

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



***Leadership to Build  
Renewal and Hope***

**CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
ADVISORY BOARDS**

*A Leadership Manual  
for Effective Catholic  
Elementary School Boards  
2019*



August 2019

Dear Catholic School Leaders, Board Members and Supporters,

One of the fundamental hallmarks of a Catholic school education is a vibrant community. Our schools welcome families from all backgrounds, and surround each student with an environment of excellence, hospitality and compassion. As an outgrowth of this support, we promote boards in our Catholic schools. These boards are comprised of generous individuals who care passionately about their Catholic schools. By dedicating their time and expertise to their local school, they provide invaluable community-based support.

As we look with confidence to the future of Catholic education in the Archdiocese, we would like to continue to support strong boards in our Catholic schools. This document is directed at those who lead, coordinate and participate in our Catholic school boards. It is my hope that this manual will be of resource to you. If you have specific questions or needs, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Catholic Schools. We are here to be of service and support to you!

Thank you for your support of your local Catholic school board. May God continue to bless our precious school communities!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim Rigg".

Jim Rigg, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Archdiocese of Chicago



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When you see this icon **RESOURCE** following the mention of a document in this handbook, click on this link: [Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Catholic Schools Resource Portal](#) and you will find that document or a sample/template of the document that can be customized for your school.

For more information or questions about advisory school boards, please contact:  
John A Glimco [john.glimco@archchicago.org](mailto:john.glimco@archchicago.org) or at 312-534-5204.



## SHARED LEADERSHIP IN THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The education of youth is a ministry of the Catholic Church. In the Declaration on Christian Education, promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, the distinguishing characteristic of a Catholic school is described in this way, “The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love” (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988).

Thus, the Catholic school should be able to offer young people the means to acquire the knowledge they need to find a place in society which is strongly characterized by technical and scientific skill. But at the same time, it should be able, above all, to impact a solid Christian formation (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1997).

*The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* **RESOURCE** developed by the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness at Loyola University Chicago in partnership with Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College, also state, “Central to the mission of the Church is the work of Catholic school education. The success of this mission depends on the key components of effective governance, which provides direction or authority, and leadership, which ensures effective operations. Catholic school governance and leadership is a ministry that promotes and protects the responsibilities and rights of the school community. Governance and leadership based on the principles and practices of excellence are essential to insuring the Catholic identity, academic excellence, and operational vitality of the school. Although governance models vary based on the sponsorship of the school, those who serve on the governing body or leadership team in Catholic schools provide for an environment for the teaching of doctrine and Sacred Scripture, the building and experiencing of community, the serving of others, and the opportunity for worship” (p. 7, 2012).

An important element in developing this community climate is the collaborative leadership of parents and parishioners in partnership with the pastor and principal in the operation of the local school advisory board. Each has a specific role and commensurate responsibilities. The purpose of this manual is to outline those roles and responsibilities, so the advisory board can truly participate in the educational mission of the Catholic school.

The school is strengthened through the working partnership between the leadership of the school, the parish and its stakeholders. By its nature, the board is advisory and therefore is commissioned to offer suggestions and advice regarding the vitality and continued success of the school.



## **SCHOOL BOARDS AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY**

In the fall of 2017, the Archdiocese released its strategic plan entitled *Renewal and Hope*. This plan affirmed the importance of school boards in strengthening the quality and vitality of Catholic schools, clearly positioning school boards as a best practice in Catholic education.

The Archdiocesan initiative *Renew My Church* further reiterates the need for high quality Catholic school boards. As parishes and schools are strengthened through the array of strategies in *Renew My Church*, boards facilitate a meaningful buy-in from stakeholders in the destiny of their local school.

## **ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY REGARDING SCHOOLS BOARDS**

The *Educational Policy Manual for School Administrators (2017)* states that each school shall have a local board. These boards may be either advisory (Policy 102.05) or Specified Jurisdiction (Policy 102.06). All Boards should have a written and approved set of bylaws that are reflective of applicable canonical and civil laws. The bylaws should clearly set forth the mission of the board, how members are recruited and approved, and how recommendations are formulated. The *Catholic School Advisory Board Manual* shall provide the foundation for bylaw formulation and revision.

Policy 102.05 of the *Educational Policy Manual for School Administrators (2017)* states (in part): *[The advisory] board serves as an advisory organization to the pastor and principal on the effectiveness, viability, and policies of the school. Particular focus of each board should be placed on school strategic planning, student recruitment, fundraising, and budgeting. Board members shall be drawn from a variety of school and parish stakeholders.*

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARDS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Advisory school boards perform many necessary functions and are a great asset to any school or parish. Advisory boards that work together with a common goal and know their roles and responsibilities can make a huge impact in the life of a school. Effective advisory school boards are instrumental in:

- Enacting the mission of the parish and the school.
- Allowing parents/guardians a way to stay connected and become involved in their child's school.
- Providing an opportunity for parents, alumni and parishioners to offer their professional experience and expertise in the service of others.
- Fostering the long-term viability and sustainability of the school.
- Providing a vehicle for public relations in the parish and larger community.
- Enabling clergy and school administration to concentrate on other duties.
- Encouraging the school's continuous improvement and strategic planning



## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

The organizational structure of the Archdiocese of Chicago describes the relationship between its various entities. The Archbishop delegates the administration of the six vicariates (geographic regions) to the Vicars. In each vicariate are the local parishes. A pastor (unless otherwise appointed) serves as the local juridic of the parish. The pastor delegates the operation of the school to the principal. The local school advisory board, representing school and parish families, serves as advisor to the pastor and principal. Each entity (archbishop, vicar, pastor, principal, and advisory board) has specific responsibilities for carrying out the mission of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

## **ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARDS**

The advisory board has a unique relationship within the parish and school community. It does not operate in a vacuum. The advisory board relates in a formal way, through a specified liaison, to the Parish Council. The board works with the parish Finance Committee as directed by Archdiocesan policy and procedure. The board must also develop a relationship with the Religious Education Board of the parish, the School/Parent Organization and the school faculty and staff (through the principal) and develop partnerships with local businesses and not-for-profit organizations in the community. The board represents all its constituents: parents, guardians and parishioners. The advisory board members act as members of the board only at official board meetings or when otherwise directed.

Each school advisory board shall define its authority and membership through written bylaws adopted by the board and approved by the pastor. Local bylaws shall be in accord with Archdiocesan policies and procedures. A current copy of these documents shall be on file with the Regional Director at the Office of Catholic Schools. Questions related to advisory board documents and/or proceedings shall be referred to the school's Regional Director at the Office of Catholic Schools.

For an advisory board to operate effectively, it is imperative that all members understand and accept the following. The advisory board:

- Is accountable to the principal and to the pastor.
- Works in partnership and collaboration with the principal and pastor.
- Acknowledges that members are part of the parish community, and the school is a vital element of the parish.
- Values a diverse and varied membership for the individual expertise and support these members offer the pastor and principal.
- Understands the mission and charism of the school. Unlike a public institution, the school board is mission driven - not compliance driven.
- Thinks about the big picture and the long-term viability of the school.
- Fosters a culture of inquiry and constructive problem solving.
- Agrees to follow the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools.
- Functions *only* when it is in session thereby relieving members of "being on duty" at social, school events or in the community.
- Understands it is a privilege to serve.



- The advisory board members agree to:
  - Accept the conditions of membership on the advisory board, namely the Code of Ethics, which describes the parameters of their collaboration and responsibility.
  - Sign a Confidentiality Statement and Conflict of Interest form.
  - Use their talents, gifts and insights for the common good of the school and parish community to promote the mission and goals of Catholic education.
  - Defer their personal agendas to discern with the other board members the “big picture” issues, concerns and challenges the school faces.
  - Provide for the educational needs of all the students in the school.
  - Serve as a positive public relations agent of the school.
  - Take seriously their role as advisors to the pastor and principal by adequately preparing for meetings and completing committee work in a timely fashion.
  - Model the Catholic faith in their dealings with each other, the community and the various stakeholders.
  - Promote respect between and among each other by acknowledging the various views of each member and discerning with each other in an open and collaborative manner.
  - Support both publicly and privately the decisions that have been approved by the administration with the board’s input.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS**

The following standards and benchmarks have been taken from the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. *Standard 5 - Leadership and Governance* states,

“An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school’s fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality” (p.8, 2012).

