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Boston College

Performance Task

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Storyline

Mt Madeen High School is a private, all-boys, Catholic high school. A day-school in a metropolitan area, the school competes with a mix of other private, catholic day-schools, as well as independent day and boarding schools. With over 100 years of history, Mt Madeen enjoys an engaged alumni community and is well-known throughout the state as an elite, selective school with its graduates going on to attend highly-ranked universities. Over the last two decades, the leadership team and the Board of Trustees have revisited on several occasions the possibility of ceasing single-gender enrollment. Across the groups that make up the Mt Madeen community, including the board, students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff, it seems there are both critics and advocates of the school becoming co-educational. The leadership team has just completed an effort to gather resources, information, and feedback to inform the next discussion about the topic.

Challenge

You are a member of the leadership team at Mt Madeen High School writing a memo to the Board of Trustees. Using evidence as you deem appropriate from the documents and resources provided below, write a recommendation regarding whether or not the school should cease single-gender enrollment and why. Address the potential consequences of your recommendation and suggest one or more actions the school should take in light of these consequences.

Document Guide [Ideally presented to each respondent in a randomized order]

- Research Brief Document provided by Mt Madeen administrator to the leadership team summarizing some relevant academic articles and studies to the single-sex versus coed educational decision
- Opinion Article Girls Can Be Mountain Goats, Too: Why Mt Madeen High Needs To Go Coed
- 3. News Article Some single-gender Catholic schools struggle
- 4. Social Media Reactions Twitter Search: "Mtmadeen coed"
- 5. About Us Mt Madeen High School Brochure
- 6. Market Intelligence Competitor School Profiles
- 7. National Catholic Population Data Over Time Interactive Map
- 8. Gathering Data Stakeholder Survey Results

Domain Specification

- 1. Discipline Specific
 - a. Strategic Planning in the Administration of Private Education
 - Operations, goals, and tensions within the administration of a private school
 - ii. Balancing priorities across academics, mission, and commercial/fiscal goals

2. Critical Thinking

- a. Dealing with dilemmas of conflict (Braun et al. 2020)
 - Tradition and connection to past community members (referrals, legacy, donations, board priorities) v. progress and attraction of potential new students (tuition revenue, growth, market value perceptions, innovation/competition, ratings)
 - ii. Historical single-gender policies as discriminatory practices
- Analyze multiple sources of information to evaluate and use evidence (Liu et al. 2014)
 - Compare factual sources like survey data and relevant academic studies to "emotional" sources like comment boards and complaints. Interpret and apply them appropriately
- c. Recognizing the perspectives of relevant stakeholders (Mejía et al. 2019)
 - i. Current students and their parents, alumni and their parents, potential students and their parents, board members, faculty/staff, local community members, affiliated "connectors" – admissions counselors of

- feeder/aspirant schools, contacts at in/externship or experiential learning programs
- ii. Weighing perspectives found through research and variations across and among stakeholder groups
- d. Considering the implications of alternative courses of action (Braun et. al 2020)
 - Potential reactions of stakeholder groups, competitors, influencing bodies and future consequences
- e. Developing, communicating, and supporting a logical argument (Liu et al. 2014)
 - i. Synthesize above facets of CT in a clear and concise argument
 - ii. Appropriately addressing the audience of the memo

Document Meta Data

	Generic CT		Discipline-specific CT	
	Document	Other	Document	Other
Relevance	Single-gender ed		Stakeholder survey	
	news articles		result data	
Trustworthiness	Single-gender ed		Competitor school	Interactive data
	academic studies		profiles	visualizations
Susceptibility to	School marketing	Twitter thread	Stakeholder survey	
judgmental bias	materials		comments/quotes	

Identifier	AA
Source	See below AA1 through AA4
PT Document Title	Mt Madeen High School Research Brief
Document Type	Collection of Academic Article abstracts/summaries
Summary	A series of academic articles gathered by a Mt Madeen administrator
	into a brief for the leadership team to consider in their recommendation
	regarding single-sex or coed enrollment.

