

From the CROW'S NEST

THE BAKER GROUP

A newsletter for independent school leaders committed to enhancing enrollment.

JANUARY 2021 | ISSUE 1



→ From the Desk of Chris Baker

President and Founder of The Baker Group



Independent schools have been thrust into the spotlight in many markets because of their quick and quality response to the urgent needs of families wanting the best education for their child during the pandemic. The opportunity presented and seized by many has aligned nicely with Google's marketing slogan this year, which became: "Agility is the new growth."

- **A-gil-i-ty:** (noun) ability to move quickly and easily. And, to think and understand quickly.
- **Nim-ble:** (adjective) quick and light in movement or action; agile.
- **Re-spon-sive-ness** (noun) the quality of reacting quickly and positively.

This "new growth" reference is not implying growing enrollment numbers, although some schools have seen applications and enrollment increase faster during the pandemic than in recent memory.

Growth is mostly referring to your school's ability to respond to the new, unpredictable normal presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. And it is critical to market your school's response by highlighting lessons and outcomes that have enhanced the quality of your school's experience for families in ways that can be applied to the future.

Growth refers to your school's responsiveness to the delivery of your school's brand of education and messaging accordingly, to

reflect your enhanced approach to running a more nimble and agile operation. We hope you have seized the opportunity to highlight the key features of how your school has learned to manage and teach better.

While it is tempting to hunker down until the Covid storm has passed, the times require a generative energy that is focused on being vital, nimble, and responsive.

The Baker Group can help implement this. Please reach out if we can be of assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Chris Baker

Chris Baker

About Us

The Baker Group helps school leaders identify creative enrollment strategies and solutions.

As the premier independent school enrollment management firm in the country since 1999, The Baker Group has successfully partnered with over 900 independent schools to improve their enrollment management practices and to create opportunities within shifting markets.

We provide a comprehensive suite of services to assist each school in meeting their unique enrollment goals.

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Enrollment Management Grade Report is the True Test



We recommend thinking strategically and collaboratively about enrollment on an ongoing basis.

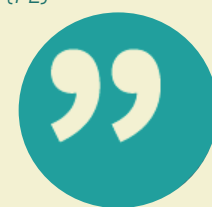
Reach out to us to get a copy of The Enrollment Grade Report for you and your team to use and gauge where you and your school are with enrollment management practices.

"We hired The Baker Group twice in 2020, and despite working during the pandemic, the Baker Group didn't miss a beat on important work for our school. Chris and her team delivered an insightful admissions office audit and led a national search for a Director of Enrollment Management for The Benjamin School. The Baker Group's analysis led us to redesign the way our admissions office works and to implement many changes that have positioned us well in a competitive marketplace in Palm Beach County, FL.

The Baker Group also identified a very talented candidate pool from which we found our new Director of Enrollment Management, after

a transparent, efficient and professional process. The Baker Group team knows the business of admissions and enrollment management better than anyone else out there!"

- David Faus
Head of School /
Benjamin School (FL)



Get in touch:
info@thebakergroup.com / 508.429.9178 / thebakergroup.com

→ Baker Group 2020 | Recent Projects



The Baker Group worked at a brisk pace in 2020 with **17 independent school enrollment management projects and leadership searches**. Despite Covid, the projects were delivered on time and featured The Baker Group's insightful analysis and recommendations.

Managing admissions, enrollment, pricing and financial aid with a strategic and enrollment management mindset is essential for the long term health of a school. And because this type of practice requires enrollment management leadership, it is important for the right leader to be in place to have enough resources and community support to be successful.



Enrollment Management and Admission Projects

Our independent school clients strengthened enrollment management functions in varied and extensive ways. Here are examples from a few 2020 projects:

- Collected and analyzed consistent and reliable data and trend information. This empowered clients to respond to increased market challenges.
- Restructured and expanded admission and enrollment functions to include school-wide enrollment management teams and an enrollment management infrastructure.

- Expanded the role of admissions to include strategic enrollment planning with the newly developed Director of Enrollment Management position.
- Moved the financial aid function out of the Business Office and into the Admission Office where financial aid can be used as a strategic enrollment tool.
- Clarified pricing and financial aid strategies to increase accessibility and enhance enrollment.
- Prioritized resources for increased marketing research dollars for targeted outreach strategies and clarified value proposition when marketing.
- Conducted research including internal marketing and retention studies.



Senior Enrollment Administrative Searches

In 2020, The Baker Group helped 12 independent schools find just the right enrollment leader.

The most important quality that schools seek in their enrollment leader has not changed in the 21 years The Baker Group has been conducting senior enrollment leader searches. 98% of the schools conducting searches chose "effective communicator" as the most important quality of the chief enrollment officer. For the past two years "commitment to diversity" has risen in importance in our searches and is among the top 3 qualities, on the importance

scale. "Sincerity and genuineness" has consistently remained in the top 5. It was more apparent in this year's searches just how important experience with financial aid and net-tuition revenue has become.