### **NATIONAL BENCHMARKS**

**5.1** The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and bylaws.

**5.2** The governing body systematizes the policies of the school’s operations to ensure fidelity to mission, and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions.

**5.3** The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the [Arch] bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue and respect for the bishop’s legitimate authority.





5.4 The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a constructive and beneficial relationship with the [Arch] diocesan Education Office consistent with [Arch] diocesan policy pertaining to the recognition of Catholic schools by the [Arch] bishop.

5.5 In the case of a parish school, the governing body, in collaboration with the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the canonical administrator (pastor or designee) of the [Arch] bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation and continuing dialogue.

5.6 The governing body engages in formation and ongoing training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.

### **NCEA BENCHMARKS**

The Department of Boards and Councils of Catholic education of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) has presented research-based benchmarks of effective boards and the characteristics of effective boards (Convey & Haney, 1997). According to this work, effective boards possess the following 10 characteristics:

1. A diversified membership, including business people and alumni
2. Ownership of issues under their jurisdiction
3. Involvement with issues pertaining to policy, mission, philosophy and planning
4. Clear goals, periodic assessments and evaluation of board goals
5. Effective committees
6. Contact and communication with their constituents
7. Endorsement of and commitment to the school's mission
8. Productive meetings
9. Training for new members and ongoing in-service for all members
10. Engagement in the areas of finance, budget management, development, funding and marketing

See OCS Portal for more *NCEA School Board Materials* **RESOURCE**.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the local school advisory board (by reason of his position), ordinarily participating in all meetings, sharing his vision, wisdom and expertise. In light of his ministry to the total parish, the pastor has the right to deny those board recommendations that are inconsistent with the integral proclamation of the Word of God, with Archdiocesan school policies, with duly established parish policies or those decisions that are not financially responsible. Other ex-officio members may include: parish leadership including parish council members, parent organization leadership or the business manager of the school or parish. These members are not to be given voting rights.

The principal shall be the executive officer of the advisory board and have full and active voice, but no vote in its deliberations. The advisory board shall be broadly representative of the Catholic community served by the school. This includes parents of children enrolled in the school, parishioners with no children in school, alumni and community members. Broad representation is encouraged since, in most



cases, the entire parish or several parishes support the school. All members of the board ascribe to the *Code of Ethics for Advisory Board Members* **RESOURCE**.

### **CODE OF ETHICS FOR ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

The *Code of Ethics for Advisory Board Members* **RESOURCE** describes the expectations inherent in the purpose of the board. Members, by accepting the position to serve on the advisory board, ascribe to this code. This form should be signed annually by all members. Annual review of the code reminds members that they are working together for the common goal - to promote the mission and purpose of Catholic education.

The code of ethics addresses the following:

- Confidentiality
- Conflict of Interest
- Courtesy
- Dependability
- Justice and Fairness
- Maintenance of Unity
- Objectivity

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Members of the advisory board are responsible to keep matters discussed in executive/closed sessions in confidence. Official information and business discussed in such sessions cannot be shared with non-board members, even with one's spouse. A *Confidentiality Statement* **RESOURCE** should be signed by members annually.

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: The board chair reveals to another school parent proposed new tuition rate before it has been officially approved by the pastor and finance committee.*

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Advisory board members shall avoid situations that present actual, perceived or potential conflict between their interest and the interest of the school. Board members must disclose actual, perceived or potential conflicts and abstain from voting on matters where an actual, perceived or potential conflict exists. A *Conflict of Interest Statement* **RESOURCE** should be signed by members annually

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A board member who owns an IT company suggests a complete overhaul of the school's wiring and purchase of a new server using his company as the provider.*

#### **COURTESY**

Members of the advisory board are asked to act in a professional and respectful manner when addressing fellow board members, the pastor and principal regarding areas of concern or contentious issues.

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A member makes derogatory personal attacks and or uses profane language when addressing fellow members of the board, the principal or pastor.*



## DEPENDABILITY

Members of the advisory board shall be prepared for every meeting, complete all tasks assigned in a timely fashion and attend all board meetings. Any Board member who is absent from three (3) successive regular Board meetings or a total of three (3) Board meetings in a year shall discuss their continuing service on the Board with the Pastor.

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A member who does not attending meetings on a consistent basis. and/or fails to report his/her absence.*

## JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

Decisions made by the advisory board and approved by the pastor should be the result of honest and open discussion by all members: pastor, principal, parents, parishioners and community members. Consideration of the good of the total parish and 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.

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A board member who disagrees with the selection of a new principal, tells her friends in the school community the name and background of that principal before it has been officially announced, thus causing a petition in the community to block the appointment.*

## MAINTENANCE OF UNITY

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

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A board member invites only some of the members to his house to discuss official school business and sends email chains only to some members.*

## OBJECTIVITY

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

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A board member often discounts the comments or suggestions of another member who has a different ethnic or racial background.*

## ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

Members shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. Employees of the parish and school and members of their immediate family, **MAY NOT** sit on the board. The term *immediate family* shall be defined as: spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, in-law or other members of one's household. No board member who is also a member of another parish board shall vote in decisions concerning that board without unanimous consent of the other board members. It is also suggested that a person on a school advisory board not serve in other parish or school leadership positions.



The ideal board will have at least nine (9) but no more than twenty-one (21) members representing a wide variety of professions and disciplines and possessing multiple skills. It is suggested that the total voting membership be an odd number to prevent a possible deadlock. High performing teams have a balance of individuals who can not only complement one another but serve to challenge and inspire each another. To ensure your board is properly represented, a *Diversity Membership Matrix* **RESOURCE** can be completed. *The Diversity Membership Matrix* will illustrate any needs that are present and will help leaders actively recruit individuals who will offer the board a desired skill or expertise. It is also important to make sure the board is demographically diverse as well and representative of the parish at large.

Each member of the advisory board has a unique and important role to play. The following outlines these roles.

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **PASTOR**

The pastor is the primary spiritual leader of the parish and responsible for the overall educational ministry in the parish. The pastor serves as an ex-officio member who ultimately has the final say to accept or reject any recommendations of the advisory board. As such, his responsibilities include:

- Participating in all board meetings and sharing his wisdom and expertise.
- Approving all major decisions, particularly those that relate to religious education in the school.
- Hiring the principal from the Approved Candidate List (provided by the OCS) after consultation with the principal search committee and advisory board, and in accordance with Archdiocesan procedures.
- Initiating the principal contract renewal process outlined by the OCS.
- Co-evaluating the principal with the designated OCS Regional Director.
- Working with the principal to determine teacher/staff renewals and signing teacher contracts.
- Cooperating in the initiation and implementation of the school's development plans, student recruitment efforts and long-range plans.
- Assuring the school has a dedicated business manager who provides direct support and information to the principal and the pastor.

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **PRINCIPAL**

The principal is the educational leader and executive officer of the advisory board. As such, the responsibilities include:

- Guiding the vision and strategic plan for the school.
- Assuring that the school provides strong religious and academic quality to the students it serves.
- Developing and leading the school's development plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plans.
- Participating in the AdvancED accreditation and Continuous School Improvement Plan - CSIP.
- Implementing and developing policies and procedures aligned with the school mission and Archdiocese of Chicago.
- Developing policies and procedures
- Keeping the advisory board informed of Archdiocesan policies and procedures. Informing the board of local policy implementation.



