



**Diocese of Little Rock  
Office of Catholic Schools**

**Policies and Procedures Manual**

**7.00 SCHOOL BOARD**

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## **7.01 CONSULTATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Little Rock will have a consultative school board in accordance with the policies and regulations adopted by the Diocesan Board of Education and approved by the Bishop.

## **7.02 ORGANIZATION**

Unlike a public school board, the Catholic school board is not autonomous. According to the Code of Canon Law, all parish boards are consultative. Actions of the board become effective only upon the approval of the pastor. To be a school board member is more than just a commitment, and is distinctly different from a political appointment. It is to contribute one's talents, wisdom, experience, faith life, and good will to the mission of the school. Individual board members exercise no official consultative role outside the board meeting.

## **7.03 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD**

1. The pastor will be a voting member of the board. The pastor must give an affirmative vote for any policy or board action to be enacted.
2. The principal will be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board and acts as executive secretary, i.e. to ensure the agenda is made for the meeting and minutes are kept.
3. In each parochial school, the majority of board members are to be parishioners who have children in the school.
4. Parents of other faith traditions may be board members, but since the main purpose of the board is to assist the pastor and principal in providing quality Catholic education, the majority of board members are to be practicing Catholics.
7. A parishioner without children in the school may serve on the school board.
6. The local school board's bylaws provide the procedure for annual selection of board members.
7. The board will consist of no fewer than five voting members.
8. Membership on the board, with the exception of the ex-officio member, will be a term of three (3) years with the provision made for replacement on a staggered basis. Members may serve only two (2) consecutive terms. Membership may be extended at the discretion of the pastor.
9. Interim vacancies will be filled by the pastor, in consultation with the principal.
10. Any board member missing three (3) meetings during a school year without a valid reason may be removed.
11. A board member's resignation must accompany a letter to the pastor and principal.
12. For a cause and for the good of a school and parish community, a pastor may remove a person from the school board.

## **7.04 REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTATIVE BOARD MEMBERS**

All board members are required to attend a workshop conducted by the Office of Catholic Schools prior to serving on a school board. Notification of the date and time a workshop is held will be sent to the principal. Principals are responsible for notifying new board members of the

workshop. Diocesan board policy can be accessed on the Diocesan website at [www.dolr.org/schools](http://www.dolr.org/schools).

### **7.05 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITY/ROLE**

- The board assists the principal and pastor in formulating policies that are compatible with Diocesan policies.
- The board assists in formulating the school budget.
- The board contributes to the hiring decision of a new principal. The final decision belongs to the pastor, in consultation with the superintendent of schools.
- The board represents the parish and school communities when considering the overall well-being of the school in regards to policy formation, budgetary matters, tuition rates, and fund-raising needs.
- School board members are mindful that the daily administration of the school is the responsibility of the principal. School board members are not to attempt to solve school problems but are to refer the aggrieved person to the principal and notify the principal.

### **7.06 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Board members will not have a member of his/her household on the school or parish staff.
- Neither school staff nor parish staff members are eligible to serve on the board.
- Only one member of a household can serve at the same time.
- Public school administrators are not eligible for placement on the board.
- Heads of firms doing business with the parish or school will be required to disclose the nature of the relationship, including full financial disclosure, and conflicts of interest.

### **7.07 OFFICERS**

The board elects a president, vice-president and secretary at the last regular meeting. The pastor and principal cannot serve as an officer. The term of office runs from the close of the meeting in which they were elected, to the close of the last regular meeting when new officers are elected. The terms of office are for one (1) year. Officers may only be elected after they have served one year on the board as a regular member.

### **7.08 DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

The president:

- Presides over the meeting
- Develops the agenda with the principal's input
- Appoints committees
- Assigns additional duties to members
- Assists new board members in learning their duties and responsibilities as a board member

The vice president acts on behalf of the president in his/her absence.

The secretary records the minutes, handles correspondence, and provides a written copy of the minutes for approval. The secretary makes any corrections to the minutes if needed.

