

Student Recruitment and Marketing

SCSC New School Boot Camp
12-2-15

Elisa A. Falco, *VP of School Services*
Allen Mueller, *Executive Director, New Schools Georgia*



CONTENTS

- ✓ Statute Review
- ✓ Considerations for Enrollment
- ✓ Marketing your Charter School
- ✓ Policy Implications
- ✓ Common Mistakes from the Field



Your advocate for better schools.

CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT OF 1998

Who's eligible to apply?

- Shall enroll students who reside in the attendance zone.
- Attendance zone is specified in the charter.
- Submits timely application (specified in the charter)

How can we choose our students?

- Random selection process if applications exceed program, class, grade, or building
- Can not discriminate on any basis that would be illegal if used by a school system

How can students withdraw?

- Students may withdraw without penalty from a charter at any time and enroll in the local school system school.
- Students expelled for disciplinary action at the charter school may enroll at the local school under the disciplinary policy of the local system.

ENROLLMENT PREFERENCES

- Define Enrollment Preferences
- Enrollment Preference Timing
 - Only during open enrollment period?
 - Year Round?
 - Give example for enrollment preference timing

ENROLLMENT PREFERENCES

SCSC ALLOWABLE PREFERENCES

- ◆ Pre-lottery enrollment priorities
- ◆ Enrollment priorities during the lottery
- ◆ Enrollment priorities must be used in the order provided in the charter contract
- ◆ Sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up charter school,
- ◆ A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school;

FEDERAL ALLOWABLE PREFERENCES FOR CSP FUNDING

- ◆ Students currently enrolled in the school.
- ◆ Siblings of students already admitted to or attending the same charter school
- ◆ Children of charter board members and full-time teachers



Your advocate for better schools.

FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL GRANT ELIGIBILITY

- ◆ Implementation and Dissemination
 - ◆ If a school has enrollment preferences outside the allowable federal preferences, then the school is NOT eligible.
 - ◆ No high school clusters
 - ◆ No sibling preferences at a different school
 - ◆ Children of part-time faculty



Your advocate for better schools.

CHARTER CONTRACT

- ◆ Charter contract includes:
 - ◆ Open Enrollment & Admissions
 - ◆ *Attendance zone*
 - ◆ *Application*
 - ◆ *Random lottery*
 - ◆ *Statutory enrollment priorities*



Your advocate for better schools.

STATE BOARD RULE GUIDANCE

- ◆ **SBOE Rule Guidance has the following provisions:**
 - ◆ May not use **admission** criteria or **admission** applications that would not be used at a traditional public school
 - ◆ May not use **admissions** applications that require submission of letters of recommendation, essays, resumes, other narrative summaries of student's school or community activities, grades, test scores, attendance record, or disciplinary history
 - ◆ **Admissions** applications may only be used for the purpose of verifying residency within attendance zone, for purposes of planning for services, may ask for previous services received (SPED, ELL)
 - ◆ School may provide info. related to mission, vision, curricular requirements, academic and behavioral expectations.



Your advocate for better schools.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ How long you want the period to last (first year and on-going...they may be different).
- ◆ Does your authorizer require notification of enrollment at a particular time?
- ◆ Formulate the PROCESS before the admissions/enrollment period...develop, adopt and publish policies related to:
 - ◆ Time period of enrollment process
 - ◆ Forms
 - ◆ Documentation
 - ◆ Waiting lists
 - ◆ Communication
 - ◆ Deadlines for submission or acceptance of slots
 - ◆ Twins, multiples, multiple children in the same grade
 - ◆ Required method of submission (mail, email, fax, etc.)
 - ◆ How/where you will post info.



Your advocate for better schools.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Forms needed:
 - **Admissions Application form (pre lottery)**
 - Should only include name, residency, grade, siblings.
 - Should absolutely NOT require info. related to race, special programs (SPED, etc.) or any other info. that could be construed as possibly a discriminatory factor
 - **Enrollment form (post lottery)**
 - May include all other information necessary for enrollment
 - Align data requested with data fields in SIS
- Practical matters such as:
 - How people access forms
 - Where they submit them
 - Staff to handle the process
 - Publicizing (newspaper, newsletter, website, etc.)
 - Costs (copying, publishing notifications, refreshments, venue rental if lottery is required, etc.)



