



CENTER FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION & FORMATION

SAINT THOMAS SEMINARY - ARCHDIOCESE of HARTFORD

Catholic School Boards and Advisory Councils Leadership Manual

2023 Edition

“Boards play a pivotal role in a Catholic elementary or high school’s ability to take charge of its own future.”

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Dear Friends in Catholic School Education:

Where schools are most successful, there exists a strong leadership team that works collaboratively with a highly effective consultative school board council, to educate every child who enters the school doors in a Catholic worldview, distinguished by academic excellence, and grounded in community that shares a common goal of living its mission and advancing a vision filled with hope for the future.

A highly effective school board recognizes its primary directive is to:

- ✓ Advance the Mission and Vision
- ✓ Promote Strategic Thinking and Planning
- ✓ Define and Assign Responsibilities in Clearly Articulated Bylaws
- ✓ Use Committees and Subcommittees to Ensure Progress Toward Mission Priorities


By its very nature, the school board council is advisory. It is accountable to the pastor and principal in its operation. It agrees to follow the policies and administrative procedures of the Archdiocese of Hartford and The Center for Catholic Education and Formation. Members agree to use their talents, gifts and insights for the common good of the community to promote the mission and goals of Catholic education. They will defer personal agendas in order to discern with the members the issues, concerns and challenges they face in meeting the educational needs of the students. The members model the faith community to its constituents. They promote respect between and among each other, acknowledge the various views of each member, discern with each other in an open and collaborative manner, and support the decisions approved by the board.

The basic principles and insights outlined in this manual offer a clear direction concerning school board councils within the Archdiocese of Hartford for Inter-parish, consortium and parish schools and Archdiocesan high schools. Within the last five years, change has occurred; needs and trends have necessitated a review of the manual to ensure that it remains a vital directive to achieve excellence in the consultative board model.

The “signs of the time” have necessitated the exploration of new models for governance. We are mindful of the research on Catholic school governance that must be incorporated into best practices that will maintain and sustain the viability of the school. Similarly, we proclaim in the ministerial plan that the Catholic identity of our schools is richly expressed through the living example and actions of the members of the school community. This witness to our Catholic beliefs must be the foundation of all board endeavors and accomplishments.

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*Catholic schools are required to follow Archdiocese of Hartford and School Policy in all matters related to the operation of the schools. Each school shall have a **consultative school board council**. A **Consultative School Board Council** is a body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adopting, and recommending policy to the person with authority to enact it. The person with authority is required to consult the board before making decisions in designated areas, but is not bound by the board's advice. The people in authority in parish schools are the Pastor and Principal, and in Archdiocesan High Schools, the Archbishop, Vicar and Superintendent, and Chief Administrator/President.*

2. Reflective Faith Conversation Starters

Reflective Faith Conversation Starters for Catholic School Boards Councils to Reinforce Catholic Identity

Boards/School Councils are most successful when they function as part of the leadership team and focus on the school's mission. Each member unites with others in their unique role in contributing to the viability and efficacy of the school; as such, recommendations made to the Pastor, Principal or Chief Administrator are informed, meaningful, and collaboratively advances the vision for the Catholic school. Council/Board members must follow the traditions of the Catholic school that include support, respect, love, mercy, and concern for young people. As a school board member, consider the following questions in your leadership role for advancing the mission of Catholic school education:

- What makes a Catholic school different from a non-Catholic?
- In what ways does our school reflect its Catholic mission well? In what ways could it improve?
- How does our school board support the Catholic mission of our school?
- What is the most important task of a Catholic school board?
- How can the board witness to the educational mission and evangelization?

(adapted from the *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis)

"It is clear that when we create a vision and formulate a clear and workable ministerial plan, the Catholic school transforms."

3. School Board's Responsibility to the School's Mission

The purpose and function of the school board is to advance the mission of the Catholic school by providing leadership, direction, and support to the school leaders and leadership teams.

"Vision and mission are so central to the life of God's people that without vision we perish and without mission we lose our way." Prov 29:18; 2 Kings 21:1-9

Catholic schools are enriched, sustained, and strengthened through effective Board Council development. An essential practice of a Catholic school board council is to select board members based on the *skills, knowledge and resources needed* by the Board in order to achieve their goals as opposed to selecting members simply as representatives of various constituencies. Schools can be more effective when school board councils shift their focus of board recruitment from "who people are" to "what the school needs them to do."

The school board is involved with the adoption of the school's mission statement and periodic review of its operational vitality and Catholic identity. The mission statement asks the question, "What are we called to do?"

What we are called to do and who the school serves may change over the years in ways that reflect society and challenges and opportunities of the times. Review is necessary to determine who the school is currently serving and how those constituents are being served. It's important to reflect on the question: *Does the mission statement accurately reflect the school of today?*

Examples of a secondary and elementary school mission statement:

Christ is the reason for St. Paul Catholic High School. Upon this foundation, young men and women from diverse backgrounds are challenged to be their personal best in academics, athletics, fine arts, and service to others, as they prepare for the rigors of college and lifelong learning. The St. Paul community is distinguished by the respect, care, and encouragement members give each other to achieve moments of greatness.

