



# MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR PARISH SCHOOL BOARDS

## PREAMBLE

This School Board, established by \_\_\_\_\_ parish in the town of \_\_\_\_\_, and with the approval of the Pastor/Vicar and Superintendent, shall have as its primary concern the ministry of Catholic school education. The Board, operating under the guidance of the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Hartford and in conformity with the policies and procedures of the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis, shall concern itself with matters pertaining to the mission of Catholic school education at \_\_\_\_\_ School, and specifically with those areas of responsibility indicated in Article II.

Working in close collaboration with its Executive Officers, the Pastor and Principal, and hearing its many publics, this School Board shall in all the areas of its responsibility, help the school to reach its agreed upon goals. These goals will be related to the School goals established by the Executive Officers.

## ARTICLE I – TITLE

The name of this body shall be \_\_\_\_\_ School Board of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Town)

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

**Sec. 1** The School Board is by its nature consultative to the Pastor and Principal. The function of the Board shall be for the exercise of shared responsibility for fulfillment of the mission as a center for excellence in Catholic school education, and to provide leadership assistance and support for the School within the context of the mission at \_\_\_\_\_ School.

**Sec. 2** The main responsibilities of the Board include the following:

1. **Mission Statement:** adoption of the school's mission statement, and periodic review of its operational validity.
2. **Policy:** the formulation and adoption of policy for the school, as needed, within the framework of Archdiocesan policy. Monitor the implementation of school policy and procedure.
3. **Planning:** the development and regular updating of a 3-5 year plan for the school; annual goal-setting for the School and for the Board. The long-range plan should follow the guidelines of the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis.
4. **Advancement:** the formulation and implementation of an Advancement program for the school, following Archdiocesan guidelines, and in cooperation with the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis.

5. **Budget:** adopting the school's operational budget, according to the format specified by the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis; receiving periodic reports from the Principal on the implementation of the budget.
6. **Evaluation:** systematically evaluating:
  - The school's mission statement, goals, and policies
  - The Board itself
  - The Principal within the process of the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis
7. **Recommendation for the Appointment of the Principal:** when a vacancy occurs, some Board members will be asked to participate in the search process.

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

**Sec. 1** The School Board shall consist of no fewer than seven and no more than nine members. Not more than a third shall be parents of the students in the school.

The Pastor, by virtue of his role as the pastoral and spiritual leader of the Parish, is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board. All Board votes are subject to the Pastor's approval.

The Principal is an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Members of the school staff, or their spouses, children, siblings, or parents, shall not be eligible for membership on the School Board.

**Sec. 2** The procedure for selecting Board members follows:

The nominating committee will make recommendation of parents, parishioners at large, alumni, parents of alumni, and community members to the Board.

Parish school Boards will recommend and submit nominees to the Pastor once a consensus is reached. The Pastor will approve and invite nominees to serve on the Board.

**Sec. 3** Each member shall serve a term of three years, renewable once, with the exception of the original members. Original members shall serve terms of one, two or three years with approximately one-third serving a one-year term, and one-third serving a two-year term, and one-third serving a three-year term. No member shall serve for more than two consecutive terms without an interval of one year.

**Sec. 4** It is expected that board members will attend at least 75% of scheduled meetings. In the event a member of the School Board has been absent from regular meetings without advance notice being given to the Chairperson, the remaining members of the School Board may, at their discretion, determine and declare that a vacancy exists. Upon the written recommendation of the Chairperson, having been authorized by the Board members, the Pastor may terminate the term of an individual Board member. The Pastor may remove an individual Board member

for just and sufficient cause after having notified the Board of his reasons for this action. Some reasons a member may be removed from the Board include: violating the confidentiality of executive sessions; acting contrary to parish/school mission and goals; impeding the Board's defined responsibilities.

**Sec. 5** When a Board member is unable to promote the purpose of the Board, abide by established roles and responsibilities as a member, or accept the Board's agenda, it may be necessary for the member to resign from the Board, which they may do in writing to the Chair.

**Sec. 6** Whenever a vacancy occurs on the Board, the remaining members shall appoint a replacement to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting. The remaining unexpired term will determine the term of office for the appointed replacement.