- Contributing to the creation of the monthly agenda for the advisory board in collaboration with the chairperson.
- Making available adequate clerical assistance for board members to utilize if needed.
- Fostering relationships between and among the board members and school community by inviting members to school events (open houses, graduations, school masses, etc.).
- Collaborating with the board committees to ensure annual goals are accomplished.
- Conducting board orientation sessions for new members.
- Providing periodically an Executive Summary for faculty and staff to update them on the board's work.

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

The advisory board is a leadership group within the ministry of a Catholic school. As such, the responsibilities include:

- Modeling faith community in a spirit of cooperation with the pastor and principal.
- Adhering to Archdiocesan policies that enable the school to fulfill its mission.
- Monitoring and advising on the school budget, tuition rates and other sources of financing, and ensuring the school's financial accounting and reporting is transparent and timely.
- Participating in the school's development, student recruitment efforts and long-range planning process.
- Acting as the public relations and marketing arm of the school and its programs in collaboration with the parent ambassadors and other school groups.
- Participating, upon request, in the AdvancED School Accreditation process.
- Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the AdvancED school improvement plan and the school's CSIP as presented by the principal.
- Supporting the efforts of local and state legislative action.
- Assisting the pastor in the search and selection of the principal when a vacancy occurs.
- Evaluating annually the board's effectiveness, productivity and internal operations.
- Participating in ongoing board in-service both at the Archdiocesan and local levels.
- Directing individuals and/or groups to appropriate resources for conflict resolution.

**NOTE:** *Board members shall direct any stakeholders with concerns regarding the parish to the pastor and concerns regarding the school to the principal.*

- Adopting the advisory bylaws provided by the OCS and periodically reviewing/editing the bylaws with final approval of the Office of Catholic Schools.

#### **ADVISORY BOARDS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Administering the day to day operations of the school.
- Evaluating or conducting a performance review of the principal.
- Hiring, evaluating, or terminating faculty and/or staff.
- Providing any advice or counsel on any matters related to the employment of teachers and staff.
- Enacting or implementing Archdiocesan or school policy.
- Creating or implementing school rules, procedures, or policies.
- Formulating school policies or board policies separate from the principal and pastor.
- Determining school curriculum or academic programs.
- Determining the amount of parish funds to be designated in support of the school.



- Addressing or determining any student related matter, including but not limited to admission, placement, exclusion or discipline.
- Acting as a grievance committee or conciliators for any group or individual in the school.



See *Expectations of Advisory Board Members* **RESOURCE** on the OCS Portal for a handout that can be passed on to members to clarify roles and responsibilities.

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **CHAIRPERSON**

The chair of the advisory board holds a very important position. He/She:

- Practices the Catholic faith and models Christian values.
- Works with the principal and pastor in developing the agenda for meetings.
- Shares appropriate leadership responsibilities with the pastor and the principal.
- Accepts duties required by the office to which elected.
- Delegates additional duties and responsibilities to board members consistent with the tasks assigned to the board.
- Facilitates and presides at the board meetings or secures a suitable substitute.
- Attends all required executive and committee meetings.
- Is an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Is punctual and is prepared for meetings.
- Ensures that board members in a timely way receive agendas, minutes, and other materials in advance of board meetings.
- Believes in the purpose of the board and is loyal to that purpose.
- Inspires enthusiasm for the board's purpose.
- Recognizes and cultivates leadership qualities in others.
- Attends an annual school safety meeting with the pastor, principal and first responders.

See [ISBE School Emergency](#) website for information and links to these forms:

- [Private School Annual Review Compliance Report](#)
- [Annual Review Report - ISBE](#) 
- [Minimum Component Checklist for Annual Review- ISBE](#) 

In addition, the chairperson must:

- Be impartial, tactful, firm and competent.
- Have a thorough knowledge of and accept the requirements/limitations of the bylaws.
- Appoint chairs of all committees.
- Operate within the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese and the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Possess leadership skills including an ability to collaborate, work for the common good and see the big picture.
- Understand that they are key to the board's success.

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **VICE CHAIRPERSON**

- Practices the Catholic faith and models Christian values.
- Performs duties in absence of chairperson.
- Serves on various committees.
- Supports the chairperson.



- Possesses or has the potential to possess the same leadership skills as the chairperson.

#### AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **SECRETARY**

- Serves as the custodian of all board records and correspondence including but not limited to length of terms and committee appointment.
- Maintains an accurate written record of the minutes at each board meeting including attendance.
- Summarizes the discussions and decisions during the board meeting and asks clarifying questions to ensure an accurate account.
- Provides written minutes from previous board meetings for approval. Corrects the record if need.
- Distributes the agenda in a timely manner prior to the meeting.
- Prepares other reports as requested by the pastor, principal, or chairperson.

An individual without voting rights could be appointed to serve as “Acting Secretary of the Board.” The acting secretary does not participate in the meetings and has no voting rights but simply records the minutes. This structure allows all board members the opportunity to fully participate in the meeting’s agenda without having the responsibility of recording the minutes. **However**, it is critical that a person named as acting secretary is highly trustworthy and maintains confidentiality refraining from any discussion of the board meetings with parish or school stakeholders. The official appointed Secretary is still ultimately responsible for the accuracy of the minutes and other board correspondence.

#### **RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL OF AN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER**

When an advisory board member is unable to promote the purpose of the board, abide by established roles and responsibilities as a member, or accept the board’s bylaws, it may be necessary for the member to resign. Any board member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chairperson, Principal and Pastor.

It may also be necessary to remove an ineffective member for the common good of the board, its members and the school community. The reasons for removing a member from the board should be clearly articulated and included in the advisory board’s bylaws. The following are some reasons a member may be removed from the advisory board:

- Acting contrary to parish/school mission and goals.
- Violating the member’s Code of Ethics.
- Violating the confidentiality agreement.
- Violating the conflict of interest agreement.
- Impeding the board’s defined responsibilities.
- Overextending the board’s defined responsibilities.
- Being excessively absent from meetings.

A board member may be removed by the Pastor in his sole discretion, if he determines that removal is in the best interest of the parish and/or school.



## COMMITTEES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

The committee structure contributes to the efficient operation of the advisory board. It is impossible to address all 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. Committee members may include both non-board members and board members. The chair of each committee shall be a board member.

The chair assigns advisory board members to lead various committees. The committee is accountable to the board for their work and gives progress reports to the board at regular board meetings. Copies of the written report become part of the board's minutes. Ordinarily, the reports are sent to board members with the agenda and minutes. The board's agenda is designed to allow time for the members to discuss topics, receive information, give input on issues and make decisions. Since the optimal time allocated for board meetings is 90-120 minutes, committee work is prepared outside of the meeting. As part of the board's agenda, each committee chair gives a brief report to the board on the progress of the committee's work. The committee chair may also use this time to seek the board's approval or input on some aspect of the committee's work. The committee chair may also invite a committee member (or two) to assist in presenting the report to the board. Some committees may not find it necessary to give a report at each board meeting. Committees are encouraged to use a standard *Committee Report Template* form **RESOURCE**.

There are two types of committees - standing and ad hoc. The standing committees provide continuity for the ongoing operation of the board. The ad hoc committees are established to meet a specific objective at a given time and are disbanded when that objective is met.

## STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees are permanent fixtures on the board. These committees consistently meet and report back to the larger group at each board meeting. Most of the work of the board is completed through these committees. The chair and members of the standing committees should be chosen for their expertise and knowledge of the focus area their committee has been charged with. The following is a list of committees for an advisory school board.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Consists of the pastor, principal and the chair of the board that meet regularly to plan the agenda for the regular meetings. The Executive Committee sees that the members receive a copy of the agenda with minutes from the previous meeting and any other information needed in preparation for an upcoming meeting. The Executive Committee also monitors the progress of the committees and the effectiveness of the board.

### MISSION EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

Provides advice and counsel regarding mission effectiveness and mission enhancement (e.g., student service projects, adult formation for school board members and school parents/guardians), opportunities to share religious and sacramental experiences (e.g., prayer





services, family Masses). This committee ensures that the school is identifiably Catholic, teaches the precepts and doctrines of the Catholic church and promotes a commitment to social justice.

