

From the

THE BAKER GROUP

CROW'S NEST

A newsletter for independent school leaders committed to enhancing enrollment. SEPTEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 2



→ From the Desk of Chris Baker

President and Founder of The Baker Group



It's All About Search

During the long 18-month stretch of the pandemic, independent schools have been focused on enrollment and enrollment management leadership. Instead of "the year of the pandemic," let's dub 2020-21 as "the year of the enrollment manager." In the end, nothing says "financial stability and sustainability" better than a school's enrollment health. The need for school leaders to be responsible for and responsive to the changing needs of students and their families has never been so critical. Knowing what is and isn't working requires new levels of research, constituent feedback, strategic planning, creative leadership, and effective communication. From recruitment to retention to graduation and beyond, enrollment managers have out of necessity relinquished old ways and embraced new methods and modalities to sustain enrollment health. Few could have anticipated such an unprecedented pivot, but it has been accomplished incredibly well by many if not most schools. So, BRAVO for a job well done!

With the recruitment and retention challenges attendant to shifting markets and the pandemic, the spotlight has, not surprisingly, been on enrollment health and sustainability. Heads of school and boards have more readily acknowledged the importance of enrollment management in developing integrated and data-driven admission and enrollment systems and strategies. Even for schools that did not previously have a formal enrollment management model, it became a priority this year. This was apparent in The Baker Group's completion of 20 director of enrollment/admission searches since the pandemic started – the most in our 22 years of search consulting. It is easy to see why the 2020-2021 year has been the "year of the enrollment manager."

Bringing together the many components and constituents necessary to achieve a successful director of admission/enrollment management search is one of my favorite projects. These searches are different from other administrator searches in that they require a carefully and thoughtfully

chosen search committee and a plan and process that facilitates the discussion of how enrollment management differs from more narrowly defined admissions practices. They require a search firm that is informed, strategic, collaborative, and well-connected in the worlds of independent school and college admissions. Our strength lies not just in finding new enrollment leaders, but also in empowering schools to embrace an enrollment management mindset.

We're proud of the many schools and clients we have served, the best-fit approaches developed for each one, and the rich relationships we enjoy with them. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the coming year!

Warm regards,

Chris Baker

Chris Baker

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THE BAKER GROUP SEARCH SERVICES DIFFERENCE

1. Has the largest network for identifying senior enrollment and admissions talent.
2. Offers 100+ years of enrollment management (not just admissions) expertise from our team of consultants.
3. Applies 22 years of working with director of admission/enrollment management search committees to be well-positioned to onboard their new enrollment leader and to work closely on a shared enrollment vision.
4. Shares important insights into how to adopt the best effective enrollment management practice for your school.
5. Provides personalized service from The Baker Group President Chris Baker who has worked with over 900 independent schools.
6. Guarantees successful tenures— enrollment leaders who have worked with the Baker Group stay on-average 5 years.

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.



"Chris Baker is an intuitive leader and immensely well-connected and knowledgeable in the world of enrollment management. My leadership was sharpened through conversations with Chris and she found for us exactly the enrollment management leader we needed!"

Jennifer C. Rao
Head of School, Emma Willard School (NY)



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

→ Top Qualities of Chief Enrollment Leaders in 2021

The most important qualities that schools seek in their enrollment leader have not changed much in the 22 years The Baker Group has been conducting enrollment leader searches. Ninety-five percent of the schools conducting searches have chosen “effective communicator” as the most important quality for their chief enrollment officer. For the past two years “commitment to diversity” has climbed the list and is now among the top three qualities. “Sincerity and genuineness” have consistently ranked in the top five.

It was apparent in this year’s searches just how important financial aid experience and experience with net-tuition revenue were. This is consistent with the integrated approach of enrollment management – an approach that grew out of the business office at Boston College in the 1970’s, not the admissions office! This should come as no surprise.

The one quality most often overlooked in hiring the right chief enrollment officer, yet the

common denominator among the best directors of enrollment management I have known, is “entrepreneurial spirit.” I encourage schools to embrace the importance of entrepreneurial spirit when hiring their next enrollment leader. The excerpts below help clarify why this trait is so important.

ABOUT ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Jacquelyn Smith, a writer for Forbes observes: “Entrepreneurial spirit is a mindset. It’s an attitude and approach to thinking that actively seeks out change, rather than waiting to adapt to change. It’s a mindset that embraces critical questioning, innovation, service and continuous improvement.”

Michael Kerr, a highly respected international business speaker and writer, suggests: “Entrepreneurial spirit is about seeing the big picture and thinking like an owner...It’s being agile, never resting on your laurels, shaking off the cloak of complacency and seeking out new opportunities. It’s about

taking ownership and pride in your organization.”

Fred Engelfried highlighted with humor in a recent Chief Executive article, “First, regardless of how big a business may grow, an entrepreneur is likely to continue an acquired early habit of opening the mail. Second, and better yet, the most feared time in an entrepreneurial environment are Mondays or the day the ‘boss’ returns from a trip because much of what he/she had laid out before leaving has been left in the dust and newly inspired initiatives have accompanied the return.”



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

→ The Baker Group can review them with you.

Get in touch:

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Three Essential Questions when hiring a search firm to help with a director of enrollment management/ director of admissions search:

1. Who will be handling the search from start to finish? And, what is their experience with enrollment management?
2. How well does the search firm understand the scope of leadership skills needed for this role and the strategic, operational, and financial importance of the director of enrollment management/ director of admissions?
3. How will the search firm help elevate enrollment management thinking at your school and help with the transition of the new senior enrollment leader?