~St. Paul Catholic High School, Bristol

Our mission is to be the Body of Christ in everything we do; wherever we go and in whatever we say. We respect the dignity of every person and share our message of hope. We want to follow the example of Jesus in our thoughts, words, and actions.

~Corpus Christi School, Wethersfield

4. Code of Ethics and Conduct

The Code of Ethics for school board council members delineates the expectations inherent in the purpose and function of the board. Members, by accepting the position to serve on the board, ascribe to this code. Periodic review of the code reminds members that they are working together for the common goal: to promote the mission and purpose of Catholic school education. The Code of Ethics addresses the following: conflict of interest, confidentiality, objectivity, decorum, and maintenance of unity.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of the school board are responsible to keep matters discussed at meetings in confidence. Official information/business discussed at meetings cannot be shared with non-board members. It should never be the practice that board members represent the personal concerns of faculty, parents, or vendors within the school population.

OBJECTIVITY

As total objectivity is impossible for anyone to achieve, members are asked to identify and manage their own personal biases. It is important that members see situations from multiple points of view rather than solely from their own perceptions, assumptions and feelings.

CULTURE OF MERCY

Decisions made by the school board and approved on the parish school level by the Pastor and on the secondary level by the Vicar and Superintendent and the Chief Administrator/President, should be the result of honest and open discussion by all members. Consideration of the good of the total parish and school community should be integral to the decision-making process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

School board members shall avoid situations that present actual, perceived or potential conflict between their interest and the interest of the school.

MAINTENANCE OF UNITY

In achieving its objectives within the community of the faith community/school/high school, the board is to do all it can to avoid creating factions, sides or other divisive groupings in the parish school community, high school and their respective faculty. Members should function within the framework of the total leadership of the parish school/high school.

5. Constitution

The **Constitution** is the fundamental principles of an organization that establishes and defines mission, structure, authority and process. Specifically, a Constitution determines responsibilities and rights of its officers and members.

Constitution

Topics included in the Constitution are as follows:

- The official title of the board
- The purpose and function of the board
- The responsibilities of the board
- Relationship with other groups
 - ✓ Archdiocese of Hartford
 - ✓ The Center for Catholic Education & Formation
 - ✓ Parish and Pastoral Councils
 - ✓ Parent Organization
 - ✓ Faculty
- Membership
- Officers of board
- Meetings
- Quorum
- Role of Pastor, Principal, and Chief Administrator/President
- Responsibilities of Committees

Amendments

6. Bylaws

The **Bylaws** are rules adopted by an organization to govern its day-to-day operation. Bylaws include detailed procedures and working guidelines of the organization and accompanies the Constitution. Use the following materials as a point of reference when developing or revising the bylaws. See Appendix for *Model Bylaws for Parish School Boards* or *Model Bylaws for High School Boards*.

Bylaws	Bylaws will usually include the following topics:
a. Formulating and Adopting Policy for the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for adopting policy • Enactment of policy by Pastor/Chief administrator/President • Process for review of school policies • Procedures for publication of new policies
b. Developing the School Budget	Policy and Procedure #2.101 established by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation.
c. Selection of the Principal	Policy and Procedure #1.203 established by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation.
d. Performance Appraisal for President and Principal	Policy and Procedure #1.207 established by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation.
e. School Improvement Process	Participate in and monitor the School Improvement Process.
f. Membership on the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Ethics and Conduct • Number of members • Composition of membership • Procedures for nomination of members • Membership eligibility • Resignation of a member

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of a member • Filling vacancies • Attendance at meetings
<p>g. Officers of the Board</p>	<p>Procedures for selection/election of officers Responsibilities of officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chair Chair must be a practicing, active Catholic Presides at all meetings Develops agenda with the Principal/Chief Administrator/President and Vice-Chair Recommends committee Chairs and members for appointment to the Council Assigns additional duties to members ✓ Vice-Chair Performs duties in absence of Chair Serves on committees ✓ Secretary Maintains written record of minutes Takes care of correspondence Distributes agenda one week before the meeting Prepares other reports as requested <p>An individual without voting power could be appointed to serve as “secretary of the board.” The “appointed secretary of the board” does not participate in the meetings. This would allow all board members to fully participate in the meeting’s agenda.</p>
<p>h. Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place • Duration and schedule • Procedures for calling special meetings • Procedures for visitors • Procedures for Open Forum • Robert’s “Rules of Order” • Order of business • Executive session

i. Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities • Standing or ad hoc • Accountability
j. Amendments to the Bylaws	Bylaws may be amended after a simple majority vote of authorized members and upon approval of the Pastor/ Chief Administrator, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Vicar for Catholic Education & Formation.
k. Review the Bylaws	<p>The content should be checked at least triennially to ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models the faith community. • Is consistent with the Archdiocese of Hartford Policies and Procedures of The Center for Catholic Education and Formation. • Is clear and readable. • Articulates the roles and responsibilities of the members. • Describes the school board as consultative to the Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator/President. • Indicates how the board operates. Before final approval of the board's constitution and bylaws, a copy should be given to the Superintendent at The Center for Catholic Education and Formation for review. A final copy and any revisions of the board's constitution and bylaws should be sent to The Center for Catholic Education and Formation.
l. Executive Session	Procedures should be established for the board to meet in executive session when necessary. The board meets in executive session in order to deal with sensitive issues that may not necessarily be shared with the public. The agenda

