

Archdiocese of Hartford
Office of Catholic Schools

Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards

2010 Edition



Catholic Schools
Education for a Lifetime

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Office of the
Superintendent
of Catholic Schools

August 2010

Dear Friends in Catholic School Education:

I am grateful to the most recent consultants in this endeavor of creating a comprehensive *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* (2010 Edition): Dr. David H. Larson, Chair of the Policy Committee of the Archdiocesan School Board, Dr. Michael Tosatti, Member of the Policy Committee, Maria Maynard, Assistant Superintendent, Anne Clubb, Director of School Advancement, Kenneth M. Przysiceki, CPA, Director of School Finances, and Karen Tyler, Administrative Assistant. I also thank members from the Principals' Advisory Council for Elementary and Archdiocesan High School Chief Administrators for reading the manual and offering suggestions.

The Archdiocesan School Board reviewed and endorsed the *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* at their May 17, 2010 meeting. During the 2010-2011 school year, the *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* will be introduced and implemented in Parish Schools and Archdiocesan High Schools. On-going training will be offered by the Office of Catholic Schools in order for school boards to have a common frame of reference, common vocabulary, and best practices to ensure their success.

The basic principles and insights outlined in this manual offer a clear direction concerning school boards within the Archdiocese of Hartford for Parish Schools and Archdiocesan High Schools. The hope is that this manual will be useful to Board Members, Pastors, Principals, and Chief Administrators as a means of exercising their rights and responsibilities in the service of others for the advancement of Catholic school education. Those who serve on school boards provide an environment for the teaching of doctrine, the building of community, the service of others, and the education and formation for future generations of holy men and women.

My sincere thank you to all those who have contributed to this *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* (2010 Edition), and for the extensive research and editing provided by Maria Maynard.

Peace in Christ Jesus,

Dale R. Hoyt
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Hartford

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Introduction

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford, under the direction, guidance, and service of the Office of Catholic Schools, are dedicated to providing faith formation, academic excellence, and appropriate developmental personal growth opportunities for all Catholic school students. Within the Church there is understanding and appreciation for the role of the laity. The laity's effectiveness is clearly demonstrated in the activity of the local school Board to assist in advancing the school's mission. The consultative, committee-driven Board efficiently assists the Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator in the operations of the school. Viability and vitality are safeguarded and promoted through the tremendous effort of the Catholic School Board.

The call to 'universal holiness' is echoed in every group of volunteers who so generously give of their time, talent, and treasure to work as a Catholic School Board.

Guiding these volunteers is the **Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards**, which is a resource for consultative Boards. It should be used for initial in-service of members, for guidance and reference, for review, and for evaluation of the Board's effectiveness. As the consultative Boards in each school assume the general responsibilities of school Board membership as well as those which arise from the individual committees, the **Manual** will reflect an adherence to the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*.

In community, the Catholic School Board has the unique opportunity to protect and advance the teaching mission of the church. The dialogue which is created among Board members stimulates unity of purpose and success. The increased responsibility of School Boards to be consultative underscores the commitment from the *Common Threads* document to "actively integrate the school community, including parents, into the ongoing life of the parish."

The School Board agrees to follow the policies and administrative procedures of the Archdiocese of Hartford and the Office of Catholic Schools. School Board members agree that they will use their expertise and insights for the common good of the school community and to promote the mission and goals of Catholic education. They will defer any personal agendas in order to discern with other school Board members the issues, concerns, and challenges their schools face in meeting the educational needs of the students.

School Board Mission Statement

In conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools, the mission of the Archdiocese of Hartford Catholic School Board is to further advance quality Catholic education for students by providing leadership, direction, and support to Pastors, Principals, Chief Administrators, and members of the school community.

The school Board is involved with the adoption of the school's mission statement and periodic review of its operational validity and Catholic identity.

Philosophy: what we are called to be

Mission Statement: what we are called to do

What we are called to do and who the school serves often change over the years. Review is necessary to determine who the school is currently serving and how; and if the mission statement accurately reflects the school of today.

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

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of the School Board are responsible to keep matters discussed in executive sessions in confidence. Official information/business discussed in such sessions cannot be shared with non-Board members, even with one's spouse.