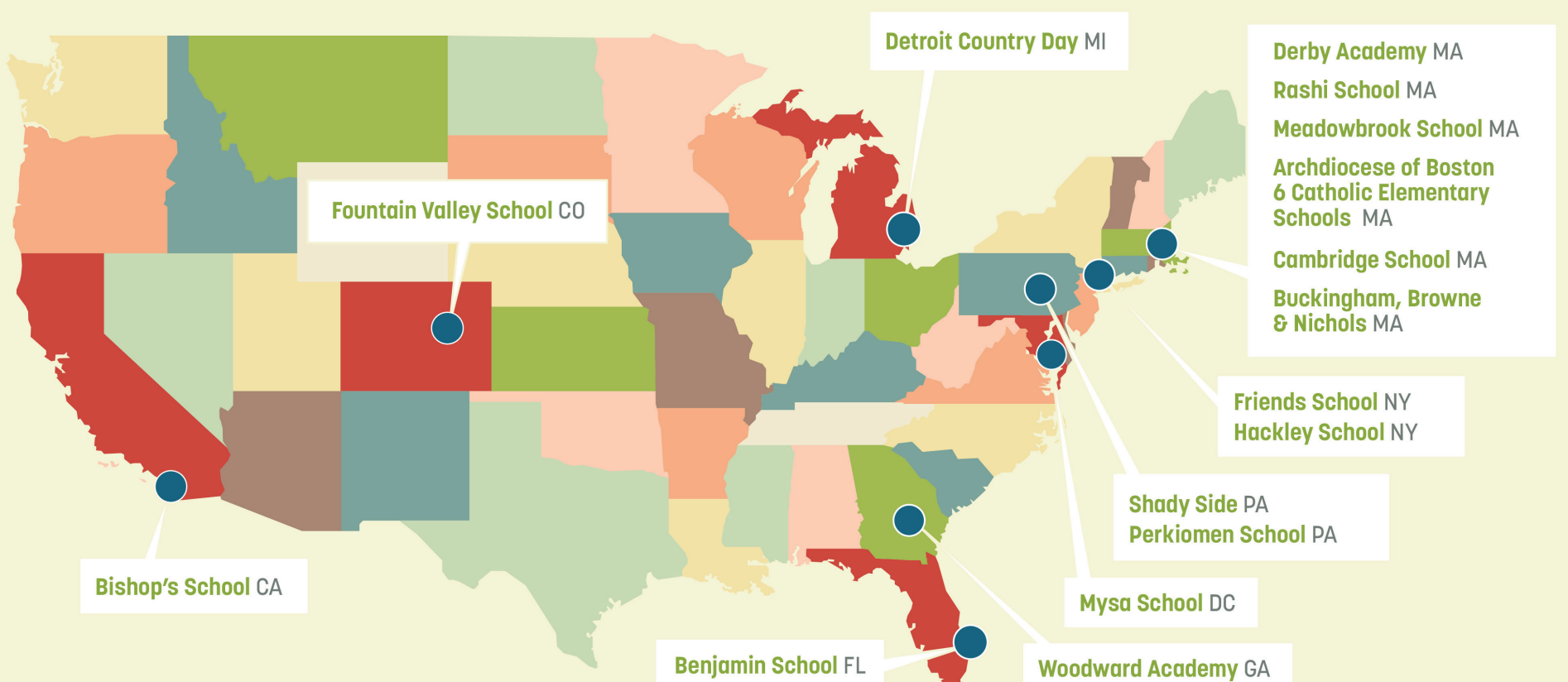
LET THE BAKER GROUP HELP YOU FIND YOUR NEXT CANDIDATE OR HELP YOU FIND YOUR NEXT ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP ROLE.

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The Baker Group Served Clients Across the Country in 2020



→ Enrollment Management in the Time of Covid

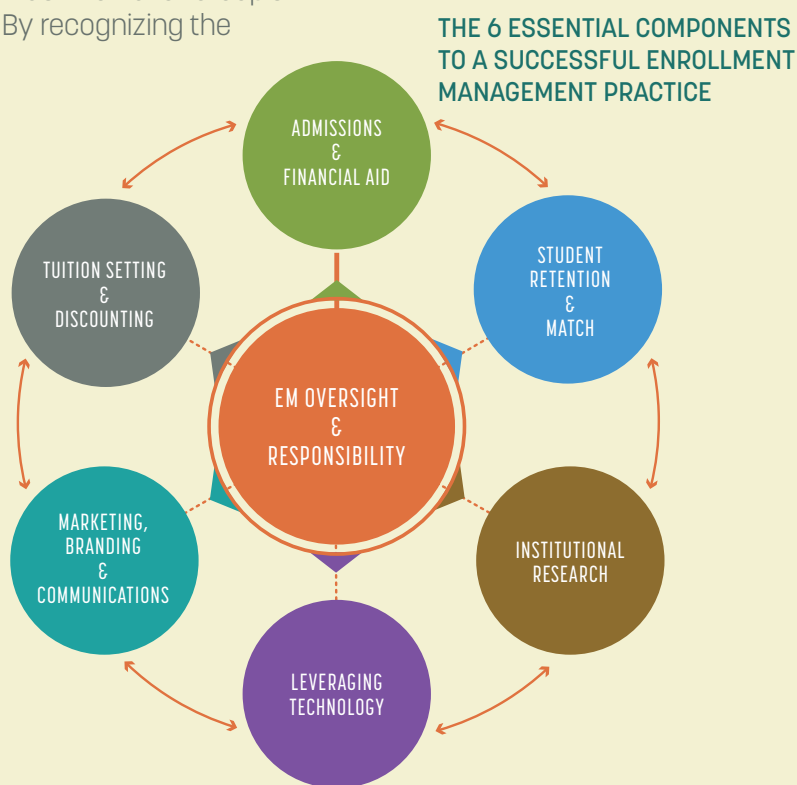
Strategies for emerging from 2020 as a stronger more nimble and agile school.