Identifier	AA1
Source	Wong, Wang Ivy, Shi, Sylvia Yun, & Chen, Zhansheng. (2018).
	Students from single-sex schools are more gender-salient and more
	anxious in mixed-gender situations: Results from high school and
	college samples. PloS One, 13(12), e0208707–e0208707.
	https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0208707
PT Document Title	Students from single-sex schools are more gender-salient and more
	anxious in mixed-gender situations: Results from high school and
	college samples.
Document Type	Academic Article
Summary	A study found higher gender salience in single-sex school students,
	greater mixed-gender anxiety, and fewer mixed-gender friendships in
	high school and college.
CT Category	+ Relevance
	+ Trustworthy
Support	Coed – The abstract to the article stresses only negatives to single-
	gender education and touches upon the influence of gender segregation.

Identifier	AA2
Source	Anfara Jr., Vincent A. & Mertens, Steven B. (2008) Do Single-Sex
	Classes and Schools Make a Difference?, Middle School Journal, 40:2,
	52-59, DOI: 10.1080/00940771.2008.11461673
PT Document Title	Do Single-Sex Classes and Schools Make a Difference?
Document Type	Academic Article
Summary	A chapter summarizing some of the existing research regarding single-
	sex education found outcomes to be not significant, inconclusive, or
	skeptical. They attribute any found benefits in academic outcomes for
	single-sex education instead to the school context.
CT Category	+ Relevance
	+ Trustworthy
Support	Coed – This article provides an argument that there are no academic
	benefits to continuing the single-gender policies at the school.

Identifier	AA3
Source	Meyer, Peter. (2008). Learning separately: the case for single-sex
	schools. Education Next, 8(1), 10.
PT Document Title	Learning Separately: The Case for Single-Sex Schools
Document Type	Academic Article
Summary	This summary of an article criticizes that the civil rights and feminist movements of the 60's and 70's were directed at converting single-sex schools to coed. They argue it was poorly done and that single-sex schools are a facet of education quality that should remain a choice.
CT Category	+ Relevance + Trustworthy
Support	Single-gender – This article criticizes the coed movements and argues that single-sex schools have not threatened civil rights or feminism.

Identifier	AA4
Source	Belcher, Christy, Frey, Andy, & Yankeelov, Pamela. (2006). The effects
	of single-sex classrooms on classroom environment, self-esteem, and
	standardized test scores. School Social Work Journal, Vol. 31, No. 1.
PT Document Title	The effects of single-sex classrooms on classroom environment, self-
	esteem, and standardized test scores
Document Type	Academic Article
Summary	This study found benefits of single-sex education in an experiment with
	middle school students, including being more attentive, more likely to
	do additional work independently, and have higher self-esteem.
CT Category	+ Relevance
	+ Trustworthy
Support	Single-gender – This article provides arguments supporting the single-
	sex educational environment.

Identifier	OA1
Source	La Camera, Paul. (2017, June 07). Girls Can Be Eagles, Too: Why BC High Needs To Go Coed – WBUR. Retrieved March 27, 2021, from https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2017/06/07/boston-college-high-school-paul-la-camera
	Miller, C. (2019, October 30). 'A very unwelcome feeling': The first women at yale look back. Retrieved April 13, 2021, from https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/30/upshot/yale-first-women-discrimination.html
PT Document Title	Girls Can Be Mountain Goats, Too: Why Mt Madeen High Needs To Go Coed
Document Type	Opinion Article
Summary	An alum of the high school writes an opinion piece about why the school should begin coed admissions. They cite college-level examples of successful transitions from an all-male catholic school to coed and argue why girls should be included.
CT Category	+ Relevance = Trustworthy
Support	Coed – The author focuses on the benefits and morality of the school admitting women

