Understanding Sacred Heart Sponsorship and Board Governance

A Formation Guide for Trustees of Sacred Heart Schools

grounded
IN VISION.

focused
ON MISSION.

hopeful
FOR THE FUTURE.

Introduction

Schools of the Sacred Heart are rooted in a mission entrusted to the Society of the Sacred Heart more than two centuries ago: to discover and reveal the love of God through the service of education. Born in France in 1800, when Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat founded the Society in response to a world marked by profound social upheaval and the urgent needs of young people, the mission of Sacred Heart education expanded to North America in 1818 through the work of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne and her companions. Today, the mission continues to thrive in Sacred Heart Schools throughout 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. This statement captures how the principles and values of Sacred Heart education are embodied in the life, culture, relationships, and educational practice within each Sacred Heart school. Trustees are entrusted with the stewardship of this mission. Their responsibility is not simply to govern an institution, but to ensure that the vision entrusted to Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat continues to remain vital and responsive to the needs of young people and the world in each new generation.

This guide is intended to help trustees understand the unique relationship among:

- The Society of the Sacred Heart, whose members are known as the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ)
- The Provincial and Provincial Leadership
- The Conference of Sacred Heart Education
- The Network of Sacred Heart Schools
- Boards of Trustees
- Heads of School
- Lay leaders who carry the mission forward today

Together, these partners ensure the vitality of Sacred Heart education today and for future generations through honoring the responsibilities of their relationships.

PART I:
The Sacred Heart Mission
Our Context Is Particular

In our role as leaders let us pause and consider the dynamic in which we are living . . .

Sacred Heart schools exist within a rapidly changing world shaped by political polarization, social fragmentation, technological transformation, anxiety, and deep spiritual searching. Trustees are called to govern in this context with clarity, courage, and hope.

As faith-filled institutional leaders, trustees must regularly pause to ask:

- What kind of world are students inheriting?
- How do our schools respond faithfully to the challenges of this moment?
- How do we remain grounded in mission amid uncertainty and change?
- How do we preserve and nurture the humanity, dignity, and spiritual development of young people?

The mission of Sacred Heart education offers a response rooted not in fear, but in faith and hope.

The Society of the Sacred Heart describes this mission in its Constitutions:

> "We are sent by the Church to communicate the love of the Heart of Jesus. In Him all find their true growth as persons and the way towards reconciliation with one another." Constitution §10 of the *Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart* (1982)

Sacred Heart education is therefore not simply a method of teaching.

It is:

- A way of seeing the world through the Heart of Christ
- A commitment to forming the whole person
- A belief in the dignity and sacredness of every human person
- A conviction that education can transform both individuals and society
- A ministry of hope in times of uncertainty

What Unites Sacred Heart Schools?

The Sacred Heart mission is sustained through a covenantal relationship among schools, trustees, school leadership, the Society of the Sacred Heart, and the broader Sacred Heart community.

At the center of this covenant are the ***Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Education***.

The *Goals and Criteria* serve as:

- Articulation of the essential principles and values of Sacred Heart education
- A shared articulation of mission and expectations
- A framework of accountability
- Fundamental blueprint for supporting mission integrity
- A guide for institutional discernment and decision-making
- An essential articulation of the relationship among the Network of Sacred Heart Schools

The *Goals and Criteria* are operational commitments that shape governance, strategic planning, school culture, curriculum, and community life. The criteria are periodically reviewed and revised as necessary to respond to the needs of the time.



PART II:
Understanding Sponsorship
What Does Sponsorship Mean to Sacred Heart Schools?

Sacred Heart schools are not simply independent schools with a historical Catholic identity; rather, they are essential expressions of the educational mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

As such, they are ministries sponsored by the Society of the Sacred Heart.

This means:

- According to Canon Law, the set of laws governing the Roman Catholic Church, the Society holds responsibility for the educational mission of the schools as ministries within the life of the Catholic Church.
- The schools' Catholic and Sacred Heart identity is rooted in the charism of St. Madeleine Sophie and the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.
- The Society serves as canonical sponsor by recognizing the school as part of its educational mission within the Catholic Church and holds the school accountable for this mission.
- The schools remain accountable to the Sacred Heart mission through the Goals and Criteria.
- Governance authority is entrusted to Boards of Trustees.
- Major mission decisions require collaboration among school leadership, the Conference of Sacred Heart Education, and Provincial Leadership.