OBJECTIVITY

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

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

Decisions made by the School Board and approved on the parish school level by the Pastor and on the secondary level by the Chief Administrator and the Superintendent, should be the result of honest and open discussion by all members: pastor, principal/high school chief administrator, parent, parishioner, and general membership. Consideration of the good of the total parish/school community should be integral to the decision-making process. Every member shall uphold decisions. When decisions will affect various constituencies, those constituencies should be informed at the same time through an agreed upon vehicle of communication.

MAINTENANCE OF UNITY

In achieving its objectives within the faith community of the parish/school, the Board is to do all it can to avoid creating factions, sides or other divisive groupings in the parish or school community. Members should function within the framework of the total leadership of the parish/school and strive to cooperate with other leadership groups in the local faith community.

Constitution and Bylaws

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

The **Constitution** is the founding document of an organization that establishes and defines mission, structure and process. The **Bylaws** are rules adopted by an organization to govern its operation. Use the following materials as a point of reference when developing or revising the constitutions and bylaws. See Appendix for *Model Constitution for Parish School Boards* or *Model Constitution for High School Boards* and *Model Bylaws for Parish School Boards* or *Model Bylaws for High School Boards*.

Constitution

Topics included in the Constitution are as follows:

- The official title of the Board
- The purpose and function of the Board
- The responsibilities of the Board
- Membership
- Officers of Board
- Meetings
- Quorum
- Role of Pastor/Chief Administrator
- Role of Committees
- Amendments

Bylaws

Bylaws will usually include the following topics:

Formulating and Adopting Policy for the School

- Process for adopting policy
- Enactment of policy by Pastor/Chief Administrator
- Process for review of School policies
- Procedures for publication of new policies

Selection of the Principal

Policy and Procedure #1.203 established by the Office of Catholic Schools.

Performance Appraisal for President and Principal

Policy and Procedure #1.207 established by the Office of Catholic Schools.

Developing the School Budget

Policy and Procedure #2.101 established by the Office of Catholic Schools.

School Improvement Process

Participate in and monitor the School Improvement Process.

Membership on the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of members Composition of membership Procedures for nomination of members Membership eligibility Resignation of a member Removal of a member Filling vacancies Attendance at meetings
Officers of the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures for selection/election of officers Responsibilities of officers Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presides at all meetings Develops agenda with the Principal/Chief Administrator Appoints committee Chairs and members Assigns additional duties to members Vice-Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs duties in absence of Chair Serves on committees Secretary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains written record of minutes Takes care of correspondence Distributes agenda one week before the meeting Prepares other reports as requested <p style="padding-left: 40px;">An individual without voting power could be appointed to serve as “secretary of the Board.” The “appointed secretary of the Board” does not participate in the meetings. This would allow all Board members to fully participate in the meeting’s agenda.</p>
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place Duration and schedule Procedures for calling special meetings Procedures for visitors Procedures for Open Forum Robert’s “Rules of Order” Order of business Executive session
Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities Standing or ad hoc Accountability
Amendments to the Bylaws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process to be followed
Review the Bylaws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content should be checked at least once every five years to ensure that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models the faith community. Is consistent with the Archdiocese of Hartford Policies and Procedures of the Office of Catholic Schools. Is clear and readable.

Articulates the roles and responsibilities of the members.
 Describes the School Board as consultative to the Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator.
 Indicates how the Board operates.
 Before final approval of the Board's constitution and bylaws, a copy should be given to the appropriate Assistant Superintendent at the Office of Catholic Schools for review. A final copy and any revisions of the Board's constitution and bylaws should be sent to the Office of Catholic Schools.

Executive Session

Procedures should be established for the Board to meet in executive session when necessary. The Board meets in executive session in order to deal with sensitive issues that may not necessarily be shared with the public. The agenda may reflect that the Board will meet in executive session. Decisions made in an "executive session" are recorded. The decision, topic, issue or concern discussed in executive session is not published.

The minutes of the executive session are confidential. These minutes are not made public. Some of the topics which may be covered in "executive session" include but are not limited to: the final selection of a Principal hired to fill a vacancy; the resignation or removal of a Board member; the review of the performance of the Principal and renewal or non-renewal of the Principal's contract. Other topics that are part of the Board's responsibilities can also be included in the executive sessions of the Board as part of the decision-making process. The Pastor/Chief Administrator is always present for an executive session of the Board. The Principal will be present except when his/her performance is being evaluated.

