

Board Governance in Support of Sacred Heart Education

Particular Focus on the Committee on Trustees



Conference of Sacred Heart Education

OCTOBER 2018

Conference of Sacred Heart Education

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FOREWORD

We are excited to offer Sacred Heart trustees and heads of school this new publication: *Board Governance in Support of Sacred Heart Education*. Why have we written this publication at this time? We believe that high performing schools have high performing boards that operate in a close and productive partnership with school leadership. The composition of the board and its operational practices create the conditions for excellence. The Committee on Trustees (CoT) is the most important committee of the board because the effectiveness of this committee determines the quality of the board and its capacity to deliver the school's Sacred Heart mission and strategic objectives. Outlining the CoT's roles and responsibilities contributes to our effectiveness as stewards of the mission of Sacred Heart education.

Why read Board Governance in Support of Sacred Heart Education? We offer to trustees and heads insights into the unique role the CoT plays in ensuring mission integrity by engaging in effective governance practice. If you have ever wondered about how people are appointed to boards and/or board committees or you sense your board is eager to increase its governance expertise and effectiveness, we encourage you to read this booklet. If you have just been asked to join the CoT and are wondering what your job is or if you are the new chair of the CoT and hope to be effective, you will find answers in *Board Governance in Support of Sacred Heart Education*.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THE PUBLICATION ADDRESSES INCLUDE:

- We have trouble recruiting new trustees. What can we do?
- Given our strengths and challenges as a board, what kinds of professional development might we pursue?
- There are two people on our board who continuously impede progress! How did they get on the board in the first place? What can we do about it?
- How can we improve board orientation?
- Our finance chair has been transferred and I've been asked to become chair. I've never chaired a board committee. What is my job?
- I love the school and the education it provides, but I really don't understand what it means to be a "Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart" school. How do I explain it to people when they ask?

Board Governance in Support of Sacred Heart Education is meant to be a practical work book for boards, heads and chairs to use in the same spirit as our first publication: *Principles and Practices for Governance and Leadership in Sacred Heart Schools*. We hope it serves as an Education to Mission resource for all who read it.

This publication would not have been possible without the insights, wisdom and generosity of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education. I am deeply grateful to the members of the Conference for the consistency, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm each brings to our dialogue and discernment about the evolving mission of Sacred Heart education. It is an honor to be working with such dedicated professionals.

— **Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ**
Head of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education

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01

Introduction

The vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, as embodied in the *Goals and Criteria*, serves as the foundation, context and guiding light for all Sacred Heart Schools. While Schools of the Sacred Heart share the same mission and fundamental aspects of culture derived from a shared Catholic identity and mission, each school has its own size, structure, history and culture, challenges and vision for the school's future. It is the duty of the school's board, working in partnership with school leadership, to serve as stewards, ensuring continuity of Sophie's vision, the Sacred Heart mission, the best educational climate for today's students and the sustainability of the school.

Just as each Sacred Heart school is distinct from the other schools in the Network, boards of trustees vary as well in terms of operations and practices. Yet despite the differences, there are fundamental responsibilities of all boards and identifiable qualities and practices of the most effective boards. In the booklet, *Principles and Practices for Governance and Leadership in Sacred Heart Schools*, the Conference of Sacred Heart Education outlines the duties, roles and responsibilities and qualities that characterize high performing boards. The Conference urges Sacred Heart boards to use *Principles and Practices* as a guide for implementing the indicators, that is, current best practices for governance and leadership in schools. Board Governance in Service of Sacred Heart Education serves as an adjunct to *Principles and Practices* to add depth and context to the processes that build the strength of a board that serves as an effective steward of mission.

High performing schools have high performing boards that operate in a close and productive partnership with school leadership. The Committee on Trustees (CoT) is the most important committee of the board because the effectiveness of the committee determines the quality of the board and its capacity to deliver the school's Sacred Heart mission and strategic objectives.

The purpose of this guide is to support the work of the CoT by defining key aspects of the committee's role, providing tools to help the committee discharge its responsibilities, clarifying certain essential elements of the mission of Sacred Heart Schools and indicating some attributes of effective Sacred Heart boards.

***Board Governance in Support of Sacred Heart Education* outlines:**

- Role and responsibilities of the CoT
- Common pitfalls of the CoT
- The CoT's role in the board/head relationship
- Effective procedures and processes for the identification, recruitment and orientation of appropriate trustee candidates
- Ongoing board development
- Board and individual trustee assessment
- Board's need to understand the structures of accountability for mission

While the CoT is the focus of this publication, a general overview of the role of board committees, trends in committee organization, and the range and limits of committee authority set a context for how a CoT should operate to assure effective governance in support of mission within a Sacred Heart school.

02

The Role of Board Committees

The board as a whole makes major policy decisions, sets the strategic directions of the school, allocates resources according to strategic priorities, and is responsible for the fiscal health of the school. The board accomplishes its work through committees and task forces that study the issues and opportunities facing the school, facilitate informed and participatory decision making, and formulate recommendations for consideration by the full board.

Effective committees are essential to successful boards. While the focus and nature of the work of individual committees vary, there are universal best practices that increase the committee effectiveness and therefore board productivity.

Standing Committees vs. Task Forces

The board determines the number of committees or task forces needed to accomplish its goals. The rapid pace of societal change and the changing circumstances of a school create new and daunting challenges requiring boards to be forward thinking and nimble. As a result, there is a trend to limit the number of standing committees in favor of task forces convened to target specific, pressing and emerging issues. This new structure allows the board to direct its human resources to the school's highest needs, enables the board to reach out to the larger community to engage individuals with specific expertise who would not otherwise be willing to commit to a board position, gives trustees more focused and interesting work, and thus increases trustee engagement.

Standing committees still play an important role and need to reflect the broad governing functions of the board and align with the board's oversight responsibility. In today's climate, independent schools are finding it more efficient to maintain as standing committees the executive (which meets infrequently), finance, CoT, advancement, and facilities committees. Some boards are streamlining even further to just three standing committees: Internal Affairs, External Affairs, and Governance. The latter structure effectively removes "silo thinking" in favor of a broader and more integrated approach to decision-making and oversight. The standing committees of the past, such as strategic planning, diversity, marketing, enrollment management and education,

have disappeared altogether or are currently formed as task forces to study a specific issue. For example, few schools today maintain active education or enrollment management committees, as those functions are operational in nature. As part of its oversight function, the board may have dashboards or other means to monitor the effectiveness of the operational aspects of the school.

Committee Authority

Committee charges or charters need to state clearly the governance purpose of each committee, and the committees' work is meant to be aligned with the *Goals and Criteria*, the school's strategic vision, objectives and priorities. The committee chairs have the following responsibilities:

- Plan each group's work, assuring alignment with the school's Sacred Heart mission, the board's objectives and coordination, and when appropriate, with other committees
- Consider how the committee can further, deepen and support the values of the *Goals and Criteria*
- Set a realistic meeting calendar
- Plan concise agendas and desired meeting outcomes in consultation with the designated staff member
- Provide committee members with the needed supporting materials and information well in advance of meetings
- Assure that committee minutes are produced
- Monitor committee progress and adjust when necessary.

Committees do not have decision authority. A committee recommends policy or a course of action to the full board, which has the ultimate authority to make the decision on a recommended course of action. Committees provide the full board with periodic updates on the committee's ongoing progress, allowing trustees to ask questions or suggest other perspectives the committee might explore. This process increases the likelihood of thorough exploration of any given issue and, at the end of the process, an informed, wise decision that is thoroughly understood and supported by the full board. This responsibility includes ongoing reflection on the calls and benefits of the *Goals and Criteria*.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE BOARD DECIDES

The Executive Committee

In many schools, the executive committee serves as a sounding board for the head. The bylaws usually state who serves on the executive committee. Typically, the officers and chairs of the standing committees and task forces serve

as the executive committee and work closely with the board chair and head of school to plan and coordinate the work of the board.

One of the most important functions of the executive committee is to act in place of the board between board meetings as prescribed by the bylaws, or as expressly directed by the board. For example, if a school is involved in a delicate or time sensitive negotiation to acquire property, the board could authorize the executive committee to act for the full board. Such authorization will usually have certain parameters, such as an upper limit to the amount of money the committee can offer for the property and a specified end date to the authorization. This said, the role of the executive committee is frequently a source of confusion and sometimes even problems on a board.

There are two types of situations where executive committees become problematical. The first involves a concentration of power and decision-making authority within the executive committee. Sometimes in a well-meaning effort to save time and streamline decision-making, the executive committee becomes a de facto board-within-a-board. Eventually, trustees who do not serve on the committee can feel they no longer have a voice or influence. The result is disengagement and even dysfunction.

Another problematical practice of an executive committee involves frequent executive sessions where the head is excused. The relationship between the board and head is critical to

the wellbeing of a school. While the head is clearly excused when the board discusses the head's evaluation and compensation, frequent discussions at the board level that do not include the head run the risk of poor communication, cross purposes, and fraying trust.

Staffing Board Committees

Effective committees require organization, accurate information and follow-through. Most board committees are staffed by a member of the senior leadership team who works with the committee chair to design and disseminate the agenda, gather the information the committee will need for its deliberations, and following the meeting, drafts minutes for the committee chair's review. For example, the CFO typically staffs the finance committee, prepares financial statements, budget scenarios, comparative information and statistics, or other information as the committee requires. Similarly, the school's advancement person usually staffs the development committee. The decision regarding who will staff a committee depends on the nature of the committee's charge, needs, and the degree of confidentiality required.

Indicators of Effective Committee Operations Include:

- Committees and task forces reflect the board's fiduciary responsibilities, strategic directions and priorities.
- Each committee has a clear charter or charge that declares the governance purpose of the committee.
- Committees translate their charges into annual objectives and action plans that align with the *Goals and Criteria*, the board's governance responsibilities and the school's strategic plan.
- Committees periodically update the full board on their progress and accomplishments.
- Committee agendas are concise, clear, state the desired outcome of the meeting, and are developed in consultation with the school's designated staff member. Agendas and any supporting documents are distributed in advance of the meeting. Minutes serve as a means to safeguard mission. They need to be clear, precise records of strategic decisions.
- Committee members must strike an appropriate balance between too much and too little information, guarding against overwhelming the school senior leadership with copious or inappropriate requests for detailed information. On the other hand, they need sufficient information to make sound recommendations and ensure adequate oversight.
- Committees serve as models of good governance where issues are debated and recommendations are framed openly, inclusively, and with full transparency.¹

¹ Wilson, E.B. and Lanier, James L. *Effective Committee Series* (Association of Governing Boards, 2013).

03

The Committee on Trustees

Role & Responsibilities

The CoT is the most important committee of the board. The work of the committee will determine the effectiveness of the board, both in the present and for years to come, because it identifies and recruits the range of talents, skills, experiences and character of those who sit on the board and trains and monitors all trustees with regard to their roles and responsibilities as stewards of the mission of Sacred Heart education.

It is a sad fact that when schools find themselves in trouble, fail accreditation reviews or simply fail, the root problem is almost always a governance problem. The issues vary but often include a mismatch of trustees to the school's mission, culture or aspirations; dysfunctional group dynamics, disengagement, or uncertainty about roles and responsibilities. The CoT plays a vital role in helping boards avoid these problems.

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The Committee has Several Responsibilities:

- Ensure ongoing education to the *Goals and Criteria* and the mission of Sacred Heart education
- Identify, recruit and orient the right people as new members of the board
- Re-nominate sitting trustees according to the term limits as defined in the bylaws
- Nominate the slate of board officers
- Research and identify current best governance practices to determine whether or not those practices are appropriate for the board, and to

provide the training opportunities necessary to keep the board operating at an optimum level

- Monitor board functioning, including interpersonal dynamics
- Evaluate the performance and effectiveness of individual trustees and of the board itself.