#### **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS**

**Sec.1** The Chair of the Board must be Catholic. No person may be chosen for office without having served one year on the Board.

**Sec.2** The officers of the School Board shall consist of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary, all of whom shall be appointed by the Pastor once elected by the Board after consensus annually by the Board membership and installed at the annual meeting.

**Sec.3** The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

The Chairperson presides at all meetings; determines the agenda with the Principal (in collaboration with the Pastor as needed); assigns additional duties to individual members; appoints members to committees; oversees committee activities; plans orientation for new members with Nominating Committee and Principal; reviews Board Self Assessment and guides Board to consensus on future plans.

The Vice Chairperson in the absence of the Chair performs all duties of the Chair.

The Secretary maintains written record of all acts of the School Board; handles all correspondence for the Board; preserves reports and documents; notifies members of date and time of meetings; distributes meeting agendas and committee reports at least seven (7) days in advance; distributes minutes following each meeting, e-mails materials when possible.

#### **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

**Sec.1** The School Board shall meet according to a yearly schedule agreed upon at the first meeting. There shall be a minimum of four business meetings scheduled per year, excluding the annual planning meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, or in the absence of the Chairperson, by the Vice Chairperson as needed and with the approval of the Pastor/Principal.

**Sec.2** The annual meeting, which shall be a goal planning meeting, shall be held in June of each year.

**Sec.3** Alternate months shall be used to accomplish committee work.

**Sec.4** The rules of parliamentary procedure shall govern meetings of the Board.

**Sec.5** The ordinary order of business shall include: Call to Order; Consent Agenda; Presentations; Reports (by Pastor, Principal, Chair, and Committees); Old Business; New Business; Planning for Next Meeting's Agenda; Closing Comments; Closing Prayer.

**Sec.6** Non-Board members who wish to speak at a Board meeting shall submit their request in writing to the Chairperson in advance of the meeting. Their requests will be honored if their business is appropriate for the Board's agenda. Such persons shall be given a specific time limit for speaking.

### **ARTICLE VI – QUORUM**

A majority of the full membership of the School Board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise provided, when a vote is taken upon any measure before the Board, a quorum being present, a majority of the members voting on the measure shall determine the outcome thereof.

### **ARTICLE VII – ROLE OF PASTOR**

The Pastor is the spiritual and administrative leader of the parish, an ex-officio member of the Parish School Board. His most important contribution to the Board will be in areas of theology and religious education, worship, and spiritual formation. He also brings to the Board his overall knowledge of the parish, his pastoral judgment, and his administrative experience.

The Pastor, under the Archbishop, is personally responsible for the administration of the parish, so the vote of the Parish School Board, like that of the Parish Council, is subject to pastoral approval. As such, therefore, the School Board is a consultative body. That is to say that the Pastor may, for good reasons, make a decision which is contrary to the majority vote. Such an action, however, would not be expected to be frequent, for the presumption in creating a Parish School Board is that those who have been asked to share in the decision-making process are worthy of the trust placed in them.

Thus the Pastor's non approval seldom happens, but when it does, Board members must recognize the ultimate responsibility of the Pastor. The Pastor should give the Board a written statement of his reasons for not approving the Board's decision.

### **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES**

**Sec.1** The School Board acts as a committee of the whole in its consideration and decisions. No individual member shall assume responsibility for speaking or acting in the Board's name unless specifically authorized.

**Sec.2** The Chairperson is empowered to appoint special committees of the School Board to assist the Board. Membership on any committee shall not be limited to members of the Board, but committee chairpersons shall be Board members. Such

committees shall operate until the duty assigned to them is completed and will be dissolved at that time, or at any earlier date, at the discretion of the Chairperson.

**Sec.3** The function of all committees shall be to determine the facts, to deliberate, and to be consultative, but never to legislate or to administer. Recommendations by any committee shall be subject to ratification and approval by the Board.

### **ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed at any regular meeting of the Board, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total membership, provided that written notice of said proposal has been given to each member not less than two weeks prior to that meeting. Such notice shall contain the statement of the manner in which it is proposed that the Constitution be amended, altered or repealed. Before the final vote, the amendment shall have been introduced and discussed at a previous meeting. Copies of the approved change shall be forwarded to the Vicar and Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Board Chair's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Board Chair's Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date