



## **Archdiocese of Denver Colorado Catholic Schools (2004-Present)**

### **Background**

From 1999 to 2003, Catholic schools in northern Colorado experienced a disheartening decline in enrollment, losing 1,100 students and, of course, the tuition revenues they represented. The loss left the schools, their staffs, students and parent supporters alarmed about prospects for the future.

In 2004, the Office of Catholic Schools hired BrandED Consultants Group to help staunch the exodus and to extend its market share by executing a brand strategy and messaging campaign. The relationship between the two entities continues to this day, with BrandED advancing projects to enhance brand implementation and advising on strategies that help the schools adapt to market conditions.

Although the schools had a long tradition of serving their communities, they lacked sufficient data about their brand and the K-12 marketplace. The schools scattered across eight cities in Northern and Central Colorado also lacked a tradition of robustly and consistently marketing Catholic education. For all their adherence to Catholic values and curricula, the schools were unaccustomed to thinking of themselves as part of a larger whole.

### **Enter BrandED Consultants Group**

To arm the Office of Catholic Schools with relevant data, BrandED proposed an extensive research project to establish the following:

1. why families choose public or private schooling
2. why those choosing private schools do or do not send their children to Catholic schools
3. why Catholic families do *not* choose Catholic schools

BrandED began its work by determining stakeholder opinions about the value of a Catholic school education. This involved extensive research with administrators, teachers, faculty, parents and alumni of Catholic schools.

Based on this research, BrandED developed a brand platform focused on a fiscal, philosophical and spiritual investment in Catholic schools.

That done, BrandED drove implementation of the adopted brand strategy by creating a call to action, “Take Another Look” and a new visual identity, shown above, which adds value to Catholic Education and is now embedded throughout 39 schools in eight cities.

## **Results**

Since 2006, BrandED has worked with local school communities to execute the brand strategy. In that time, the brand initiative has spawned a collaborative culture within the school system. That, in turn, has led to improvements in enrollment, retention and fundraising. The brand strategy also gets credit for raising the school system’s credibility at the national level. In 2010 Catholic schools in northern Colorado were granted district accreditation, making them one of only eight Catholic school systems in the United States to attain this status.

Thanks to such successes, BrandED was hired in 2010 to conduct additional research to support a system-wide marketing campaign. That project involves assessing the level of brand awareness among stakeholder groups, evaluating how opinions about Catholic schools have changed since 2004, and gathering the intelligence essential for a successful marketing campaign.

BrandED continues to provide brand strategy consultation to the 39 schools in the District. BrandED is currently developing a social media plan to effectively communicate the District’s brand strategy through emerging media.

Today, BrandED’s work with the Office of Catholic Schools is heralded as the model of brand development for Catholic schools in the United States. BrandED was invited several times to present the case study at the National Catholic Educational Association convention.