On many high performing boards, the CoT works with the board chair and head to design the agendas for board meetings and discuss any emerging or ongoing governance problems. One advantage of utilizing the CoT, as opposed to the executive committee, for planning board meetings is to avoid either the perception or the reality of a board-within-a-board, a situation that disempowers trustees and leads to disengagement. The CoT often plans board development sessions for board meetings and alerts trustees to board development opportunities offered by outside organizations.

Committee Composition & Structure

The CoT is usually the smallest board committee and consists exclusively of trustees because of the sensitive and confidential nature of its work. Typically, it includes the board chair, vice chair, immediate past chair (if still serving as a trustee), and two additional trustees appointed by the board chair. A standard rule of thumb is that the board chair appoints “the best and brightest” to the committee. The committee should include individuals with deep context on the Sacred Heart mission, the school and governance practice, who do not miss meetings, who carefully prepare for

sensitive discussions, and who are willing to participate in appropriate outside seminars and conferences, especially those sponsored by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education and/or the Network of Sacred Heart Schools. Most important of all, the committee requires wisdom and integrity.

The head of school is an ex officio member and works as a full partner and working member of the committee. The success of the committee rests on a close alliance with school leadership and a healthy exchange of ideas and information. The head of school often knows potential candidates, their backgrounds and personalities, personal or professional achievements. The head's opinion of a candidate is invaluable. For example, the head of school can steer the committee away from nominating an individual whose interactions with faculty and the school are problematical, a situation that otherwise would likely not be known to the committee.

While in some schools, the director of institutional advancement often serves the committee as staff support, it is essential that the head of school speak with the members of the senior leadership team while seeking potential board committee members and possible trustees, since each interacts with members of the larger school community in a variety of ways. Securing suggestions for possible board and/or committee members is essential to the CoT's understanding of its pool of future nominees.

Common Pitfall

Mistakes in Board Composition

There are many reasons for mistakes in board composition. The most common is expediency, especially in small schools, where it can be difficult to recruit the actual talent the school needs on the board. The second most common mistake is an over emphasis on one kind of talent in the face of a current initiative. For example, the COT of a school about to launch a capital campaign might emphasize philanthropy over other qualities needed for governance, and the result is the board loses balance. Sometimes individuals seek a board position because they have an agenda that is contrary to the board and the institution. Many strong schools are faithful to a formula they use to establish the composition of the board: a third parents, a third parents of alumnae/i, a third friends and RSCJ or provincial designee.

Underprepared Members

All board members and officers must understand the time commitment in board service. When recruiting individuals to the board, committees and task forces, or board offices, the responsibilities and time commitment required must be clearly communicated. Trustees who miss meetings, do not read background materials and arrive unprepared for key discussions place the institution at risk for poor decision-making. The mission and success of the school cannot be achieved without full commitment.

Ils of Committees on Trustees

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Ineffective Relationships with the Head of School and Senior Leadership

While the head of school and senior leadership have important insights on board candidates, the ultimate decision is a board decision. The CoT must listen to the perspectives of school leadership, but the board determines if an individual has the criteria the board seeks. Similarly, the CoT can support the HoS or senior leadership if any trustee, especially a committee chair, is demanding quantities of data, information and minutiae that the staff simply does not have the time to prepare or that violate separation of governance and operational roles. While the board chair would typically deliver the message to the committee or task force chair, the CoT can play a supporting role.

Resistance to Change

The CoT has a responsibility to stay abreast of changing trends and governance practices and changes in the evolving educational landscape. Boards can be resistant to change and resort to “We’ve always done it this way. Why change?” The committee must communicate to all trustees the trends, emerging new practices and explain the rationale for why changes are taking place and why the board has a responsibility to examine how it conducts board business.

Undue Influence of Business Models of Governance²

Trustees are often deeply experienced with corporate business models and governance structures and seek to impose them on schools in the belief such practices will lead to higher performance. Certain business practices, such as cash flow analysis and investment responsibilities, cannot be ignored. But there are very important differences in how a school and a for-profit business operate. For example, a school’s measure of success is not its bottom line, but mission achievement. The culture and character of a school are among its greatest assets. The strength and engagement of the various constituents are an important consideration in all decision-making, and the self-perpetuating nature of the board distinguishes the academic institution from a business corporation. It is important that the CoT consider developing materials to illustrate the differences between businesses and independent schools for board information and discussion.

Overly Influential Trustees or Honorary Trustees

Boards benefit from having trustees with deep historical perspective, awareness of past problems or opportunities and the way the school navigated those issues.

² Association of Governing Boards, www.agb.org.

Common Pitfalls of Committees

The practice of keeping such trustees connected by re-electing them to the board, keeping them on committees or task forces as non-trustees once their terms have expired, or naming them as honorary trustees can be very beneficial and can serve to honor and keep major donors close to the school. Occasionally, these individuals can have an oversized role in governance, exerting inappropriate influence. The CoT must be clear about term limits and follow the bylaws. If the board has a designation for honorary trustees, or trustees emeriti, the role of these individuals must be stated with unambiguous clarity so that there is no misunderstanding that the current board and its leadership are responsible for governance.

Insufficient Attention to Leadership Succession

Almost every board at one time or another has experienced the angst that comes with the realization that the current board chair, who has served ably through two or more terms, is about to rotate off the board and no clear successor is in sight. When recruiting individuals to the board, leadership potential should be a high priority. These trustees may have opportunities to chair committees and task forces, and within a reasonable length of time, move into an officer role. Depending on the term limits for trustees specified in the bylaws and the terms for officers, the window for moving a strong trustee into a leadership

position can be small if that trustee is to have impact as a vice-chair or chair of the board. All too frequently great board chairs are forced to step down because of job requirements, including relocation. “Depth on the bench” must be a continuous focus of the committee on trustees to assure a leadership talent pool.

Late Reception of Board Materials

If boards are to be deliberative in their consideration and engage in generative thinking and discernment, trustees need to receive meeting materials with sufficient time to consider them prior to board meetings. Prior notification deadlines may be articulated by a school’s accrediting body. Ideally, boards need at least a full week to review the board materials.

Poorly Constructed Agendas

The construction of the agenda is essential in the effectiveness of a board. Time is limited so the board meeting time needs to be used wisely. To that end, CoT can play a significant role by assuming responsibility to design board meeting agendas that allow the discussion of strategic issues early in the meeting. Within the context of the CoT meeting, a thoughtful discussion might occur about the balance between honoring the significant work of committees and insisting that board committees report at every board meeting, thereby making board meetings too long. Some schools have effectively adopted

ees on Trustees

03

the consent agenda, which allows for a single vote on a number of routine matters such as committee updates that can be disseminated before the meeting in writing. While some trustees feel a consent agenda stifles discussion and shared decision making, when managed judiciously, the practice opens up time for strategic and generative thinking. Questions or concerns can still be allowed before the vote.

Badly Written Minutes

Institutional memory is essential to ensuring mission integrity and institutional viability. Minutes serve as historic documents, capturing a school's evolving living of mission. Boards need to keep clear, precise records of strategic decisions in order to safeguard mission. Part of the annual evaluation process that the CoT conducts needs to determine if board minutes are effective.

Indicators of an Effective Committee on Trustees

The Committee:

- among parents of alumnae/i, alumnae/i, parents, friends of the school.
 - Ensures that the board adheres to the by-law requirement of RSCJ/provincial designee presence on the board
 - Attends to leadership succession on the board as a whole and the board's committees
 - Develops processes and practices for the identification, recruitment and vetting of trustee candidates
 - Engages in open and honest discussion of candidates, relying on discernment especially when conversations are difficult.
 - Conducts a thorough orientation of new trustees that is rooted in the *Goals and Criteria* and best practices, ensuring that every new trustee attends the orientation session
 - Conducts an annual self-evaluation of the board as a whole, including an individual self-evaluation by each trustee
 - Identifies the board's needs for education and training and designs the means to meet those needs
 - Monitors interactions among trustees and between the board and head to assure an ethos of trust, respect and collaboration
 - Assures leadership potential for committees and the board as a whole
 - Participates with the head of school and board chair in designing the board agenda, allowing time for report to the full board on the status of the SHCOG Action Plan, the school's strategic plan and accreditation agency recommendations.
- Maintains accurate records of the board roster, tracking term limits for each board member and identifying what openings are available and when
 - Identifies the kinds of talent, expertise and personal qualities the board needs for now and in the future, including balanced composition of the board

04

The Board/Head Relationship

Sacred Heart culture is relational. The most important governance relationship in the school is that between the board, especially the board chair, and the head of school. The quality of the relationship is fundamental to school effectiveness. Although the head of school is hired, evaluated, and if necessary, fired by the board, it is far too simplistic to characterize the relationship as that of an employer and an employee. The relationship is best defined as a partnership with delineation of roles and responsibilities but with clear understanding of the many areas requiring collaboration and mutual decision-making.

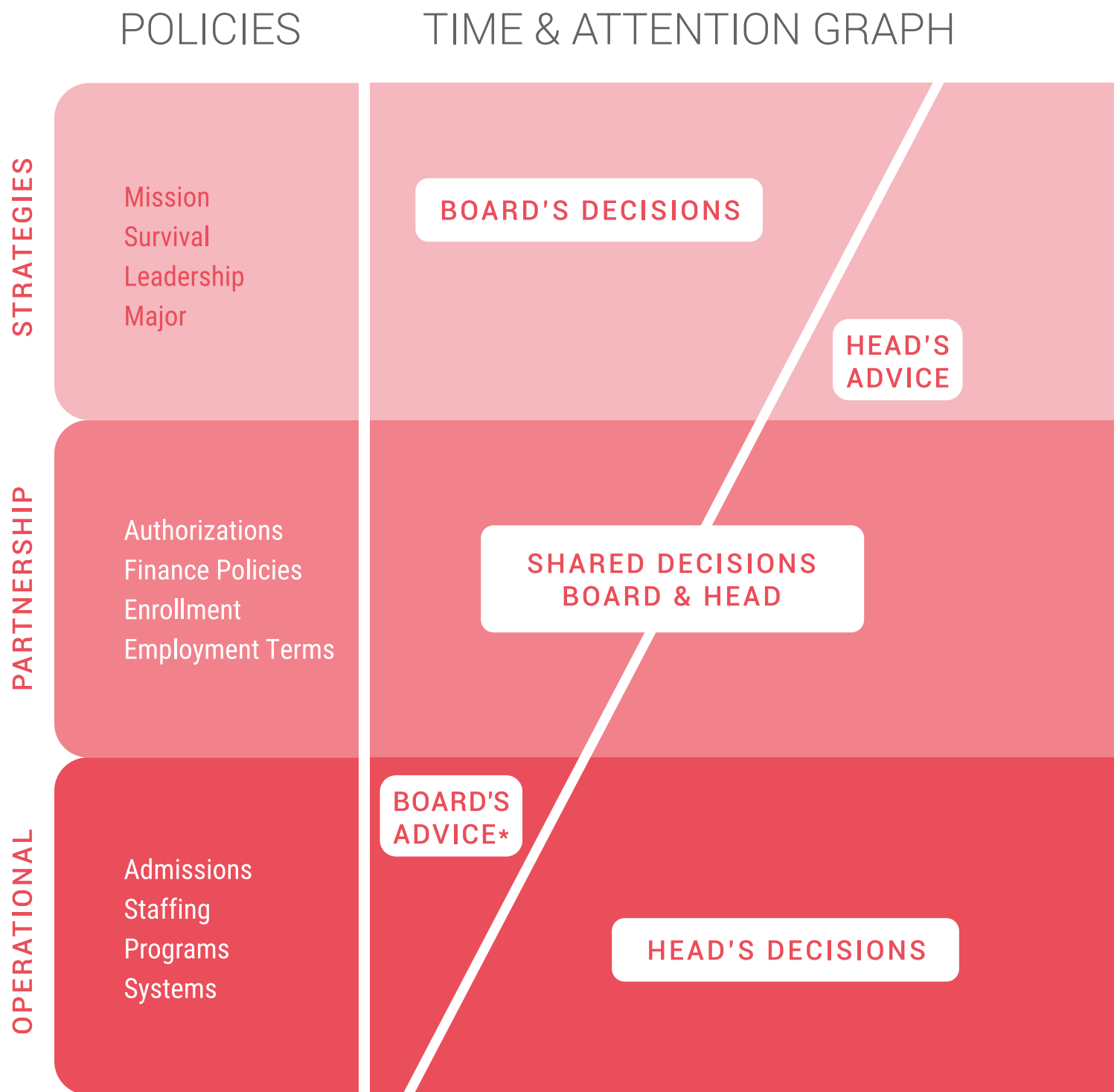
The relationship between the board chair and head of school is a critical component of a high functioning board. Trust is the foundation of great leadership and an essential quality to any relationship. Honesty and open communication encourage candor and mutual support. A head of school has few individuals in whom s/he can openly confide. The board chair is the head's "person" who can serve as a sounding board, an advisor, and even an occasional shoulder to cry on. Similarly, the board chair should feel comfortable enough to share concerns with the head and even occasional criticism. When such a degree of trust exists, issues are surfaced and managed before they become problems that can undermine the institution.