Have You Completed the Enrollment Management Grade Report?

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

Contact us to receive a copy of TBG’s Enrollment Grade Report for you to assess how your school “measures up” with standard enrollment management practices.

→ From Our 2020-2021 Search Clients

Hear what your colleagues have to say.

“Our work with Chris was seamless – from developing the position statement, to attracting candidates to the finalist phase, we couldn’t be happier with our collaboration with The Baker Group. She recruited strong candidates to our process and supported our search committee every step of the way. We landed our first choice and we couldn’t have done it without Chris’ guidance and support.”

Sally Keidel
Head of School, Agnes Irwin School (PA)

“I’m so pleased that I used Chris Baker for our search for the director of admissions and financial aid. She is incredibly well-connected and knowledgeable, runs a great search, and she is fun to talk to. She would be the first person I would recommend if you are searching for this position.”

Ron Kim
Head of School, Bishop’s School (CA)



“From the first call to follow up, Chris and her team were attentive, thorough, and took the necessary time to ensure that the right fit was there for the culture of our school. Despite the constraints presented by the pandemic, Chris went above and beyond in tending to our needs and requests and the result was a wonderful partnership that resulted in placing a director of enrollment management that is the perfect fit. We could not be happier and highly recommend Chris and her team.”

William V. Webb
Head of School, Fountain Valley School (CO)

“Chris Baker was everything we could have hoped for in a consultant. She communicated clearly and often, she presented us with a formidable pool of candidates, and she led us through a process that resulted in a fantastic outcome for Pomfret School. She was an exceptional professional and reliable partner, and she did so at a price point that put our CFO at ease! I appreciate deeply her candor, focus, and collegiality, and would recommend her (and have) strongly and with no reservations as a consultant in the realm of admissions.”

Tim Richards
Head of School, Pomfret School (CT)

→ Baker Group 2020-2021 Searches



We currently have several active searches on our website:

→ thebakergroup.com/director-searches



CONGRATULATIONS to 2020 and 2021 Baker Group Search Appointees

1. **Agnes Irwin School (Rosemont, PA)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Allison Price, Former Director of Enrollment, Tatnall School (DE) and Derryfield School (NH)
2. **Bancroft School (Worcester, MA)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Susie Horan, Associate Dir of Admissions, Chapel Hill-Chauncey Hall (MA)
3. **The Benjamin School (North Palm Beach, FL)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Amy Jablonskii, Director of Admissions and Enrollment, Hewitt School (NY)
4. **The Bishop's School (La Jolla, CA)** • Director of Admissions and Financial Aid • **Appointed:** Vivien Mallick, Director of Admissions Operations, Phillips Academy Andover (MA)
5. **Buckingham, Browne, and Nichols School (Cambridge, MA)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Jorge Delgado, Associate Director of Admissions, Brandeis University (MA)
6. **Darrow School (New Lebanon, NY)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Kristen Kaschub, Director of Advancement and External Affairs, Besant Hill, (CA), and Northfield Mt. Hermon School (MA)
7. **Detroit Country Day School (Oakland County, MI)** • Director of Enrollment Mgt. and Financial Aid • **Appointed:** Imad Zahr, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, Kings Academy, Jordan
8. **Emma Willard School (Troy, NY)** • Head of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Kristen Mariotti, Assistant Head for Enrollment & Strategy Stoneleigh-Burnham School (MA)
9. **Friends Academy (Locust Valley, NY)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Taisha Thompson, Director of Enrollment Management, Ethical Culture Fieldston School (NY)
10. **Fountain Valley (Colorado Springs CO)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Lindsey Ratliff, Director of Admissions, Kimball Union Academy (NH)
11. **Hackley School (Tarrytown, NY)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Sheila Hicks-Rotella, Associate Director of Admissions, Riverdale Country School (NY)
12. **Hewitt School (New York, NY)** • Director of Admissions & Enrollment • **Appointed:** Melissa Hong, Director of Lower School Admissions, Avenues (NY)
13. **Lawrence Academy (Groton, MA)** • Dean of Enrollment and Admissions
14. **Moravian Academy (Bethlehem, PA)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Torsie Judkins, Director of Admission and Enrollment, International School of Brooklyn (NY)
15. **MYSA Micro School (Washington, DC)** • Director of Enrollment, Advancement & Creative Expansion • **Appointed:** Marina Eisenberg, Director of Bilingual Public Charter School (DC)
16. **Nichols School (Buffalo, NY)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Peter Wickman, Director of Admissions, White Mountain School (NH)
17. **Pomfret School (Pomfret, CT)** • Director of Enrollment Management and Director of Admissions • **Appointed:** Susan Mantilla-Goin, Associate Director of Admission, Fay School (MA); Peter Anderson, DEM at Episcopal Academy (PA)
18. **Vermont Academy (Saxtons River, VT)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** John Ettore, Assistant Director of International Admissions, University of Delaware (DE)
19. **Walnut Hill School for the Arts (Natick, MA)** • Director of Admissions and Financial Aid • **Appointed:** Karen Loder, Interim Director of Enrollment Management, St. Timothy's School (MD)
20. **White Mountain School (Bethlehem, NH)** • Director of Enrollment Management • **Appointed:** Phillip Dunbridge, Assistant Head, Rivermont Collegiate (IA)

LET THE BAKER GROUP HELP YOU DEFINE YOUR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT NEEDS AND IDENTIFY CANDIDATES WHO MATCH THOSE QUALITIES.

Join The Baker Group email list.
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The Baker Group Search Clients 2020 and 2021