### **FISCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Monitors school finances and physical resources and assists the pastor and principal in recommending financial procedures and policies based on best practices.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

Consists of one or more members of the board who assists the school's development director and/or principal as needed with opportunities for fundraising and other activities for the continued financial support and operation of the school.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT SUBCOMMITTEES**

- **DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Creates and enacts local fundraising efforts for the school. This committee may also apply for charitable grants and/or other corporate or non-profit opportunities.

- **MARKETING/ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE**

Implements the marketing plan of the school as well as assists in the recruitment and retention of students.

- **COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE**

Maintains and enhances the positive image of the school in the parish and local community via social media posts, bulletin articles, press releases and other forms of communication.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Provides advice regarding long range plans to ensure the vitality of the school. In conjunction with the principal and pastor, creates the goals, objectives and action steps in a long-range plan (3 years) to ensure the viability of the school.

### **AD HOC COMMITTEES**

Ad hoc Committees may be formed as the need presents itself. Members of ad hoc committees are selected because they are knowledgeable, service-centered and possess the expertise needed by the board. Task Forces that also require a multidisciplinary approach to complete a project or solve a problem may also be formed. Any non-board members of an ad hoc committee or task force do not actively participate in the board meeting after presenting their report. They may be invited to stay for the rest of the proceedings but will not interject comments or have any voting privileges. When the work of the ad hoc or task force committee is completed, the committee disbands.

### **EXAMPLES OF AD HOC COMMITTEES**



- **Principal Search Committee:** When there is a principal vacancy, the pastor may establish a Principal Search Committee to interview prospective principal candidates. Procedures and in-service for members of the search committee is provided by the Office of Catholic Schools according to the Principal Selection Process of the Archdiocese of Chicago. See the OCS Portal for materials on the Principal Search Process. **RESOURCE**
- **Constitution and Bylaws Committee:** When it is necessary to write, revise or update the constitution and bylaws, an ad hoc committee may be formed to complete this task.
- **Board Membership Committee:** This committee develops and implements the election/appointment procedures to fill vacancies on the advisory board. They announce the timeline for elections/appointments and seek nominees to fill vacancies. If elections are needed this committee facilitates the process.

### **DEVELOPING ANNUAL S.M.A.R.T. GOALS**

Annual goals and action plans are developed to accomplish the ongoing work of the advisory board. The principal informs the board regarding the school's goals developed within the CSIP (Continuous School Improvement Plan) and other operational goals created in collaboration with the Archdiocese. The principal gives a monthly report of the progress being made to implement these goals.

The advisory board's goals should align and support the school's goals and be in keeping with the school's published mission. At the end of the school year, the advisory board's goals should be evaluated for completion and either rewritten (based on current information-including an updated timeline) or entirely new goals should be developed for the upcoming school year.

### **S.M.A.R.T. GOALS**

Each standing committee should establish one or more S.M.A.R.T. goals for the academic year. S.M.A.R.T. goals conform to the following criteria as they are: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant/**R**esults-focused and **T**imely.

- **Specific:** Goal is explicit about what will change, when it will change, and why it needs to change.
- **Measurable:** Goal can be quantified and tracked with data throughout the school year.
- **Attainable:** Goal is both challenging and realistic.
- **Relevant/Results-focused:** Goal will directly and positively impact the school.
- **Time-bound:** Goal has a specific timeframe for completion.

Each S.M.A.R.T. goal should identify several specific action steps needed to complete the goal. S.M.A.R.T. goals are outcome-based and will guide the work of the committee throughout the course of the year with realistic timelines and clear action steps.

The following is an example of a S.M.A.R.T. goal that a Marketing/Enrollment subcommittee might create.



**Goal:** *To advertise and publicize the St. Mary's Catholic Schools Week Mass and Open House so that the number of new families visiting the school will increase compared to last year.*

**Action Steps:**

1. *Run parish bulletin announcements advertising the event from December 1 to the date of the event.*
2. *Create a postcard mailing advertising the event to the zip codes the school serves - to be sent by December 15.*
3. *Purchase outdoor signage for the school advertising the event to be hung by January 1.*
4. *Develop a newspaper ad in the local paper to be run the two weekends before and the weekend of the event.*
5. *Track the number of new families attending the Mass and Open House. Compare this to the previous year.*

In some cases, the data needed for comparison may not be available. In that case, data should be collected and saved to create a baseline for future comparison.

See OCS Portal for a S.M.A.R.T. Goals template **RESOURCE** that the various committees can implement. In addition, participating in a *Goal Prioritization Exercise* **RESOURCE** can also help committees to narrow down their focus and complete those initiatives that have the most impact.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

The Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago follow the policies developed by the Archdiocese and the Office of Catholic Schools. There are various processes provided by the Office of Catholic Schools that support the written policies and procedures. Often new policies are the result of recently adopted state or federal laws. The Office of Catholic Schools will communicate these changes in policy to the principal as they are developed. All advisory boards are to abide by and follow the policies and procedures set forth by the Archdiocese of Chicago through the Office of Catholic Schools.

The advisory board may review and recommend school policies **ONLY** at the pastor's or principal's request. The advisory board does not enact or implement policy. The principal should apprise the advisory board of ordinary changes in policies and procedures, so all members are well informed. All school policy should be contained within the school's Student/Parent Handbook. This handbook shall be reviewed and updated annually to ensure proper compliance.

## **DEVELOPING A CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

Every advisory board needs to have a written constitution and bylaws. The constitution describes how the advisory will board operate. The bylaws serve as guidelines for the ways that the board functions as a group. Every board member should have a good working knowledge regarding the board's constitution and bylaws. All schools that utilize an advisory board are required to adopt the *OCS Advisory Board Template* **RESOURCE** located on the OCS Portal.



Topics included in the **constitution and bylaws** are as follows:

- Preamble/Mission Statement
- The Official Title of the Advisory Board
- A Statement Articulating the Purpose and Function of the Advisory Board
- The Roles and Responsibilities of the Board Members
- Relationships with Other Groups
- The Date Adopted and Date of any Subsequent Revisions
- Official Signature Lines

A suggested outline for a constitution and bylaws document is as follows:

**PREAMBLE**

- Name of School
- Address of School

**INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

- The board works in an ADVSIORY capacity

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

- Official title of the board

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE & FUNCTION**

- Board has no authority to:
  - Determine parish funding
  - Hire, evaluate, terminate staff
  - Provide advice and counsel on employment matters
  - Determine school curriculum or academic programs
  - Address student related matters

**ARTICLE III – RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS**

- Pastor
- Principal
- Pastoral Council
- Parish Finance Council
- Parent Organization
- Faculty

**ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

- Membership defined
  - Number of members
  - Age of members
  - Ex-officio members
- Nominations and eligibility



- Qualifications
- Expectations
- Nominations process
- Exclusions
- Appointments and terms
  - Leadership succession
- Resignation/Removal of Members
- Vacancy
- Attendance

**ARTICLE V - OFFICERS**

- Officers
  - Chair
  - Vice Chair
  - Secretary
  - Administrative Officer
  - Nominations
- Duties of Officers
- Terms of Officers
- Removal of Officers

**ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS**

- Number of regular meetings
  - Minutes
- Committee meetings
  - Minutes
- Special meetings
- Annual retreat
- Meeting protocol
  - Open to Stakeholders
  - Visitors
- Quorum

**ARTICLE VII – RULES OF ORDER**

- Consensus
- Parliamentary rules
- Code of Ethics and Confidentiality

**ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES**

- Executive
- Standing Committees
  - Descriptions
- Committee leadership/membership
- Committee charges



- Ad hoc committees

#### ARTICLE IX - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- No compensation
- Reimbursement of bona fide expenses

#### ARTICLE X – CODE OF CONDUCT

- Conflict of interest
- Confidentiality
- Objectivity and unity

#### ARTICLE XI – INDEMNIFICATION

#### ARTICLE XII – REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

- Reviewed every three (3) years
- Amended by a 2/3 majority
- Written approval of pastor, principal & Archdiocese of Chicago

#### PROMULGATION

- Official Signature Lines
- The Date Initially Adopted
- Date of Any Subsequent Revisions

#### REVISING A CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

There should be a consistent periodic review of the constitution and bylaws every three years, especially when new leadership is appointed in the school or parish. The Executive Committee (pastor, principal and board chair) can appoint an ad hoc committee with to work on these revisions and updates. As with all decisions made by an advisory board, the pastor has the final say. In addition, all changes must first be approved by the Office of Catholic Schools prior to ratification.