Identifier	NA1
Source	Vaznis, J. (2017, July 05). Some single-gender Catholic schools are
	flourishing while others struggle - The Boston Globe. Retrieved March
	27, 2021, from https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/07/05/some-
	single-gender-catholic-schools-are-flourishing-while-others-
	struggle/50Pn4jHZJTCSLUiKWCRwuL/story.html
PT Document Title	Some single-gender Catholic schools struggle
Document Type	News Article
Summary	A news piece about many of the catholic schools in the area. It details
	one all-male school's decision to offer a girls' division and several other
	schools are mentioned as having to make strategic decisions in the wake
	of declining enrollment. The high school of focus is mentioned along
	with some of the political ramifications of their potential switch to coed.
CT Category	+ Relevance
	+ Trustworthy
Support	Neutral – Points of this more "factual" piece could be used for either
	side of the argument

Identifier	SM1
Source	Twitter. Search "BCHigh coed."
	https://twitter.com/search?q=bchigh%20coed&src=typed_query
PT Document Title	Twitter Search: "Mtmadeen coed"
Document Type	Social Media Thread
Summary	A collection of all tweets that mention both "Mtmadeen" and "coed"
	that includes opinions from students, community members, and news
	sources.
CT Category	- Relevance
	- Trustworthy
Support	Single-gender - There are more negative reactions to the potential coed
	decision than positive ones. If this source were to be used, it would
	likely be to support the decision to maintain single-gender enrollment.

Identifier	ID1
Source	Boston College High School. (2018). BC High Viewbook. Retrieved
	March 27, 2021, from
	https://issuu.com/bchigh/docs/viewbook_web_ready_pdf
PT Document Title	Mt Madeen High School Brochure
Document Type	Internal Document
Summary	A brochure that would be distributed by the admissions office of Mt
	Madeen High School highlighting their promising statistics and photos
	of the school, campus, and students.
CT Category	- Relevance
	- Trustworthy
Support	Neutral - This piece will only to provide background information on the
	school as well as community-member perspectives.

Identifier	ID2
Source	U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National
	Center for Education Statistics. Table Generator. "Private School
	Universe Survey (PSS)." http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/
PT Document Title	Competitor School Profiles
Document Type	Internal Document
Summary	A memo prepared for the Board of Trustees meeting that includes
	available statistics about competitor schools currently and over time.
CT Category	= Relevance
	+ Trustworthy
Support	Coed - A respondent familiar with the field will be able to learn about
	where the school stands within their competitor group, as well as the
	enrollment strength brought to schools who ceased single-gender
	admissions, to support a coed policy.

Identifier	ID3			
Source	Fath, D. (2020, March 18). Catholic Proportion of Population - Tableau			
	Public. Retrieved April 14, 2021, from			
	https://public.tableau.com/profile/denise.fath#!/vizhome/			
	CatholicProportionofPopulation/Sheet1			
PT Document Title	National Catholic Population Data Over Time - Interactive Map			
Document Type	Internal Document			
Summary	An interactive map that will allow someone to view the changes in the			
	proportion of Catholic people by state over time from 1980 to 2019.			
CT Category	- Relevance			
	+ Trustworthy			
Support	Neutral - Although someone might be able to extract that the Catholic			
	population has experienced a general decreasing trend nationwide, this			
	document is a distractor and is the least relevant to the task.			

Identifier	ID4
Source	
PT Document Title	Stakeholder Survey Results
Document Type	Internal Document
Summary	A presentation prepared for the Board of Trustees meeting that
	summarizes the survey responses of community members about Mt
	Madeen and the potential to go coed.
CT Category	+ Relevance
	- Trustworthy
Support	Single-gender - The community is mixed, but most of the feedback is
	negative regarding the potential to cease single-gender enrollment. The
	slides highlight both the potential market of new families to a coed
	school, but also the threats of the change (loss of tuition and donor
	revenue).

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 https://twitter.com/search?q=bchigh%20coed&src=typed_query
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MT MADEEN HIGH SCHOOL

Students from single-sex schools are more gender-salient and more anxious in mixed gender situations: Results from high school and college samples

Wang Ivy Wong, Sylvia Yun Shi, Zhansheng Chen

Abstract

Gender segregation exists in all walks of life. One of the most common forms of institutionalized gender segregation is perhaps single-sex schooling... We report two systematic studies on gender salience, mixed-gender friendships, and mixed-gender anxiety on 2059 high school students and 456 college students from single-sex or coeducational schools. Even with demographic background controlled, results suggested higher gender salience in single-sex school students in the high school sample, and greater mixed-gender anxiety and fewer mixed-gender friendships in these students in both samples... Mixed-gender friendships, though not gender salience, appeared to engage in a possibly bi-directional mediation relationship with mixed-gender anxiety that is consistent with a vicious cycle of escalating anxiety and lack of mixed-gender interaction among single-sex school students...

