous academic standards* at The Episcopal Academy and we provide a classical education. While the college process is getting harder exponentially, **there are more than 90 EA students currently enrolled at Ivy League Schools.** Our program is renowned for its excellence in the humanities and sciences, focusing on social responsibility and an individual approach to each child.**

**We are a faith-based Episcopalian school.** The modern era's best educators argue that success in life will depend on character even more than a mastery of content. At EA, we believe that spirituality is a central piece of character development. Our students attend chapel and take religion classes. In a world that too frequently struggles to raise young people of principle, our students are regularly asked to think beyond themselves. Here at Episcopal, students develop their mind, their body, and their spirit, and have richer and better lives as a result.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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With ***smaller class sizes*** (LS 16-1, MS 14-1, US 12-1), our faculty can provide more individualized attention for every child. Some schools struggle with career burnout in the classroom. A manageable class size provides faculty greater job satisfaction and better results. With smaller classroom sizes, our faculty and administration will know your child and can nurture his or her particular talents with far greater efficiency. A smaller classroom size also allows each child to participate and engage, rather than spectate.

Our ***selectivity in admission*** creates an environment especially conducive to productive and efficient learning. Surrounded by other motivated and able students changes peers' sense of the norm. With a parent base completely committed to educational attainment and a close-knit and supportive network of teachers, students naturally come to motivate each other in a healthy way.

**We can better secure and develop an excellent faculty.** With experienced search teams and a great reputation, our national searches can discover and attract bright and caring individuals to serve in every area your child encounters adults. Our resources allow for greater commitment to professional development. Last summer, more than 100 EA Faculty and Staff took advantage of professional development opportunities worldwide.

We have a ***vibrant arts program*** with unparalleled resources and extraordinary opportunities to participate. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century calls out for the skills a full investment in the arts secures. Beyond the intrinsic beauty and value of any graduate's greater skills in, and appreciation of, art, today's world absolutely requires young people who have the full development that only comes through the arts – experienced commitment to seeing through design projects to completion, a deep ability to think outside the box, the special level of discipline required to master a piece of music and frequent opportunities to present graciously and thoughtfully *all* provide *better* outcomes.

**We support and promote athletic engagement** so that all of our students develop an appreciation for healthy living and understand the importance of teamwork. We field 30 highly competitive programs. Over 370 Upper School students play more than one sport, over 100 of our graduates currently play sports in college and EA teams have won 13 Inter-Ac titles in the past two years. Our school's size allows for a much greater percentage of our student body to have the best possible experiences in this important area of character development.

**We are committed to character education.** It is not enough to learn content in a vacuum. The virtues the best educators note are at the center of lifelong success have always been at the core of an EA education. We teach character by living **The Stripes**, which represent our 10 taught and supported virtues: Self-control, Faith, Honesty, Courtesy, Kindness, Generosity, Gratitude, Courage, Respect, and Sportsmanship.

**EA has deep history and traditions** and was founded in 1785 by members of the first Continental Congress and signers of the Declaration of Independence. In 2010, we celebrated 225 years of making a difference in the lives of young people.



# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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### **III. Your Friends' Questions & Good Responses to their concerns**

In this section, we provide 17 tough questions and offer up answers that may convey the strengths of Episcopal Academy. Our hope is to offer ideas and information that you can see and believe, and that help you comfortably advocate for EA.

#### **We're not necessarily a devout family/we are not Episcopalian. What role does Chapel play in school life?**

Chapel is about teaching our students to think beyond themselves and to recognize their responsibilities as citizens and human beings. We embrace the chance to be respectful of all faiths and recognize that the presence of students, families, and faculty of varied religions and backgrounds is vital to the vibrancy of our diverse community. In the midst of this environment of respect, at EA we practice our religious traditions every day, and we welcome participation by all.