A relatively easy intervention to address a seemingly dysfunctional board or one that seems to be *stuck* is to adopt the *OCS Advisory Board Template* **RESOURCE** on the portal and conduct a “reset” of the board. Problems may arise when there is not a clear guiding document to inform the work of the board and establish its governance structure.

#### NOMINATION OF ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The advisory board constitution and bylaws stipulate how members are appointed. The Office of Catholic Schools guidelines for boards specify who is eligible to fill a vacancy on the board. See eligibility requirements below:

1. Interest in and commitment to Catholic education in general, and a specific commitment to the mission and philosophy of the school.
2. Capacity to give witness to Catholic and Christian moral values within the school



- and be an active member of the parish community.
3. Availability to attend meetings and periodic in-service programs.
  4. Availability to participate fully in Board and committee work.
  5. Commitment to the various goals and objectives of the Board and an ability to devote the necessary and substantial time commitments to achieve those goals.
  6. Ability to maintain high levels of ethics, integrity and confidentiality.
  7. Ability to objectively assess data and make recommendations for the greater good of the parish and school.
  8. Ability to work positively with others to achieve consensus.
  9. Ability to attend and assume a significant role in resource development programs (e.g., galas, fundraisers) for the school.
  10. Ability to disclose existing or potential conflicts of interest.

Those seeking membership on a board realize that they are genuinely concerned about contributing to the ministry of Catholic education. Their agenda is the board's agenda; their goals are the same as the advisory board's goals; their open manner allows them to listen to the needs of the school; they set aside their own opinions to listen to the membership. They are not hesitant; they speak up in respectful and sincere ways.

There is ongoing communication to the public about the impending vacancies on the advisory board. To assist in determining board staffing needs and engaging in a process for identifying potential candidates, see the OCS Portal for the *Diversity Membership Matrix* **RESOURCE** and access this [Civic Power Grid](#) link.

Once identified, prospective members should be informed about the purpose of the board, the roles and responsibilities and the kind of committee work that the members do. They should know the eligibility requirements. Nominees willing to commit themselves to serving on the advisory board should complete an *Application Form* **RESOURCE** and should be interviewed about their desire to include their name on the nomination slate. The interview session could include the following questions as well as others appropriate to the needs of a school. See the OCS Portal for a complete list of *Interview Questions* **RESOURCE**.

- *Explain how you might develop a collaborative relationship with the other members of the board, the principal, and the pastor?*
- *How will you listen to others without bias or without forming a "final opinion" about the matter?*
- *Are you able to keep matters in confidence until decisions are made public?*
- *How will you support the advisory board's decisions if you were unable to agree with them?*
- *Given your personal and professional commitments, are you able to fully engage in the work of the board including committee meetings, full board meetings and other board related activities?*



## APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

All Board members will be approved by the Principal and Pastor and notified in writing using this *Board Appointment Letter* **RESOURCE**. Employees of the parish and school and their immediate family members **MAY NOT** sit on the board. The newly appointed members shall assume their responsibilities at the last official Board meeting of the school year. Consider conducting a “Commissioning Ceremony” (Mass or Prayer Service) to induct new members. Those who may be interested but not appointed to the board (if appropriate) can be asked instead to participate on one of the board’s committees. Use the *Committee Appointment Letter* **RESOURCE** on the OCS portal to communicate committee appointment to nominees.

## STARTING A NEW ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARD

Starting a new advisory board requires a multi-phase process from its inception to the first meeting. Schools should allow anywhere from 6-9 months to realistically complete the required tasks needed to get a school board up and running. If a school has a board that is not functioning according to best practices and can be described as dysfunctional at best, it may be advisable to dismantle the entire board and begin anew. The decision to salvage an existing ineffective board by adopting the OCS constitution and bylaws, training the members, and instituting best practices is a collaborative decision of the pastor, principal and Office of Catholic Schools.

### PHASE 1 - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Establish the Executive Committee which will consist of the pastor, principal and a chair. The Executive Committee should meet regularly (monthly) throughout the phases of the project and clearly define the tasks that need to be completed as well generate a timeline for completion. **TIME NEEDED: 1-2 Months.**

### PHASE 2 - CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Adopt the *OCS Advisory Board Template* **RESOURCE** for the proposed board. Take adequate time to read, understand and internalize the document for overall board effectiveness. **TIME NEEDED: 1 Month.**

### PHASE 3 - RECRUITMENT

First, identify the various areas of expertise needed to ensure that the board will have a good balance of members. Then, recruit prospective members from the parish, school, alumni base and the community for the skills and knowledge of specific disciplines identified as needs. Try to use a variety of connections (someone who might know someone, who knows someone else, etc.) to expand the pool of potential candidates. See the OCS Portal for a form that will help with recruiting: *Diversity Matrix* **RESOURCE** and access this link: [Civic Power Grid](#). Once identified, personally contact the prospective members and ask them to apply. **TIME NEEDED: 2-3 Months.**

### PHASE 4 - SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Interview and select members based on the traits they possess and the expertise they can bring to the board. The Executive Committee should participate in the interview process. Based on the interviews, select the most highly qualified candidates and notify the nominees in writing of their appointment using





*Board Appointment Letter* **RESOURCE**. Consider conducting a “Commissioning Ceremony” (Mass or Prayer Service) to induct new members. Those who may be interested but not appointed to the board (if appropriate) can be asked instead to participate on one of the board’s committees. Use the *Committee Appointment Letter* **RESOURCE** on the OCS portal to communicate committee appointment to nominees. **TIME NEEDED: 1 Month.**

## PHASE 5 - ORIENTATION AND COMMISSION

Orient, train and commission new members. This is an important aspect of creating a highly functioning board. See the next section for more information on the orientation process. **TIME NEEDED: 1 Month.**

### ORIENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS

New members to the advisory school board should receive an orientation prior to beginning their work. The orientation should be conducted by the principal. The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) recommends that the orientation package or binder include the following:

- Welcome letter from pastor and principal
- Copy of the parish and school mission statement
- School marketing brochures/alumni newsletters
- Updated copy of the school’s policy handbook
- Organization chart showing chain of command
- Principal’s job description
- Current copy of the advisory board’s constitution and bylaws
- *Expectations of Advisory Boards Members* **RESOURCE**
- Past year’s meeting minutes
- Calendar of upcoming meetings and other advisory board events
- Roster and directory of current members
- List of the various committees, their roles and their membership
- School’s strategic plan (if applicable)
- Member *Code of Ethics, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest* forms to be signed

The main purpose of the orientation is for new members to gain an in-depth understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The principal also provides ongoing in-service for the other members to keep them informed about procedures for board members. The Office of Catholic Schools can serve as a resource for board orientation. See the OCS Portal for:

- *Orientation Checklist* **RESOURCE**
- *Code of Ethics form* **RESOURCE**
- *Confidentiality form* **RESOURCE**
- *Conflicts of Interest form* **RESOURCE**
- *New Member Workshop PowerPoint* **RESOURCE**
- *NCEA general board info* **RESOURCE**

### MEETINGS



Advisory school board meetings should occur bi-monthly from August through June of the academic year. Committee meetings should occur in the months between full board meetings. Meetings should be anywhere from 90-120 minutes in length. See table below.