School Board Membership

Size and Composition

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

PASTOR

Ex-officio, all parish School Board votes are subject to Pastor's approval

SUPERINTENDENT / ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Ex-officio non-voting members of Archdiocesan High School Boards

PRINCIPAL / CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

Ex-officio non-voting Executive Officer of the Board

PARENTS

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

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER

One parish council member from the school's parish should sit on the parish School Board. This will help develop a relationship and improve communication with the parish.

OTHER

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

Term of Membership And Eligibility

Each member shall serve a term of 3 years, renewable for a second term. After the second term, there must be a one year interval before the individual is again eligible for Board membership. Staggered term lengths are recommended.

- Eighteen years of age or older
- Genuine interest in Catholic School education
- A credible witness of the Catholic faith; a member of a parish; or if non-Catholic, not opposed to the tenets of the Catholic faith.
- Ability to work with others to achieve consensus
- Ability to make time commitment for meetings, committee work, and in-services
- Willing to maintain confidentiality and high level of integrity
- Willing to support School philosophy and mission.
- Have a professional and personal life that is reflective of the teachings of the Catholic Church

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

Responsibilities of the School Board

The School Board is by its nature consultative to the Pastor and Principal in parish schools; and to the Archbishop, Superintendent, and Chief Administrator in the Archdiocesan High Schools. In parish schools the consultative Board shall relate to the parish finance council as directed by the Pastor. In Archdiocesan high schools the Board relates to the Corporation Officers through the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent and Chief Administrator. The School Board is a leadership group within the ministry of Catholic education. As such, the responsibilities include:

1. **Mission Statement:** adoption of the school's mission statement, and periodic review of its operational validity.
2. **Policy:** the formulation and adoption of policy for the school, as needed, within the framework of Archdiocesan policy. Monitor the implementation of school policy and procedure.
3. **Planning:** the development and regular updating of a 3-5 year plan for the school; annual goal-setting for the School and for the Board. The long-range plan should follow the guidelines of the Office of Catholic Schools.
4. **Advancement:** the formulation and implementation of an Advancement program for the school, following Archdiocesan guidelines, and in cooperation with the Office of Catholic Schools.
5. **Budget:** adopting the school's operational budget, according to the format specified by the Office of Catholic Schools; receiving periodic reports from the Principal/Chief Administrator on the implementation of the budget.
6. **Evaluation:** systematically evaluating:
 - The school's mission statement, goals and policies
 - The Board itself
 - The Principal/Chief Administrator within the process of the Archdiocese
7. **Recommendation for the Appointment of the Principal/Chief Administrator:** when a vacancy occurs, some Board members will be asked to participate in the search process.

PASTOR

- Canonical administrator of parish; spiritual and administrative leader
- Hires, supervises, and with the Office of Catholic Schools, evaluates the Principal of parish school
- Brings his overall knowledge of the parish to the Board
- Approves budget prepared by the Principal and recommended by the School Board
- Cooperates in the initiation and implementation of the school's advancement plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plan
- School Board is consultative to the Pastor, so all votes are subject to his approval – the Pastor has ultimate responsibility.
 - While he may make a decision contrary to majority vote, this is usually infrequent since the presumption is that the Board is worthy of the trust he's placed in them.
 - If he does not approve a Board decision, he should provide a written statement of his reasons to the Board. In this and all cases, the Board must recognize his ultimate authority.

"I would encourage members to make a resolution to be energetic and enthusiastic in carrying out Board responsibilities and helping the organization move into the future."

*Regina M. Haney, Ed.D,
Executive Director,
NCEA Department of
Boards and Councils*

SUPERINTENDENT / ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

- Chief spokesperson for school's mission
- Ex-officio non-voting members of Archdiocesan High School Boards
- Superintendent is responsible for the general administration and supervision of Catholic parish and secondary schools; for the direction of the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Superintendent and staff of the Office of Catholic Schools establish regulations, programs and procedures to implement the policies promulgated by the Archbishop in the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*.
- The Superintendent of Catholic Schools interprets Archdiocesan policies; provides in-service programs; consults; receives recommendations for additions/changes to Archdiocesan Catholic School procedures.

PRINCIPAL / CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

- Educational leader and administrator of School – responsible for operation of the School program
- Parish School Principal responsible for employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff; the establishment of educational programming; evaluation and management of student behavior; and implementation of School policy, all in accordance with Archdiocesan policy
- Archdiocesan High School Chief Administrator responsible to carry out Archdiocesan policies and procedures, and any policies the High School Board has developed.
- Develops regulations, programs, and procedures to implement policies
- Main source of recommendations regarding need for School policies
- Develops agendas for Board meeting with Chair; is the main resource person for Board in-services

- Develops the budget (in conjunction with Pastor and Finance Committee for parish schools); implements budget; periodically reports to Board and the Office of Catholic Schools on budget
- Participates in the school's advancement plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plan

CHAIRPERSON / OFFICERS

Officers are elected annually by the Board membership and need to have served on the Board for at least one year.