The effects of single-sex classrooms on classroom environment, self-esteem, and standardized test scores

Christy Belcher, Andy Frey, and Pamela Yankeelov

Abstract

This study employed an experimental, post-test-only design to determine the effect single-sex configurations have on classroom environment, self-esteem, and standardized test scores. Sixth graders (middle school) were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Students in the single-sex classrooms were significantly more attentive and interested in classroom activities, more likely to do additional work independently, and also perceived their classroom environments to be more orderly than students in coeducational classrooms. Students participating in single-sex classrooms also had significantly higher school-related self-esteem than students in the control group. No significant differences were found in students' standardized test scores.

MT MADEEN HIGH SCHOOL

Learning Separately: The Case for Single-Sex Schools

Peter Meyer

Summary

While there are no reliable counts of single-gender schools in the first half of the 20th century, best estimates are that most were schools for white boys. Many of the girls' schools that did exist early on served as "finishing" schools rather than preparation for college. In the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights and feminist movements combined their equality crusade fervor to "open" previously exclusive men's schools to women, and white schools to blacks... Great efforts were made to make schools more girl-friendly...which seemed to succeed only in creating a "boys crisis." ... The resurgence of single-sex schooling has been the result of hard-fought battles to recapture the benefits of difference and take advantage of educational choice... But the dire predictions about the resegregation of public schools and turning back the clock on civil rights gains for women never materialized. While various groups threatened legal actions, none have materialized. It is a new world, especially for women, and serious educators seem to realize that single-sex schools and classrooms are not a threat, but another arrow in the quiver of education quality.

Do Single-Sex Classes and Schools Make a Difference?

Vincent A. Anfara Jr. & Steven B. Mertens

Conclusion

The benefits of single-sex schooling remain unclear (Harker, 2000; Warrington, 2002). The research comparing the merits of single-sex education and coeducation has not yielded definitive answers. In spite of this conclusion, in 2002 and again in 2004, the Bush administration signaled its intent to promote single-sex schools... Simply put, when a single-sex school works, we are not exactly sure why it works... What seems to get lost in the search for definitive evidence is that the exact nature and benefits of single-sex education are highly contextual. School characteristics (e.g., class size, percentage of male and female teachers), teaching styles and instructional practices, and the curriculum, among other factors, all have significant effects on students' achievement. It depends on the students, their backgrounds, abilities, and needs... When these factors are controlled for, the academic differences between students in single-sex education and coeducational schools are neither significant nor conclusive (Lingard et al., 2001).

Girls Can Be Mountain Goats, Too: Why Mt Madeen High Needs To Go Coed

Mt Madeen High School has a distinguished history of serving the boys and young men of our city. My father was one of its beneficiaries some 90 years ago and I a generation later.

Catholic families, smaller than in generations past, now look beyond the traditional parochial schools for their children's education. In addition, as generous as Mt Madeen High might be with its student aid, tuition has reached a breaking point for most families. These forces, and others, have contributed to declining applications to the school in recent years.

The trend has even found its way onto the front pages of the Morning Gazette and resulted in some massive changes to the school's board of trustees. Some board resignations were presumably precipitated by their suggestion that the school consider admitting girls.



I encourage you to look back some 40 years ago to examples at the college and university level, like Boston College and the College of the Holy Cross, both once stalwart Catholic and Jesuit institutions exclusively for men. I remember the doomsday predictions of what would happen to these schools — its mission, its standing, its very academics — if women were admitted.