A 30-minute Episcopalian service, Chapel takes place twice a cycle for Lower School students and 6 times a cycle for Middle and Upper School students. In Lower School, it is a place where the Character Stripes are discussed and explored. It is also an occasion for musical performances and opportunities to speak in public. In Middle School, Chapel is a time for reflection and, in eighth grade through Faith Papers, an opportunity for every child to delve deeper and express their religious beliefs. Guest speakers, dignitaries and Upper School students address the chapel theme for the year. This year's theme is "Love Never Fails."

#### **Public schools require teachers to have a certification and a degree in education, making them more knowledgeable about how to educate. What is it that makes your faculty better?**

Our teachers are dedicated to their craft and have chosen to teach at an independent institution because of the creativity they are able to bring into the classroom and because of the quality of students they will be teaching. Out of 180 teachers at EA, 27 have over 25 years of service at Episcopal. More than half of our faculty have advanced degrees, many with degrees in specialty areas such as English Literature or European studies. In addition, we have 12 faculty members with doctorates.

With experienced search teams and a great reputation, our national searches can discover and attract the brightest and best individuals to serve in every area your child encounters adults. When a role identifies a benefit to certification, we are able to attract and secure those individuals. When other strengths are more important, we have the flexibility to meet the even greater goals of the school and our students. Our resources also allow for greater commitment to professional development. Last summer, more than 100 EA Faculty and Staff took advantage of professional development opportunities.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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**My daughter or son is a natural leader. In a co-ed environment he/she will not have as many opportunities for leadership. Why would he/she come?**

For any future leader it is important to be able to approach and lead in an environment that represents the real world. This could only be a co-ed school. Every one of our students has an opportunity to lead, whether in the classroom with a presentation, on student council, the Vestry, clubs, musical and theater groups, sports teams and manager positions. We have purposely developed all of these leadership positions because we feel that it is a critical element in the development of every child. This kind of dedication to leadership skills sets us apart and would offer every child, boy or girl, ample opportunity to learn how to lead.

**I read that boys and girls learn differently. How do you accommodate both in the same environment?**

Over the last few years, meta-analysis – complete and full summaries of all the research done that both promote coeducation and single-sex education -- has concluded that single sex environments do not provide any meaningful advantages. The country's best educators allow that collaboration, engagement and connection with diverse groups in education and in social development provides tolerance, thoughtfulness and outcomes that young people need to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Adding an extra layer that takes students away from the environments they will need to understand to flourish in the world we feel only limits the most efficient development of young people.

Respect for different races, circumstances and genders builds character, humility and understanding. We seek to cultivate these virtues amongst our students through a warm and healthy community. We seek to avoid stereotypes based on inexperience with life's realities.

We acknowledge that boys and girls learn differently, but part of our mission is to teach to the individual. Not every boy *or* girl learns the same way. We specialize in understanding the way each child learns and we help young people understand material in the most productive and comfortable platform. As a result, we have a long history of success with girls and boys in every discipline. Learning together, boys and girls are able to build off of one another's strengths and weaknesses. Once a student is in Upper School they are able to design a course sequence that best suits their interests – heavy on language or more intense math and science.

**I feel like we are constantly hearing stories about violence in schools. What does Episcopal do about security for such a big campus?**

Relative to our area neighbors, EA has a remarkably pastoral setting. However, beyond our safer location, the school has 54 security cameras and employs four full time security personnel, including a former operations officer charged with security for the Super Bowl at Giants Stadium.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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**My child is in the gifted program at his school. How does EA work with students who excel above the rest of the class?**

EA's selectivity and high expectations help us create an engaging and stimulating environment. In the admission process, all EA students are tested and the average EA student tests slightly under the gifted level as they arrive, making the typical EA classroom very nearly the equivalent of a gifted classroom at neighboring schools. For students who rise above even that level, the school is intimate enough to be flexible with families and scheduling. There are current students doing graduate level work at U Penn who will publish as co-authors alongside PhD students before they graduate from high school. EA can raise the ceiling for even the brightest students.

**My daughter wants to be an engineer. What kind of programs do you have in the curriculum that will prepare her for this course of study in college?**

We have a very strong science, math and technology department at Episcopal. We have just renovated a space to create a FAB lab for our students interested in technology, robotics and production. The Global Online Academy available to our students offers several engineering courses.