Sponsorship is therefore not daily management. It is mission stewardship.

It is a relationship of trust, accountability, collaboration, and shared responsibility for ensuring that Sacred Heart education remains faithful to the charism of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat while responding creatively to the future.

❧

Sacred Heart education is not simply a method of teaching. It is a way of being — rooted in love, shaped by contemplation, committed to justice, and lived in joyful community.

– excerpt from a presentation by United States–Canada Provincial Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ, April 2026

Sponsorship Is About Relationships

The Sacred Heart tradition translates mission as lived through relationships rooted in the love of God and exemplified in the Heart of Jesus Christ. Sacred Heart education is “a genuine relationship of mutual interaction, where each person both receives and gives so that all may grow together.” Strong relationships are therefore not secondary to governance. They are essential to mission fidelity.

Religious of the Sacred Heart deeply value this understanding of education and this principle of governance. RSCJ continue to play a vital role in Sacred Heart education.

- The broader Sacred Heart Community and the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) support Sacred Heart schools through their witness to the charism, spirituality, and educational vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat.
- The nature and extent of involvement will vary according to the circumstances of each school and local community. The Head of School/President is the liaison between the local RSCJ and the school community. Support may be offered through direct engagement with schools, regional and Province-wide initiatives, consultation, prayer, and other forms of accompaniment.
- Each Board of Trustees is required to have three Religious of the Sacred Heart or Provincial delegates on its Board from among a pool of candidates developed by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education. Their presence fosters the relationship of the Board to the Society of the Sacred Heart and its mission.
- RSCJ are encouraged to serve as companions in mission, offering encouragement, perspective, and support.

So, too, Sacred Heart Trustees believe that governance is relational. Trustees enjoy a special relationship with RSCJ because trustees hold the Society’s mission in trust. Their role in the mutual relationship of sponsorship is a sacred one.



PART III:
Governance as Mission Stewardship

Governance Is More Than Institutional Oversight

In Sacred Heart schools, governance is mission stewardship.

Boards do not simply oversee budgets, facilities, and strategy.

Sacred Heart boards hold in trust:

- St. Madeleine Sophie Barat's charism and the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart to discover and reveal God's love in the world
- The school's Sacred Heart identity
- The Goals and Criteria for the vitality of mission
- The long-term viability of the institution for the future relevance of mission
- Institutional culture reflecting the ethos of Sacred Heart education

This requires trustees to think beyond short-term institutional concerns and toward the deeper question:

How do Board decisions honor, strengthen, and nurture the Sacred Heart mission for future generations?

The Role of the Board of Trustees

The Board governs the institution and ensures mission alignment and institutional sustainability.

Trustees are responsible for:

Mission Stewardship

- Safeguarding the school's Catholic and Sacred Heart identity
- Ensuring fidelity to the Goals and Criteria
- Advancing mission-centered strategic decision-making
- Sustaining the Sacred Heart culture and spirit
- Strengthening engagement with the Network of Sacred Heart Schools

Fiduciary Oversight

- Ensuring long-term financial sustainability
- Guiding strategic planning
- Managing institutional risk
- Overseeing facilities and capital assets
- Ensuring legal and regulatory compliance
- Promoting the long-term vitality of the institution

Leadership Oversight

- Appointing, supporting, and evaluating the Head of School/President
- Ensuring thoughtful succession planning for Heads of School and Boards of Trustees
- Cultivating the formation and development of future leaders
- Collaborating with Sacred Heart partners

Governance Responsibilities Particular to Sacred Heart Schools

The Foundational Principles provide the framework for the Board's particular responsibilities to Sacred Heart Schools.

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 of the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals for its 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.

Boards of Trustees commit themselves to:

- Promoting understanding of the school's identity as part of the Society's educational mission in the Catholic Church
- Ensuring the governance decisions reflect the mission and identity of the Society of the Sacred Heart
- Ensuring the participation of RSCJ or Provincial delegates on the Board as articulated in the Board's bylaws
- Seeking counsel from the Head of Conference on matters related to mission and leadership
- Supporting collaboration among the Head of School/President, Conference leadership, and Network leadership
- Encouraging active participation in the life of the Network and broader Sacred Heart community

Every Trustee Should Regularly Ask

- How well do I understand the Sacred Heart mission?
- Do I understand the Goals as timeless values and the Criteria as indicators of how to live the mission?
- How is our board being formed for mission leadership?
- Are our decisions strengthening Sacred Heart identity?
- Are financial decisions aligned with institutional mission?
- How are we preparing future generations?
- How are we sustaining a culture of hope, joy, and belonging?
- Are we collaborating well with Sacred Heart partners?
- Are we ensuring both institutional vitality and mission integrity?