On the contrary, thanks to the addition and contributions of young women, the outcome for both colleges has been the opposite. Boston College has evolved from a commuter school to a prestigious national university, and Holy Cross to a preeminent college. And I would argue that young, bright, accomplished women have been at the very heart of why these two colleges are thriving today.

I worry too that by not seriously considering the coed option, Mt Madeen may very well be denying opportunity to the girls and young women of our city, whether consciously or not. Prestigious institutions of education across the country have been making the switch to coed for decades now, but women are still struggling to be treated fairly in schools, to be viewed as equals in the workplace, to be compensated fairly and to balance work, love and family.

Mt Madeen High School provides an exceptional educational opportunity. It is finally time to offer this opportunity to girls as well as boys. I am convinced, as in the Boston College and Holy Cross experiences, the beneficiaries will be both the girls of our community and the school itself.

Written by a 1960 graduate of Mt Madeen High School.

Some single-gender Catholic schools struggle

For 75 years, Contemporary Catholic High School has sought to nurture boys on their journey to manhood, instilling in them a strong work ethic and a deep faith while encouraging them to seek positive leadership roles.

But the school will move in a new direction next September: It plans to open an all-girl division and has purchased property across the street to build a school for them. Officials say they hope to fill a void in the area, which lacks any all-girl Catholic schools.



Across the greater city area, single-gender Catholic schools are seeking ways to increase their presence as overall interest in Catholic schools is waning nationwide and the number of school-age children in the state decreases.

- Two years ago the popular Saints Preparatory added a middle school program
- The once all-boy Hilltop High Academy changed to a coed model.
- Last August, as students were preparing to return to class, one of the few all-girl Catholic schools in the city, Contemplation Academy, abruptly closed.
- Last September, the new School at Caribou Hall opened with about 60 young women attending

Expansions like those being undertaken at Contemporary Catholic have helped increase interest among families, but overall enrollment in the archdiocese's schools has declined by 4,000 students over 6 years.

Then this spring, Mt Madeen High School, the all-boys school powerhouse, revealed it was struggling with declining applications, sparking heated speculation that some trustees were plotting to go coed. This sent a shiver of fear through the region's all-girl Catholic schools that a coed Mt Madeen High could drive them out of business. The controversy led to an overhaul of trustee membership at the school. The diocese spoke out against such a path, as did many predictable members of the alumni group who want Mt Madeen to remain true to its historic and noble mission of educating boys.

The state of single-gender Catholic schools is somewhat fragile, like their coed counterparts, nationwide. A lot of parochial elementary schools have closed, which is problematic for many single-gender Catholic schools, the vast majority of which are high schools and have long relied on the parochial elementary schools as a source of new students.

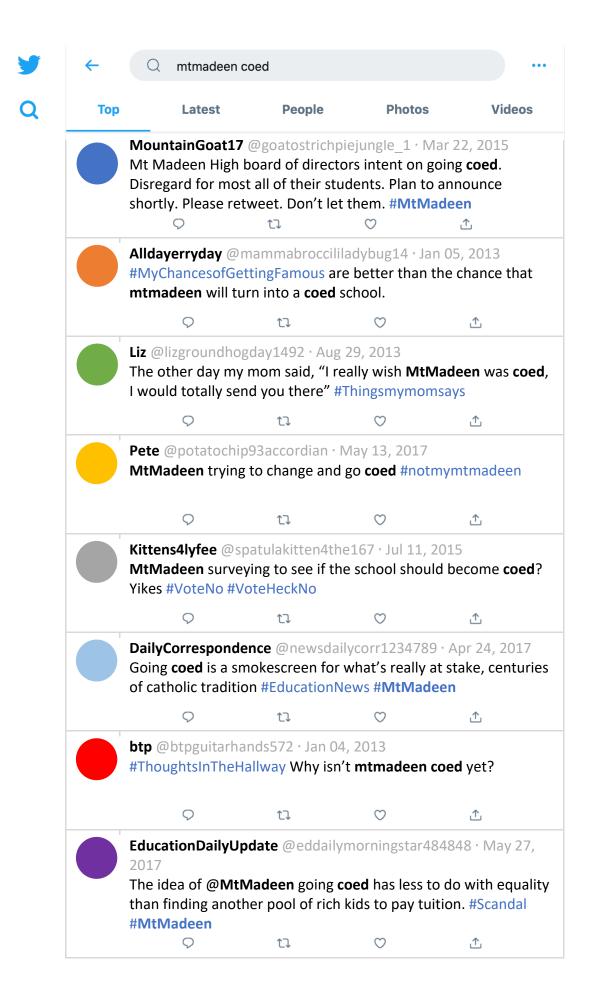
Proponents of single-sex education say that boys and girls focus better in class when they are segregated by gender because they are not trying to impress the opposite sex by joking around or appearing less smart in class.