	<p>may reflect that the board will meet in executive session. Decisions made in an “executive session” are recorded. The decision, topic, issue or concern discussed in executive session is not published.</p> <p>The minutes of the executive session are confidential. These minutes are not made public. Some of the topics that may be covered in “executive session” include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The insights from Principal/Chief Administrator/President regarding the search process for a new administrator, the resignation or removal of a board member; • The review of the Administrator’s formal performance appraisal; • Sensitive personnel issues. <p>Other topics that are part of the board’s responsibilities can also be included in the executive sessions of the board as part of the decision-making process.</p> <p>The Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator/President is always present for an executive session of the board. The Principal/Chief Administrator/President will be present except when his/her formal performance appraisal is being discussed.</p>
<p>m. Rules for Operations</p>	<p>An organized plan for meeting operations should always be used. i.e. Robert’s Rules</p> <p>When an action requires a vote, the following process should be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action is stated by the committee chair. • A motion is made. • The motion must be seconded. • The request for a vote must be made. • The board Chair will ask for all those in favor and the count will be taken. • The board Chair will ask for all those opposed and the count will be taken. • The board Chair will then announce the motion is accepted or the motion is denied.

7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities

Size and Composition

It is recommended that the board be composed of 7-9 members (excluding Archbishop, Pastor, Principal, and Chief Administrator/President). They should include:

ARCHBISHOP

Governance of Catholic schools rests with the Archbishop, who exercises it directly or through his delegates. In accordance with Canon Law, the Archbishop is the chief catechist of the Archdiocese with final authority over schools.

PASTOR (ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS)

The ultimate responsibility of the parish and parish school rests with the pastor who is appointed by the Archbishop. The pastor supports the work of the board and should be regularly consulted and informed in the work of the board. The pastor approves local school board council decisions.

The pastor attends all regular and executive board meetings, represents the interests of the parish to the board and represents the interests of the school to the parish.

He serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the consultative board council. As an ex-officio, all discussion and varying opinions must take place before a vote is taken.

If the Pastor changes his view after a vote is taken, a motion must be made to revisit the decision, and the Pastor's reason must be documented in writing.

VICAR AND SUPERINTENDENT

The Vicar and Superintendent of Schools serve as the Archbishop's educational executive, charged with the task of coordinating and facilitating the services of the Archdiocese to elementary and secondary schools.

The Vicar and Superintendent provide leadership and support to the Priests and Principal/Chief Administrator/President of all schools in the Archdiocese.

The Superintendent attends regular and executive board meetings and serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Archdiocesan High School Boards.

7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities (Continued)

PRINCIPAL/CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR/PRESIDENT

The Principal provides the overall leadership for the parish and inter-parish elementary school.

The Principal, along with the faculty and students, ensure the development of religious attitudes and values, fostering community, worship, faith in action to others and educational excellence as guided by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation. Among the Principal's responsibilities to the board include: (1) apprising the board on the implementation of policies and procedures, (2) informing the board about school programs, events and needs, (3) attending board meetings and executive sessions, and (4) preparing the board agenda in collaboration with the chairperson. The Principal serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the board.

The Chief Administrator/President has as its primary purpose to provide overall leadership for the Archdiocesan Catholic high schools. The Chief Administrator/President has the responsibility for both the spiritual and administrative leadership of the high school. The Chief Administrator/President is responsible for promulgating school policies, and for approving local school board decisions. The Chief Administrator/President serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the school board.

PARENTS

Parents of students currently enrolled in the school. This group should not comprise more than 1/3 of the board

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER/PARISH TRUSTEE

One parish council member from the school's parish(es) should sit on the parish(es) school board. This will help develop a relationship and improve communication with the parish(es).

OTHER

Other parishioners, alumni, parents of alumni, and community members, who are supportive of Catholic education and who have talents or skills that contribute to the board's goals.