Trust also characterizes the relationship of the board and the head of school. Boards of

trustees set the context for leadership through wise policies that establish directions, inform strategic priorities and guide decision-making while also providing some degree of flexibility. The board oversees the long-term strategic and fiscal viability of the school. In order to maintain this high-level oversight, the board must stay out of operations and the day-to-day work of the head and staff. It is most important that the board appreciate and value the expertise of its sole employee, the head of school. The head is the professional educator. The head serves as the spiritual, intellectual and community leader of the school. The head oversees the shaping of the school's program and the quality of life in the school community. It is the head who, working in partnership with the board of trustees to establish and refine the school's mission, articulates the mission to all constituencies.

Together the head and board support mission among students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni/ae, and the community.³ *The Design of the Board-Head Partnership: Time and Attention* provides an excellent chart demonstrating the difference in the board/head roles. A careful study of this graph enables the head and board to begin the discussion of annual goals and objectives with greater clarity about their respective roles and responsibilities as they design an annual plan to support the mission of Sacred Heart education as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*.

³ NAIS, "Principles of Good Practice," NAIS, 2018, <https://www.nais.org/learn/principles-of-good-practice/>.



Above the Diagonal Line — Allocation of Board's Time

Below the Diagonal Line — Allocation of Head's Time

* When Asked

Created by Mary Hundley DeKuyper. *NAIS Trustee Handbook*, 8th Edition.

Design of the Partnership: The increasing complexity of school governance and leadership sometimes creates gray areas in terms of division of roles and responsibilities. For example, schools engaging in bond financing might rely heavily on a trustee with particular expertise in that area. The trustee could become increasingly involved in working directly with staff. In such cases, a trustee must be ever cognizant that the head is the board's only employee, and the staff is accountable to the head, not to the board or to a particular trustee.

The CoT can play an important role in strengthening and guiding the board/head relationship. The committee's small size, strength and wisdom of its members, and focus on the school's, and therefore the board's, long term strategic needs make it an ideal conduit for helping build the relationships. Similarly, the head of school plays an important role on the committee by identifying board needs from the perspective of the school. For example, the director of advancement might want a trustee or two with specific kinds of fundraising experience. Or, as mentioned earlier, the head might "red flag" individuals under consideration who are problematical because of previous interactions with members of the school community.

A constant responsibility of the CoT is to scan the board and its interactions for any signs of tension or problems that left unchecked could lead to dysfunction. As the committee that typically plans board retreats, board education, and special board events, the committee is well positioned to play an ongoing role in building relationships between and among trustees and between the board and the head.

05

Recruitment of New Trustees

The Board Composition Matrix

An effective CoT strives to create a board with a combination of individuals who have the attributes and skills needed for a high performing board, and who are genuinely committed to the school's identity as Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart as well as its strategic aspirations and future sustainability.

Boards also benefit from the diverse viewpoints that come with a mix of ages, genders, ethnicities, and institutional relationships. Given term requirements, typically every year some trustees will complete their terms and rotate off the board, and new members will be welcomed.

Many schools and other non-profits find it useful to maintain a three-year rolling matrix for tracking the board's current composition including the various skills and attributes of members. The matrix allows the CoT to see the existing strengths and gaps in experience and expertise on the current board. When the matrix is extended over a period of years, the committee can know well in advance the qualities and skills the board will need in the future. The matrix is especially helpful when aligned with the school's strategic plan, as the committee can focus on the expertise needed to achieve both current and future strategic goals.

While the matrix is helpful for defining priority needs, the committee must guard against using it as a simple checklist. The aim is always to attract the most qualified and highest quality individuals to the board.

Recruitment Strategies

Often the individuals the CoT hopes to recruit to the board are in high demand, serve on other boards, or have important professional and volunteer commitments. The committee should not be discouraged. These individuals can sometimes be cultivated over time and gradually engaged.

“Only 1 in 5 CEOs strongly agrees [that s/he has] the right board members. 58% say it is difficult to find people (up from 44% in 2012).”

—Nonprofit Quarterly,

“The Completely Revised Guide to Great Board Recruitment”⁴

One of the most effective ways to recruit and vet potential trustees is to invite their participation on committees or task forces.

⁴ Nonprofit Quarterly, “The Completely Revised Guide to Great Board Recruitment”, May 17, 2017, <https://non-profitquarterly.org/2017/05/17/board-recruitment-revised-guide/>.

The assignment is less time-consuming, focuses on an area of the potential candidate's high interest or expertise, and introduces the individual to trustees, school senior leadership, and the workings of the school. The relationships formed during committee work can often be leveraged to interest the individual in a board position. Similarly, the individual's performance on the committee or task force is a good indicator of how committed and reliable the person would be in a board role and how well s/he works with others and embraces the school's Sacred Heart mission.

For example, one school consulted a well-known local philanthropist for advice on how to build the board's fundraising comfort level and skills. An initial luncheon conversation resulted in the philanthropist's agreement to conduct a board training session. A year later, having developed a relationship with the school and several trustees, the philanthropist joined the board and chaired a highly successful capital campaign.

Many trustees in Sacred Heart Schools are parents. It is a fact of life that independent schools, especially small ones, can find recruiting outside trustees to be a challenge. Parents of current students can be far more invested and dedicated than outside trustees; on the other hand, driven by concerns for their own children, misplaced devotion to the school can manifest itself in inappropriate incursions into operations. Such parents will sometimes attempt to insert themselves, "as a member of the board," into staffing, or

programmatic or discipline decisions that are the purview of the school's leadership team. While parent trustees can be invaluable, they require focused orientation and training to separate the parent and trustee "hats." Alumnae/i parents offer many of the benefits of current parents but with less temptation to cross boundary lines.

Beginning early in the school year, the CoT frequently reminds the board as a whole of the kinds of expertise and qualities the board seeks. In their personal and professional lives, trustees often encounter individuals who could bring the talents required and who would mesh well with the school's culture. For example, one trustee recommended the recently retired head of human resources in his company. As they no longer worked together, there were no conflicts of interest. Yet the previously strong working relationship raised her level of interest in the board. She brought a wealth of skills, experience and perspective to the board, eventually assumed leadership positions, and served as a valuable sounding board for the head of school.

The head of school has a broad network of contacts within the school community, the Network of Sacred Heart Schools, and the independent school associations. Within these communities is a wealth of individuals with expertise and experience in educational trends and issues. A head of school or other school leader can be very valuable on a board, provided they come from non-competing institutions.

The Vetting Process

The process of recruiting new trustees and vetting them is time consuming and deserves careful attention. One of the greatest mistakes a board makes is to sweep a “warm body” on to the board to fill a spot rather than a need. In too many schools, the CoT finds itself in a time crunch to recommend new trustees and resorts to expediency. All too frequently these individuals neither meet the strategic needs of the board nor have the skills and perspective to be a highly effective member of the board. At best, they do no harm but occupy a seat better suited to a more skilled trustee; at worst, they become destructive.

Personality matters. All board candidates must be thoroughly vetted both for the qualities and experience they will bring and for their personalities and compatibility with existing members. While a board wants a diversity of opinions and perspectives, a well-functioning board needs individuals who are reflective, respectful of colleagues, able to navigate complex situations and, when necessary, compromise. For example, on some boards the addition of a domineering or opinionated trustee could effectively squelch open inquiry and the kind of discussion that leads to sound and shared decision-making. Prospective trustees must be screened for agendas, whether overt or covert, and for their ability and willingness to work collaboratively. A trustee’s only agenda should be the school’s Sacred Heart mission and its long-term success.

In some cases, the individual will have been an active community member, perhaps serving on parent association committees, on a board committee or task force, or as a volunteer in some other important role. In this case, several trustees, the head of school, and many parents know the individual and have a high degree of trust in his/her capacities. In other cases, the individual may be less well known. If possible, engage those individuals who are not well known in some project or activity that opens a window to their skills and operating style.

When vetting potential trustees who have served on other boards or who have been members of other school communities, a phone call to the other school is wise. While it is tempting to rush a “seasoned” trustee onto the board or an individual who already “gets” Sacred Heart or independent schools, the committee needs to take the time to find out the nature and quality of the individual’s service.

In all cases, prospective trustees must be interviewed to assess their interest in serving on the board, their background and experience, and how they match up to the skills required. The interview needs to thoroughly explore the candidate’s understanding of and commitment to the Sacred Heart mission.

A Common Vetting Process

Create a List

1

The committee draws up a **list of potential candidates** who can fill the needed spots in the matrix and/or have qualities and skills desired on the board. During the course of this process, committee members may feel discomfort as they balance the individual's commitment to mission, personal qualities, and capacity coupled with willingness to give and ask.

Share with Board

2

The list is **confidentially shared with the board** for approval to proceed with recruitment and vetting of the individuals on the list.

Prioritize the Names

3

The **committee decides and prioritizes the names** of the individuals with whom the committee will proceed.

Determine Interest

4

An informal call or meeting with the chair of the committee (or his/her designee) to ascertain the **individual's potential interest in becoming a candidate**. The call can also explore questions the committee has about the person's background and/or areas of interest. The individual either agrees to have his/her name put forward for consideration or not. If not, but the committee feels the individual could be approached in the future, his/her name can go on a "watch list." The school might invite these individuals to special community events and assure that they receive communications.

s Includes:

5

Act with Discretion

Throughout the process, the committee acts with **discretion and courtesy**, recognizing that relationships matter.

6

Candidate Meets The Chair

The **candidate meets with the committee chair** (or his/her designee), the board chair, and the head of school for a more formal interview and discussion of the roles and responsibilities of a trustee, and any questions the individual has regarding the role of trustee as the steward of Sacred Heart mission. During this discussion, the CoT chair and board chair will review with the candidate the *Goals and Criteria*, Sacred Heart School Identity, and Structural Implications of Identity. An important topic of this conversation is an explanation of why the candidate has been identified. At this point, the question of tentative committee assignment(s) is broached with the caution that final assignments will take place once the annual agenda for the coming year is determined.

7

Slate of Candidates Received

The board receives a **slate of proposed candidates** with attached bios.

8

The Board Votes

The board votes. New members are called, congratulated, and given the date of orientation.

06

Board Orientation

The depth and quality of new trustee orientation is a major factor in the success of the full board. A thorough orientation eases a new trustee's entry on to the board and increases the speed of the learning curve. Every effort should be made to help new trustees become full participating members of the board as soon as possible.