They also say boys and girls respond more favorably to different learning styles. For instance, boys tend to do better academically with classroom activities that allow them to move around and release their fidgety energy, while girls do well working in small groups.



Officials say Contemporary Catholic is starting a girls' division in response to parents who are seeking a single-gender environment for their daughters. One parent, whose son just graduated from there, had long wanted a similar setting for her 16-year-old twin daughters. "It will be such a blessing when it opens," she said.

"I think it will be a little bit of an adjustment, but it won't be too major because we have to get used to competing with women in the workforce when we get jobs after college," said a current Contemporary Catholic freshman.



1500

Average enrollment across grades 9-12

1:1

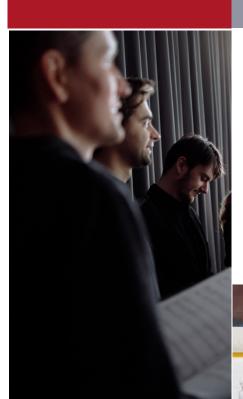
Mentorship and individual advising

Brotherhood

"All my classmates feel like teammates. I have made the best relationships with friends, teachers, and coaches as a Mt Madeen Mountain Goat!"

Mt Madeen High School

Prepared for the future as thinkers, leaders, doers, and men of God.



85

Elective course offerings



Mt Madeen High School

Admissions Office

555-5555

info@mtmadeenhs.edu

www.mtmadeenhs.edu



99%

Graduates going on to selective 4-year colleges

12

Maximum students per class

Interviews & Tours

Join us for Fall Saturdays

See the campus, enjoy a meal in the cafeteria, and have a conversation with one of our admissions staff. Finish the day with a visit to our field center to cheer on the Mountain Goats at our home games!





35000

Hours of local community service

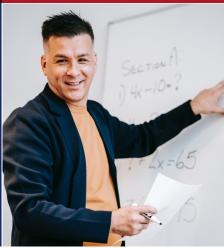


Challenging ourselves in countless ways.



48

Award winning sports teams

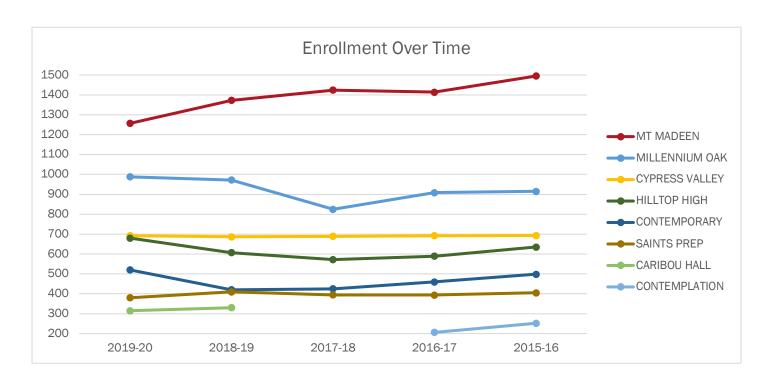


MT MADEEN HIGH SCHOOL

COMPETITOR SCHOOL PROFILES

School Name	School Type	Gender	Selectivity	Yield	Tuition	Endowment
MT MADEEN HIGH SCHOOL	Private Catholic	М	38%	20%	\$22,300	\$70M
MILLENNIUM OAK HIGH	Independent	Coed	21%	24%	\$49,600	\$43M
CYPRESS VALLEY ACADEMY	Independent	Coed	12%	29%	\$50,870	\$51M
HILLTOP HIGH ACADEMY	Private Catholic	Coed	58%	15%	\$16,100	\$26M
CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC	Private Catholic	M/F Div	61%	12%	\$13,880	\$27M
SAINTS PREP	Private Catholic	М	53%	16%	\$15,450	\$34M
CARIBOU HALL	Private Catholic	F	70%	11%	\$24,800	\$12M
CONTEMPLATION ACADEMY	Private Catholic	F	-			