- 21 years of age or older
- The board Chair must be a practicing Catholic.
- Genuine interest in Catholic School education
- A credible witness of the Catholic faith; a member of a parish; or if non-Catholic, not opposed to the tenets of the Catholic faith.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work with others to achieve consensus • Ability to make time commitment for meetings, committee work, and in-services • Willing to maintain confidentiality and high level of integrity • Willing to support school philosophy and mission. • Have a professional and personal life that is reflective of the teachings of the Catholic Church. • School employees, their spouses, children, siblings, or parents shall not be eligible for membership. <p>No lay member of a local school board may serve concurrently as a member of the Archdiocesan School Board.</p>
<p>Terms</p>	<p>Each member shall serve a term of 3 years, renewable for a second term. After the second term, there must be a one year interval before the individual is again eligible for board membership. Staggered term lengths are recommended. Membership to the school board requires a background check to the Office of Safe Environment (Policy #1.209).</p>
<p>Responsibilities of the Board Members</p>	<p>The school board council is by its nature advisory to the Pastor and Principal in parish, inter-parish schools; and to the Archbishop, Vicar and Superintendent, and Chief Administrator/President in the Archdiocesan High Schools. In parish schools, the consultative board shall relate to the parish finance council as directed by the Pastor. In Archdiocesan high schools, the board relates to the Corporation Officers through the Vicar and Superintendent and Chief Administrator/President. The school board is a leadership group within the mission of Catholic education. As such, the responsibilities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Executive</u>: includes Pastor, Principal/Chief Administrator/President, School Board Chair, Vice Chair 2. <u>Mission Formation & Evangelization</u>: adoption of the school’s mission statement, and periodic review of its operational validity 3. <u>Policy</u>: the formulation and adoption of policy for the school, as needed, within the framework of Archdiocesan policy and monitor the implementation of school policy and procedure 4. <u>Planning</u>: 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 Center for Catholic Education and Formation (i.e. includes but not limited to marketing, facilities, enrollment management) 5. <u>Advancement</u>: the formulation and implementation of an Advancement program for the school, following Archdiocesan guidelines 6. <u>Budget</u>: adopting the school’s operational budget, according to the format specified by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation; receiving periodic reports from the Principal/Chief Administrator/President on the

implementation of the budget. The finance committee formulates, approves, and adopts the budget, and the chair of the finance committee is responsible for reporting the status of the budget at each regular meeting

7. **Nominating**: Exploring a variety of expertise required by goals
8. **Evaluation**: systematically evaluating:
 - The school's mission statement, goals and policies
 - The board itself
 - The Principal/Chief Administrator/President within the process of the Archdiocese
9. **Recommendation for the Appointment of the Principal/Chief Administrator/President**: when a vacancy occurs, some board members will be asked to participate in the search process. The school board chair may serve as the chair of the search committee.

7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities (Continued)

Responsibilities of the Board Members

P A S T O R

- Canonical administrator of parish; spiritual and administrative leader
- Hires, supervises, and with The Center for Catholic Education and Formation, evaluates the Principal of parish school
- Brings his overall knowledge of the parish to the board
- Approves budget prepared by the Principal and recommended by the school board
- Cooperates in the initiation and implementation of the school's advancement plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plan
- The school board council is advisory to the Pastor. Pastor has ultimate responsibility.
 - While he may make a decision contrary to majority vote, this is usually infrequent since the presumption is that the board is worthy of the trust he has placed in them.
 - If he does not approve a board decision, he should provide a written statement of his reasons to the board. If a change of heart occurs after a vote has been taken, the Pastor must respond in writing and a motion to revisit the decision must be made. In this and all cases, the board must recognize his ultimate authority.

V I C A R A N D S U P E R I N T E N D E N T

- Chief spokesperson for mission of Catholic schools
- Ex-officio non-voting member of Archdiocesan High School Boards
- Under the authority of the Archbishop, the Vicar and Superintendent are responsible for the establishment and implementation of Archdiocesan policy governing Catholic schools, and for the direction of The Center for Catholic Education and Formation in providing guidance and service to schools in the Archdiocese.
- The Vicar and Superintendent are responsible for the oversight of the Archdiocesan High Schools.
- The Vicar and Superintendent and staff of The Center for Catholic Education and Formation establish regulations, programs and procedures to implement the policies promulgated by the Archbishop in the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*.
- The Vicar and Superintendent of Catholic Schools interpret Archdiocesan policies; provide in-service programs; consult; receive recommendations for additions/changes to Archdiocesan Catholic School procedures.

7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities (Continued)

Responsibilities of the Board Members

PRINCIPAL/CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR/PRESIDENT

- Archdiocesan High School Chief Administrator/President responsible to carry out Archdiocesan policies and procedures, and any policies the High School Board has developed.
- Develops regulations, programs, and procedures to implement policies
- Main source of recommendations regarding need for School policies
- Develops agendas for board meeting with Chair; is the main resource person for board in-services
- Develops the budget (in conjunction with Pastor and Finance Committee for parish schools); implements budget; periodically reports to board and The Center for Catholic Education and Formation on budget
- Participates in the school's advancement plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plan
- Educational leader and administrator of School – responsible for operation of the School program
- Parish, Inter-Parish School Principal responsible for employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff; the establishment of educational programming; evaluation and management of student behavior; and implementation of school policy, all in accordance with Archdiocesan policy.

CHAIRPERSON/OFFICERS

Officers are elected annually by the board membership and need to have served on the board for at least one year. **The Chair must be an active, practicing Catholic.**

- **Chairperson** presides at all meetings; determines the agenda with the Principal (in collaboration with the Pastor as needed)/Chief Administrator/President; assigns additional duties to individual members; appoints members to committees; oversees committee activities; plans orientation for new members with Nominating Committee and Principal/Chief Administrator/President; coordinates and reviews board Self-Assessment and guides board to consensus on future plans.
- **Vice Chairperson** in the absence of the Chair performs all duties of the Chair.
- **Recording 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; collects school board Self-Assessment forms and files report of data to Chair.