It can be difficult to find an orientation date that works for all new trustees and the individuals who are conducting orientation. The school is best served if all new trustees are oriented at the same time; the trick is to start early and set the date well in advance. Many schools find that scheduling orientation two to two and a half hours before the first board meeting of the year works well, as individuals will be planning on attending the board meeting in any case.

A sample agenda for a typical orientation can be found in the appendix of this booklet. The focus of the orientation is largely on the understanding of trusteeship as stewardship of the Sacred Heart mission as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*, the role and responsibilities of a trustee, the structure and processes of the board, and the differentiation between governance and management. The meeting begins with a focus on mission, what it means to be a School of the Sacred Heart with focus on

the school's three-dimensional identity as Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart, the *Goals and Criteria*, the expectations of governance by local accrediting bodies, and the school's multiple relationships as explained in *Principles and Practices*.

The Board Book is the centerpiece of orientation. A sample table of contents (See Appendix) can guide schools to create their own board books. The Board Book contains copies of the *Goals and Criteria*, *Sacred Heart School Identity*, *Structural Implications of Identity*, articles of incorporation, bylaws, board policies, strategic plan, the school's *SHCOG Self-study and Action Plan*, the *accrediting body report*, the annual budget, the audit, a year's worth of board minutes, as well as other documents and resources to help bring each trustee up to speed on the school's current position, including strengths, challenges, current and future initiatives.

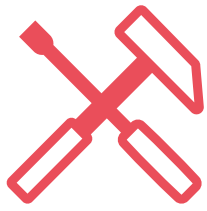
Other resources supplied to the new trustees include a copy of the *NAIS Trustee Handbook* or similar guide to governance practice, and *Principles and Practices*. Additional resources provided by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education including *Trustee Topics* and other digital resources that augment these publications.

During orientation, new trustees read the trustee job description and sign conflict of interest and confidentiality statements. This moment is an ideal time for new trustees to receive login information for the Sacred Heart Board portal and, if relevant, the school's trustee portal. Trustees can also register for the Fall Trustee/Head Education to Mission Conference. Mini case studies (See Appendix) can help differentiate the role of the board from that of management and train trustees on how to navigate difficult and awkward situations that occasionally arise for trustees, such as being approached by a parent who has a grievance about a teacher.

PROVIDE ONGOING BRIEF REFRESHERS

The chair of the CoT usually presides over board orientation with key roles played by the board chair, the head of school, and other members of the CoT as needed. Toward the end of the orientation, senior administrators enter, introduce themselves, and give a brief description of their role and current projects. In middle and secondary schools, the president of the student body might also be introduced and have an opportunity to describe student projects/events planned for the year.

Clearly, the amount of material and information presented during orientation can be overwhelming. The CoT needs to provide ongoing “refreshers” throughout the year during regular board meetings. These can be as short as five minutes and focus on a single “good practice.” The Conference of Sacred Heart Education provides resources for these moments of Education to Mission on the website. Trustee Topics also provides resources for ongoing orientation to mission for all trustees. All board members benefit from these mini-reminders. Several schools actually give trustees a short quiz at the beginning of the annual retreat or the first board meeting of the year. (See Appendix.) The quiz can contain questions from the bylaws, articles of incorporation, board policies or good practices, along with current facts such as enrollment or size of budget. The objective is to remind all trustees of their responsibilities and to teach/refresh knowledge of important facts trustees must know.



USEFUL TOOLS

The Appendix contains a number of useful tools for board orientation:

Samples of...

- Table of Contents for the Board Book
- Sample Board Orientation Agenda
- Sample Sacred Heart Trustee Agreement
- Confidentiality Statement
- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Sample of Trustee Obligations
- Mini Case Studies for training purposes

06

See Appendix on Page 54

07

Board Professional Development

“I had no idea how complex and challenging it is to be a trustee in an independent school. And my job is less complicated than that of our school head.”

Former Senior Executive at Proctor and Gamble

Why do boards need ongoing professional development?

The quality of the board determines the future of the organization. School trustees whose professional lives involve corporations or large organizations often underestimate the challenge of the role of trustee. School governance is not simple. Schools are complex institutions made up of many different constituencies all of whom feel a vested interest in the school and its directions. A lack of understanding of the school's Sacred Heart mission, as well as missteps in decision-making or implementation of decisions, can embroil the school in controversy and lead to distrust, dysfunction and even failure.

When schools find themselves in trouble, more often than not the underlying problem is one of governance. The widespread nature of governance problems has spurred considerable research on “what works.” The fundamentals of good governance are well understood and captured in a plethora of handbooks on “best practices.” On an annual basis the Conference of Sacred Heart Education, independent school associations, and accrediting bodies throughout the nation offer seminars and workshops on governance practice. And still schools find themselves ensnared in governance problems.

Assessing Board Needs

One of the best antidotes to governance disease is a CoT that continuously scans current literature and thinking regarding governance practice, the shifts in the educational landscape, changing or emerging local and national trends, and assesses the board's needs for training and professional development. While it may be unreasonable to expect everyone on the board to attend conferences that involve travel and days away from work and home, members of the CoT are encouraged to take part routinely in these opportunities and to bring new learning back to the board. The resources provided by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education offer support to the CoT.

See the
Resources
Available at

www.sacredheartusc.education

There are several ways to assess a board's needs. The easiest is simple observation:

- Is the board mission-focused and strategic?
- Are board priorities clear and shared?
- Does the board regularly assess the school's position in a competitive educational landscape and consider educational developments in setting strategic priorities?
- Are committees and task forces focused on identified priorities?
- Is the board achieving its objectives?
- Do trustees attend meetings and arrive prepared?
- Does the board have a culture of inquiry, mutual respect and constructive debate that leads to sound and shared decision-making?
- Do trustees keep their hats on straight, fully understanding and embracing their roles and responsibilities?

The annual board evaluation is another way to assess the board's needs. Questions on the board survey can surface where and how trustees feel more or less prepared and highlight areas of dissatisfaction with the board and its operations. Results from the evaluation can be used to plan board professional development by identifying best practices that need clearer understanding or need to be implemented on the board.

Internal and External Professional Development Opportunities

Governance conferences and seminars offered by professional associations usually draw top expertise from around the country. To stay abreast of trends and developments, the board ensures that its members take advantage of these opportunities and report to the full board. The CoT can take the lead in investigating the most promising external opportunities and encouraging attendance. The annual Fall Trustee/Head Education to Mission Conference hosted by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education must be on every trustee's calendar, as it is the only Network-wide professional development training focused on Sacred Heart trusteeship.

Internal professional development should be ongoing. For example, every trustee needs to know how to read and interpret the school's financial statements. A mini-seminar on financial statements could be a part of a board meeting early in the year or at a meeting in advance of the presentation of the preliminary budget. Another meeting could focus on benchmarks, dashboards, or other means the school uses to assess its effectiveness. As mentioned above, a pop quiz at the beginning of the year can cover important facts or key good practices, or mini-refreshers on good practice can be inserted into meetings, especially when most applicable. For example, if a discussion on a tuition increase becomes contentious, the board must be reminded that deliberations are confidential and that once the decision is made, the board speaks with one voice.

08

Board Assessment

As leaders committed to mission, Sacred Heart boards and heads strive to create a culture of reflection, analysis and continuous improvement. Boards lead and model the process by engaging in annual board self-assessment as well as evaluation of the head of school. Recognizing the absolute need for both competence and character, and as stewards of mission, trustees should see these annual moments of reflection and assessment as important means to assure mission effectiveness. The CoT is responsible for board assessment, and design of both the instrument and the process must be rooted in the *Goals and Criteria*, the school's strategic plan and the board's annual objectives.

Board members are volunteers who typically devote considerable time to their duties as trustees. It can be awkward to ask trustees to evaluate their performance when they give so generously in terms of time, wisdom and often wealth. If the school has nurtured a culture of trust, honesty and open communication that encourages candor, mutual support and problem-solving, effective assessment will feel like a natural extension of already healthy practices.

Board assessment needs to focus on the following areas:

- Do board decisions and processes clearly reflect the values of the *Goals and Criteria*, including the Foundational Principles?
- Does board process follow commonly accepted good practices?
- Is the board focused on mission effectiveness and strategic initiatives?
- Has the board met its objectives for the year?
- Do trustees feel engaged?
- Are board meetings well managed, making effective use of trustee time and talent?
- Are decisions driven first and foremost by what is best for the education and well-being of students?
- Do trustees receive adequate timely information in order to prepare fully for discussions?
- Do meetings prove to be a valuable use of people's time?
- Does the board meet often enough to fulfill its responsibilities?
- What are the board's perceived strengths? Areas for growth?
- How could board operations improve?

A good board assessment has a section devoted to individual self-evaluation. The section can ask the individual to assess his/her attendance at board and committee meetings, level of preparation for and participation in discussions, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the board experience, and suggestions for change and improvement.

Occasionally a trustee can become problematic. Examples include individuals who violate Sacred Heart *principles and practices* or board confidentiality, or who have an agenda that crosses into operational territory, such as seeking the firing of a teacher. One of the most difficult situations arises when a trustee refuses to accept a board decision, violates the principle "the board speaks with one voice," and takes the issue public in the school community to incite support for his/her position. When a trustee's behavior becomes disruptive for the board and community, the board chair and chair of the CoT need to meet with the individual to correct the behavior and/or to disinvite the individual from the board.

Samples of board assessment frameworks are provided by both local and national accrediting bodies. In the Appendix, we have provided the one designed by the New York Association of Independent Schools (NYAIS) with its permission. This model offers ideas of what an assessment tool might include.

09

Documents Essential to
Mission Integrity

Effective governance that ensures mission integrity necessitates an informed understanding of the values of Sacred Heart education as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*. Boards need to have an appreciation for Sacred Heart Schools' identity being three dimensional — Catholic — independent — Sacred Heart. It is equally important that

boards know the structures of accountability this three dimensional identity entails. As the trustees of Catholic — independent — Sacred Heart Schools, boards need a working knowledge of the requirements of accountability required by the local diocese, the accrediting body and the Society of the Sacred Heart.

There are three essential documents that all trustees, chairs and heads must know in order to support their full understanding of mission, identity, and accountability structures. *These documents are:*

The Goals and Criteria

(including the Foundational Principles)

Sacred Heart School Identity

Structural Implications of Identity

Together these documents provide Sacred Heart boards, chairs, and heads the essential orientation to mission that will guide decision making and the exercise of leadership rooted in mission.

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Goals and Criteria, 2005

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1. In the *Goals and Criteria*, the Society of the Sacred Heart defines the mission of the school as part of the Society's educational mission in the Catholic Church.
2. Each school is accountable to the Society through the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals for adherence to the *Goals and Criteria*.
3. Each school's Board of Trustees and Administration establish and uphold policies that are consistent with the *Goals and Criteria*.
4. The school allocates its resources to support each Goal and its Criteria.
5. The school is in compliance with professional standards as stated by accrediting agencies.

Ensures Mission Integrity

GOAL ONE

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a personal and active faith in God.

1. Rooted in the love of Jesus Christ, the school promotes a personal relationship with God and fosters the spiritual lives of its members.
2. The school seeks to form its students in the attitudes of the heart of Jesus expressed in respect, compassion, forgiveness and generosity.
3. The entire school program explores one's relationship to God, to self, to others, and to all creation.
4. Opening themselves to the transforming power of the Spirit of God, members of the school community engage in personal and communal prayer, reflection and action.
5. The entire school program affirms that there is meaning and value in life and fosters a sense of hope in the individual and in the school community.
6. The school fosters inter-religious acceptance and dialogue by educating to an understanding of and deep respect for the religions of the world.
7. The school presents itself to the wider community as a Christ-centered institution and as an expression of the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

GOAL TWO

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values.