School Name	Total Students 2019-20	Total Students 2018-19	Total Students 2017-18	Total Students 2016-17	Total Students 2015-16
MT MADEEN HIGH SCHOOL	1507	1573	1624	1614	1695
MILLENNIUM OAK HIGH	988	972	825	909	915
CYPRESS VALLEY ACADEMY	692	687	689	692	693
HILLTOP HIGH ACADEMY	640	607	572	589	635
CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC	480	420	425	460	498
SAINTS PREP	380	410	395	394	405
CARIBOU HALL	315	330			
CONTEMPLATION ACADEMY		_		206	202



Document 7.ID3

National Catholic Population Data Over Time

Please visit the URL below to view and interact with the map:

https://public.tableau.com/profile/denise.fath#!/vizhome/CatholicProportionofPopulation/Sheet1

Mt Madeen Stakeholder Survey

Consulting Firm

Results & Findings

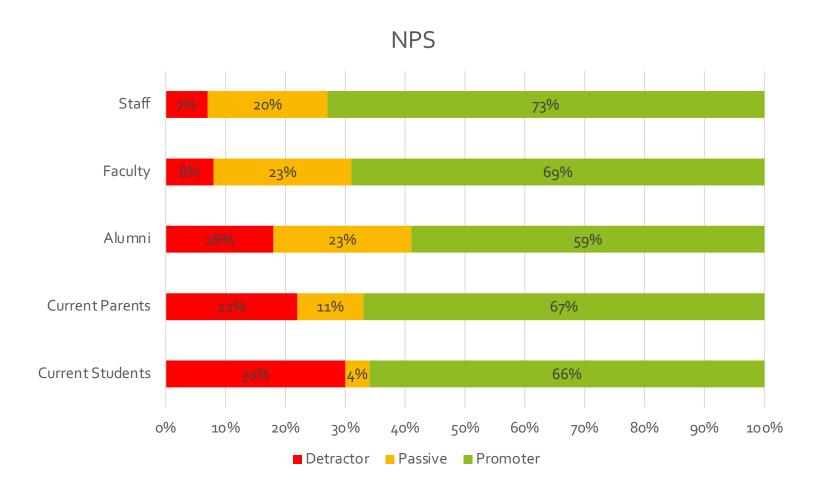
Participants

All survey invitations promised anonymity of responses and results only reported in aggregate groups

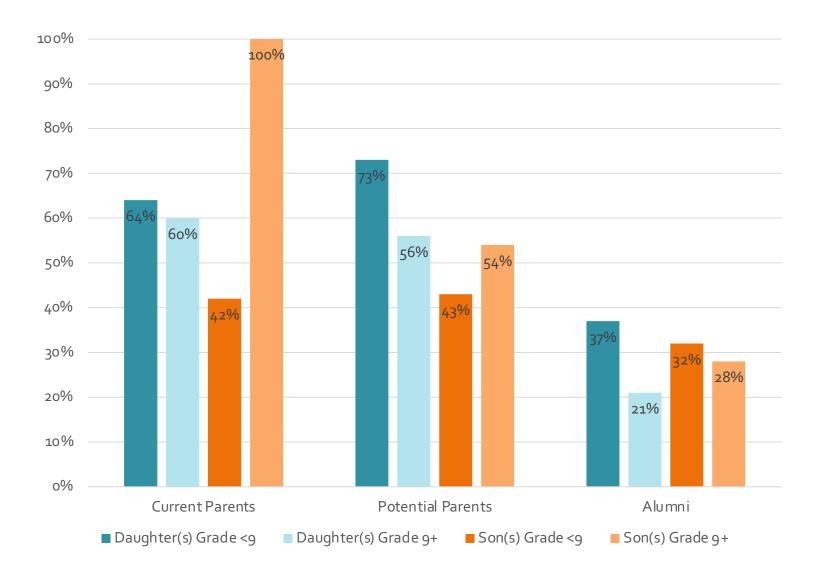
Population	Notes	Response Rate
Current Students	 Form sent to families from President describing research effort Asked to participate by their homeroom teachers in the student homework portal 	94%
Current Parents	 Form sent to families from President describing research effort Invited via email and parent bulletin 	86%
Alumni	 Email invitation from President Excluding current parent alums Invited via email and alumni magazine 	39%
Faculty/Staff	 Email invitation from President Participation monitored and individual reminders from their department heads 	96%
Potential Parents	 Inquiring families past 3 years Email invitation from President Offered \$10 gift card for completion 	5%
	 Purchased sample list of high income households from feeder zip codes with school-aged children "Blind" email invitation from consulting firm Offered \$10 gift card for completion 	2%