PART IV:
The Roles of Sacred Heart Leadership

Our Unique and Yet Mutually Dependent Roles

The Head of School is responsible for leading, managing, and animating the Sacred Heart mission in the daily life of the school, while partnering with the board to ensure governance decisions protect and deepen that mission.

The Chair as the leader of the Board of Trustees, holds in trust the Sacred Heart and Catholic identity of the school. Collectively, the Board acts as Steward of Mission, accountable to the Society of the Sacred Heart (through the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals) and partners with the Head of School to ensure policies and strategy align with the *Goals and Criteria*.

The Provincial with her Council affirms the School as an apostolic ministry of the Society of the Sacred Heart. They hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding the Sacred Heart charism and Catholic identity of its sponsored schools. While governance authority is entrusted to local boards, the Society retains responsibility for mission fidelity.

The Conference of Sacred Heart Education is appointed by the Provincial and her Council. The Conference serves the Province and individual Schools by promoting fidelity to Sacred Heart mission, supporting leadership formation, and fostering collaboration among Network Schools and their leadership. The Conference focuses on governance for mission, formation to mission and accountability to mission.

The Network of Sacred Heart Schools ensures the vitality of mission through exceptional programming that serves students and the adult communities.

The Role of the Head of School/President

In addition to executive leadership, the Head of School/President is called to far more. Entrusted with an apostolic work of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the Head is the steward of a living mission, the guardian of a sacred tradition, and the spiritual leader of the school community.

Every decision, every relationship, and every aspiration is rooted in the conviction that the mission comes first. A Sacred Heart school is mission-centric in all that it is and all that it does; its educational excellence, governance, finances, programs, and daily life are all expressions of the Gospel values embodied in the *Goals and Criteria*.

The Head of School/President therefore serves with a dual vocation: as the institutional leader responsible for the vitality and sustainability of the school, and as the mission leader who inspires, forms, and guides the community in the charism of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat. Holding these two responsibilities in harmony, the Head ensures that the school not only flourishes as an institution but also remains a faithful witness to the educational mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart and the transforming love of the Heart of Jesus.

This role includes:

- Promoting the Sacred Heart identity and mission
- Serving as spiritual leader of the school grounded in the charism of St. Madeleine Sophie
- Hiring mission-centered faculty and staff
- Leading daily school operations
- Building strong academic programs
- Ensuring implementation of the Goals and Criteria
- Participating in the SHCOG process and action planning
- Engaging actively with the Sacred Heart Network and broader community
- Collaborating closely with trustees and Sacred Heart partners

The Role of the Board Chair

A Sacred Heart Board Chair holds a particularly important leadership role within governance.

The Chair:

- Leads the Board to remain focused on mission
- Facilitates healthy governance culture and best practices
- Partners with the Head of School/President
- Encourages thoughtful discernment and strategic vision
- Helps sustain accountability to the Sacred Heart mission
- Models collaborative leadership rooted in respect and trust
- Collaborates with the Conference of Sacred Heart Education
- Engages actively with the Network of Sacred Heart Schools

The Chair serves not simply as an organizational leader, but as a steward of the Board's work in furtherance of the school's mission.



The Role of the Provincial and Provincial Council

The Provincial Council exercises the Society of the Sacred Heart's ecclesial responsibility for sponsorship and the ongoing vitality of its educational mission. As the canonical sponsor, the Provincial Council safeguards the Sacred Heart identity of each school, ensuring fidelity to St. Madeleine Sophie Barat's charism, the Goals and Criteria, and the mission entrusted to Sacred Heart education.

To fulfill this responsibility effectively, the Provincial Council entrusts significant leadership responsibilities to the Head of Conference, who serves as its principal collaborator in animating, strengthening, and advancing the mission of Sacred Heart education throughout the Network. Working in close partnership with the Provincial Leadership, the Head of Conference promotes mission formation, supports Heads of School and Boards of Trustees in Governance for Mission, guides the implementation of the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals process, and serves as a principal liaison between the schools, the Conference, and the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Through this collaborative relationship, Provincial Leadership and the Head of Conference work together to ensure that every Sacred Heart school remains both a vibrant educational institution and a faithful expression of the Society's apostolic mission in the Church.