**What makes your school better than our local school? The Honors programs at Lower Merion, T/E, and Radnor are very competitive.**

The most competitive area schools are all significantly larger than EA. They do not have the luxury of a selective admission process and all of them invest less per child in academics, the arts and in athletics. Whether a child is functioning at an elite level or is strong enough for our program with a healthy work ethic and the right amount of support, he or she will have the attention and investment every child needs to be significantly better prepared for exactly the environment they will experience at a selective college and in life.

The strongest district schools are large enough to make most students' active participation in a true variety of athletic programs almost impossible. EA has produced more than 40 championship teams in the 2000s. About 35% of our seniors each year are recruited by colleges for inter-collegiate athletics and while we feel we are as strong as any school in the area in sports, relative to our closest single sex rivals, because we are coed, we have at least 20-40% fewer students in each gender trying out for a similarly broad array of sports, making it far more likely your child can participate instead of spectate at a crucial juncture in their development.

At EA, your child can have a role in an all school production in the fall and play for the varsity lacrosse program in the spring with equal passion and support. Both are important to proper development, but at larger schools, these opportunities are simply less realistic. At a school of just 130 in each grade in Upper School, with both genders represented, our typical student is fully engaged in Mind, Body and Spirit.



# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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Our small classroom situations allow for a different support system, from teachers, to specialists, Advisors, Deans and Chaplains. The demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call out for mentors and close engagement to better guarantee the best possible outcomes. Larger public schools, even well-funded ones, whose size and regulations dictate testing over learning how to learn, whose budgets make collaborative learning opportunities scarce and whose finances prevent a higher level of investment in the arts, find themselves far less likely to provide what universities (and eventually employers) seek.

## **I don't see how you rationalize it financially.**

It is an investment in the whole child – Mind, Body and Spirit -- which provides a lifetime of returns academically, socially and physically.

For families unwilling to come without a direct financial rationale:

In the past five years, there has been some wonderful work done by the nation's best economists and educators, attempting to place a financial value on having the right type of educational program & environment at each stage of a child's development. For example, in just one area, strength of faculty -- just a modest improvement in instruction, in a sampling size of more than a million students, translated into more than \$10,000 a year in further income every year for the average child. Importantly, that study ignored other key advantages that EA enjoys -- smaller class size, greater co-curricular development, greater peer motivation to excel, a parent community more universally vested in educational attainment, deeper and more successful character focus, etc.. If you add those advantages together, economists and educators are noting, they add up to much more than the cost of our programs. To add to that, there is wonderful alumni loyalty and significant networking advantages. Our alumni share that these networks have contributed to especially productive and lucrative career trajectories.

## **With some of your student body coming from affluent and/or heterogeneous backgrounds, how do you keep them grounded and engaged with peers from all walks of life? Is there an elitist attitude or narrow perspective amongst students and parents?**

EA is racially and socio-economically diverse. EA spends more than \$4 million dollars on scholarship grants each year. EA also has 24% students of color. The community is small enough and the relationships intimate enough for genuine understanding and respect for difference to take place.

## **This is a competitive environment for college bound students -- How do EA students fare?**

Despite the fact that applications to Ivy League schools have more than quintupled since 1990, EA is very well represented at the nation's top colleges, and nearly 100 EA students attend Ivy League schools this year.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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EA has enviable resources. We have the investment and personnel to take the time to counsel wisely and to help students think with ambition and with thoughtfulness while they uncover their full interests and depth... We use our resources to frame things wisely and rationally, to help lessen the anxiety, assist with details and make the rite of passage a constructive, educational and fulfilling time.

This is an area of distinction for EA. The difference between a guidance counselor at even the most successful public schools and a guidance counselor at a smaller, more intimate PK-12 school focused on students headed to a range of strong colleges, is noticeable. Our guidance counselor to student ratio is often *significantly* smaller compared to area public schools, which means our guidance team really gets to know your student and can endorse your child with a different level of precision and support. Colleges notice and the difference matters.