On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied are you with Mt Madeen HS?

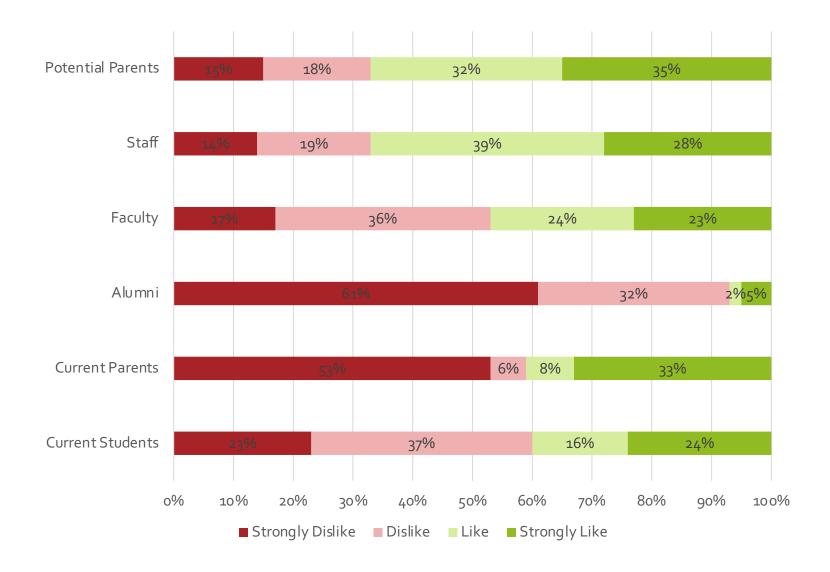




Potential Market



How would you feel about a coed Mt Madeen HS?



Current Students

I would love a bigger school open to all genders. ELIMINATE THE DRESS CODE.

I just don't think it would be the same. Girls can't compete, leave them out of the equation.

Current Parents

We pay the Mt Madeen price for an all-boys education because that is what my son needs. To have a high quality educational option for my daughters would be amazing!

Just what we need, little girls in their skirts walking around and distracting everyone. We need to focus on educating young men.

Faculty

I think it would be a step forward and valuable for our students to be in a more realistic environment

Lots of logistics questions, will we be hiring?

This would be rocking the boat to the extreme.

Staff

Then my daughter could attend too!
Will there be construction for bathrooms and locker rooms?

Would we be losing who we are at Mt Madeen?

I would love to fill these halls again with frosh Mountain Goats! Open the gates.

Potential Parents

We considered Mt
Madeen for my oldest
boy, but he wasn't
interested in a male-only
school. We would like
coed!

Mt Madeen is too expensive for any of my kids. We're not catholic, but will think about it when my kids get older. I wouldn't drive to two separate schools.

Alumni

Mt Madeen as a coed school is not the school where I became a man. You will ruin decades of history with this.

I will never donate another cent.

If it's what has to be done because of the times...