Their responsibilities include:

- Safeguarding St. Madeleine Sophie's charism and the spiritual heritage of the Society of the Sacred Heart
- Ensuring fidelity to the mission, Goals and Criteria, and Catholic identity of Sacred Heart education
- Strengthening and accompanying sponsored ministries in their apostolic mission
- Missioning and empowering Heads of School as leaders of the Society's apostolic works
- Cultivating the active participation and witness of RSCJ in the life and governance of sponsored ministries
- Preserving the continuity and vitality of Sacred Heart identity across generations
- Appointing the members of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education to carry forward delegated responsibilities for mission
- Entrusting and affirming the leadership of the Head of Conference in exercising delegated responsibilities on behalf of the Provincial Leadership
- Exercising ecclesial oversight and accountability within the life and mission of the Church
- Affirming each sponsored school as a living expression of the Society of the Sacred Heart's educational mission in the Catholic Church.

The Role of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education

The Conference serves to promote, sustain, and ensure the vitality of the mission of Sacred Heart education as entrusted to the Schools of the Sacred Heart by the Society. The Conference exercises sponsorship responsibilities on behalf of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Its deepest purpose is to ensure that Sacred Heart education remains mission-centric, forming young people who are called to discover and reveal God's love in the heart of the world. The Conference supports schools through three primary areas:

Education to Mission

Mandate: To animate the mission of Sacred Heart education by providing formation, resources, and leadership development that deepen understanding of St. Madeleine Sophie's charism and strengthen mission-centered leadership throughout the Network.

Areas of Responsibility

- **Trustee Formation:** To form Trustees as faithful stewards of the Sacred Heart mission and sponsors' educational ministry.
- **Leadership Development:** To cultivate mission-centered leaders who integrate the Goals and Criteria into every aspect of school life.
- **Publications and Resources:** To develop and share mission-based resources that support formation, governance, and educational excellence.
- **Formation programs for school leaders and faculty:** To provide ongoing opportunities for spiritual, educational, and professional formation rooted in the Sacred Heart tradition.

Accountability to Mission

Mandate: To promote fidelity to the mission of Sacred Heart education by guiding mission accountability, reflection, and continuous growth through the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals process.

Areas of Responsibility

- Create and implement a process through which each school holds itself accountable for the mission of Sacred Heart education: the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG).
- Create, implement and assess an annual process of each school holding itself accountable to the Society of the Sacred Heart for demonstrating its vitality and viability in promoting the mission of Sacred Heart Education: Annual Report for Canonical Sponsorship.

Governance for Mission

Mandate: To strengthen governance that advances the Sacred Heart mission by forming trustees and school leaders who exercise leadership with fidelity, wisdom, and strategic vision.

Areas of Responsibility

- **Trustee Education:** To prepare trustees to govern as stewards of the Society's educational mission and apostolic work through creating and offering resources.
- **Governance Consultation:** To advise Boards and Heads of School on governance practices that strengthen mission effectiveness and institutional vitality.
- **Leadership Transition Support:** To accompany Boards and school leaders through leadership transitions while preserving continuity of mission and culture.
- **Succession Planning:** To encourage thoughtful leadership succession that ensures the enduring vitality of Sacred Heart education.
- **Mission-Focused Governance Practices:** To recommend governance structures, policies, documents, and decision-making that place mission at the heart of every institutional endeavor.

The Conference exists to help schools remain vibrant, faithful, and mission-centered.



The Role of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools

The Network of Sacred Heart Schools exists to strengthen and enrich the shared mission of Sacred Heart education by fostering collaboration, formation, innovation, and mutual support among its member schools. Working in close partnership with the Conference of Sacred Heart Education, the Network brings the mission to life through programs, relationships, and initiatives that deepen the Sacred Heart charism and equip schools to meet the evolving needs of today's world.

The role of the Network is to:

- Provide mission-centered, professional opportunities that strengthen teaching, learning, and collaboration for school leaders, faculty, and staff.
- Create and provide meaningful student programs and conferences.
- Inspire and educate current and future Sacred Heart leaders through formation, mentorship, and leadership programs.
- Implement strategic initiatives.
- Build and sustain relationships among Sacred Heart schools across the ANAM Province.
- Foster global connections within the international Sacred Heart community.
- Advance the shared mission of Sacred Heart education through collaboration, innovation, and service.



