



**Diocese of Little Rock
Office of Catholic Schools**

Policies and Procedures Manual

7.00 SCHOOL BOARD

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RIGHT TO AMEND

The Diocese of Little Rock Office of Catholic Schools reserves the right to amend at any time this policy manual, which is not a contract. School principals will be given prompt notification of any amendments.

7.01 CONSULTATIVE SCHOOL BOARD

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Little Rock shall have a consultative school board in accordance with the policies and regulations adopted by the Diocesan Board of Education and approved by the Bishop.

7.02 ORGANIZATION

Unlike a public school board, the Catholic school board is not autonomous. Recommendations of the board become effective only upon the approval of the pastor. To be a school board member is more than just a commitment and is distinctly different from a political appointment. It is to contribute one's talents, wisdom, experience, faith life, and good will to the mission of the school. Individual board members exercise no official consultative role outside the board meeting.

7.03 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

1. The pastor shall be a voting member of the board. The pastor must approve any policy or action recommended by the board.
2. The principal shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board and acts as executive secretary, i.e. to ensure the agenda is made for the meeting and minutes are kept.
3. The majority of the board members should be practicing Catholics, which may include parishioners without children in the school.
4. Parents of other faith traditions may serve on the board.
5. All boards should have at least one member who has expertise in finance and budgeting. Individuals who have background knowledge in the areas of marketing, development, and building/ grounds are recommended for the board.
6. The local school board's bylaws provide the procedure for the annual selection of board members.
7. The board will consist of no fewer than five voting members. The board should reflect the cultural diversity of the school.
8. Membership on the board, with the exception of the ex-officio member, will be a term of three (3) years with the provision made for replacement on a staggered basis. Members may serve only two (2) consecutive terms. Membership may be extended at the discretion of the pastor.
9. Interim vacancies will be filled by the pastor, in consultation with the principal.
10. Any board member missing three (3) meetings during a school year without a valid reason may be removed.
11. A board member who wishes to resign must inform the pastor and principal via a letter of resignation.
12. A pastor may remove a person from the school board for cause and for the good of a school and parish community.

7.04 REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTATIVE BOARD MEMBERS

The Office of Catholic Schools provides a training for all new board members. Principals are responsible for informing new board members about the training.

Diocesan board policy can be accessed on the Diocesan website at www.dolr.org/schools.

7.05 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITY/ROLE

- The board assists the principal and pastor in recommending policies that are compatible with Diocesan policies.
- The board assists in formulating the school budget.
- The board advises the pastor (and, where appropriate to the outgoing principal) regarding the hiring of a new principal. The final decision belongs to the pastor, in consultation with the superintendent of schools.
- The board represents the parish and school communities when considering the overall well-being of the school in regard to policy formation, budgetary matters, tuition rates, and fund-raising needs.
- School board members are mindful that the daily administration of the school is the responsibility of the principal. School board members are not to attempt to solve school problems but are to refer the aggrieved person to the principal and notify the principal.
- Board members will keep information shared at meetings confidential.
- Neither the board collectively nor individual board members exercise governance over current school employees nor have authority for decisions regarding their employment.

7.06 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Paid employees of the school and parish, or their spouses and close relatives are not eligible for membership on the school board.
- Only one member of a household can serve at a time.
- Public school administrators are not eligible to serve on the board.
- Heads of firms doing business with the parish or school will be required to disclose the financial nature of the relationship, and conflicts of interest.

7.07 OFFICERS

The board elects a president, vice-president and secretary at the last regular meeting of the school year. The pastor and principal cannot serve as an officer. The term of office runs from the close of the meeting in which they were elected, to the close of the last regular meeting when new officers are elected. The terms of office are for one (1) year. Officers may only be elected after they have served one year on the board as a regular member.

7.08 DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The president:

- Presides over the meeting.
- Develops the agenda in consultation with the principal.
- Appoints committee chairs in consultation with the principal.
- Assigns additional duties to members.
- Assists new board members in learning their duties and responsibilities as a board member.

The vice president acts on behalf of the president in his/her absence.

The secretary records the minutes, handles correspondence, and provides a written copy of the minutes for approval. The secretary makes any corrections to the minutes if needed.

7.09 PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO BOARD

The principal:

- Functions as executive secretary.
- Develops the agenda, with assistance from the president and the pastor.
- Provides current financials at each meeting.
- Provides agendas and any other specific information relating to school board functions for each meeting.
- Educates the board in all school policies and procedures.
- Keeps the board and pastor adequately informed of the operation of the school.