MEMBERS AT LARGE

- Accept appointments as committee Chairs
- Use their expertise to assist with committee work
- Provide written committee reports to board
- Assist in setting goals
- Accept other duties as needed

8. Committee and Responsibilities

Committee Structure

The **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE** contributes to the efficient operation of the board. It is impossible to address all of the work of the school board council without using the **committee structure**. The committee structure is also a way to recruit new members to the board and provide opportunities for members of the school community to become involved in the work of the board. Committees research, organize, and present needed information so that the board can take action on a particular issue. Committee members may include both non-board members and board members. The Chair of each committee must be a board member.

There are two types of committees: *standing and ad hoc*. The **standing committee** provides continuity for the ongoing operation of the board. The **ad hoc committee** is established to meet a specific objective at a given time. Non-board members of the ad hoc committee do not actively participate in the board's agenda after presenting their report. When the work of this committee is complete, the committee disbands.

The board may also invite representatives of various constituent groups to report on activities, educate the board, or communicate essential information pertinent to the board's purpose. The responsibility of these representatives is to advance the mission of Catholic schools. Representatives may be invited to report from the school faculty, school legislative liaison, business office, advancement office, parish religious education, parish council, parish finance council, parish trustees, or facilities department. These invited representatives have no vote and are not full members of the board.

The president of the Home and School Association or parent association may be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board, and this must be stated in the bylaws.

8. Committee and Responsibilities (Continued)

Standing Committee Responsibilities

The recommended **standing committees** and a brief description of their responsibilities are:

EXECUTIVE

The Executive Committee prepares full board meetings, transcribes minutes of meetings, and provides guidance and direction to the chairs of committees as well as professional development as needed to the school board council.

Responsibilities:

1. Developing and regular (annual) updating of the long-range strategic plan to assess where the School is currently and where it hopes to be in 3-5 years
2. Including an environmental scan and a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) into the plan
3. Making the plan strategic – identifying key performance indicators for each objective and action plans to achieve overarching goals
4. Developing a value proposition statement for the school
5. Embodying distributive leadership to appropriate constituents: parents, teachers, parish, principal, pastor, ensuring decision-making is a shared endeavor
6. Preparing eight areas of the plan: Catholic Identity (Mission Integration), Enrollment, Staffing, Academic Excellence, Physical Plant, Financial Plan, Advancement, and Nominating
For each area: stating dream/vision; setting goals; prioritizing goals; establishing objectives and action steps (including cost, staffing, and timing)
7. Creating a case statement including data gathered and a narrative. The case statement provides platform for why donors should contribute.
8. Using the plan as the school's yearly road map that drives all advancement activities
9. Planning annually for the third/fifth year out so school always has a 3-5 year plan
10. Prioritizing Key Focus Areas each year that outline specific areas for action, who will take the lead for each area, a timeline, and possible costs.

**Strategic plan is necessary to maintain school's NEASC accreditation and to receive funding from the Archdiocese.

8. Committee and Responsibilities (Continued)

Standing Committee Responsibilities (Continued)

The committee is responsible for:

MISSION AND EVANGELIZATION

The local school board and the leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.

Responsibilities:

1. The school board council must participate in formulating the mission statement and periodically reviewing its operational validity.
2. Leadership, faculty and governance teams must accept that the Catholic school is the center of evangelization.

The board must assist the school by supporting a culture that welcomes diversity, by appreciating their role as laity called and gifted within the Catholic school community, and by supporting the need for cultivation of a strong Catholic identity.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

The school board participates in the formulation and implementation of strategies for the School, which includes enrollment management, public relations and marketing, and is in line with The Center for Catholic Education and Formation guidelines.

Responsibilities:

1. Participating in marketing support to drive enrollment
2. Assisting in the analysis of student recruitment and retention programs
3. Collaborating with communication planning and tools

8. Committee and Responsibilities (Continued)

Standing Committee Responsibilities

The committee is responsible for:

FINANCE

The school board council assists in adopting and monitoring the school's operational budget, according to the format specified by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation. Preparation of periodic reports from the Principal/Chief Administrator/President on the implementation of the budget is vital to the stability and viability of the school.

Budgeting Responsibilities:

1. Adopting the budget (income and expenditure) according to the Archdiocesan format, monitoring the budget via periodic reports from the Principal and Pastor with recommendations from the parish finance council for parish schools, and aligned with the domain – Operational Vitality. For Archdiocesan High Schools, financial reports are developed by the Chief Administrator/President, business manager, and finance committee and sent directly to The Center for Catholic Education and Formation
2. Developing the plans and means to finance on-going educational program (i.e. setting the tuition, negotiating the parish subsidy with the Pastor and parish finance council, developing the annual operating budget)
3. Participating in development of financial plan section of the Strategic Plan - Catholic schools are funded from a combination of tuition, subsidy (parish, Archdiocesan, religious congregation, donated services), fundraising, and advancement.
4. Integrating tuition assistance line item into budget
5. Assisting with tuition assistance aide

Advancement Responsibilities:

6. Formulating and implementing advancement program, including public relations and marketing, fund development, alumni and constituency relations, and enrollment management
7. Friend-raising, not fundraising (Raise funds, friends, and freshmen)
8. Supporting the advancement team
9. Identifying, cultivating, and soliciting major donors; serving as School ambassadors in the community; participating in fund development; recruitment; marketing; and alumni relations.