1. The school develops and implements a curriculum based on the *Goals and Criteria*, educational research and ongoing evaluation.
2. The school provides a rigorous education that incorporates all forms of critical thinking and inspires a life-long love of learning.
3. The school program develops aesthetic values and the creative use of the imagination.
4. The faculty utilizes a variety of teaching and learning strategies that recognizes the individual needs of the students.
5. The school provides ongoing professional development for faculty and staff.
6. Members of the school community model and teach ethical and respectful use of technology.

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Goals and Criteria, 2005

GOAL THREE

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a social awareness which impels to action.

1. The school educates to a critical consciousness that leads its total community to analyze and reflect on the values of society and to act for justice.
2. The school offers all its members opportunities for direct service and advocacy and instills a life-long commitment to service.
3. The school is linked in a reciprocal manner with ministries among people who are poor, marginalized and suffering from injustice.
4. In our multicultural world, the school prepares and inspires students to be active, informed, and responsible citizens locally, nationally, and globally.
5. The school teaches respect for creation and prepares students to be stewards of the earth's resources.

nsures Mission Integrity

GOAL FOUR

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to the building of community as a Christian value.

1. The school implements an ongoing plan for educating both adults and students in the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education.
2. The school promotes a safe and welcoming environment in which each person is valued, cared for and respected.
3. Adult members of the school model and teach skills needed to build community and practice clear, direct and open communication.
4. The school has programs that teach the principles of nonviolence, conflict resolution and peacemaking.
5. The school makes a deliberate effort to recruit students and employ faculty and staff of diverse races, ethnicities and backgrounds.
6. The financial aid program effectively supports socioeconomic diversity.
7. The school participates actively in the national and international networks of Sacred Heart Schools.

GOAL FIVE

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.

1. All members of the school community show respect, acceptance and concern for themselves and for others.
2. School policies and practices promote self-discipline, responsible decision-making, and accountability.
3. Students grow in self-knowledge and develop self-confidence as they learn to deal realistically with their gifts and limitations.
4. School programs provide for recognizing, nurturing and exercising leadership in its many forms.
5. The school provides opportunities for all members of the community to share their knowledge and gifts with others.
6. All members of the school community take personal responsibility for balance in their lives and for their health and well-being.

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Sacred Heart School Identity

Sacred Heart Schools are an essential expression of the Society of the Sacred Heart's mission in the world. In the *Goals and Criteria*, the Society of the Sacred Heart defines the mission of the school as part of the Society's educational mission in the Catholic Church.⁵ Our institutions are Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart. This three-dimensional nature of our identity creates a framework for our schools in our work on behalf of children and young people of all faiths. Rooted in Catholic theology and philosophy, the schools extend through education the Society's mission to reveal the love of God in the world. Sacred Heart Schools ground educational practice in the love of Jesus Christ and seek to form our students in the attitudes of Christ's Heart. Our independence means that each school is governed by a board of trustees that serves each school community in light of the *Goals and Criteria*. Our three-dimensional identity raises the essential question: What does it mean to be concurrently Catholic, independent and Sacred Heart?

As we accompany children and young people of all faiths, our hope is to educate Sacred Heart graduates to be their best for the world.⁶ The philosophy of Sacred Heart education is framed by the assumption that education is transformational because students and educators are engaged in learning for the purpose of coming to self-understanding as those loved by God. Such self-understanding is not possible without intentional formation in critical thinking. Our education of young people is inspired by the conviction that it is only in coming to know one's true self that one can become an inspired agent of transformation. Focused on the development of the whole person, Sacred Heart education engages each student's heart, mind and will. In orienting students towards the discovery of their own unique gifts, the graduates are set on a path of discernment, equipped to serve the world with compassion, critical-consciousness, authenticity and hope. Our perspective as Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart Schools impels us to encourage our students to embrace fully their human dignity for the sake of others.

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The Catholic Dimension of Our Identity:

As learning environments serving children and young people, Sacred Heart Schools are focused on the development of each child in the context of community. Anchored in the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart, this education is inherently Catholic. Sacred Heart educators are inspired by an understanding of Jesus Christ, His Gospel and the Holy Spirit. In and through the visible world in which we live, we come to know and experience the invisible God working through persons, events, and physical things. Through invoking our spirit, mind and imagination, we discover the intelligibility and coherence of all reality. As participants in God's grace, we experience the love of Jesus Christ and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God's grace initiates our actions and assists us in becoming people of service grounded in love, mirroring the attitudes of Christ's Heart such as respect, compassion, forgiveness and generosity. God comes to us as communion, through the communities in which we live. This community includes liturgies, prayer, service and the spiritual, intellectual and theological practices that mark the life of the Church. The emphasis on community in Catholicism is the source of

Sacred Heart's commitment to relationships and the building of community as an essential value.

A Catholic school draws its inspiration from Jesus Christ as the source of all wisdom and from the conviction that in Him all things can be brought to their full potential. For us, Sacred Heart education is never the end; rather education serves as the means by which students come to know and experience God's love so that they can become agents of transformation. When we live as Christ-centered institutions, we are Catholic.

The Independent Dimension of Our Identity:

Independent schools engage in education in light of a unique mission. An independent school is organized as not-for-profit and is governed by a self-perpetuating board of trustees or directors, as opposed to being "owned" and run by the government (public schools), by a diocese (parochial schools), or by for-profit entities (proprietary schools). In light of its mission, an independent school board as a whole makes major policy decisions, sets the strategic directions of the school, allocates resources according to strategic priorities, and is responsible for

⁵ Foundational Principle 1, *Goals and Criteria* (St. Louis: Society of the Sacred Heart, 2005).

⁶ Conclusions and Proposals, V Conference of International Directors of Schools (Mexico, 2015).

Effective Governance En

Sacred Heart School Identity

the fiscal health of the school. Independent schools are free to design curriculum, regulate admissions, determine tuition levels and raise money. Independent schools are accredited typically by a local association of independent schools. In all cases, the accreditation process involves demonstrating that in light of the particular school's mission, it meets the level of excellence as defined in the standards established by the accrediting body.

Our educational mission as Sacred Heart Schools is articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*. These principles inform our independence as educators who define Catholic education in light of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat's charism and the spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart. As stewards of the *Goals and Criteria*, Sacred Heart boards of trustees work in concert with the Society of the Sacred Heart to ensure mission integrity. This exercise of mission stewardship is both a process and a relationship of mutual trust and respect through which the essential mission of Sacred Heart education is deepened.⁷

While Schools of the Sacred Heart share the same mission and fundamental aspects of culture, derived from a shared three-dimensional identity, each Sacred Heart school has its own size, structure, history, culture, challenges and vision for its future. It is the responsibility of the individual board of trustees working in partnership with school leadership to ensure continuity of vision and mission, the best educational climate for today's students and the sustainability of the school for future generations.

The Sacred Heart Dimension of Our Identity:

Sacred Heart Schools are Catholic independent learning communities animated from their origins in the Society of the Sacred Heart. Our philosophy of education finds its inspiration in the vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat who saw education as the primary means to communicate and reveal the love of the Heart of Jesus. Sacred Heart Schools educate from the perspective of Christ's Heart by creating cultures defined

nsures Mission Integrity

by a commitment to form relationships that are the means to experience the love of God. Within this communion, all encounter Christ. Whether in the classroom, on the athletic field, or in the chapel, our students learn to think and act according to the mind and attitudes of Christ's Heart. It is within this grace-filled atmosphere that our students are challenged to achieve their full potential as human beings impelled to act on behalf of others.

Sacred Heart Schools form young people on a path towards transformation and hope by providing an effective education and the formation of character. For Sacred Heart educators this cultivation of virtues is informed by the charism of the Society and the values articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*. Nothing short of excellence will ensure that the members of learning communities develop an informed, active faith, critical thinking and service to others.

Rooted in Catholic theology and philosophy, Sacred Heart Schools are called to be communities in which students are respected as integral persons. Students are helped to develop a multiplicity of skills that enrich the human person, such as creativity, reflection, imagination, and interiority. Their education cultivates the aptitudes to take on responsibilities such as loving the world, cherishing justice and acting with compassion. Faithful to the inspiration of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, the Society, and Catholic theology and philosophy, Sacred Heart learning communities share the desire to help children and young people become ever more aware of the truth, of love and of freedom as they discover the significance of their lives, and devote themselves to others. Ours is a sacred imperative to educate the whole child and through the dynamic of this education, the students and we come to experience being loved and loving God.

⁷ The responsibility to ensure Catholic identity belongs to the leadership of the Society of Sacred Heart United States – Canada Province, the boards of trustees, and to the diocesan bishop of the diocese/archdiocese. Boards and heads of schools need to understand both the bishop's authority to exercise his teaching and pastoral ministry and the Society's obligation to oversee the mission according to the charism of the Society. Each school is accountable to the provincial for carrying out all of the *Goals and Criteria* including the Foundational Principles and to the diocesan bishop for maintaining communion with the Church. Both roles are essential to the mission and Catholic identity of Sacred Heart Schools.

Effective Governance En

Sacred Heart School Identity

Our Three-Dimensional Identity is Our Framework:

Sacred Heart Schools then enjoy three dimensions of our identity as educational institutions. In being Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart, our schools are responding from the depths of Saint Madeleine Sophie’s vision to the emerging future. At the center of our response remain the students and their education. These dimensions to our identity create our framework as institutions. The nature of being Catholic – independent – Sacred Heart creates a synergy for the Sacred Heart Schools in our work on behalf of children and young people of all faiths.

Our identity is both rich in opportunity and complex in challenge. Sometimes one dimension can seem at odds with the other dimensions. Due to the current rate of change facing our world, schools are facing conundrums for which there are no pre-established blueprints for resolution. At such moments, living our identity as Sacred Heart Schools with integrity calls all to exercise the principles of discernment guided by the

Goals and Criteria including the Foundational Principles, Saint Madeleine Sophie’s charism, the spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and the Church’s teachings. This is the time for us to act from the conviction that there is a genuine efficacious value to dialogue and collaboration among those who form the communities representing our three-dimensional identity. This foundation of mutual, respectful relationships coupled with discernment provides a sound context to search for the common good while being true to vision of Sacred Heart education.⁸

From the very start, those who came before us realized that values taken for granted or left unarticulated can become inoperative. Patterns of leadership in governance, the make-up of faculties and student bodies have changed rapidly. We continue as schools to feel the characteristic pressures and strains connected to change and complexity. Sacred Heart Schools no matter our geography enjoy a strong unity rooted in a shared mission. Every Sacred Heart school finds the strength of belonging to the larger whole, of sharing principles and values, broad purposes, hopes and ambitions.⁹

nsures Mission Integrity

In the midst of today's complexity, the *Goals and Criteria* provide Sacred Heart Schools with a prophetic orientation that leads us to hope, a hope that believes in the goodness of each individual, a hope that believes in the goodness of humanity, a hope that believes in and trusts the love of the Heart of God.¹⁰



Shared with Membership April 2018

⁸*Principles and Practices for Governance and Leadership in Sacred Heart Schools* (Washington, DC: Conference of Sacred Heart Education, 2017).

⁹Preamble, *Goals and Criteria* (St. Louis: Society of the Sacred Heart, 1975).

¹⁰Final Paragraph of Introduction, *Goals and Criteria* (St. Louis: Society of the Sacred Heart, 2005).

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Structural Implications of Identity

Schools of the Sacred Heart share in the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart to reveal God's love in the world. This mission finds its source in the vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat who began her work as an educator in 1800 when she founded the Society in France. In a time of complexity, change and uncertainty, Sophie responded from the depths of her relationship with Jesus Christ whose love was so deeply a reality to her that the Spirit remained infused in all she did. It is from this love and spirit that she received and developed her vision of education. She believed the service of education was the primary means by which the Society would carry on its mission of communicating the love of the Heart of Jesus. For her education was never an end in itself. Rather it served as the means for educators and students to come to know and experience God's love.