PART V:
The *Goals and Criteria* as the Mission Compass

The Five Goals of Sacred Heart Education

The *Goals and Criteria* are the foundational framework for ensuring mission effectiveness and guiding institutional decision-making.

GOAL I:
Schools of the Sacred Heart educate to a personal and active faith in God.

Goal I and its Criteria call schools to:

- Foster spiritual growth
- Create an ethos of joy, hope, and celebration
- Encourage prayer, reflection, and discernment
- Form students in the attitudes of the Heart of Jesus
- Welcome persons of all faith traditions

For trustees, Goal I raises important governance questions:

- In what ways does the Board ensure that the school's culture embodies joy, hope, compassion, and faith?
- How does the Board evaluate whether resources are being aligned with the school's mission and its commitment to spiritual formation?
- How does the Board ensure that the school's Catholic identity remains visible, authentic, and integrated throughout every dimension of school life?

GOAL II:
Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values

Goal II and its Criteria call schools to:

- Academic excellence
- Critical thinking
- Innovation and creativity
- Lifelong learning
- Intellectual curiosity grounded in meaning and purpose

Sacred Heart Trustees should regularly ask:

- How do strategic priorities support academic excellence?
- Does innovation align with mission?
- Are emerging technologies embraced thoughtfully and ethically?
- Do faculty formation and professional development remain a priority?
- How do trustees and the Board ensure their ongoing education as Sacred Heart trustees in light of the resources provided by the Conference of Sacred Heart Education?

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

Goal III and its Criteria call schools to:

- Form students in the attitudes of the Heart of Christ for service in the world
- Engage Catholic Social Teaching
- Promote civic responsibility
- Foster stewardship of creation
- Develop global awareness and cultural literacy

Sacred Heart Trustees should regularly ask:

- How are we educating students to engage the world compassionately and courageously?
- How are the values of Catholic Social Teaching reflected in our Board actions?
- How do our policies and priorities reflect human dignity and justice?
- How are we addressing social and environmental challenges faithfully?

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

Goal IV and its Criteria call schools to:

- Inclusion and belonging
- Mutual respect
- Peace and reconciliation
- Diversity and community life
- Formation in charism and mission

Sacred Heart Boards play an important role in sustaining healthy institutional culture.

Governance itself should model:

- Respectful dialogue
- Collaboration
- Transparency
- Wise discernment
- Relational leadership

Sacred Heart trustees should consider:

- How effectively does our board model the qualities of Christian community—respectful dialogue, collaboration, transparency, and wise discernment—in the way we conduct our own work?
- How do we hold ourselves responsible for the quality of relationships within our board?
- What evidence do we see that our school fosters a culture of inclusion, belonging, mutual respect, and reconciliation for all members of the community, and where might growth still be needed?
- How are we, as trustees, supporting the formation of students, faculty, staff, and board members in the spirit, mission, and values of Sacred Heart education so that community life reflects the Goals and Criteria?

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

Goal V and its Criteria call schools to:

- Personal responsibility
- Resilience and courage
- Ethical decision-making
- Healthy balance and well-being
- Responsible use of social media and all technology
- Transformational leadership

Sacred Heart Trustees should consider:

- How are we supporting the healthy development of students and adults?
- How are we modeling ethical leadership?
- How do school policies support wise freedom and accountability?



PART VI:
Mission-Centered Decision Making

During Head of School/President Searches

The Board will collaborate closely with the Conference of Sacred Heart Education and the Provincial Leadership. Heads of School/Presidents must be practicing Catholics.

Questions for discernment include:

- How does the candidate understand the mission of Sacred Heart education?
- How might the candidate demonstrate spiritual leadership of a Sacred Heart School?
- How does the candidate embody the values reflected in the *Goals and Criteria*?
- How might the candidate's executive leadership of the school reflect the values of the *Goals and Criteria*?
- How does the candidate demonstrate a willingness to sustain relationships within the broader Sacred Heart community?
- How does the candidate reflect a commitment to decision-making rooted in prayer and discernment?

During Strategic Planning

Mission alignment should guide all strategic priorities.

Questions Trustees should ask:

- Do strategic goals strengthen mission vitality?
- Do financial decisions support long-term mission sustainability?
- Does innovation remain grounded in Sacred Heart identity?
- Does planning reflect both institutional realities and spiritual purpose?

During Financial Challenges

Financial stewardship must remain mission-centric. Trustees should avoid reducing discernment solely to operational efficiency.