- **Chairperson** presides at all meetings; determines the agenda with the Principal (in collaboration with the Pastor as needed)/Chief Administrator; assigns additional duties to individual members; appoints members to committees; oversees committee activities; plans orientation for new members with Nominating Committee and Principal/Chief Administrator; coordinates and reviews Board Self Assessment and guides Board to consensus on future plans.
- **Vice Chairperson** in the absence of the Chair performs all duties of the Chair.
- **Secretary** maintains written record of all acts of the School Board; handles all correspondence for the Board; preserves reports and documents; notifies members of date and time of meetings; distributes meeting agendas and committee reports at least seven (7) days in advance; distributes minutes following each meeting, e-mails materials when possible; collects School Board Self Assessment forms and files report of data to Chair.

MEMBERS AT LARGE

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

Committees

Committee Structure

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

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

is complete, the committee disbands.

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

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

Standing Committees

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

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The School Board contributes to the development and regular updating of a 3-5 year long-range strategic plan for the school; annual goal setting and action steps for the School and for the Board. The long-range plan should follow the guidelines of the Office of Catholic Schools.

ADVANCEMENT

The School Board participates in the formulation and implementation of an advancement program for the School which includes; public relations and marketing, fund development (annual fund, capital projects, capital campaigns, planned giving, and endowments), alumni and constituency relations, and enrollment management, and is in cooperation with the Office of Catholic Schools guidelines.

FINANCE

The School Board assists in adopting and monitoring the school's operational budget, according to the format specified by the Office of Catholic Schools; receiving periodic reports from the Principal/Chief Administrator on the implementation of the budget.

NOMINATING

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

Committee Responsibilities

The Committee is responsible for:

Strategic Planning

“ A central feature is its active leadership role in developing and implementing a long-term strategic plan”

Catholic School Board of the Archdiocese of Hartford

1. Developing and regular (annual) updating of a long-range strategic plan to assess where the School is currently and where it hopes to be in 3-5 years.
2. Including an environmental scan and a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) into the plan.
3. Making the plan strategic – explaining how the School will achieve its goals and not just projecting current trends over 3-5 years.
4. Integrating Archdiocesan Planning Statements (i.e., Common Threads “We Will” statements) into the school’s strategic plan.
5. Including consultation from constituents; parents, teachers, parish, principal, pastor.
6. Preparing seven areas of the plan: Catholic Identity, Enrollment, Staffing, Quality Catholic Education, Physical Plant, Financial Plan, and Advancement (in that order). For each area: stating dream/vision; setting goals; prioritizing goals; establishing objectives and action steps (including cost, staffing, and timing).
7. Creating a case statement including data gathered and a narrative.
8. Using the plan as the school’s yearly road map which drives all advancement activities.
9. Planning annually for the third/fifth year out so School always has a 3-5 year plan.

**Strategic plan is necessary to maintain school’s NEASC accreditation and to receive funding from the Archdiocese (i.e., HOPES, Teacher- Administrator Grants, etc).

Advancement

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

Finance

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

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

Nominating

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

"Ongoing Board training builds faith community among the members while instilling in them a strong sense of ownership and responsibility."

*Stephanie Welling, NCEA
Chair of the Department of
Boards and Councils*

Annual Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps

A **goal** is a statement of broad direction or purpose. A goal, by definition, will identify some outcome that will be achieved. An **objective** is the specific time-oriented and realistic statement of what is going to be done to achieve a goal. The **action steps** further specify the **how, when, who, where, and cost** for each objective.

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

Policy Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposing a New Policy

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

The need for a potential new policy or change to existing policy should be submitted to the administration and to the Board using the *Proposed New Policy or Change in Policy Form* (see Appendix) that includes: a statement indicating the need for the policy and the perceived consequences of implementing the change.

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

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

- The statement is written to describe what will be accomplished.

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

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

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

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

“Everyone recognizes that if we were satisfied with our accomplishments we would cease to grow, so there is a continuous process of development and improvement.”

