



## THE VALUE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT CORE TEAM

By

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*PLEASE NOTE: This article will make much greater sense if you have read the previous month's article on "Development Infrastructure".*

In last month's article, we introduced the Development Infrastructure Chart. One of the key components of that chart was the "Core Team." This group of people can become the most important addition to a Catholic school's development effort, if we understand what their role is and how they can relate to the overall development effort.

Years ago, I was conducting a two-day development workshop in the Diocese of San Jose. At the end of the first day, there was a principal who approached me, and she had an excellent perspective. She said, " Mr. Donaldson, everything you are talking about certainly makes sense. But, who is going to do all of this development work? We cannot afford a development director, and I certainly do not have the time to do it. What are your suggestions?"

This was a great question, and one to which I did not have an immediate answer. However, over the next few months, we brainstormed ideas here at the company, and eventually came up with one of the most practical suggestions since we opened the doors sixteen years ago. The Development Core Team.

Please, this is not to be confused with a development committee or an advisory group who sits in the "back seat" and gives out advice and orders. This is a "roll up your sleeves" group that becomes the "right arm" of the development operation. By way of Q & A format, we would like to explain this to the reader.

**Q1: What is the Development Core Team in a Catholic school?**

**A1:** The Core Team that works with the development efforts of a Catholic school is a group of 15 - 18 dedicated and committed people who create, implement and sustain the development processes. The initial thrust is toward the following:

- Deciding on the need and rationale for development
- Assuring the commitment level
- Understanding Catholic School Development
  - † 7 I approach
- Introducing development to the school community
- Identifying the development challenges the school faces
- Conducting input sessions with parents and alumni

The major focus of the Development Core Team is to work closely with the administration, and, if there is personnel in place, to work with the development officer(s). The real value of the Core Team is serving as the implementers of the plans that are created. They guide and direct these processes.

**Q2: Who should be on the Core Team?**

**A2:** The people who serve on the Core Team should come from the "first ripple out." They are usually inner circle members already and leaders in the school. They must be positive, mission-driven individuals who strongly believe in the school and where it is going. They should be able to work in a team setting, and be true team players. At least one-half of the members should be able to speak well in front of a small or large group of people -- especially as this applies to teaching others what development is all about and what the development efforts are in your Catholic school. Besides the administration, you could have representation from:

- Faculty and staff
- Boards
- Parent leaders
- Alumni leaders
- Parish leaders (if applicable)
- Key donor(s) -- actual or potential

After the initial meeting, it may be necessary to add or amend the original list in order to get good representation. It will be important to have the names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of the members of this team, so they can stay informed every step of the way.

**Q3: What are their roles and responsibilities?**

**A3:**

- To serve as the "steering wheel" to the development process - help decide what needs to be done and then do it
- To provide background information and any historical perspective that may be needed as the school moves through the development processes
- To identify people in the school who will be asked to get involved in this development effort:
- To help invite these people to become involved
  - Input sessions
  - Planning Teams

- Financial leaders

- To serve as spokespersons for the development efforts in case anyone in the school wishes to find out more about it
- To share any concern or issue that needs to be discussed before it may reach the problem stage out in the school community
- To honor the confidentiality of the information that is discussed in this Core Team -- especially as it concerns other individual members of the school community
- To serve in leadership positions when asked to do so -- for example, to help facilitate input sessions or small group meetings
- To offer news and bulletin information that would be pertinent to the development efforts
- To always remain positive and vision-driven

**Q4: Who selects and invites the Core Team members?**

- A4:**
- The administration “hand selects” these folks. The president, principal, pastor, development director and any other key school leader usually sits down and comes up with a list of twenty people. Usually, these people are already leaders in the school, and because this development effort is so important, they need to be invited to step forward and possibly even drop something else with which they are working.
  - The invitation is done one on one and should be extended by the “honcho” whoever that is. Usually the pastor, president or principal.
  - Please understand that this is not a team that is open for membership to anyone. This is a select group who will roll up their sleeves and make things happen.

**Q5: What are the keys to a successful Development Core Team?**

- A5:** We usually look for the following:
- Committed -- not just interested
  - Members are prompt and on time for meetings.
  - Meetings begin on time and end on time and are scheduled for months in advance
  - There is an agenda for each meeting.
  - There is a Report from each meeting with the results shared with team members before the next meeting.
  - Team members respect each other's opinions -- although they may not always agree on everything.
  - The Core Team is geared toward four major areas:
    - Helping guide and facilitate the development processes
    - Offering key suggestions for success
    - Helping implement key strategies
    - Continuing to educate and inform all school groups on what is going on with the development effort

- All ideas are discussed out in the open, and conversations do not continue into the "parking lot" with hidden agendas. The Core Team must be solid and members must trust one another.
- The mission of the Development Core Team should be created, and it must be clear to all.

This is a very important group of men and women. If there is a development director in place, they can work right alongside. If there is no one on board, then they can be the pioneers of the development efforts. Out of all the groups that Catholic schools will assemble for their development growth, this Core Team is the most important.

*If you have further questions, please e-mail Mr. Donaldson at [ispd@aol.com](mailto:ispd@aol.com) or please visit ISPD's web site at [www.ispd.com](http://www.ispd.com).*

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