

RISE

Results in Independent Schools E-newsletter
Shining a Light on Fundraising

Alexander Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

First Things First



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www.fundraisingcounsel.com



from the stand-up desk of
David H. King | President & CEO

Year-End Giving in a Pandemic

In normal times, most development offices function on a natural, predictable calendar-driven rhythm, with springtime solicitations, a summer slowdown, fall solicitations, special events and the traditional year-end appeal. But since March, nothing about this year has been normal. With so many of our usual fundraising tactics upended due to COVID-19, year-end giving will be more critical now than ever before.

This is typically the time when development teams plan for their year-end appeal. With many development officers still working from home and given the unknowns of how the pandemic will continue to unfold, this year's processes will be more difficult than usual. Many schools are struggling to create a safe and effective environment for students that will be beneficial for all involved. At this point, institutions are simply focusing on how to hold on and make it through these challenging times as they seek to address long-term financial survival, workforce availability, and on-going efforts to provide education to students.

As you contemplate your strategy for the year end, here are a few practical tips to consider:

Be Timely. Donors will receive a larger than usual amount of solicitation mail this fall, especially since this is an election year. Plan for your letter to arrive in mid-October, giving you the opportunity to send a second, more focused appeal to a smaller list around Thanksgiving. Be sure to plan around the challenges of mass printing if you're not in the office. If you use a mail-house, don't forget that your vendor's schedule might be flooded with extra political mail.

Be Transparent. Your alumni and other donors understand that this is not a typical year and that your need is greater than ever. Without going too far into the weeds, tell them the story of how your school has been impacted by the pandemic. Focus on how you've adapted to provide much-needed classes and activities to students, more so than the financials. Importantly, tell stories of how you are impacting lives.

Help donors to understand how their gift will advance your school's mission, not just balance the budget.

Be Optimistic. The fundraising guru Harold J. Seymour wrote that an effective appeal must both stir the mind and warm the heart. Talk about how your school will come through this ordeal like a phoenix rising from the ashes. This pandemic will be over someday, and your school will be stronger and more efficient having come through it.

Be Realistic. While 2019 was a strong year for giving to educational institutions, it is difficult to predict how donors will respond at the end of this unusual year. Although there is much pressure for your year-end appeal to perform well, set your goal conservatively to manage realistic expectations.

As we look back on 2020 and the disruption to our comfortable rhythms, perhaps we'll realize that the changes we were forced into by the pandemic resulted in fresh new approaches that found their way into our new status quo – a worthy outcome from the difficulties we're living through today.

Your alumni and volunteers care deeply about your school and its success. As you undertake your important year-end fundraising, know that all of us at **Alexander Haas** wish you the best and always welcome the opportunity to help if needed.

It starts with an email.....
and ends with 30 minutes of
fundraising counsel*
info@fundraisingcounsel.com
*free time

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TODAY**

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Covid Impact on Independent Schools

COVID-19's Impact on Enrollment

Some independent schools have seen kids switch from public to independent school in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Atlanta, **The Davis Academy**, had a waitlist as the school year began. The **Atlanta Jewish Academy** reported its enrollment is also up. **The Epstein School** said the school has seen an increase in applications from parents interested in switching their children's school.

Some school systems protocols for virtual school at the end of last year's school term is one reason for the move. "What ended up happening was parents had to teach their kids. There is a reason why I'm not a schoolteacher. It was so stressful," said a parent moving her children to a private school. As public school districts in the US tentatively reopen with hybrid or remote models, parents are switching to private schools, which are mostly operating in-person.

Scott Bohan, dean of admission at **St. Paul's School** in Concord, MA, said back in the spring there was concern that families wouldn't send their kids to private school during a pandemic. But those fears turned out to be unwarranted when summer hit and his phone started to ring — and ring, and ring — with people who had not applied to St. Paul's but who wanted to, after they learned their local school system was planning.

"This has probably been the busiest summer I've ever had, fielding phone calls from people trying to get their kids into St. Paul's," Bohan said. "It's been fascinating to see how this has unfolded, from this [enrollment] being a major concern to...we can take many more." *Atlanta Jewish Times, 8-28 & Concord Monitor, 8-22*

Meanwhile, Catholic Leaders Appeal for Support

However, the Catholic Church is struggling to fend off a wave of school closures. According to officials who oversee Catholic education nationally, financial and enrollment shortfalls exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic have forced the permanent closure of more than a 140 Catholic schools in 2020, many of which served low-income, African-American, and immigrant children in urban areas. And with the economic fallout of COVID-related lockdowns making it difficult if not impossible for many students' families to pay tuition fees, the pace of closures has accelerated. In just the last month, five schools in Newark, New Jersey, and 26 in New York City have been targeted for closure.

In an open letter to congressional leaders, USCCB leaders, including Committee on Catholic Education chair Michael C. Barber, Bishop of Oakland, wrote, "By equally supporting children in the non-public school community, you will maintain the integrity of those strong communities, while helping sustain the positive legacy of Catholic schools and their benefit to the common good for generations to come. *PND, 8-11*

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Start planning NOW!

DAVID KING

Alexander-Haas



We Think You Should Know

New Survey Looks at Fundraising Activities

More than half of charitable organizations in the United States are expecting to raise less money in 2020 than they did in 2019, and an equal percentage believe the same will occur in 2021, according to the Association of Fundraising Professionals' (AFP) Coronavirus Response Survey. More than 850 fundraisers in the U.S. participated in the survey distributed to all AFP members in May.

Key Highlights from the Survey

- Compared to the first quarter of 2019, 33% did not see any changes in fundraising totals, while 31% saw increases and 35% saw decreases.
- More than half of respondents—57%—expect to see decreases in giving in the second quarter. Only 25% expect an increase, while 18% believe giving to their charity will remain the same.
- 56% of respondents expect to raise fewer funds in 2020 compared to 2019, while 21% predict organizational funding will increase, and 23% believe fundraising totals will remain the same.
- Almost half of charities report increasing their fundraising activity now because of COVID-19, while 44% will keep their fundraising at normal levels throughout the year. Only 7% of organizations plan to decrease their fundraising.

- When asked which types of fundraising they will focus on more in 2020, 82% of respondents selected activities related to donor retention and stewardship, with 78% of respondents saying they would focus on social media, online and virtual events, and 75% selecting email as a priority.
- 74% of respondents submitted a grant for funding through the CARES Act, and 66% successfully received funding through this legislation. The CARES Act also included a limited universal charitable deduction provision, and 44% are using the new deduction in their fundraising solicitations.
- Nearly 64% have had to cancel at least one fundraising event, and 24% have canceled three or more events. At the same time, more than 50% have switched at least one in-person event to a virtual event, with 14% converting three or more events into online experiences.

We'd Like You To Know

Transforming Institutions

For more than 30 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with some of the largest, and some of the smallest, independent schools that help transform our nations adolescents into our next leaders.

[Our Independent School Client Partners](#)

Our Transforming Fundraising Services

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