

Questions for Review & Discussion

1. In what concrete ways do our board members share their time and talents with the school community?
2. In what concrete ways does our board model the ministry of service to others?
3. In what concrete ways does our board assist the school with its service programs?
4. In what spiritual growth activities has our board participated?
5. How do the philosophy and goals of our board reflect Gospel values?
6. How is the board making Catholic education available to all Catholic children who wish to come to the school?
7. How are board decisions reached?

Application

1. Make the Board Beliefs a part of your board's annual self-evaluation.

The Board Member's Thumbnail Series is ideal for 10-minute discussions at the beginning of meetings, or expanded for longer sessions. They can be given to new board members and collected by members as a handy reference library. Some titles may be helpful to teachers or parents.

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ISBN: 1-55833-480-7
Part No.: BDS-25-1482

This series is produced by the NCEA Department of Boards and Councils. New titles will be added and older titles updated periodically. To order, contact NCEA, Suite 525, 1005 N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22201. (800) 711-6232. services@ncea.org Online Store at www.ncea.org.

ISBN 155833480-7



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THE BOARD* MEMBER'S THUMBNAIL SERIES

What Makes an Education Board* Catholic?

Department of Boards
and Councils of the
National Catholic
Educational Association



*The word "board" always includes council, commission and other titles given to governance groups.

An education board is Catholic when it embraces the concept of stewardship. And, when it wholeheartedly accepts its role of ministry in the development of a faith community where Christian formation, spiritual growth, and service to others are nurtured and can be practiced in accordance with the Catholic Church.

To be called Catholic, a school must be under the direction of or recognized by a competent Catholic Church authority, such as a bishop, archbishop, or head of a religious order. The school then comes under the jurisdiction of that authority and of the Code of Canon Law. Board members can expect the authority and responsibilities of a Catholic board to be different from those of any public school board they might be familiar with.

When empowered by the appropriate authority, it becomes the responsibility of the board to ensure that its deliberations and actions reflect and promote gospel values of faithful stewardship, ministry, and service.

Faithful Stewardship

Those who are asked to serve on a Catholic school board graciously accept the opportunity, as faithful stewards, to use the God-given gifts they have received to advance the work of the Catholic Church (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). If all aspects and facets of an effectively functioning board are to be realized, board members need to make their talents, abilities, and skills available to the faith community. As St. Paul described so beautifully and forcefully, “we are many members in one body” (Romans 12:4-8).

Ministry and Service

A Catholic school has a responsibility to form its students into concerned citizens who will advocate for the development of a society that values each person as a child of God. A well-organized board with a gospel vision for the future facilitates the school's programs of formation, growth, and service so that this community of believers truly becomes Christ's heart, arms, and hands for others.

Board Beliefs

In order to facilitate its work and to model to the school community the concepts of stewardship and ministry of service to others, board members espouse the following beliefs:

- The board acknowledges that its authority is derived from the appropriate authority such as the pastor, bishop, or religious order as stated in its founding documents.

- The goals and philosophy of the board are derived from the Gospels and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Board decisions and actions are reached through dialogue and consensus.
- Board discussions and deliberations are models of charity and justice.
- Board members are committed to working within the framework of the shared vision and goals of the arch/diocese, parish/ies, and school/s.
- Board members, as good stewards, are committed to sharing their time, talent, and treasure for the good of the school community.
- Board members perceive themselves as significant participants in a vital ministry of the Church.
- Board members are committed to providing the ideals of Catholic education to all Catholic families.
- Board members are practicing members of their faith who value prayer, spiritual growth, and good works.
- Board members recognize that prayer and spiritual development are important components of board meetings and activities.
- Particularly, the board calls upon the Holy Spirit at the beginning of each meeting and during difficult deliberations.
- Board members are knowledgeable about the curriculum, education programs, and student service projects of the school.
- Board members are committed to modeling the ministry of service to all of God's people and particularly to the school community.