Faithful to her inspiration and openness to new situations, Sacred Heart educators share

Sophie's desire to help people become ever more aware of truth, love and freedom as they discover the significance of their lives,

and devote themselves to others (1982 Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart). In the *Goals and Criteria*, the Society of the Sacred Heart defines the mission of the school as part of the Society's educational mission within the Catholic Church. The *Goals and Criteria* capture the principles of Catholic education infused by Saint Madeleine Sophie's charism and the spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

The Society of the Sacred Heart, United States Canada Province, entrusts the governance and administration of the schools to local boards of trustees and administrators. Through sponsorship, which is both a process and a relationship of mutual trust and respect, the essential mission of Sacred Heart education to reveal God's love in the world is deepened.

nsures Mission Integrity

The board of trustees holds in trust the Sacred Heart and Catholic identity of the school, is accountable to the Society through the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals for adherence to the mission, and in partnership with the head of school establishes and implements policies and plans consistent with the *Goals and Criteria* and the individual school's vision and strategic goals.

Catholic Identity

The Society of the Sacred Heart, United States Canada Province, states clearly in the *Goals and Criteria* that we carry out our mission on behalf of the Church and through the lens of the Heart of Christ. As the sponsor and canonical steward of the Schools of the Sacred Heart, the Society oversees the mission and ensures the Catholic identity of the schools.

True as well is that each school is a local entity and exists in a specific context within a specific diocese. While the province is multi-national and the Society as a whole is international in its scope, each Sacred Heart

school is accountable to the local bishop, as he exercises his oversight of the works within his diocese (Canon 678). The interpretation of what it means to be Catholic and the criteria by which local bishops define Catholicity may differ from diocese to diocese.

The responsibility to ensure Catholic identity belongs to the leadership of the Society USC Province, the boards of trustees as Stewards of Mission, to the diocesan bishop as the Pastoral Leader of the diocese/archdiocese. Boards and heads of schools need to understand both the bishop's authority to exercise his teaching and pastoral ministry and the Society's obligation to oversee the mission according to the charism of the Society. Each school is accountable to the provincial for carrying out all of the *Goals and Criteria* including the Foundational Principles and to the diocesan bishop for maintaining communion with the Church. Both roles are essential to the mission and Catholic identity of Sacred Heart schools.

Effective Governance En

Structural Implications of Identity

Structural Relationships with the Society of the Sacred Heart and the Catholic Church

As Catholic schools, Schools of the Sacred Heart participate in structural relationships with both the USC Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart and the Catholic Church. Given today's complexity, change and uncertainty, Sacred Heart schools may find themselves caught in dilemmas resulting from different perspectives on some church teachings, which lead to conflict. At such moments school leaders need to exercise the principles of discernment guided by the *Goals and Criteria* including the Foundational Principles, Saint Madeleine Sophie's charism, the spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and the Church's teachings. Representing the Provincial of

the USC Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the Head of Conference works with school leaders during such moments of discernment.

In the spirit of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, Schools of the Sacred Heart attend to relationships. Dialogue and communion are sacred practices within the culture of our schools and the Society of the Sacred Heart. So, too, communion is a fundamental strength of the Church. Recognizing that there is a genuine efficacious value to dialogue and collaboration, Sacred Heart school leaders are committed to engaging in relationships with both the leaders of the Society and of the local diocese. This foundation of mutual respectful relationships provides a sound context to search for the common good.

nsures Mission Integrity

In the process of discernment and dialogue, the province and its leaders remain responsible to assist the school in living mission. The Province provides this support through the Conference and its work in the areas of education to mission, accountability for mission and governance for mission. School leaders work collaboratively with the Conference in ongoing formation to mission. As the delegate of the Provincial, the Head of Conference facilitates this collaboration and serves as the primary liaison for school leaders with regard to the relationship with the Society of the Sacred Heart.



*Shared with Membership as the
Dialogue Paper October 2017*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Sample Committee on Trustee Job Description

APPENDIX B: The Board Book: Suggested Contents

APPENDIX C: Sample Statement of Trustee Obligations

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APPENDIX A

Sample Committee on Trustees Job Description

01 Board Role and Responsibilities

- Leads the board in reviewing and updating the board's statement of its role and areas of responsibility and the expectations of individual board members
- Assists the board in clarifying its short and long term agenda, based on the strategic plan

03 Board Knowledge and Development

- Designs and conducts orientation for new trustees
- Designs and implements an ongoing program of board information and development for all board members that include best practices and evolving trends in education and trusteeship
- Utilizes the resources offered by the Education to Mission Committee and the Conference of Sacred Heart Education

05 Board Leadership and Leadership Succession

- Takes the lead in succession planning, taking steps to prepare for future board leadership
- Nominates board members for election as board officers

02 Board Composition

- Leads in assessing current and anticipated needs for the board, determining the knowledge, skills, attribute, abilities, experience, and influence the board will need to accomplish its strategic priorities
- Develops a matrix, or profile, of the board as it should evolve over time
- Identifies potential board candidates, and explores their interest and availability in serving
- Nominates individuals for election to the board

04 Board Effectiveness

- Conducts periodic assessment of the board's performance; proposes changes in board structure, roles and responsibilities, as appropriate
- Provides counsel to the board chair and other board leaders on steps to enhance the board's effectiveness
- Regularly reviews board practices regarding member participation, conflict of interest, confidentiality, etc., and suggests improvements as needed
- Periodically reviews and updates the board's policy guidelines and practices

APPENDIX B

The Board Book: Suggested Contents

01 Organizational Documents

- *Goals and Criteria*
- *Sacred Heart School Identity*
- *Structural Implications of Identity*
- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- School History Overview
- SHCOG Self-Study and Action Plan
- Strategic Plan
- The Annual Report

03 School Documents

- Fact Sheet (structure, enrollment, campus size, etc.)
- School Roster
- School Handbook
- View Book
- School Calendar, highlighting events requiring/encouraging trustee attendance
- Survey/Data Analysis, if applicable
- The School Magazine, newspaper, or other recent publications
- Any other relevant resources

02 Board Documents

- Statement of Trustee Obligations
- Current Committees/Task Forces
- Committee Charges
- Board Roster
- Confidentiality Statement
- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Board Policies
- Minutes from the Past Year
- Sample Board Assessment Tool
- Meeting Calendar
- Annual Budget
- Most Recent Audit
- Clear Statement of School's Policy on Director's and Officer's Insurance

04 Governance Resources

- NAIS Handbook
- *Principles and Practices for Governance and Leadership in Sacred Heart Schools*
- Governance standards from the school's state/regional accrediting association

APPENDIX C

Sample Statement of Trustee Obligations

Statement of Trustee Obligations Title:

Regular Trustee (voting), Ex-Officio, Honorary, or Trustee Emeritus (non-voting)

Summary of Responsibilities:

To serve as a steward of the mission of Sacred Heart education; to develop policies, procedures, and regulations for the operation of the school; to serve as a fiduciary and to monitor the finances of the school, its program and performance; to ensure implementation of the school's strategic vision.

Term — Three years; renewable once (not inclusive of Trustee Emeritus status)

Specific Trustee Duties

- Understand and implement the school's mission, beliefs, and board policies
- Establish board policy that supports the mission of the school
- Hire, evaluate, support, and when necessary, replace the head of school
- Ensure effective planning, including developing, updating and executing the strategic plan
- Contribute financially in a meaningful way, to the annual fund, any capital campaign, and other fund raising activities such as the auction. Place the school at the top of one's philanthropic priorities.
- Ensure adequate resources, including setting of tuition and budget oversight
- Monitor school finances
- Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability
- Oversee, monitor and strengthen the school's programs
- Serve as an "ambassador," "advocate," and "asker" on behalf of the school
- Assume leadership responsibility (e.g., chair a committee, executive functions) in board work (excluding trustee emeritus)
- Be informed enough to ask questions on issues and agenda items in advance of meetings
- Contribute skills, knowledge, and experience to board work
- Participate in organizational decision-making
- Preserve the confidentiality of all board-related discussions

Expected Meeting Attendance:

- Regularly attend board and committee meetings, as scheduled
- Serve on at least one committee of the board each year
- Participate as an ad hoc committee/task force member, when appointed
- Participate in board retreats, conferences, workshops, and other board development activities
- Attend and participate in fundraising events
- Attend and participate in other special school events, as needed

Trustee's Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D

Sample Sacred Heart Trustee Agreement

The Society of the Sacred Heart, United States -- Canada Province entrusts the governance and administration of the schools to local boards of trustees and administrators. The board of trustees of School of the Sacred Heart (herein the “school”) promotes and advances the *Goals and Criteria* of Sacred Heart Schools and the school’s mission statement. Trustees ensure that the school is well managed, provide for adequate resources, and maintain good relationships with all constituencies. By overseeing and monitoring the strategic plan, the board works to form the present and future direction of the school.

Election to the school’s board of trustees carries with it a responsibility of stewardship. By definition, trustees are the custodians of the school and hold “in trust” the mission, *Goals and Criteria* and the school’s reputation. Trustees act and make decisions based on the overall interests of the school and are accountable for upholding the mission of the school through the Sacred

Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG) process. The board ensures that the school is actively engaged in the Network of Sacred Heart Schools.

The work of trustees begins with fiduciary expectations of duty (due diligence on financials), care (executing decisions with the level of care of a “prudent” person) and obedience (to laws and bylaws). Beyond these duties, the work of trustees concentrates exclusively on policies and strategies that are future-focused. The board is not involved with the daily operations of the school, which are delegated to the head of the school.

Trustees contribute their time, expertise, and energy, as well as financial resources to support the viability and growth of the school. All new trustees should plan to attend the annual Fall Trustee/Head Education to Mission Conference hosted by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education within their first two years of service.

All trustees are asked to execute faithfully the following responsibilities:

Education to Mission:

Beginning with Trustee Orientation, trustees participate in ongoing education to the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education.

- All trustees hold in trust the mission of the school, which includes at its foundation the *Goals and Criteria* of Sacred Heart education.
- Trustees participate in ongoing education to the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education.
- Trustees commit themselves to deepening their understanding of and commitment to the *Goals and Criteria* by examining the implication of board decisions and policies as well as allocation of resources.
- The committee on trustees assumes responsibility to assure this commitment through the selection, orientation and ongoing education of trustees.

Work in Partnership with the Head of the School:

The board oversees the long-term strategic and fiscal viability of the school. In that capacity, the board hires the head who oversees the

shaping of the school's program and the quality of life in the school community. In order to maintain its high-level oversight, the board remains out of operations and the day-to-day work of the head and staff. Recognizing the head as the professional educator, the board appreciates and values the expertise of the head who serves as the spiritual, intellectual and community leader of the school. The head of school reports to the board of trustees. Each trustee is expected to support the head of school, participate in the annual evaluation process, and support any hiring or termination decisions that may arise.

Attend Board Meetings:

Since scheduled board meetings are the forum at which all important board policy and decisions are proposed, discussed and acted upon, it is imperative that board members attend meetings in order to be informed of board business and vote knowledgeably on issues brought before the board. Trustees come to meetings prepared (having read the minutes of previous meetings and the background materials for the current meeting) and actively participate in discussions by asking pertinent questions. Trustees also attend special meetings and small discussion groups that may be called to discuss key issues or initiatives. When voting on issues, trustees exercise their own judgment in light of the *Goals and Criteria*.

Contribute Financial Support:

The school's financial security and future growth depend upon contributions from private individuals. Annually, the board adopts a budget for the school that calls for substantial funds to be raised through the Annual Fund. Also, from time to time capital/endowment campaigns are launched to fund the school's strategic planning initiatives. Trustees play a leadership role in the school's fundraising efforts by contributing to the Annual Fund and to any capital/endowment campaigns at a level that demonstrates commitment commensurate with each trustee's personal financial situation.