Dr. Kevin Baxter, Former Principal of American Martyrs School, NCEA Outstanding Board 2009

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

Set Times for each of the following:

Gathering Usually occurs 10-15 minutes before the meeting. The purpose is to socialize. Rotate task of bringing refreshments.

Call to order Welcome and Opening Prayer
Recognition of visitors
Roll call

Consent Agenda A group of items that may include previous meeting minutes for approval, general reports, committee reports, routine correspondence, and/or informational materials that:

- Do not require discussion
- Are self-explanatory
- Are noncontroversial

- Were submitted in writing and distributed to the Board prior to the meeting

Consent agenda items can be removed from the group and placed on the meeting agenda. The consent agenda is voted on as a whole and acceptance is stated in the meeting minutes. The purpose of a consent agenda is to free up time for discussion of critical issues and ongoing planning.

The Chair handles this part of the agenda.

Presentations

Presentations to the School Board could be offered early in the meeting

General Reports

Pastor: updates and shares general information that has not been included in the consent agenda.

Principal: gives information not already included in the consent agenda about the school's program; gives a progress report about the school's goals and objectives; informs about the coming School activities; clarifies questions raised in report; provides data regarding enrollment trends.

Board Chair: gives information regarding Board events and activities.

Committee Reports

Indicate who will present the report on behalf of the committee and the purpose of the report, e.g., seek input from the Board or make a final recommendation. Not all committees give reports at each meeting. Written updates can be given to the Board as part of the consent agenda.

Standing Committees

List each committee that will apprise the Board about its progress, only if they need input from the Board or have some final recommendations for the Board to consider. Otherwise, a written report may be included in the consent agenda.

Ad hoc committees

List each committee that will apprise the Board about its progress, only if input is needed from the Board or there is some final recommendation for the Board to consider. Otherwise, a written report may be included in the consent agenda.

Old Business

Consider items addressed at a previous meeting

New Business

Indicate the topic or issue to be addressed

Visitors Comments

Non-members who wish to speak at a Board meeting shall submit their request in writing to the Chairperson 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. Their requests will be honored if their business is appropriate for the Board's responsibilities and agenda. Such persons shall be given a specific time limit for speaking. Guests should be informed that someone would respond to them later. Do not make promises about resolving the issues raised.

Planning for Next Meeting's Agenda

Closing Comments

Closing Prayer

Executive Session

Executive Sessions are held as needed either before the regularly scheduled meeting or after the meeting. Executive sessions need not be part of every Board meeting.

Suggested Procedures for Visitors

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

“Board members are attentive and respectful, listening and responding in ways that model Catholic values.”

*Karen Barreras, Principal,
The Little Flower School,
Outstanding Board Award
2009*

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

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

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

Open Forum

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

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

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

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

Services of the Office of Catholic Schools

The Office of Catholic Schools will provide services of orientation and training, guidance, and direction so that the purpose of and function for the consultative, committee-driven School Board will be sustainable and viable.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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RESOURCES

Office of Catholic Schools Website:
www.catholicsschoolshartford.org
 NCEA Website and Literature,
 Department of Boards and Councils
www.ncea.org

LIAISON

Assistant Superintendent
School Board Consultation
Ex-Officio, Archdiocesan High School Boards

ADVANCEMENT

Director of School Advancement
Advancement Consultation and Training
Marketing/Marketing Analysis
Enrollment Management

FINANCES

Director of School Finances
Financial Consultation
Catholic School Support Program: Analysis and Administration
School Budget Review, Analysis, and Projection
Fiscal Training

Annual Planning and Self Assessment of the School Board

For a Catholic School Board to be effective, it must provide time for goal setting and periodic evaluation. It is important that at least one day be set aside each year for an annual planning meeting for Board members to meet with the school's administrators in order to set the Board's goals for the year, as well as to review the administration's goals. The Board will plan annually for the election of officers for appointment. It is also important that the Board evaluates its performance. Refer to the Appendix for the *School Board Self Assessment* tool to be used for this purpose. The *School Board Self Assessment* should be completed by each Board member and submitted at least seven (7) days prior to the annual meeting to the Secretary of the Board. The Secretary will file a report of the data to the Board Chair for discussion at the annual planning meeting and for consensus on planned changes.

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Mr. Kenneth M. Przysiecki, CPA, Director of School Finances
Ms. Karen Tyler, Administrative Assistant, Office of Catholic Schools

Appendix

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