



School Management

Executive Summary/Synopsis

A private, Catholic high school in an urban setting struggled to meet growing costs and enrollment goals. As the demographics of the leadership team and the community changed, the sustainability of the school model was called into question.

Background

Spirit Academy was opened in a thriving urban neighborhood in 1952. Built to support a growing number of immigrant families, Spirit was opened "to meet the needs of the day." Housed in and recognized by their archdiocese, the Academy operated as a private institution sponsored by a religious order of Sisters. The all-girls school was a complement to the other single sex options in the neighborhood, primarily supporting graduates of a local Catholic grade school.

The school blossomed. Through the 1960's and 1970's, Spirit Academy educated 1,400 women per year. The school and the alumnae thrived, including a State Supreme Court Justice and a State's Attorney.

In the 1990's, the demographics of their neighborhood changed, resulting in fewer candidates for admission. With less high school aged women in the neighborhood, the enrollment declined. By the early 2000's, there were less than 500 students in the Academy.

In addition, the median household income for the neighborhood made it more challenging for families to afford private tuition. When adjusted for inflation, the neighborhood's median household income shifted from \$9,870 in 1970 (\$80,300 in 2024 dollars) to \$41,884 in 2022 (\$45,175 in 2024 dollars).

Enrollment dropped below 500 students in the early 2000's. The alumnae were still thriving, and the school provided a strong foundation for the students attending.

Case (Problem)

With the changing demographics, the Sisters, the Board, and the Community needed to determine a sustainable path forward or close the school. What option(s) would you recommend?



- ❖ Teams will present to judges in the VJM Performing Arts Center on December 7th
- ❖ Presentation materials must be emailed to Kristen Davis at kdavis@vjmhs.org by 8:00 am on Friday, December 6th
- ❖ Each team will have 10 mins to present
- ❖ Judges will have 5 mins for Q&A at the end
- ❖ Each presentation must contain the following elements (no more than 6 slides total)
 - Team Name and introduction
 - Background Summary
 - Description of the Ethical Challenge
 - Recommendation & Justification
 - Share how your faith guided you in your recommendation

EVALUATION

- ❖ Teams will present to a panel of judges who will score presentations
- ❖ The rubric will be based on concepts within two areas: Content of the Presentation, and Presentation Skills
- ❖ Content of the Presentation will include concepts such as effective description of the ethical dilemma, knowledge of applied ethics within a business setting, and thorough presentation of case information
- ❖ Presentation Skills will include concepts such as thoughtful organization of ideas, effective speaking and professional manner, and judge Q&A responses
- ❖ Points will be deducted for grammatical errors and/or incomplete slides
- ❖ Points will be deducted for presentations over 10 minutes

DRESS CODE

- ❖ Similar to other non-athletic student competitions, such as Forensics and Mock Trial, students should dress in business attire or something similar (blazers, ties, business dresses, etc.)
- ❖ No jeans, sweats, t-shirts, sneakers, casual sandals