Act as an Ambassador:

All trustees exhibit an abiding interest in the welfare of the school and a strong desire to help widen its basic support through upholding the *Goals and Criteria* and making their service to the school a high personal priority. Well informed about the school's history, objectives, accomplishments, current operations and challenges, trustees act as knowledgeable advocates of the school and the board's policy decisions. Trustees serve as visible advocates of the mission of the school and the board's policy decisions. In addition, each trustee takes every appropriate opportunity to increase the public's awareness of the school's contribution to the community.

Participate in Committees and Task Forces:

Each trustee serves on one or more committees or task forces. Attendance and participation in committee meetings is essential since these groups accomplish much of the work of the board in advance of board meetings. The board makes its final decisions based on the recommendations that emerge from discussions within these committees and task forces.

Identify and Recruit Board and Committee Members:

Annually the committee on trustees reviews the composition of the board and its committees. To further the objective of a diverse board and committees, when filling open positions the board considers a wide breadth and depth of potential candidates who represent various constituencies. Trustees participate in the process of identifying, reviewing and recruiting potential new members.

Uphold Confidentiality:

Members of the board of trustees adhere to the highest standards of personal and professional behavior so as to reflect favorably on the school.

Trustees agree to respect the confidentiality under which discussions take place during board and committee meetings and agree to maintain strict confidentiality concerning all information and knowledge gained from or related to their service on the board or its committees. Such information includes, but is not limited to, financial matters (including tuition and salary data), personnel matters, donor information, strategic planning, student and family matters, admission issues, and legal issues.

When asked to comment by persons outside the board on board action or direction, trustees should refer inquiries to the board chair, the spokesperson of the board.

Disclose Conflicts of Interest:

Many trustees and committee members are engaged in a variety of civic and business pursuits, serving numerous organizations in volunteer and professional capacities. The board of trustees and the school as a whole benefit substantially from the many perspectives brought to the board by those working, volunteering, or otherwise making commitments in diverse fields. It is important to ensure that any conflicts of interest, real or perceived, between the best interests of the school and those of the trustees' and committee members' other pursuits are disclosed, and any adverse effect minimized as the board performs its duties and governs the school. In an era of increasing public and governmental scrutiny of not-for-profit

organizations, the school wants to eliminate any perception that trustees and committee members have been influenced by their own self-interest, and to ensure instead that they are, and are seen to be, acting strictly for what benefits the school.

Trustees shall annually declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest that might affect or appear to affect his or her position or action in any matter coming before the board or any committee of the board. Space is provided for this declaration of conflict of interest on the signature page at the end of this agreement. Having signed this agreement, if a trustee discovers or is made aware of a conflict or potential conflict, the trustee must notify the board chair immediately.

Participate in School Activities:

As active leaders of the school, trustees support special events, such as the school's annual fundraising event, graduation, and major donor events, by their attendance and participation. In addition, the school appreciates trustee attendance at athletic, fine arts, and other events.

Respect the Role of the Trustee:

Trustees choose service to the school as a high priority by participating constructively and consistently in the work of the board and its committees. The role of the board of trustees is governance and leadership, not management. Although trustees may receive impassioned appeals from constituents, including those with whom they have personal relationships, an individual trustee does not become involved directly in specific management, personnel, or curricular issues. The trustee takes care to separate the interests of the school from the specific needs of a particular child or constituency.

As such, it is inappropriate for trustees to engage in discussions or act as an “appeals court” with anyone regarding grievances that they may have with the school. Personnel, disciplinary, and day-to-day operational matters lie exclusively within the realm of the head of school. Each trustee redirects any misguided requests, comments and concerns from constituents such as faculty, parents or alumnae/i to the head of school for consideration. Trustees respect and support the authority of the head of school. A trustee accepts and supports board decisions. Once a decision has been made, the board speaks as one voice.

As a trustee of the board, I have read the School of the Sacred Heart Agreement and agree to abide by these principles in my service as a trustee:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

In the space provided below, please disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest that might affect or appear to affect your position or action in any matter coming before the board or any committee of the board.

APPENDIX E

Sample Board Orientation Agenda

New Trustee Orientation Rolling Hills Academy of the Sacred Heart

September 25, 2017

AGENDA

3:00 – 3:10 Welcome and Introductions..... Chair, Committee on Trustees

3:10 – 3:40 Overview of the School and its Mission Board Chair

- The School's Identity and Mission
 - *Goals and Criteria*
 - *Sacred Heart School Identity*
 - *Structural Implications of Identity*
- Strategic Vision
- The Board Book
- Principles of Good Practice
- Trustee Roles and Responsibilities
- Role of the Board and the Role of the Head
- Board Expectations
- Board Calendar
- Board Assessment

3:40 – 4:00 Inside Rolling Hills Academy of the Sacred Heart Head of School

- School History and Culture
- Current Priorities and Initiatives
- The Head's Goals for the Year

4:00 – 4:20 Mini-Case Studies.....Full Group

4:20 – 4:45 Meet the Leadership Team Senior Leadership

The Head invites the senior leadership team and, if appropriate, the President of the Student Body to enter the room. Each explains his/her role and focus for the coming year.

4:45 – 5:00 Questions and Discussion

5:00 Adjourn

APPENDIX F

Sample Board Quiz

The purpose of the “Board Quiz” is to remind and educate the board about basic facts of the school and trusteeship. Questions often are drawn from the bylaws, budget, or school materials and serve as a refresher regarding good practice. The quiz is often given at the first board meeting of the year.

Union Street School

Board Retreat — August 19, 2018

A GOVERNANCE QUIZ

01 The exclusive purpose(s) of Union Street is (are): (*circle all that apply*)

- a) Educational
- b) Charitable
- c) Literary
- d) All of the above

02 The board of trustees may not be composed of fewer than _____ persons.

- a) 3
- b) 5
- c) 10
- d) 15

03 A trustee’s service on the board is limited to _____ consecutive terms.

04 Any action of the board may be taken without a meeting if the action is proposed to all members of the board in writing and two-thirds agree in writings.

TRUE

FALSE

05 A quorum of the board is constituted by a 2/3 majority of duly elected trustees.

TRUE

FALSE

06 The board’s primary responsibility is a focus on

- a) Purpose and Mission
- b) Financial Viability and Sustainability
- c) Oversight of the Head of School
- d) Strategic Planning

- 07** Once a decision is made, no matter how contentious, each trustee has a responsibility to support the decision in word and deed.

TRUE

FALSE

- 08** The best way to describe the board/head relationship is

- a) Employer/Employee
- b) Coach/Quarterback
- c) Checks and Balances
- d) Partnership

- 09** Only decisions of the full board are binding on the head of school.

TRUE

FALSE

- 10** If board members or committees request information or assistance from the head, the head is expected to comply

TRUE

FALSE

- 11** If a parent approaches you in your role as a school trustee with a serious complaint about a teacher, the appropriate response is: (circle all that apply)

- a) Assure the parent you will look into the matter and get back to her
- b) Survey other parents in the class to ascertain the extent of the problem
- c) Refer the parent to the head of school and contact the head to give her/him a heads up.
- d) Contact the board chair and request the matter be placed on the agenda of the next board meeting

- 12** Your child has the leading role in the spring musical, and even as a biased proud parent, you marvel at his talent. After curtain call on closing night, the director approaches you, raves about your child and says, "Next year for Ryan's senior year, I'm planning a show that will stretch and showcase his talent, but to do so, I really need better sound and lighting equipment. The head tells me there is no room in the budget for what I need. Is there any way you could convince the board to include this expense? If not, you have always been such a generous donor, would you consider funding a new system?" You would:

- a) Assure the director you will do what you can to meet the need.
- b) Let the director know that budget decisions are the responsibility of the full board and alert the board chair and head about the approach to you.
- c) Suggest the director write a proposal that you can present to the board
- d) As you truly want to support this man who has done so much for your child, and it is well within your means to do so, quietly fund the request with an anonymous gift.

13 Fellow trustee Karen Conover invites you to lunch. Over salad, she tells you she “and lots of other parents” are concerned about the school’s college admission track record. Karen has been quietly doing some independent research, including calling peer schools and college admission offices to gather information on the perceptions of the school in the larger community. She plans to present her findings at the next board meeting, call for replacement of the college advisor, and asks if she can count on your support. You share her concerns. What would you do?

- a) Call other trustees to let them know of the concerns you, Karen, and others parents share and urge them to attend the next board meeting.
- b) Offer to help Karen gather more information to ensure that the issue will have ample data to support the proposal.
- c) Ask Karen if she has discussed her concerns with the head of school, suggest she make an appointment with her/him, and then call the head and board chair to given them a heads up.
- d) Explain to her why her actions must stop and promise you will keep the whole thing confidential to avoid any embarrassment to her.

14 The Board of Union Street holds itself accountable for “governing with excellence.” This applies to: *(circle all that apply)* *(Drawn from Union Street’s Board Policy manual)*

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) Attendance | g) Identifying strategic issues and opportunities facing the school |
| b) Beginning meetings on time | |
| c) Preparation for meetings | h) Fashioning initiatives to achieve highest priorities |
| d) Adherence to policy-making principles | |
| e) Respect for roles | i) Self-assessment |
| f) Ensuring effective governance capability into the future | j) Support for the head of school and the school’s leadership team |

15 The most important board committee is:

- a) Committee on Trustees
- b) Development Committee
- c) Executive Committee
- d) Finance Committee

16 The board's first consideration in decision-making would be:

- a) Furthering the school's mission
- b) Ensuring the school's financial sustainability
- c) Enhancing the schools public standing
- d) Serving the best interests of students

17 Union Street's 2016-2017 enrollment was

- a) 978
- b) 1,030
- c) 1,050
- d) 1,109

18 Union Street's budget is approximately

- a) \$12 million
- b) \$14 million
- c) \$17 million
- d) \$20 million

19 What is Union Street's current strategic priority?

APPENDIX G

Mini Case Studies

The following mini-case studies could be used during board orientation to help educate new trustees to the roles and responsibilities of trusteeship. More complex case studies focused on current best practices may be found in Principles and Practices for Governance and Leadership in Sacred Heart Schools.

1. You are attending your 9th grade daughter's soccer game when the parent of another girl in the class comes up to you and says, "I'm sure you've heard all the complaints about the new science teacher. He's a disaster and has no place in our school! I hear he yells at the kids, and no one likes him. As a member of the board, you should do something about this!" What do you tell her? What would you do?
2. The board has been engaging in a lively debate over the plans and costs for a proposed renovation of the school's kitchen. In your own professional work you know the world of commercial kitchens, and based on your knowledge and experience, you believe the proposed costs for the project are excessive. You also know that the company the board has selected for the renovation does not have a good reputation. But you are new to the board and have no knowledge of the process used to select the company. You think the board is about to make a terrible decision. You wonder if you should keep quiet or should you say something? Will the board think you have a conflict of interest? What would you do?
3. Shortly before you left for the board meeting this evening, your 3rd grade son came home crying and insisted he will not return to school. The kids in his class have been teasing him about the size of his ears, and today one boy came up behind your son and yanked hard on his ears. If anything, your spouse is more upset than your son and insisted you bring the issue of bullying up with the full board, and threatened that if nothing is done about the situation, your family will leave the school and withdraw your pledge to the capital campaign. What would you do?
4. The board has just voted for a 10% tuition increase. You vehemently disagreed with the proposal, expressed your strong objections during debate, but you were the only one to vote against the new tuition. You feel the parents are being asked to pay for increased staffing and salaries that are unjustified and that the increase will cause attrition. Over the past month or so as the board discussed a tuition increase, you have shared your feelings with several parents who are not on the board and who agree with you. It's possible that you can rally them to protest and get the decision reversed. What are the problems in this scenario?
5. Thanks to a recent windfall, you are in a position to make a significant gift to the school. The school is currently raising money for a new middle school. While you could contribute to that campaign, you'd rather see a new Olympic-size swimming pool named in memory of your father. How would you handle this dilemma?