**Budget must be approved/enacted by the Pastor and implemented by Principal of parish schools or reviewed by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation Director of School Finance and approved by the Archdiocesan High School Corporation and enacted by the Chief Administrator/President for Archdiocesan High Schools.

8. Committee and Responsibilities (Continued)

Standing Committee Responsibilities

The committee is responsible for:

N O M I N A T I N G

The school board creates a nominating committee to seek new board members to replace those whose terms have expired. The Pastor must approve the nominations for Parish Elementary School Board Councils. The Archbishop with the Vicar and Superintendent's recommendation must approve appointments to Archdiocesan High School Boards.

Responsibilities:

1. Ensuring that the school board membership is representative of the school community and is comprised of members whose talents speak to the priority needs of the school as stated in the long-range strategic plan
2. Gathering biographical information on candidates including their statement of interest/candidacy, which presents their vision for the school, their willingness to share their time, talent, and treasure with the school, and their interests and expertise that can be matched with the school's needs and goals. For Archdiocesan High School Boards, candidates must complete the *Statement of Candidacy Archdiocesan High School Board* form and a *Pastor's Approval Form*, see Appendix.
3. Developing a slate of eligible candidates for board council membership, to be given to the board Chair for discussion and consensus by the board and submitted to the Pastor for appointment to parish schools, or to the Archbishop with the recommendation of the Vicar and Superintendent to Archdiocesan High Schools.
4. Providing Confidentiality Statement to be signed by new board members. Refer to Appendix for *Confidentiality Statement for School Boards*.
5. Preparing and executing a board orientation annually for new members.
6. Suggesting topics for board in-services.
7. Preparing slate of nominees to be elected as officers of the board.
8. The Nominating Committee Chair conducts the election of officers for appointment to the board.

Refer to Appendix for *School Board Nominating Committee Guidelines*.

9. Annual Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps

A goal is a statement of broad direction or target growth area. A well-crafted goal will identify a purposeful outcome that will be achieved. An objective is the specific, measurable and realistic statement of what needs to be done to achieve a goal. The action steps further specify the how, when, who, where, and cost for each objective to successfully reach a goal.

Annual goals, objectives, and action steps are developed to accomplish the ongoing work of the board. They must be specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, and timely. The Principal/Chief Administrator/President informs the board about the annual school goals developed by themselves and faculty members and gives a report of the progress being made to implement the School goals and objectives. The board's goals support School goals as reflected in the long-range strategic plan.

In top-performing schools, leaders have proactively shifted their strategic planning process to genuinely include and involve parents and other key constituent groups. They know that without community support and the insight that comes with community engagement, their strategic plans are likely to fail. Clare Morrison-Porter

10. Policy Development

The Parish and High School boards formulate and adopt policies, the Pastor/Vicar/Superintendent enacts or promulgates them, and the Principal/Chief Administrator/President implements them.

The Catholic parish and secondary schools of the Archdiocese of Hartford follow the policies developed by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation. There are various procedures provided by The Center for Catholic Education and Formation that support the written policies. One of the school board's responsibilities is to consider new or proposed changes in policies for the operation of the specific school.

A **policy** is a deliberate plan of action for the operation of the school used to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. It is a guide for discretionary action stating what should be done, but not how it should be done. A policy must be written.

The policy is determined by a response to a need expressed by the Principal, Pastor or the board representing its constituents. In some instances, parent input may indicate that consideration should be given to developing a policy. This information may come from data received through an open forum, parent surveys or the results of input from focus groups.

For policy development to be effective, it is essential that appropriate input be sought from those who will be affected by the policy. Policies are never made in isolation nor are they made to "solve one problem." The nature of policy development requires time to analyze the need, gather data, allow for thoughtful deliberation and ultimately approve a policy statement. This process cannot be covered at one meeting.

A **procedure** is the process for carrying out the policy. The board does not make recommendations regarding procedure, as that is the role and responsibility of the administration.

10. Policy Development (Continued)

Proposing a New Policy

An issue or topic may be brought to the board by one or more members for discussion and, if the board determines there is a need, the individual or group who proposed the policy may be asked to develop a rationale for the new or changed policy. This formalizes the process but does not imply that it will receive approval.

The need for a potential new policy or change to existing policy should be submitted to the administration and to the board that includes: a statement indicating the need for the policy and the perceived consequences of implementing the change.

Once the topic is placed on the agenda, the following occurs:

- Discussion about the topic, issue, concern,
- Study of the issue is conducted by the principal, and possibly by an ad hoc committee
- Questions, concerns are clarified by the individual or group who initiated the policy,
- A statement is formulated that is brief, simple, clear,
- The statement is written to describe what will be accomplished.

