



## SAVING A SCHOOL FROM CLOSING

Case Study 109

### *The Situation*

The first Catholic, co-ed high school in Chicago was now plagued by the community opinion that this was a second-rate school -- a place for those rejected by more selective institutions. **This level of cynicism about the school depleted the energy of the principal and her teachers and they were now facing the threat of closing their doors forever.**

The administrators and faculty were also dealing with the challenges that many of the student population presented. Fifty percent of students received free or reduced lunch and 1/3 of students received tuition assistance. **Over 27% of the student body suffered from some type of learning disability.** Their special needs required individualized attention in a special education course, resulting in an extra expense for the school.

The school's staff was affected by the belief that the school was substandard but they wanted to continue doing what they loved so they wanted to make a final attempt to save their school.

### *Work of Best Year Yet*

Nineteen freshmen created plans to have their best year yet. **They met monthly to learn more about goal setting, choice and accountability as they progressed towards their goals.** In addition, we worked with the core of the school – the principal and faculty.

Our work with the staff included defining a clear, focused school-wide vision and support for prioritizing, measurable goals for this most challenging school year. **What made the biggest difference to this team was the tracking of progress towards their goals,** something they never done before!

The principal, while constantly making challenging choices, was coached to hold the vision of the school while progressing her personal goals. The program educated the teachers about ways they could provide the students with the structure and support they needed to have a prosperous, optimistic view of their environment and their future.

### *The Results*

The school is currently open and thriving! The institution has become a viable educational option for the community. The highest attendance ever was reported for the Homecoming Game, and the school as a whole saw a **resurgence of school pride at all levels.**

Donna Price  
Best Year Yet Partner  
973-948-7673  
donna.price@bestyearyet.com



In a new uplifting culture of accountability and accomplishment, the students became proficient at learning from the past, setting powerful goals, and achieving milestones.

Students demonstrated new levels of self-awareness, responsibility and confidence. The institution is achieving a **graduation rate of 96%** with graduates being accepted at such schools as Loyola University, DePaul University and Virginia Military Academy.

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973-948-7673  
[donna.price@bestyearyet.com](mailto:donna.price@bestyearyet.com)