Your advocate for better schools.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ Transparency
 - ◆ Public notification with plenty of time provided
 - ◆ Date (and time) stamps for registration and enrollment forms
 - ◆ Must follow FERPA regulations
 - ◆ May disclose/post directory information (name, grade level) during enrollment
 - ◆ But, must provide notice that it will be disclosed/posted and parent must have adequate time to request non-disclosure
 - ◆ Suggest providing notice on registration form and directions on how to request non-disclosure.
 - ◆ Can also assign student code rather than posting names
 - ◆ If a lottery is necessary...
 - ◆ Have a 3rd party non-school individual draw names
 - ◆ Read lottery directions aloud and provide opportunity to ask questions before beginning
 - ◆ Use a glass bowl or wire basket
 - ◆ May use computer program (consider cost, accuracy, etc..)
 - ◆ Read every name/number BEFORE it goes in the bowl
 - ◆ Write the names large on posted charts for all to see
 - ◆ Video the event and save it!



Your advocate for better schools.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ Twins, Multiples, and Students in Same Grade
 - ◆ Define “sibling” in your policy
 - ◆ Suggest custodial relationship
 - ◆ Suggest living in a household or joint custody
 - ◆ How will you treat twins, multiples, and students in same grade?
 - ◆ Each child gets own ticket?
 - ◆ Each child shares one ticket?
 - ◆ If one child is pulled, are others guaranteed a spot...what if they were the last child pulled and there isn't space?
 - ◆ Consider “fairness” for other students in the lottery (i.e., does your decision make it more likely for the twin, multiple, or students in the same grade to get pulled?
 - ◆ Does your decision negatively impact the family of twins, multiples, or students in the same grade?

GENERAL ENROLLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

◆ Wait Lists

◆ What does your charter say about priority?

- ◆ How will you manage a wait list with various priority categories?
- ◆ Suggest multiple wait lists prioritized according to your charter...

◆ Do you have a policy in place for notification of open positions and required timing to accept the slot?

◆ Do your wait lists carry from year to year or do individuals have to re-register each year?



Your advocate for better schools.

LOTTERY PREPARATION (I)

- **Consider maximum attendance**
 - Avoid potential conflicts with times, days and community events
 - Evenings
 - Weekends
 - Location
 - School Timeline

- **Site**
 - Seating
 - Tables for materials
 - Visibility
 - A/V accommodations
 - Adhere to legal facility requirements (maximum occupancy)



Your advocate for better schools.

LOTTERY PREPARATION (2)

- **Attendees**

- Applicants
- Board, teachers, administrators, staff
- Community leaders
- GCSA
- Press
- Authorizer
- A/V Equipment

- **Drawing**

- 3rd Party Person to read rules, call names, certify the lottery
- 1-3 people for administration
- Must be transparent to all (glass, random number generator, lottery balls, etc)
- Read aloud all rules and allow questions before starting (Rules should be the same as published prior to the lottery)
- Read out names BEFORE putting them in
- Post priority names and read aloud reason for priority
- Read names aloud and write on paper visible to all



Your advocate for better schools.

POST-LOTTERY PERIOD

◆ Things to Consider

- ◆ Cut off date for new enrollment
- ◆ Enrollment Preference Waitlist
- ◆ Accepting Enrollment Forms Year Round
- ◆ Process and timeframe for giving away an unclaimed slot
 - ◆ Notification process needs to be communicated to each applicant multiple times, pre-enrollment, lottery, post-enrollment
- ◆ Process to determine students who lose their eligibility to attend
- ◆ Re-enrollment notification process



Your advocate for better schools.

Marketing your Charter School



True or False?

***“If You Build it They Will
Come....”***



Your advocate for better schools.

Why Marketing?

The “Bad News”

- Even with nearly 40,000 estimated children on waiting lists for charters, marketing is needed to get the word out about your school.

The “Good News”

- With a little bit of planning you can make a small marketing budget go a long way.

TRUE OR FALSE?

**You Must Hire an Expensive
Consulting Firm to Create your
School's *Marketing Plan*?**



Your advocate for better schools.

FALSE!

A Marketing Plan can be created internally with a few simple steps.

TIP: Create a Marketing Committee of volunteers, parents and other community members to help create and execute your plan.



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 1 – Know Your School

- Identify 2-3 points that explain what makes your school unique.
 - Agree on these points internally.
 - Make sure these points coincide with your mission.



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 1: Know your school

What Makes Our School Unique?	Who Does this Appeal to? (i.e. parents, students)
#1:	
#2:	
#3:	



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 2 – Establish Marketing Goals

- Set a maximum of three, specific, measurable marketing goals for the year.
- Make sure your internal “stakeholders” understand and buy into these goals.



