

Catholic Memorial High School Waukesha, Wisconsin

Catholic Memorial High School is a coeducational high school in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 2010, the school had 747 students enrolled from nine separate communities in Waukesha County. The high school was founded in 1949 and is recognized for strong academics and competitive athletic teams. The school began participation in the International Baccalaureate program in 2005. Four years later, the first IB diplomas were awarded to 43 seniors.

The Challenge

Enrollment at Catholic Memorial High School peaked at 776 in 2007-08 and was in gradual decline. Projections for 2011-12 pointed to a further decline to 699. The administration believed an enrollment of 870 students would provide a healthier financial and academic environment. To achieve that goal, a Task Force was established to determine exactly what the optimal enrollment should be and examine ways the school could achieve it.

The Process

In order to assist the Task Force, Meitler was contracted to establish a database for planning and to assess the current marketing efforts and materials. The consultants conducted interviews with key school administrators, facilitated focus groups with a variety of groups both internal and external and conducted a comprehensive survey of five distinct school constituencies.

The Results

The Meitler report presented a statistical view of the current state of both the high school and its predominately Catholic elementary feeder system, a critique of the activities and publications that are used throughout the recruiting process and a summary of the attitudes and opinions of people important to the marketing/recruiting process. In addition, the report synthesized all of this information into a collection of conclusions and fundamental recommendations. The report provided a foundation for the Task Force to develop an effective enrollment management plan for the school.

Ms. Julie Lindahl, Director of Admissions at Catholic Memorial High School, said: *"We chose to work Meitler because of the depth of their experience and the reputation of the company. Meitler provided us with more than we asked for. The recommendations were realistic, honest and clear. We have since created and have begun implementation of an Enrollment Management Plan that incorporates these suggestions. Meitler has provided us with critical tools that will enhance our efforts for years to come."*

"I anticipated there would be a lot of work on our end in order for the consultants to gather statistical information, meet with focus groups, send surveys, conduct research, etc. I was surprised at how easy they made it for us. They take a personal approach and tailored their work to our needs and time constraints. I still find myself calling them if I have questions and they are happy to help. They exceeded our expectations."