

# Diocese of Arlington

## PTO Council

Date: December 18, 2007  
Memo For: PTO Presidents and PTO Council Representatives  
From: PTO Council Executive Committee  
Subject: December 1, 2007 General Meeting

The second General Membership meeting, of this school year, of the Arlington Diocese PTO Council was held on Saturday, December 1, 2007 at St. Timothy Catholic School. President Malcolm Coate welcomed the Council with announcements. The third meeting will be held on March 8, 2008 at Holy Spirit Catholic School. There will be an **election** for three officers, President, Vice President and Secretary. Jim Holbein has agreed to run for a position on the Executive Committee and Matt Reynolds will remain an officer. Any Council representative who is interested in serving as an officer, please contact Jim Holbein at [holbein@cox.net](mailto:holbein@cox.net).

**Dan Ferris, Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools**, led a lively discussion on marketing Catholic Education. His power point presentation is attached. He handed out a good tool titled the Catholic School Strategic Marketing Plan Workbook. However, that work has not been approved for distribution, but will be circulated to school Principals in January, then later to the Council.

Dan invited the Council to urge principals and marketing directors to attend an OCS program, “**10 Best Practices**” offered on **January 8, 2008** in conference room 5A at OCS, 200 Glebe Road in Arlington.

**Superintendent Tim McNiff** noted that the Diocese has experienced a change from full enrollment and waiting lists at many schools to open seats. The Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) is working with a consultant, principals and the Advisory Board for Catholic Education to develop a comprehensive, global plan for marketing Catholic education. He made the analogy that our past approach has been by “shotgun” method, and we are trying to be more coherent in the message and efficient in the use of the OCS advertising budget. He challenged the Council to help implement a new plan this year.

Marketing Ideas:

- Give each school family a car magnet with the school logo.
- Give away school logo t-shirts and sweatshirts.
- Invite parishioners to school events.
- Advertise school info weekly in the parish bulletin

- Use one of the 36 “Did You Know” quotes from OCS in parish bulletins each week.
- Post school info weekly on a bulletin board in the vestibule of each church.
- Talk to parents of pre-schoolers about the benefits of enrollment
- Talk to parents with kids in public school who may be seeking an alternative.
- Note our primary strengths – compared to public schools -- are academics, Catholic values and safe schools
- Be prepared to counter fears that our teachers are unqualified, the children are oppressed and the public schools have better equipment.
- Prepare school brochures to hand out to prospective enrollees and post the same info on the website.
- Place counter arguments to the fears above and note strengths.
- OCS agreed to investigate using sample templates or forms with a consistent message and format to simplify the marketing job at each school.
- OCS will distribute a bulletin to 18,000 families later this year, so we will discuss how that vehicle can assist our efforts.
- OCS will also collect short anecdotes and messages for parents to use in “selling” the schools to prospective school families.

**Eric Adcock, VCC Associate Director** gave an overview of the legislative program this year. He noted the victory for the program this year with the passage of the state legislation permitting public schools to bus Catholic students. The public school systems are hostile and most have written non-compliance proposals into their charters. There is a threat that the Senate may repeal the legislation, so VCC must fight that proposal. Another priority for 2008 is aggressive action to get access to textbooks at the state textbook procurement rate. In addition, VCC will work to permit tax credits for private sector donations to scholarship foundations for educational organizations.