EA students' references will be from faculty that have known them for many years. Families can be certain that they will access the best opportunities possible, and that by the time they make the decision, they will be doing it with a maturity and wisdom the school cultivates over many years.

Colleges know the patterns and statistics – that our students outperform their peers regionally – and seek out EA students. College admission professionals share how well our students express themselves, how comfortable they are with adults and how well they perform at their colleges.

**My child is really gifted/talented in sports, so she / he needs to go to our public school.**

EA has produced more than 40 championship teams in the 2000s. Nearly a third of our seniors each year are recruited by colleges for inter-collegiate athletics...

Our facilities provide significant advantages for student athletes... The school's 4000 Square Foot fitness center, (18,000 sq. foot) field house, our 6 lane 35 meter pool, rowing tanks, (10) squash courts, (14) Deco-surfaced tennis courts, (9) athletic fields and (2) artificial fields give us a great opportunity to ask a lot, and to develop grit, sportsmanship and teamwork.

**Our district school offers more AP classes and its students perform well. Why should we make the switch?**

In the past five years, there has been some wonderful work done by the nation's best economists and educators on what is missing in our district schools, even the strongest district schools.

What human resource offices and college professors are saying, even at the most selective colleges, is that big district schools that highlight AP results are not providing a properly structured foundation for real success. EA offers AP courses in an environment

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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and at a pace that goes well beyond preparing for the test. AP courses that only identify questions and provide correct answers are not successfully teaching students how to think, how to ask the right questions, how to design solutions, how to be persuasive, how to collaborate, how to think outside the box, etc.. A wisely and more thoughtfully structured program and environment more successfully provides what young people need.

**My district school was outstanding. In addition, I feel I am successful in part because I had to work a little harder to overcome challenges that public school posed.**

Often EA parents who have transitioned their children here went to public school themselves, loved it and are proud of their background. It makes the decision to make the sacrifice for our children even harder. But when many of us went to public school, it was different. The schools were more appropriately sized, teachers had greater authority, the problems kids brought to class were less significant, and the competition both in college and after was less significant.

EA families want real security for our kids down the road. The best possible education is a sensible investment in that future.

**My child is smart enough to get into a really great college; he'll have no trouble when it's time to apply. Why should I spend so much when he's already at the top of his class?**

There are families at EA that felt the same way. For us it was all the other advantages – the difference in outcomes, the difference in whole child development, the ability to truly cultivate independent thinking, the ability to create a community whose values are affirmed by their peers and not harmed in communities with less leverage to sustain the highest expectations for good behavior.

EA prepares kids for a bigger world really well. For college and life – socially, academically, culturally – in the ways that are most important to us as a family.

**Isn't the bus ride too long?**

For some, it offers a chance to be with friends, or a chance to decompress after a pressured day at school.

Many public school children have long or longer rides within their district than our children have on private busses from our neighboring districts.

What one student said was that anything meaningful involves a small sacrifice or two, and that kids grow to know that what they are getting is worth it. It makes them even more aware of the meaning of the decision they have made.

# The Episcopal Academy's Parent Ambassador Network Guide (cont.)

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**I am part of the PTO at our school. We are really able to be part of our kids' school day. How can I get involved at EA?**