### **7.09 PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO BOARD**

The principal:

- Functions as executive secretary
- Develops the agenda, with assistance from the president and the pastor
- Provides financials, agendas, and any other specific information relating to school board functions
- Educates the board in all school policies and procedures
- Keeps the board and pastor adequately informed of the operation of the school

### **7.10 COMMITTEES**

Committees should be formed and goals and objectives written based on the needs of the mission of the school. Recommended committees, but not all inclusive, are:

- Finance
- Public Relations/Marketing
- Facilities/Grounds/Maintenance
- Development and Strategic Planning
- Special /Ad Hoc committees

### **7.11 AGENDA**

- The principal and president will work together to create the agenda.
- Items on the agenda must be presented in advance of the board meeting.
- Copies of the agenda must be handed out at every meeting.

### **7.12 MEETINGS**

- The board will hold a minimum of six (6) meetings during the school year. The meetings should typically last ninety (90) minutes or less.
- Minutes will be kept at all meetings.
- Board meetings are regular (open) or executive (closed).
- Regular meetings will be announced in advance.
- Executive meetings are held when the board discusses finances or other sensitive issues.
- Matters discussed at executive meetings are confidential and not to be discussed outside of the board meetings.
- Minutes of open board meetings must be approved by the board.

### **7.13 FORMAT FOR CONDUCTING MEETINGS**

- I. Call to order
- II. Opening prayer
- III. Recommended actions
  - A. Routine matters
    - 1. Comments of non-board members, if present
    - 2. Roll of members
    - 3. Reading, correction, and approval of minutes
  - B. Old business
  - C. New business
- IV. Information and proposals
  - A. Principal's report
  - B. Committee reports (if any)
  - C. Pastor's report
  - D. Questions asked of and by board members
- V. Future business
  - A. Future meeting date(s)
  - B. Preview of agenda topics
  - C. General discussion to guide future recommendations
- VI. Executive session
  - A. Financials
  - B. Other business
- VII. Closing prayer
- VIII. Adjournment sections

### **7.14 PARTICIATION OF NON-MEMBERS AT BOARD MEETINGS**

Even though some board meetings are open, they are still to be highly regulated and timely affairs. Whenever non-members are present, the following statement should be read after the opening prayer, which sets the stage for the meeting.

“The board functions as a consultative group to the pastor. Our purpose is to share responsibility for Catholic education with the pastor and the principal as the policy making body for the school. The agenda for this meeting has been set for the past week. You will be afforded the opportunity to make comments immediately after this statement is read. Board members are not permitted to respond to any comments you make at this meeting. Any subjects brought up by non-members will be placed on the next meeting's agenda if the board deems it necessary. The board appreciates your attendance and we commend you for your interest in the school.”

### **7.15 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PASTOR**

The pastor is the head of the parish and as such is a voting member of the board. The pastor's approval is required before any board action becomes effective. The pastor, as spiritual leader of the parish, will share his vision of religious education with the principal and the faculty of the school. The pastor will be especially concerned with the policies that relate to the religious

education program in the school and will provide direction to the board. The pastor supports and cooperates with the principal in the general administration of the school.

#### **7.16 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PRINCIPAL**

The board relates to the school only through the principal. The principal is charged with the main task of keeping the Catholic school Catholic. The principal cooperates with the pastor in the administration of the school according to Diocesan guidelines. The principal is the educational leader of the school and as such determines and selects the needed staff. The principal is the director of the curriculum and makes the class assignments according to the qualifications of the teacher and the needs of the school. The principal administers and is accountable for the receipts and disbursements of all internal funds such as books, fees, supplies, etc. Administrative decisions are the responsibility of the principal.

#### **7.17 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO TEACHERS**

The board relates to the teachers only through the principal. The board does not hire or evaluate teachers.

#### **7.18 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PASTORAL COUNCIL**

The school board relates to the parish council only in matters pertaining to the subsidy requested from the parish. The pastoral council does not determine the school budget but approves the amount the parish will allocate to the school. The school board assists the pastor and principal in developing the budget.

#### **7.19 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO THE PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The board relates to the parent-teacher organization in matters concerning fund-raising activities and expenditures of funds. All fund-raising plans by the Parent-Teacher Organization are to be submitted to the board for review. The pastor and the principal have final approval.