APPENDIX H

Sample Board of Trustees Assessment



NYS AIS Manual for Evaluation and Accreditation SAMPLE BOARD ASSESSMENT

The following evaluation of fundamental governing body and individual trustee responsibilities is designed to stimulate thought about how the Board of Trustees should operate, to assess how it might improve its performance, and to assist in the writing of the Section Three, Governance, of the NYS AIS Manual for Evaluation and Accreditation. Used with permission of the New York State Association of Independent Schools.

For each section, rate the performance of the governing body of the school on the following scale:

- 6 = outstanding
- 5 = very good
- 4 = satisfactory, for the time being
- 3 = needs improvement
- 2 = work has begun, but needs major improvement
- 1 = topic not yet on board's agenda

RATING	MISSION
☐	The governing body periodically reviews the mission statement and provides for continuity of the mission in the life of the school.
☐	The governing body assures that the mission is clear and understood by all the constituencies of the school.
☐	The members of the governing body recognize and fulfill their responsibility as stewards of the mission.

RATING	STRATEGIC THINKING & PLANNING
	The governing body undertakes effective strategic planning for the school. Members of the governing body focus on the strategic interests and needs of the school in fulfilling their responsibilities.
	FINANCIAL RESOURCES
	The governing body ensures that financial resources are provided for the school. The governing body understands its central role in institutional advancement and supports these efforts.
	FISCAL OVERSIGHT
	The governing body has policies in place to support the creation, review and approval of an annual operating and capital budget as well as a multi-year financial plan. The governing body ensures administrative follow up as a result of an outside annual professional audit and the corresponding management letter. The governing body ensures that the school has in place adequate provisions for risk assessment and management, including the transfer of risk through appropriate insurance coverage.
	BOARD MEMBERSHIP
	The governing body participates in an effective program of board development that includes annual new trustee orientation, ongoing trustee education, evaluation and self-evaluation, and board leadership succession planning. The roles and responsibilities of the governing body are clearly defined, transparent, and communicated to all constituents. The governing body ensures that issues of gender, diversity, and multiculturalism are appropriately considered in policymaking and governing body membership.

RATING	RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEAD OF SCHOOL
	The governing body provides stability in transitions of leadership for itself and its head of school. The governing body ensures that the head of school receives appropriate support, evaluation, and compensation. The governing body is responsible for establishing broad school policies and appropriately delegates responsibility for the operations of the school to the head of school.
	SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS
	The decisions of the governing body are effectively communicated to the appropriate constituents. The governing body ensures the confidentiality of all conversations.
	BOARD STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS
	The governing body reviews and maintains appropriate bylaws that conform to legal requirements. The governing body periodically reviews that the board and the school are in compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The governing body creates a conflict of interest policy that is reviewed annually with, and signed by, individual trustees. The governing body keeps full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies.



Self-Evaluation

TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

For each section, rate your performance as a trustee on the following scale:

- 6 = outstanding
- 5 = very good
- 4 = satisfactory, for the time being
- 3 = needs improvement
- 2 = work has begun, but needs major improvement
- 1 = topic not yet on board's agenda

	I understand and support the school's mission.
	I monitor the progress of the school in its strategic plan.
	I assist in the fundraising efforts of the school.
	I give to the school commensurate with my financial circumstances.
	I read and understand the school's financial reports.
	I support and, as requested, advise the head of school.
	I take advantage of opportunities to enhance the school's public image.
	I recommend qualified individuals as possible nominees for the governing body.
	I participate in board training and development opportunities.
	I read materials in advance of board and committee meetings.
	As appropriate I suggest agenda items for committees and the governing board to consider.
	I avoid, in fact and perception, conflicts of interest that might jeopardize the school or its governing body.
	I participate in meaningful ways in board meetings.
	I respect the confidentiality of the board's executive sessions.
	I willingly volunteer to further the school's mission.
	I complete assignments in a responsible and timely manner.

This part of the evaluation allows additional issues to be raised and comments on the performance of the board.

What do you perceive to be the principle strengths of the school?

On what issues should the governing body concentrate in the next year?

What are the key strengths of this governing board?

In what areas could the governing body improve its performance?

In what areas do you feel you are most effective as a trustee?

In what areas do you feel least effective?

Do you find your work as a trustee satisfying? In what ways?

Other Sources for Assessment Samples

National Association of Independent Schools. www.nais.org

BoardSource. www.boardsource.org

Association of Governing Boards. www.agb.org

National Council of Non-Profits. www.councilofnonprofits.org

APPENDIX I

SacredHeartUSC.Education Web Resources

A Trustee Map

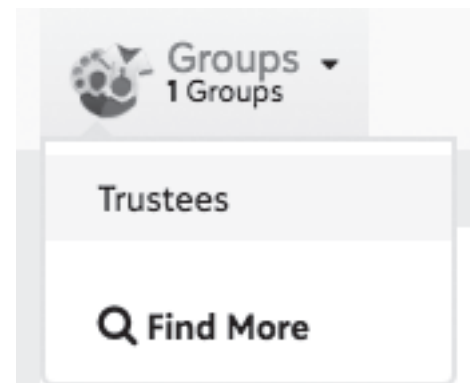
PAGES

WEBSITE

sacredheartusc.education

LOGIN

(Click on first time logging in to receive username and password)



Resources



News

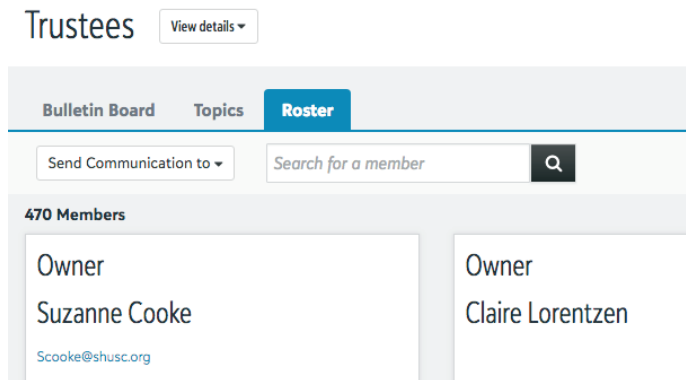


Calendar



Directories

DETAILED CONTENT

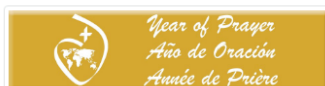


- Trustee Community group
- Communicate with other trustees ("Roster")
- Engage with one another on shared discussion boards ("Topics")

Posts



News



Wednesday, December 06, 2017

Year of Prayer

As part of the Bicentennial of Philippine Duchesne, the Society and the world-wide Sacred Heart community is celebrating a Year of Prayer, with weekly reflections available each Monday morning at <https://rscj.org/spirituality/year-of-prayer>.

- View trustee specific events
- Find trustees from other Network of Sacred Heart Schools

GLOSSARY

Board of Trustees: It is the duty of the school's board of trustees, working in partnership with school leadership, to serve as stewards, ensuring continuity of Sophie's vision, the Sacred Heart mission, the best educational climate for today's students and the sustainability of the school for future generations.

Charism: a theological term signifying a special gift or vision given to an individual for service to the Church. The individual may found a religious community to help fulfill the gift or vision.

Canon Law: regulations body of laws enacted by ecclesiastical authority of operational policy for the governance of the Church and church members.

Conference of Sacred Heart Education: The Conference is composed of educators and trustees who work with the Head of Conference to ensure the integrity of the mission of Sacred Heart education. The primary purpose of the Conference is to

animate fidelity to mission as the most effective means of invigorating Sacred Heart education for the future. It focuses on three dimensions of mission effectiveness: governance to ensure vitality and relevance of mission; education to mission of boards, chairs, heads and leadership teams to promote depth of understanding of mission; and accountability on the part of school communities to fulfill mission as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*. The Conference aims to provide resources, opportunities, and avenues for thoughtful dialogue and discernment about the evolving mission of Sacred Heart education among trustees, heads, leadership teams, provincial team, and school communities.

Constitutions: document detailing the nature, mission and structure of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Discernment: process of making mission driven decisions rooted in reflection, analysis, dialogue and prayer.

Education to Mission Committee: One of the committees of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education, the Education to Mission Committee focuses on the formation to mission of the adult communities across the Network. If Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat's charism is to be caught; it must be experienced in the context of relationships, ones that are characterized by mutual respect. Relationships are the context in which Education to Mission occurs. While the formation of faculties, staffs, and trustees is ultimately the responsibility of the local head of school and board chair, this committee ensures that programs, resources, and plans for Education to Mission for heads, chairs, leadership teams, and school communities exist and are systematic.

Governance Committee: Recognizing the centrality of relationships to furthering mission, the Governance Committee of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education advises the Head of Conference and the provincial team on governance matters regarding Sacred Heart education in Canada and the United States. The responsibility of the committee is to be mindful of the mutual relational obligation of the school and the Society as articulated in articles of incorporation, bylaws and essential governance documents. The committee serves as a resource for the heads and chairs in their evolving relationship with the Society. Aware of the

issues facing North American independent schools, the committee offers guidance to the boards and the provincial team regarding emerging challenges.

Local Ordinary: the pastoral leader (bishop or archbishop) who oversees the Catholicity of institutions within his diocese (a specific geographical area).

Membership: This term is used when referring to the 24 Sacred Heart Schools and the United States – Canada province of the Society of the Sacred Heart, as represented by the heads, chairs and provincial team.

NAIS: National Association of Independent Schools: a nonprofit educational group dedicated to research and professional development serving over 1,800 schools.

Network of Sacred Heart Schools: The Network operates as an association of 24 Catholic independent schools acting in cooperation with the United States-Canada Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart to advance a shared mission. The members (24 schools and the USC Province) elect the Network Board that serves as an executive committee. The Network Board appoints the Director of Program Planning who is responsible to ensure services and programs for students, faculty and staff.

Provincial and Team: The provincial is the governing authority for one of the administrative divisions (province) of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She works with a team. The provincial and team must know the resources and needs of the province and give direction to the apostolic service of the province. They foster communion and ensure ongoing formation and maintain communication with the hierarchy of the Church so as to maintain mutual relationships and follow its lawful directives.³

In light of their responsibility within the Church, the provincial and the team are ultimately responsible to ensure that each school that bears the Society's name is committed to the mission of Sacred Heart education as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*. To this end the provincial and her team appoint members to both the Conference of Sacred Heart Education and the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals. The Provincial of the USC Province is responsible to ensure integrity of mission; she appoints the Head of Conference as her delegate in this regard.

RSCJ: designates members of the Society of the Sacred Heart. The initials stand for Religieuses du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus, which translates to Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sacred Heart Commission on Goals

(SHCOG): The Sacred Heart Commission on Goals provides a system of accountability for living the Sacred Heart mission. The commission is appointed by the provincial of the USC Province, Society of the Sacred Heart. Its membership reflects the relationships of head of school, trustees, faculty/staff and senior leadership (middle management). Its mandate from the provincial is to design a reflective process whereby a school community holds itself accountable for living according to the *Goals and Criteria*. This design is known as the SHCOG process. A description of the SHCOG process can be found in the SHCOG Manual.

Society of the Sacred Heart: congregation of Roman Catholic religious women dedicated to making known the love of the Heart of Jesus.

United States - Canada Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart: The geographic area of the United States and Canada as designated by the Society of the Sacred Heart under the leadership of the provincial.

¹¹ Society of the Sacred Heart, *1982 Constitutions* (Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 1987), The Spirit of Government, <https://rscj.org/vocations/spirit-government>.

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