Parents are an important part of our community. There are various ways a parent can participate and be active on campus. The Parent Association at EA is called the EAPA. In Lower School, parents can work in the library, chaperone field trips, attend Chapel, help with school plays and musical performances, assist in special class room activities or be a celebrity reader. In third grade, EA has a Family Share project where the entire family presents an important aspect of their family life together to the entire grade (some families have cooked their favorite meal, played a song together, played a game, had a slide show etc.). Through the EAPA parents can also get involved by chairing or working on school events -- Harvest Day, Book Fair, Michelle's Miles, Gingerbread House or Tree Lighting -- just to name a few. In addition, we have a small farmhouse that has been renovated to be used as a gathering place for parents. The Newtown Post is open three mornings and two afternoons a week for parents to drop in and socialize. As our students get older, there are fewer opportunities for parents to be involved in the school day; however, parents can work at the Thrift Shop or Bake Sale. Form parents may be asked to help with grade activities. There is a parent Book Club once a month, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee and our Athletic Association and Hospitality Committee organize sporting events and spirit competitions. Our Altar Guild not only prepares the Chapel for services, but also has an active outreach ministry. The EAPA organizes Community Outreach projects and parents can also volunteer on days of service with their students. For those parents interested in the theater there is the Community Players, which performs for the school. Parents can also get involved in some of the bigger school wide events organized by the EAPA such as Starfest, House Tour, Graduation Dinner and the Online Auction.



# Trevor Day School's Custom Message Toolkit

## Trevor Day School Mission

An independent, Nursery through Grade 12 coeducational day school, Trevor Day School educates college-bound students to achieve academic and personal excellence in an inquiry-driven, idea-rich community. Trevor celebrates diversity of thought, experiences, and culture; promotes compassion, collaboration, courage, and creativity; and develops in children a recognition of their own unique potential as lifelong learners and leaders who act as responsible global citizens in our world.

## Why Trevor?

### 1. Academic excellence and happiness

My daughter is driven by high expectations at Trevor, but not at the expense of her happiness. They figured out the formula for motivating children through a love of learning.

### 2. College prep in an IBL environment

My son benefits from all the elements of a classic college prep curriculum—from literature to calculus to coding—but he is taught through investigations, discussions, and real world contexts, so the content really sticks. It's called inquiry-based learning. I'll give you an example...

### 3. Nurturing my whole child

My daughter is not only smart, she is well-rounded, well-adjusted, and well-informed about the world around her. She is both an artist and athlete/she started her own club/she is a peer leader...Trevor nurtures every facet of her life.

### 4. Faculty's focus is student-centered

My son is known at Trevor. He is challenged, cared for, and loved. His teachers know the way he learns best and respond to his endless curiosity.

### 5. Facilities reflect the school mission

My Lower Schooler is in a beautifully renovated building, across the street from Central Park, with spacious, light-filled classrooms. My Middle/Upper Schooler is learning in a state-of-the-art, LEED Gold building that was designed to support Trevor's commitment to sustainability and collaborative learning, with unlimited access to teachers.

### 6. Common spaces and experiences lead to agile thinkers

You should see how they use common spaces and collaborate across the grade level and divisions. The way my daughter learns at Trevor reflects the best collaborative work environments in our society.

### 7. Uniquely accomplished and purpose-driven graduates

My son is prepared for the best colleges and universities in the country. He's taken college level courses, he's completely at ease with teachers, his critical thinking skills are off the charts, and he's had the time and space to discover what he's passionate about.

## 20 Examples of Inquiry-Based Learning at Trevor

1. A Kindergarten teacher, noticing a group of students mesmerized by a butterfly in Central Park, pauses their play to incorporate their curiosity into a study of symmetry. "How is a butterfly like the letter W? Or our faces?" "Where else can we find symmetry in nature?"
2. First graders engage in a year-long study of birds. It's not based on facts they read in books or online, it is based in their back yard—Central Park. And their study is further actualized by an partnership with experts at the Wild Bird Fund on the UWS.
3. The 3rd grade's study of the Hudson River culminates with a sail on a replica of a 19th-century cargo schooner. The trip allows students to test their accumulated knowledge with experts, in the field. Testing the water for pH and acidity levels, for example, to confirm all they have studied about the river's health, or sketching the shoreline from this unique vantage point and using the drawings to make historical compare and contrast statements.
4. Utilizing the Math in the City program, 3rd grade hosts "Math Congresses" where children explore the features of grouping and ungrouping to decide for themselves how multiplication and division is useful in the real world. Multiples of a number are further contextualized through searches for patterns in multiples by investigating the food in a grocery store and patterns on fabric and stamps.