7.10 COMMITTEES

Committees should be formed, and goals and objectives written based on the needs of the mission of the school. Recommended committees, but not all inclusive, are:

- Finance
- Public Relations/Marketing
- Facilities/Grounds/Maintenance
- Development and Strategic Planning
- Special /Ad Hoc committees

7.11 AGENDA

- The principal and president will consult to create the agenda.
- Agenda items must be presented in advance of the board meeting.
- An agenda must be provided at every meeting.

7.12 MEETINGS

- The board will hold a minimum of six (6) meetings during the school year. The meetings should typically last ninety (90) minutes or less.
- Minutes will be recorded at all meetings.
- Board meetings are regular (open) or executive (closed).
- Regular meetings will be announced in advance.
- Executive meetings are held when the board discusses finances or other sensitive issues.
- Matters discussed at executive meetings are confidential and not to be discussed outside of the board meetings.
- Minutes of open board meetings must be approved by the board.

7.13 FORMAT FOR CONDUCTING MEETINGS

- I. Call to order
- II. Opening prayer
- III. Recommended actions
 - A. Routine matters
 1. Comments of non-board members, if present
 2. Roll of members
 3. Reading, correction, and approval of minutes
 - B. Old business
 - C. New business
- IV. Information and proposals
 - A. Principal's report
 - B. Committee reports (if any)
 - C. Pastor's report
 - D. Questions asked of and by board members
- V. Future business
 - A. Future meeting date(s)
 - B. Preview of agenda topics
 - C. General discussion to guide future recommendations
- VI. Executive session
 - A. Financials – current financials will be presented at every meeting
 - B. Other business
- VII. Closing prayer
- VIII. Adjournment sections

7.14 PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS AT BOARD MEETINGS

Even though some board meetings are open, they are still to be highly regulated and timely affairs. Whenever non-members are present, the following statement should be read after the opening prayer, which sets the stage for the meeting.

“The board functions as a consultative group to the pastor. Our purpose is to share responsibility for Catholic education with the pastor and the principal as the policy making body for the school. The agenda for this meeting has been set for the past week. You will be afforded the opportunity to make comments immediately after this statement is read. Board members are not permitted to respond to any comments you make at this meeting. Any subjects brought up by non-members will be placed on the next meeting’s agenda if the board deems it necessary. The board appreciates your attendance, and we commend you for your interest in the school.”

7.15 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PASTOR

The pastor is the head of the parish and a voting member of the board. The pastor’s approval is required before any board action becomes effective. The pastor, as spiritual leader of the parish, will share his vision of religious education with the principal and the faculty of the school. The pastor will be especially concerned with the policies that relate to the religious education program in the school and will provide direction to the board. The pastor supports and cooperates with the principal in the general administration of the school.

7.16 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PRINCIPAL

The board relates to the school only through the principal. The principal is entrusted with keeping the school faithful to its Catholic mission and identity. The principal cooperates with the pastor in the administration of the school according to Diocesan guidelines. The principal, as the educational leader of the school, determines and selects the staff. The principal is the director of the curriculum and makes the class assignments according to the qualifications of the teacher and the needs of the school. The principal administers and is accountable for the receipts and disbursements of all internal funds such as books, fees, supplies, etc. Administrative decisions are the responsibility of the principal.

7.17 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO TEACHERS

The board relates to the teachers only through the principal. The board does not hire or evaluate teachers.

7.18 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PASTORAL COUNCIL

The board relates to the finance council only in matters pertaining to the subsidy requested from the parish. The parish finance council does not determine the school budget but approves the amount the parish will allocate to the school.

7.19 RELATIONSHIP OF BOARD TO PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The board relates to the parent-teacher organization in matters concerning fund-raising activities and expenditures of funds. All fund-raising plans by the Parent-Teacher Organization are to be submitted to the board for review. The pastor and the principal have final approval.

7.20 COMPLAINTS

Any person feeling aggrieved concerning any matter connected with the school will contact the individual involved before discussing it with other patrons. School board members will not attempt to solve a problem but will refer the aggrieved person to the appropriate person and contact the principal.

- If a person has a complaint about a teacher, the individual will go first to the teacher to seek a solution to the problem.
- If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the person will contact the principal for an appointment.
- If the problem is still not resolved, the person will contact the pastor to discuss the matter.
- If no solution is found to the problem, the matter will be referred to the superintendent.