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 2: Establish Marketing Goals for the Year

Marketing Goals	Target Audience	Completion Date
Example: Secure 500 applications for enrollment and increase applications for enrollment among minority students by 10% from last year.	Parents	March 15, 2016
Goal #1:		
Goal #2:		
Goal #3:		



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 3 – Identify Your Target Audiences

- Identify up to three, specific target audiences
 - i.e. parents of pre-schoolers who will be entering Kindergarten in 2016 – who reside in your approved attendance zone
- Determine how to reach these audiences.
- Think about what appeals to these audiences, what is important to them?



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 3: Identify Target Audiences

Target Audience	What is important to this audience	How can we reach this audience?	What action do we want the audience to take?
<p>Example: Parents of pre-school aged children who will be entering Kindergarten in 2009. Preferably these parents live in Southeast Aurora.</p>	<p>Quality education, more individualized attention from teachers, hands on/project based learning environment.</p>	<p>Preschools MOPS Groups Kids Expos</p>	<p>Attend an informational meeting to learn more about our school.</p>
<p>Audience #1</p>			
<p>Audience #2</p>			
<p>Audience #3</p>			



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 4 – Develop Clear Message

- Create value proposition
 - This is a combination of what makes your school unique and how it will benefit your target audience based on their needs.
- Develop 2-3 key messages
 - These support the value proposition and motivate target audience to take action.
- List supporting points
 - Use data-based details and facts to back up key messages.



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 4: Develop Clear Messages

Value Proposition

(combination of what makes your school unique/and benefit to target audience based on their needs)

Key Message #1:

Key Message #2:

Key Message #3:

Supporting Points:

Supporting Points:

Supporting Points:



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 5 – Create Marketing Tactics/Execute

- Develop specific tactics to meet each of your marketing goals.
 - i.e. Send direct mail piece, place fliers at preschools, host informational/community meeting, etc.
- List which target audience each tactic applies to, and what action you want them to take as a result of tactic.
- Determine cost of each tactic.
- Assign staff or volunteer to execute each tactic.



Your advocate for better schools.

Step 5: Create Marketing Tactics

Target Audience	Type of Marketing	Description (include call to action)	Cost	Responsibility



Your advocate for better schools.

Marketing Tips

- Website
 - Have an easy-to-navigate website and keep it up-to-date.
 - Ensure that website is consistent with other marketing materials and incorporates key messages.
 - Make sure upcoming events are easy to find on your site.
 - Make sure it's easy to find enrollment information on your site.



Your advocate for better schools.

Marketing Tips

■ Media Relations

- Find out who the education reporters are in your area and send them info about your school at the beginning of each school year.
- Create an annual media calendar with story ideas and send a press release or announcement every 1-2 months.
 - School awards, student achievement, special events, etc.
- Invite media to your school's events, such as "back-to-school night," student performances, etc.
- Take advantage of tools such as Yourhub.com if available in your area.



Your advocate for better schools.

Marketing Tips

- Build Relationships with Other Charters
 - Especially if you are a high school, get to know the K-8 charters in your area - invite their students to shadow your students for a day.
 - Especially if that schools curriculum/mission is similar to yours.



Your advocate for better schools.

Policy Implications

- School attendance zone
- Student recruitment
- School admissions
- Transfers and withdrawals
- Student records
- Before and after school programs
- Clubs and extra curricular programs
- Technology acceptable use policy
- Parent and student complaints and grievances
- Lottery
- School day/year
- Others??



Your advocate for better schools.

Common Mistakes

Common Enrollment Mistakes

- Conflating Admissions with Enrollment Forms
 - asking for too much, or for the wrong information
 - “pre-enrolling” students
- Imposing withdrawal penalties, explicitly or implicitly
- Not understanding the difference between state and federal enrollment preferences
 - Schools may choose to forego federal grant money, but this should be a conscious strategy



Your advocate for better schools.

Common Mistakes

- Insufficient Lottery Documentation
 - Each step must be rehearsed and discussed
 - Publish process and results on website
 - Approach with the thought that you may need to “reproduce” process later

Not Considering Funding-Cycle Timing

- The importance of “backfilling”



Your advocate for better schools.

Common Mistakes

Common Marketing Mistakes

- Targeting to the Point of Exclusion
- Focusing on the Negative
- Not combining Marketing and Outreach
- Not Utilizing Existing Connections
- Not Diversifying Marketing Approach



Your advocate for better schools.

Additional Resources

- National Charter Schools Institute
 - Measurement: The Key to Charter School Marketing by Brian Carpenter
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
 - Public Charter School Lottery Day Event Tool Kit



Your advocate for better schools.

Contact Information

- Elisa A. Falco, VP of School Services
 - efalco@gacharters.org



Your advocate for better schools.