School Board Meetings	Committee Meetings
August	September
October	November
December	January
February	March
April	May
June	July (if necessary)

Unless there is an executive session, all advisory board meetings are open to the public and the dates should be published well in advance in the parish bulletin, school calendar, school’s website and in the school’s newsletter. The agenda for the monthly meeting is created by the chair of the board in consultation with the principal and pastor and should be given to members approximately one week in advance.

**EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**

Executive sessions are either held before the regularly scheduled meeting or immediately following the regular meeting. Executive sessions need not be part of every board meeting. Procedures should be established for the advisory board to meet in executive session. The board meets in executive session to deal with sensitive issues that may not necessarily be shared with the public. The monthly agenda may reflect that the board will meet in executive session. Decisions made in an executive session are recorded, however, the decision, topic, issue or concern discussed in the executive session is not published in the general minutes and remains confidential.

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 or the resignation or removal of a board member. 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 is always present for an executive session of the advisory board. The principal may or may not be present.

**MEETING SPACE**

The meeting space chosen should allow the size of the advisory board to meet comfortably and be large enough for any guests and/or visitors that may want to attend. The room should have adequate lighting, air conditioning, internet connection and the capability to project digital material. The room should be prepared in advance for the meeting. Permanent name tags should be printed for each member and



collected by the secretary for use at the future meetings. Water bottles and healthy snacks can be provided as a courtesy to the members, especially if the meeting is scheduled right after working hours but before members are able to eat dinner.

Executive sessions are confidential in nature and should meet behind closed doors. If the room chosen for regular meetings is in an open space like a cafeteria, the executive session must be relocated to a more secure location.

## MEETING WISE PROTOCOL

The Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools has adopted the Meeting Wise agenda and protocols for all its educational meetings. Meeting Wise is a process developed by Kathryn Parker Boudett and Elizabeth A. City from Harvard University Graduate School of Education. The Meeting Wise process highlights the following important components to running effective meetings:

- Clear and important meeting objectives are identified.
- Specific and realistic time allocations are assigned to each objective.
- Members attending the meeting are given tasks to complete before the meeting begins.
- Roles are clearly established and include:
  - **Facilitator** - The Chair of the advisory board serves as the facilitator. The facilitator runs the meeting, making sure the objectives are met and the norms are adhered to.
  - **Note Taker** - The secretary of the advisory board uses the agenda in the **NOTES:** section to record the reports provided and the discussion that follows. These notes will become the meeting minutes.
  - **Timekeeper** - This role should rotate and can be assigned to various members of the board who simply keep track of the time and gently remind the presenters and facilitators when their allotted time is coming to an end. Timekeepers can set a stopwatch on a cell phone to ring and serve as an audible cue.
- Norms for meeting behavior have been established and include:
  - **Assume positive intentions** - Start with the premise that everyone at the meeting is there to support the school.
  - **Take an inquiry stance** - Ask more questions than provide answers. Seek to find solutions, not just point out problems.
  - **Use “I notice” statements and “I wonder” questions** - When reflecting on information that has been presented or asking questions of other board members.
  - **Ground statements in evidence** - Make sure that there is concrete data presented when making a point or raising a concern. Avoid opinions, perceptions or generalizations.
  - **Start and end on time** - Meetings should begin exactly when they are to start and not go past the established end time. This means that all members commit to arriving on time and adhering to the time constraints when it is their turn to report.
  - **Be here and now** - Avoid the temptation to answer emails, text or complete other tasks during the meeting. If an emergency occurs, step out of the room to make a call or send an email.
  - **Stick to protocol and hear all voices** - Equity of voice allows all perspectives to be heard. Some members may need to speak up if they are hesitant to communicate, and others may need to rein themselves in.



- The meeting always ends with an opportunity to:
  - **Provide next steps** for future meetings to continue the work of the board into the next cycle.
  - **Assess and reflect** what worked well and what did not, using the Plus/Delta protocol and Ignatian spiritual questions.

**MEETING WISE AGENDA EXAMPLE**

Here is an example of a Meeting Wise agenda adapted for a Catholic school advisory board. The agenda houses the minutes or notes of the meeting (**NOTES:**) within the document, written in blue for easy access. These minutes/notes can be saved for later publication, so the secretary of the board does not have to rewrite them into another format. It will be helpful if minutes/notes are recorded to reflect the process, indicating both pros and cons about the issue during the decision-making session. The Secretary will summarize the discussions and decisions during the meeting and ask clarifying questions if needed to ensure an accurate account. Any item that is stated as “Off the Record” is not to be included in the minutes/notes. The secretary should take care to summarize and generalize the minutes/notes, so they do not reflect poorly on any individual or school/parish group.

When the secretary has completed the notes, the document should be turned into a PDF, so minutes/notes cannot be altered. This document will then be presented to the board at the next meeting, and if approved will be shared with the rest of the school community. Minutes/notes shall not be made available to the public at large. If posting them to a school’s website, care must be taken to ensure they are only accessible to stakeholders.

<p><b>Meeting Wise Agenda Template</b></p> <p><small>Taken from: <i>Meeting Wise - Making the Most of Collaborative Time for Educators</i>, Kathryn Parker Boudett &amp; Elizabeth City; Harvard Education Press</small></p>
<p><b>ST. MARY SCHOOL BOARD</b>  <b>MEETING AGENDA</b>  <b>Monday, August 29, 20xx</b>  <b>7:30-9:00 pm</b>  <b>School Library</b></p> <p><b>Please note:</b> Hospitality will be available from 7:00-7:30 pm. Please park in the lot adjacent to the school.</p>



<b>TOPIC:</b> August 20xx Board Meeting	<b>ROLES:</b> <b>Attendees:</b> Fr. Mike, Principal Jones, Yu Tube, Justin Case, Paige Turner, Rick O'Shea, Barb Dwyer, Don Stairs, Will Power, Claire Voyant, Manuel Labor, Sara Bellum, Chip Zinsalsa <b>Guest:</b> Sr. Margaret Mary <b>Visitor:</b> Sue Vaneer <b>Facilitator:</b> Yu Tube <b>Note Keeper:</b> Justin Case <b>Timekeeper:</b> Rick O'Shea
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<b>MEETING OBJECTIVES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Objective 1</b> - Pastor's Report - Discussion</li> <li>● <b>Objective 2</b> - Principal's Report - Discussion</li> <li>● <b>Objective 3</b> - Mission Effectiveness Committee Report - Discussion</li> <li>● <b>Objective 4</b> - Development Subcommittee Report - Discussion</li> <li>● <b>Objective 5</b> - Marketing/Enrollment Subcommittee Report - Discussion</li> <li>● <b>Objective 6</b> - Fiscal Management Committee Report – Discussion</li> </ul>
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<b>TO PREPARE FOR THIS MEETING, PLEASE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read this agenda</li> <li>● Read minutes from meeting on June 21, 20xx</li> <li>● Read the various committee reports</li> </ul>
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**Schedule: 90 minutes**

TIME	MINUTES	ACTIVITY
7:30-7:35 pm	5 min.	<b>Welcome!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Opening Prayer - Sara Bellum and Don Stairs.</li> <li>● Welcome guests/visitors.</li> <li>● Determine role of Timekeeper if needed.</li> <li>● Take Attendance.</li> <li>● Review the meeting's objectives.</li> <li>● Review any Next Steps or Plus/Deltas from previous meeting.</li> </ul>
7:35-7:40 pm	5 min.	<b>Review Advisory Board Meeting Norms Prior to Each Meeting.</b> <b>Meeting Norms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assume positive intentions.</li> <li>● Take an inquiry stance.</li> <li>● Use "I notice" statements and "I wonder" questions.</li> <li>● Ground statements in evidence.</li> <li>● Start and end on time.</li> <li>● Be here and now.</li> <li>● Stick to protocol - hear all voices.</li> </ul>
7:40-7:45 pm	5 min.	<b>Approval of Minutes of June 21, 20xx</b>  <b>NOTES:</b>