As you lead Enrollment Management efforts during challenging times, it is important to focus on the **6 essential components to a successful Enrollment Management Practice**.

The following will help remind you of the 6 essential components, also known as The Baker Group's ½ dozen. By recognizing the

connectivity of these elements you will become a more nimble and agile leader.

This diagram is available in detail on our website. Assess each of the following components and contact us if we can help you assess or improve your program.



How well have you gauged the effectiveness of your current enrollment management efforts?

→ The Baker Group can gauge it with you.

Get in touch:

info@thebakergrp.com / 508-429-9178 / thebakergrp.com

→ From the Field

See what your colleagues are up to and hear what they have to say.

Bush School Video



The pandemic has cast a gray cloud over our universe and yet independent school leaders have found ways to shine for their communities.

In a short video, Bush School mascot Blaze displayed school spirit and hope for a silver lining.

Embrace the Basics

“Advising schools during a leadership transition is challenging work. Doing so in the time of Covid adds another layer of difficulty. Over the past year, as Interim Head of School at two different schools, I watched Chris Baker and her team overcome challenges - for two independent school communities. I have seen first-hand how each school has benefited from working with The Baker Group. I can attest to the quality of Chris’ work, advice and follow through. Both schools are now guided by an enrollment management playbook with strategies to help achieve enrollment goals that Chris and her team helped the school develop and embrace.”

Tom Reid
Interim Head of School,
Derby Academy

“The Baker Group was quick to learn the landscape of Catholic schools, under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Boston, and offer crucial assessments and recommendations for the schools involved. The Baker Group developed rapport with each school, fostering an environment of trust, mutual respect, and transparency during on-campus visits and through ongoing communication. The Baker Group introduced best practices in admissions, retention and recruitment that are new to the Catholic school spaces and provided new admissions tools and resources that have been data-informed, actionable and impactful. We are grateful for the partnership with Chris Baker.”

Christine Healy
President, Healey
Education
Foundation

→ Tips from the Front Lines

How Can Admissions Connect with Applicant Families Remotely?

In an August 2020 blog post, Charlie Lytle, technical solutions engineer for Blackbaud’s K-12 Team, noted 5 ways schools could connect with families through a remote enrollment process.

1. Rethink direct mail.
2. Require inquiry forms.
3. Have families RSVP for virtual events.
4. Set a goal for phone calls.
5. Create a workflow for personal follow-up.



→ What's Happening

Crow's Nest 2021

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

The Crow's Nest Institute is an annual 3 day leadership program for experienced Director of Admission/Enrollment Management. This year our theme is Regroup, Reconnect and Restore.

The 2021 Crow's Nest Institute will be held **June 28-30, 2021** in Kennebunkport, ME and Covid safety protocols will be in place.

For more details or to register, go to <https://www.thebakergroup.com/crows-nest-institute>



The Baker Group has moved!

Our headquarters are now in Kennebunkport, Maine. We remain accessible to you through our website, thebakergroup.com, and at the address, email and phone number below.

**PO Box 1088
Kennebunkport, ME 04046**

You can always reach us at info@thebakergroup.com email and **508.429.9178**.

Tending to Your Inner Captain

As part of the annual Crow's Nest Institute, we always find time for "Tending to Your Inner Captain." Until we meet again in person, **Katie O'Connell** has the following recommendations for self care:

Yoga Poses to Calm the Mind & Boost Immunity!

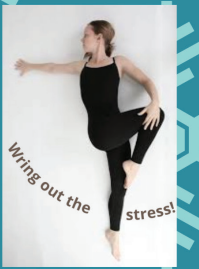
*CHILD'S POSE

Child's pose is easy peasy and can be done practically anywhere. It slows the heart rate, calms the mind, and gets us out of "fight or flight" and into the "rest & digest" mode of the PSNS.



*TWISTS

Twists of all kinds are a great way to open the lungs, stretch the intercostal muscles of the ribs, relieve tension and congestion in the lungs, and aid in digestion and elimination, all of which help the body eliminate waste and stagnant energy.



*CHEST OPENERS

Heart-opening poses like fish, camel, supported bound angle, or simply reclining on a bolster under your spine are all wonderful ways to open the chest, promote deep breathing to free up the lungs, relieve congestion, and improve circulation



Dragonfly
YOGA & BARN



 **THE BAKER GROUP**
Solutions for Enhancing Enrollment.

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