# Trevor Day School's Custom Message Toolkit (cont.)

5. Third graders fell in love with a book they were reading and asked their teacher if they could write to the author. The teacher moved up letter writing in his curriculum to capitalize on the enthusiasm and the opportunity to contextualize the lesson.
6. Fourth graders transform a classroom into a Makerspace to explore a science unit on simple machines. Teachers supply a few key materials and guidance, and students hypothesize, tinker, and ultimately test solutions to the question, "How can a fulcrum most effectually catapult a Ping Pong ball?"
7. A dynamic study teaches 5th graders about the electoral college and other related topics, through a hands-on election that is meaningful to them—the race for Lower School Dragon Mascot. In 2016, students' interest turned to third-party candidates, and teachers responded to their curiosity through added time devoted to this topic. Third-party candidate "Sunny" won in a landslide.
8. Fifth-grade scientists finds themselves in a dark auditorium, lit by a single lightbulb in the center of the room—the sun. They explore the cycles of the earth and moon in relation to the sun in a tangible and understandable experience.
9. The Boston Massacre: Who Started It? A 5th-grade social studies lesson uses primary sources to dissect the historical evidence to answer this essential question. After looking at historical evidence, students then view recent video footage of forensic testing to get at what might have really happened in this precursor to the American Revolution.
10. The final part of each class in English 6 asks students to work in small teams to use content, allowing a deeper connection with the material. While studying the book, *The Outsiders*, for example, students collaborate in teams to write newspaper articles covering an event in the text from multiple points of view, allowing them to compare and contrast viewpoints, and discover the importance of perspective.
11. Debate is a powerful tool used often in Middle School history courses. "In a Sparta vs. Athens battle, who would be victorious?" "What is a border...why is it formed...and should it be controlled?" Students call on their well of acquired knowledge and further their research skills to cement a deeper understanding of the material through prep and debate.
12. In Grades 7 & 8 Digital Art & Coding, "The Bread & Jam Algorithm" is a demonstration of the underlying logic of programming—but it does not involve the use of computers. Instead, the teacher is actually programmed by the class. It is always funny, sometimes messy, and very engaging for the student programmers turned sandwich makers.
13. At Trevor, the periodic table—a perennially dry chemistry topic for generations of Middle School students—is reimagined as a mystery to be solved. The exercise is fun, challenging, and provides a deeper understanding of the table's complexities.
14. In June 2017, a Trevor student was photographed for the cover of the NY Times. He was dressed as King Hrothgar from Beowulf, in Fort Tryon Park next the Cloisters, reciting his final project for 8th-grade history—a storytelling initiative that asked students: "What tales, tall or real, speak to your truest selves?"
15. In Grade 9 Math, relatable problems sets will follow skill acquisition, to help ensure students are flexible and adept problem-solvers. Students will use algebra to determine how long it would take for Noah Syndergaard's pitch to reach home base, or ascertain 95th Street's square footage based on a page of blueprint.
16. Upper School French students investigate Fragonard's intriguing 18th-century painting, *The Swing*, and use the target language for their advanced art critique. It is an inquiry-based examination that allows students to find out for themselves what stories lurk behind the painting.
17. Upper School English classes are not lecture-based. All classes are set around the table and employ discussion as the basis for learning. This is often referred to as the Harkness Method.
18. What new questions arise when we shift the focus to children in history? Trevor's new digital humanities course tackles that question and attempts to remedy the archival absence of children in the history of NYC—by taking a deeper and more nuanced dive into historical big data.
19. The Upper School's advanced biology class performs cutting-edge neuroscience research with NYU on the science of the brain as it learns. Students were out in the field, working with experts, learning about sophisticated topics with real world applications. This work was published in a peer-reviewed journal.
20. The 2017 drama was conceived in reaction to contemporary themes with which Upper School students were grappling. Teachers guided them to create a modern retelling of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, and they did from start to finish—from scripting through staging. It was all theirs, and it was all based on their own questions and responses.