7:45-7:55 pm	10 min.	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 1 - Pastor's Report - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Campaign Update</li> <li>• Youth Ministry Update</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
7:55-8:05 pm	10 min.	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 2 - Principal's Report - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AdvancED Accreditation Update</li> <li>• Teacher Orientation and Professional Development Plan</li> <li>• New school staff</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:05-8:15 pm	10 min.	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 3 - Mission Effectiveness Committee Report and Sr. Mary Margaret - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and Parish Religious Education theme for the year</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:15-8:25 pm	10 min.	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4 - Development Subcommittee Report - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology Grant</li> <li>• Fall Octoberfest Fundraiser update</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:25-8:35 pm	10 min.	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 5 - Marketing/Enrollment Committee Report - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projected enrollment</li> <li>• Summer outreach to new families in the area</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:35-8:45 pm	10 min.	<p><b>OBJECTIVE 6 – Fiscal Management Committee Report - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Update</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:45-8:50 pm	5 min.	<p><b>Visitor Comments</b></p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:50-8:55 pm	5 min.	<p><b>Review Next Steps</b></p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
8:55-9:00 pm	5 min.	<p><b>Closing Prayer - Principal Jones</b></p>



		<p><b>Assess</b> what worked well about this meeting and what we would have liked to change.</p> <p><i>What are we grateful for? Where did we see God present and in action? What did we learn? What will we do differently?</i></p> <p>Based on Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.</p>	
		+ Plus	▲ Delta
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		•	•
		•	•

Each section of the Meeting Wise agenda is described below:

**HEADING**

List the school, date, time, place as well as any important information regarding arrival to the meeting such as hospitality, parking or which door to use. The principal and chairperson of the advisory board plan the monthly agenda, and have it distributed to the members along with a packet including materials to preview at least one week prior to the meeting.

**TOPIC**

Include the topic of the meeting (date).

**ROLES**

List the various roles and responsibilities needed for the meeting as well as the membership including guests and/or visitors. To save time, all the members’ names should be included on the agenda and the names of those that do not attend can be deleted or noted as “not in attendance.”

**MEETING OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the meeting are listed here. Add in as many objectives needed that can be covered in the time allotted.

**MEETING PREPARATION**

Any work that needs to be completed by the members prior to the meeting should appear in this section. Also, the total time allocated for the meeting is listed in the “Schedule” portion of the document.



## WELCOME

The facilitator calls the meeting to order. All advisory board meetings should begin with prayer. It is a good idea to create a prayer schedule and assign various members or groups of members this task for the year. See the OCS Portal for *School Board Prayers* **RESOURCE**. This is also the time to welcome guests or visitors and take attendance. The objectives for the meeting as well as any next steps or feedback from previous meetings should also occur during this time. **TIME: 5 minutes.**

## NORMS

The facilitator reviews the **advisory board meeting norms** prior to the start of each meeting. These norms serve as a good reminder of appropriate meeting behavior and help guide positive, productive discussions and conversations. **TIME: 5 minutes.**

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The facilitator asks for **approval of the last meeting's minutes**. Any changes to the minutes should be noted and then the secretary should update the minutes in the previous agenda reflecting the new changes prior to publishing and sharing them with the school community. **TIME: 5 minutes.**

## OBJECTIVES

The facilitator invites each member or committee in the **Objectives** section to address the group in turn. Objectives are the heart of the meeting and allow the pastor, principal and various committees a chance to report to the group. The pastor gives information about the parish's initiatives, programs and upcoming events. The principal gives information about the school's program, gives a progress report about the school's goals and objectives, informs about upcoming school activities, and clarifies questions raised by members. Committee reports indicate who will present the report on behalf of the committee (usually the chair of the committee) and the purpose of the report, e.g., input from board, final recommendations and decisions. Not all committees need to give reports at each meeting. **Note:** Committees should provide written reports ahead of time to be included in the meeting packet and invite any discussion or questions regarding the report - not simply reread it. To ensure uniformity of reports, a common *Committee Report Template* **RESOURCE** is available on the OCS Portal. **TIME: 10 minutes for each objective.**

## VISITORS

The facilitator acknowledges any visitors. **Visitors (non-board members) of the school or parish community ONLY** (not the general public) may attend advisory board meetings but are not to make any comments or ask any questions during the meeting until they are called upon to speak. With the time keeper's assistance, visitor's comments should be completed within the designated time frame and the facilitator will need to make sure that all who wish to speak are given an opportunity to do so. Visitors may not discuss issues of school personnel, an individual family or a particular student's needs. All comments are recorded on the agenda in the **NOTES:** section. Visitors should be thanked for coming forward and informed that someone (typically the principal) will respond to them at a later date. The advisory board should not make any promises about resolving the issues raised, but merely record the





statement or concern of the visitor. See the OCS Portal for a *Visitor Protocol* **RESOURCE** [handout](#) that can be given to visitors prior to the meeting's commencement. **TIME: 5-10 minutes.**

### REVIEW NEXT STEPS

The facilitator directs everyone to the **review next steps** section of the agenda. This will allow for continuing conversation and follow through of agenda items that could not be fully addressed due to time constraints or insufficient information. These items should be addressed at the beginning of the next meeting. **TIME: 5 minutes.**

### CLOSING PRAYER & PLUS/DELTA

The **closing prayer** is recited, then the facilitator directs everyone to the **Plus/Delta Protocol** section of the agenda. The Plus/Delta Protocol allows all members of the board to indicate what worked well in the meeting (+ Plus) and any areas of improvement (▲ Delta) needed. Using an Ignatian spiritual exercise, participants are asked to reflect: *What are we grateful for? Where did we see God present and in action? What did we learn? What will we do differently?* Items added to the Plus/Delta table should speak to ways that affirm what is going well and challenge the group towards more effective engagement. **TIME: 5 minutes.**

See the OCS Portal for a blank *School Board Meeting Wise Agenda* **RESOURCE** [template](#) that can be adapted to suit the individual needs of the school.

### SOME HINTS FOR THE CHAIR ACTING AS A FACILITATOR

The role of the facilitator is an important one that will help set the tone for the meeting and ensure time spent is productive. The Meeting Wise protocols are designed to assist the facilitator in running a smooth and effective meeting. The Facilitator should...

- With the help of the timekeeper, **keep the agenda moving** and assure that all members are active participants. This can be done by asking questions of those who have not spoken.
- **Guide discussions to resolution**; e.g., listing pros and cons about an issue, planning next steps, solving a problem, making a recommendation or finalizing a decision.
- **Model "I notice" statements and "I wonder" questions** to encourage inquiry if there is uncertainty.
- **Occasionally make summary comments** for clarification during the discussion and periodically throughout the meeting. The facilitator keeps the topic moving, and at the same time ensures progress of the discussion is noted. The facilitator relates the comments of individual board members to the purpose of the discussion.
- **Interjecting comments** about adhering to the protocol and inviting further development of an idea about the issue will keep the members engaged in the topic. These strategies will also indicate that the opinions of an individual board member are valued.
- **Set time limits** for each item on the agenda. The objectives should have a specified time allotted for information, input and response. If the discussion exceeds the time limits then the time can be renegotiated, or it may be necessary to move the topic to a future meeting by including it in



the “Next Steps” section or by assigning a committee to research the issue further before placing it on a future agenda.

- **Table comments** about topics not on the agenda. Such topics can be dealt with at another time, or they may become a future agenda item.
- **Interrupt** any discussion if it goes off the track. The facilitator reminds members that side-bar conversations and comments are both inappropriate and unacceptable. The members need to follow the norm of being “Here and Now.”
- **Begin and end** meetings on time.
- **Encourage a “closing statement”** from each member before moving to the next topic. This is one sentence about what has occurred. Members may “pass” if they wish. This tactic gives all members the confidence to speak to the issue and engenders respect for the opinions of others. However, this is not an opportunity to open the discussion again.