The **first reading of the proposed policy** is considered at the board meeting. (This may occur at an executive session.) If the policy will be considered, the initiator or a committee assigned by the Chair “writes” the policy with the suggestions made by the board in a **second draft**. The **second reading of the proposed policy** allows the board to either accept or reject the proposed policy, or ask for another draft. An approved policy is dated, submitted to the Pastor in parish schools or the Vicar and Superintendent in Archdiocesan High Schools for enactment, and then included with the other policies.

Publication of the policy occurs when the board adopts the policy and it is promulgated by the Pastor/Chief Administrator/President. Appropriate constituents are informed about the new policy. This may occur through the school newsletter, the parish bulletin and/or the school’s handbooks.

Reviewing and rescinding policies is also the responsibility of the board. Policies are tested every time they are used, and they should be changed as soon as they become obsolete in order to achieve a balance of justice and care.

When the policy has been approved, and enacted, the Principal/Chief Administrator/President determines how the policy will be **implemented** and informs the board about the progress being made.

II. The Agenda

Planning the agenda for board meetings.

The Principal/Chief Administrator/President and Chair of the board plan the meeting agenda and have it distributed to the members along with an agenda packet at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Include the name of the school, date, time, and place of the meeting on the agenda. Topics for future agendas can be raised at meetings. The format for the meetings is the same for all meetings. Meetings are usually scheduled for no more than two hours. Refer to Appendix for samples of a *Template for School Board Agenda*.

a. Set Times for each of the following:	A planning meeting is essential for the school board. It should occur in June of the present year or late August preceding the new year. At this meeting goals should be clearly assigned to each committee. The goals should be communicated on the school's website.
b. Gathering	Usually occurs 10-15 minutes before the meeting. The purpose is to socialize. Rotate task of bringing refreshments.
c. Call to order	Welcome and Opening Prayer Recognition of visitors Roll call
d. Consent Agenda	<p>A group of items that may include previous meeting minutes for approval, general reports, committee reports, routine correspondence, and/or informational materials that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not require discussion • Are self-explanatory • Are noncontroversial • Were submitted in writing and distributed to the board prior to the meeting <p>Consent agenda items can be removed from the group and placed on the meeting agenda. The consent agenda is voted on as a whole and acceptance is stated in the meeting minutes. The purpose of a consent agenda is to free up time for discussion of critical issues and ongoing planning.</p> <p>The Chair handles this part of the agenda.</p>
e. Presentations	Presentations to the school board could be offered early in the meeting
f. General Reports	<p>Pastor: updates and shares general information that has not been included in the consent agenda.</p> <p>Principal: gives information not already included in the consent agenda about the school's program; gives a progress report about the school's goals and objectives; informs about the coming School activities; clarifies questions raised in report; provides data regarding enrollment trends.</p> <p>Board Chair: gives information regarding board events and activities.</p>

II. The Agenda (Continued)

Planning the Agenda for board meetings. (Continued)

g. Committee Reports	Indicate who will present the report on behalf of the committee and the purpose of the report, e.g., seek input from the board or make a final recommendation. Not all committees give reports at each meeting. Written updates can be given to the board as part of the consent agenda.
h. Standing Committees	List each committee that will apprise the board about its progress, only if they need input from the board or have some final recommendations for the board to consider. Otherwise, a written report may be included in the consent agenda.
i. Ad hoc committees	List each committee that will apprise the board about its progress, only if input is needed from the board or there is some final recommendation for the board to consider. Otherwise, a written report may be included in the consent agenda.
j. Old Business	Consider items addressed at a previous meeting
k. New Business	Indicate the topic or issue to be addressed
l. Visitors Comments	Non-members who wish to speak at a board meeting shall submit their request in writing to the Chairperson 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. Their requests will be honored if their business is appropriate for the board's responsibilities and agenda. Such persons shall be given a specific time limit for speaking. Guests should be informed that someone would respond to them later. Do not make promises about resolving the issues raised.
m. Planning for Next Meeting's Agenda	Suggestions or items not covered should be carried over.
n. Closing Comments	
o. Closing Prayer	A board member may be selected to close the meeting with a prayer.
p. Executive Session	Executive Sessions are held as needed either before the regularly scheduled meeting or after the meeting. Executive sessions need not be part of every board meeting.

II. The Agenda (Continued)

Planning the Agenda for board meetings. (Continued)

q. Open Forum

Board meetings, other than those held in executive session, may be open to the public. The dates and times are announced in the school's monthly calendar and/or the church bulletin. A particular time may be stipulated on the agenda to allow visitors to address the board.

The Open Forum is an opportunity for the board to communicate with the School families. It will also help the school's administration continue to provide a learning environment that is Catholic and excellent. This will also assist the board in developing annual goals to meet the needs of the School community, the students and the school's program.

The Open Forum allows the board, Pastor and School administrator to hear from the parents and guardians of the students. Parents and guardians are given the opportunity to express what they are thinking about the School and its mission of Catholic education for their children.