Questions should include:

- What best serves the long-term mission?
- How do we preserve Sacred Heart identity during challenge?
- How do we balance financial sustainability with educational mission?
- How do we care for the human impact of decisions?

During Times of Crisis

Sacred Heart values should shape institutional responses.

Does crises leadership and communication in Sacred Heart schools reflect:

- Compassion reflected in the attitudes of the Heart of Christ?
- Respect for human dignity?
- Clear, open and direct communication, professional expertise when needed?
- Wise discernment?
- Courageous leadership?
- Hope rooted in active and informed faith?



During Board Recruitment

Trustees should be selected not only for expertise, but first for commitment to mission.

Strong Sacred Heart trustees:

- Understand and value the mission of Sacred Heart Education
- Nurture the Sacred Heart identity anchored in the charism of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart
- Support and model the values of the *Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Education*
- Support the relational and collaborative nature of governance
- Allocate school resources to support the overall mission of Sacred Heart education, including the resources to support each Goal and its Criteria
- Value Sacred Heart Board formation and development
- Demonstrate thoughtful engagement
- Think strategically, attentive to mission
- Desire to ensure the integrity of Sacred Heart education for future generations



WHAT WE LOOK FOR

We seek trustees who bring diverse perspectives, professional expertise, and a deep commitment to the Sacred Heart mission.

Mission Alignment

- Leadership
- Commitment to Catholic education in the Sacred Heart tradition
- Willingness to learn and embody the Goals and Criteria
- Respect for the charism of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat

Professional Expertise

- Experience in finance, law, education, real estate, or nonprofit governance and other roles as needed from the Strategic Plan
- Strategic thinking and sound judgment
- Ability to work collaboratively in a board setting

Philanthropic Leadership

- Generous personal giving, making the school a top priority
- Active participation in fundraising and advancement
- Ambassador for the school in the broader community

PART VII:
The Spiritual Dimension of Trusteeship

Trusteeship Is a Sacred Responsibility

Trustees of Sacred Heart schools are not merely board members.

They are entrusted with a sacred responsibility to:

- Nurture their spiritual life through the exploration of your relationship to God, to others and to creation
- Honor and promote the educational mission entrusted to the Society of the Sacred Heart
- Foster and model the values of the Goals and Criteria
- Nurture the Sacred Heart identity of the school
- Ensure institutional vitality
- Steward relationships reflecting the attitudes of the Heart of Christ
- Help future generations encounter the love of God through education

It requires:

- Fidelity to mission
- Respect for confidentiality
- Thoughtful stewardship
- Wise governance
- Deep collaboration
- Courageous discernment
- Hope for the future

❧

"In the midst of the world's current uncertainty and instability, Sophie's vision inspires us to demonstrate a contemplative sensitivity and regard for the human dignity of each person through the service of education. We believe that education is inherent to the process of humanization and, therefore, is at the heart of our mission to discover and reveal the Love of the Heart of Jesus."

— Philosophy of Sacred Heart Education Sophie's Gift Our Call to the Future

A Final Self-Reflection for Trustees

Sacred Heart education has always emerged in moments of profound social change.

Today's trustees inherit both the responsibility and the privilege of helping Sacred Heart schools respond faithfully to the needs of the present moment. Trustees "Hold In Trust" the mission and future of Sacred Heart Education.

As a Sacred Heart Trustee, do I help ensure that this mission:

- Remains rooted in the Heart of Christ?
- Continues to form young people in wisdom, compassion, courage, and hope?
- Preserves a commitment to justice and human dignity?
- Sustains vibrant Catholic and Sacred Heart identity?
- Flourishes for generations yet to come?

The work of governance in Sacred Heart schools is more than institutional leadership; it is participation in a sacred mission. It is a shared responsibility for creating the conditions in which Sacred Heart education can flourish—faithful to its heritage, responsive to the needs of the present, and generative for the future.

Grounded in Vision | Focused on Mission | Hopeful for the Future



Thank you to the following schools for providing photographs.

Academy of the Sacred Heart, St. Charles, MO

Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, Omaha, NE

Josephinum Academy, Chicago, IL

Sacred Heart Schools, Chicago, IL

Schools of the Sacred Heart, Atherton, CA

© 2026 Society of the Sacred Heart. All rights reserved.
Reproduction without permission is prohibited. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written consent.

Design: Beth Ponticello | CEDC.org



Sacred Heart Education