### CONDUCTING AN OPEN FORUM OR TOWN HALL MEETING

Advisory board members believe in and support the mission of Catholic education. As a part of the mission, the board endeavors to “know” what will improve the school’s program and its operation. Since the board represents the parents and guardians, they will periodically want to assess how it is meeting the needs of the school. They will also want to know if the school is meeting the expectations of its constituents.

The Open Forum/Town Hall 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/Town Hall allows the advisory board, pastor and school administrator to hear from the parents and guardians of the students, who are given the opportunity to express what they are thinking about the school and its mission of Catholic education for their children. The Regional Director may be called up to assist with an Open Forum/Town Hall meeting.

The following procedure is recommended: A letter and registration form is sent to each family indicating that:

- All parents and guardians are invited to attend an open forum with the advisory board.
- The date and time is announced well in advance.
- The purpose of the open forum is clearly stated.
- The protocol for participation is announced. This is not a time to resolve specific problems or express grave displeasure with any 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 collected by the school board.
- Parents and guardians will be asked questions like:
  - What do you **like** about the school?
  - If you could **change** one thing about the school, what would that be?
  - If you could **add** one thing to the school’s program, what would that be?



After registrations have been returned, the parents and guardians will be randomly arranged in small discussion groups; nametags will identify the discussion groups. A board member will be assigned to facilitate group discussions following the format listed above. The facilitators listen and record comments but do not respond to questions or make comments of their own.

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 advisory school board, since the input will serve as a means of continuous improvement in the school's program and operation. The purpose of the small groups is to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to express their opinions. After a given time, the responses are shared with the group at large.

The issues raised are specified in each of the categories. No final judgments or decisions are made at this time. The chair of the advisory board assures the parents and guardians that an ad hoc committee will collate the responses from the notes from each of the discussion groups, and a summary report will be shared with the community. The items of concern will be given to the appropriate person for follow-up, namely the pastor, the principal and/or the appropriate advisory board members.

The results of the Open Forum/Town Hall become an agenda item at a future board meeting. The board determines a way to effectively communicate the results 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.

### **EVALUATING ADVISORY BOARD EFFECTIVENESS**

It is worthwhile for the advisory board members to evaluate both their effectiveness as a group and how they meet their responsibilities as board members. They will also want to review how they interact with each other and to assess the implementation of the board's annual goals. One part of their evaluation will be centered upon the internal effectiveness of the board; the other will be the community's perception of their overall effectiveness.

Board members can first reflect on their own performance and then the performance of the board using the *Internal Effectiveness Form* **RESOURCE** found on the OCS Portal. After this has been completed by each member, a discussion in executive session can be conducted with the other board members to identify areas of improvement. Pastors, Principals and Boards can also use the *Board Best Practices Checklist & Assessment Tool* **RESOURCE** to conduct a preliminary evaluation of the board's effectiveness.

It is suggested that the school community be familiar with the purpose of the advisory board before they are asked to evaluate its effectiveness. The board represents the school families and works in an advisory capacity with the pastor and the principal. Constituents should be aware of this function, and realize that, according to Archdiocese of Chicago policy, the board is **strictly advisory** in nature. They are not involved in the administration of the school; they do not evaluate, hire or fire staff; they are not involved in resolving conflicts. Frequent communication "about the work of the board" through the Church bulletin and the school newsletter will serve as a vehicle of this reality. See the OCS Portal for an *External Effectiveness Form* **RESOURCE** that school community can complete.



The evaluation forms that appear on the OCS Portal can easily be turned into online surveys to quickly gather data. Whether to offer surveys in an anonymous format will be a decision for the board to make based on the local culture and needs of the community. Anonymous surveys often elicit more honest feedback; however, it also gives some the freedom to make outrageous and inflammatory personal remarks, which are counterproductive. Conversely, a survey that is not anonymous might discourage stakeholders from completing it. Advisory boards can conduct anonymous surveys with the option for the survey taker to provide a name and contact information, if willing, so the board can speak with them directly to gather any additional information needed.

### **BOARD RETREATS AND OTHER SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

To ensure the Catholicity of the school board is fostered and developed, a board retreat should be planned each year. The pastor or an outside speaker can facilitate the religious component, and the principal and chair can concentrate on operational issues. Topics should be planned based on the needs of the group, and an attempt should be made to link the work of the school board to the larger mission and vision of the church and school. Time should be given for the members to pray quietly and reflect, as well as come together and share their experiences.

Some school boards begin their first meeting of the year with a Mass and Commissioning Ceremony of the new members. This is a nice way to acknowledge and introduce new members. It also sets the tone for the work that is to come and keeps the emphasis on the true mission of the school board - service to the community.

The board can also choose to attend parish spiritual events or service opportunities (Parish Mission, Stations of the Cross, Soup Kitchens, Food Pantries, etc.) as a group to strengthen the bonds between them and help them grow spiritually as individuals. These types of events will foster trust amongst the members. Trust is built on the fundamental values of community - faith, hope, reconciliation, courage, service, justice and love (Fr. Ed McDermott - NCEA, Mission & Values). Advisory boards should embrace these values and demonstrate them in their relationships with others and their work on the board.



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**AdvancED** - A non-profit, non-partisan organization that conducts rigorous, on-site reviews of a variety of educational institutions for accreditation purposes.

**AD HOC COMMITTEE** - A committee formed for a specific task or objective and dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.

**ADVISORY** - Being in a capacity to provide advice or opinions.

**ADVISORY BOARD** - A body that participates by recommending policy when requested to the person or persons who have final authority for the organization. The authority person or persons are not bound to follow the advisory board's suggestions or advice.

**(ARCH) BISHOP'S LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY** - The bishop's right to establish structures of governance and norms that guide his involvement regarding schools. A diocesan bishop exercises his authority in accord with Canon Law and in accord with all applicable Civil Laws at the Federal, state and local levels.

**BYLAWS** - The bylaws are a companion document to the organization's constitution that state the rules and by which the organization operates.

**CONSTITUTION** - The founding document of an organization that establishes and defines the mission, structure and process.

**CSIP** – Acronym for “Continuous School Improvement Plan”

**DEVELOPMENT** - The strategic process by which schools identify, cultivate, solicit and recognize stewards & donors to establish and nurture relationships, and to raise resources. It requires staff to build a culture of philanthropy, which begins in the admissions office, while educating your stewards and donors about the benefits, value and distinct nature of your school.

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER** - Holding a position or membership due to the power or influence of one's office, and not by election or appointment.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - A closed session of the board where only the current members are allowed to participate. These sessions are usually held to discuss highly confidential matters.

**FINANCIAL PLAN** - In general, a financial plan is a series of steps and/or defined strategies aligned with mission-defined goals used by school leadership, which are designed to accomplish a financial goal or set of conditions, e.g. balanced budget, elimination of debt, etc.

**GOVERNANCE** - A process that provides direction or authority for the well-being of the school.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY** - Knowledge and skills used in a real-world context across disciplines.



**OCS** – Acronym for the “Office of Catholic Schools” of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

**POLICY** - A written document that outlines the guidelines and principles of the school.

**PROCEDURE** - Step by step directions on how a policy is to be enacted.

**STANDING COMMITTEE** - A committee with a continued existence, formed to do its assigned work on an ongoing basis. Catholic identity, development, marketing/enrollment, legislative action and academic excellence are generally standing committees.

**S.M.A.R.T. GOALS** - Goals that are strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant, and time-bound.

**SCHOOL CONSTITUENCIES** - This includes the faculty, staff, administration, governing body, students, parents, alumni, and parish or community members who have regular interactions with the school.

**SCHOOL STAKEHOLDERS** - A person or group that has an interest in a local, system or diocesan enterprise or project. The primary stakeholders are its parents, staff, employees, investors, board members, parishioners and business community.

**TASKFORCE** - A temporary group of people formed to carry out a specific mission or project, or to solve a problem that requires a multidisciplinary approach.

**TRANSPARENCY** - Characterized by visibility or accessibility of information. Transparency describes a willingness to share school information – be it academic, operational, financial or strategic – with stakeholders and the larger community in which the school operates.



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