- Parents and guardians are invited to attend an open forum with the board.
- The date and time is announced well in advance.
- The purpose of the open forum is clearly stated.
- The protocol for participating is announced. This is not a time to resolve specific problems or express grave displeasure with an aspect of the school's program, operation or personnel.
- Parents and guardians will be given the opportunity to express themselves in groups and have their input become part of the information collated by the school board.
- Parents and guardians will be asked:
 - What do you like about the school?
 - If you could change one thing in the school, what would that be?
 - If you could add one thing to the school's program, what would that be?
- The meeting will begin on time. The purpose of the meeting is stated. Serious consideration will be given to all that is shared with the school board since the input will serve as a means of continuous improvement in the school's program and its operation.
- The results of the Open Forum become an agenda item at a future board meeting. The board determines a way to communicate the results to the School families. Families are informed that the issues raised will be addressed in one of the following ways, e.g., item for discussion of the action plans for school board or the school faculty and staff. Some items may be deferred for action at a later date. Others may be discerned as impossible or inconsistent with the mission, means and philosophy of the Catholic school.
- Periodic reports are given to the School families. These updates are a response to the families that board members have heard them and that they will, when possible, deal with the issues raised.

12. Suggested Procedures for Visitors

Visitors should be aware of the protocol observed by those who attend the board meetings. It is important that a friendly atmosphere prevails, but it is also important the visitors know the parameters for speaking to the board. A flyer welcoming visitors could be distributed before the meeting begins. The flyer would include a statement of welcome and the protocol to be followed by visitors during the meeting.

- **Visitors observe the board** while it is in session. They do not engage in the discussion nor do they actively participate in the agenda either through comments or by offering their opinions on the topic being discussed. No electronic devices of any kind should be accessed unless prior approval is received from the Chair.
- **Once the visitor is recognized**, the visitor has one opportunity to express an opinion on the item approved for the agenda. Each individual may speak for a specified amount of time (2-3 minutes).
- **There is no discussion or debate** between the visitors and the members.
- **All members listen to the visitors.** If necessary, either the Chair or someone designated by the Chair can assist in clarifying the question or topic.
- **The Chair thanks** the visitors for their comments and informs them that someone will get back to them later.

The Chair and the members are cordial to the visitors. It is understood that the issues raised will not be handled at the meeting. If appropriate to the parameters of the board's responsibilities, the issue may be addressed at a future time. Ordinarily, the visitor's comments are related to the matters considered on the agenda. Personnel issues and individual family or student's needs are not discussed. Questions of a general nature, however, could be referred to the appropriate person, e.g., Pastor or Principal/Chief Administrator/President.

The Chair assures the visitors that the matter will be taken under consideration by the board, the Pastor or the Principal/Chief Administrator/President. It is important that the Chair not "promise" that the issue will be dealt with at the next meeting because it may not be possible to do so. Chair does not necessarily address some of the issues that may be raised. It may be appropriate, for the Pastor or Principal/Chief Administrator/President to respond to the individual's question, issue or concern later.

13. Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis - Contacts

The Center for Catholic Education and Formation will provide services of orientation and training, guidance, and direction so that the purpose of and function for the consultative, committee-driven school board will be sustainable and viable.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Archdiocese of Hartford
The Center for Catholic Education & Formation
467 Bloomfield Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 242-5573

RESOURCES

The Center for Catholic Education & Formation Website:
www.catholicedaohct.org

14. Annual Planning and Self-Assessment of the School Board

For a Catholic school board to be effective, it must provide time for goal setting and periodic evaluation. It is important that at least one day be set aside each year for an annual planning meeting for board members to meet with the school's administrators in order to set the board's goals for the year, as well as to review the administration's goals.

The board will plan annually for the election of officers for appointment. It is also important that the board evaluates its performance. Refer to the Appendix for the *School Board Self-Assessment* tool to be used for this purpose. The *School Board Self-Assessment* should be completed by each board member and submitted at least seven (7) days prior to the annual meeting to the Secretary of the board. The Secretary will file a report of the data to the board Chair for discussion at the annual planning meeting and for consensus on planned changes. A summary of the results of the self-assessment must be sent to The Center for Catholic Education and Formation by July 1 signed by Principal and School Board/Council Chair.

“Both research and experience suggest that operational vitality and, indeed, long-term viability are enhanced by clarity of roles and responsibilities... collaborative efforts... clearly written school foundational documents... strategic long-range plans... operational plans... and professional development.”

Br. John R. Paige CSC, Ph. D., 2012

15. Appendix

Commissioning a School Board
Model Constitution for Parish School Boards
Model Constitution for High School Boards
Model Bylaws for Parish School Boards
Model Bylaws for High School Boards
School Board Committee Report Form
Statement of Candidacy Archdiocesan High School Board
Pastor's Approval Form
Confidentiality Statement for School Boards
School Board Nominating Committee Guidelines
Proposed New Policy or Change in Policy Form
Template for School Board Agenda
School Board Self-Assessment
Glossary of Terms

