

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



***Leadership to Build a
Bright Future***

**CATHOLIC SCHOOL
ADVISORY BOARDS**

*A Leadership Manual
for Effective Catholic
Elementary School Boards*



February 2017

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 foster regional and advisory 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, reading "Jim Rigg".

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



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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 in order 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, 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 can be seen as 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 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 policies and procedures.



ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY REGARDING SCHOOLS BOARDS

The Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools *Policy ES 102.1* states that each school shall have a local school board and is listed below:

The Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools (2013-2016) calls all Catholic schools to implement best business practices to ensure the financial health of all schools in the Archdiocese. These best practices include appropriate and focused institutional development, with informed community relations, strategic marketing and enrollment management, and financial expertise and transparency. Pastors and principals, including those with business education and experience, will benefit from a strong board whose members have skills to bring best practices to the board committees whose work is in the focused areas of responsibility.

Procedure

- a. *The written constitution and bylaws shall be in accordance with Archdiocesan policies and procedures.*
- b. *Operational procedures provided by the Office of Catholic Schools shall be followed. Local school boards are, by their very nature, consultative to the pastor and principal. The pastor and principal participate in all regular, special and executive session meetings of the board. The pastor and principal participate in all deliberations of the board. The pastor has final approval of all board decisions. The principal is the executive officer of the board, in addition to other duties, and provides in-service and guidance to the board in school matters. The Archdiocesan and Elementary School Policies shall be the policies of the local board.*

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:

- Providing an opportunity for parents, alumni and parishioners to offer their experience and expertise in the service of others.
- Developing shared ownership of the school and fostering long term viability and sustainability.
- Offering financial advice and fiscal best practices.
- Developing/recommending new and necessary school policy - when requested to do so.
- Providing a vehicle for public relations in the parish and larger community.
- Enabling clergy and school administration to concentrate on other duties.
- Allowing parents a voice in their child's education.
- 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 person 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 and/or the Parish Council Education Commission. 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 a written constitution and bylaws adopted by the board and approved by the pastor. Local constitutions and 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 pastor and to the principal.
- Works in partnership and collaboration with 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 and the 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.
- Acknowledges that members are part of the parish community, and the school is a vital element of the parish.
- Understands it is a privilege to serve.



- Values diverse and varied membership for the individual expertise and support these members offer the pastor and principal.
- 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 in order to discern with other members the issues, concerns and challenges they face in helping to provide for the educational needs of the students in their 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 standard 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

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 not accept 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: faculty members, 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 unless the governance structure set forth in the constitution and bylaws dictates otherwise.

The principal shall be the executive officer of the advisory board and have 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*.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

The *Code of Ethics for Advisory Board Members* 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 by all members. See Appendix for an example. Periodic 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. See the Appendix for a Confidentiality Statement that should be signed by members.

- *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. See the Appendix for a Conflict of Interest Statement that should be signed by members.

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A board member who owns an IT company suggests a complete overhaul of the school's wiring and 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 administrator 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.

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A member who does not attending meetings on a consistent basis.*

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 the new principal, tells her friends in the school community the name and background of that principal before it has been officially announced.*

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.*

OBJECTIVITY

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

- *Ex. of breach of the Code: A board member often discounts the comments of another member who lives on the wrong side of town or a member of a different ethnic or racial background.*

ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

Voting members shall be at least 21 years of age. No employee of the local school or parish and no member of the immediate family of an employee shall be eligible for membership. The term immediate family shall be defined as spouse, child, parent, brother, sister or in-law. In addition, membership is limited to one person per household. 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 approximately 9 to 15 members representing a wide variety of professions and disciplines and possessing multiple skills. High performing teams have a balance of individuals who can not only complement one another but serve to challenge and inspire one another. To ensure your board is properly represented, a diversity membership matrix can be completed. See the Appendix for a membership matrix. 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 and every 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 advisory board and according to Archdiocesan procedures.
- Approving the budget prepared by the principal or business manager and reviewed by the finance committee and the advisory board.
- Initiating the principal contract renewal process outlined by the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Co-evaluating the principal with the designated OCS Regional Director.
- Working with the principal 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.
- Preparing the annual school budget for the board's review and reporting periodically on year-to-date finances.
- Developing and leading the school's development plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plans.
- Participating in the AdvancED accreditation and continuous school improvement process - CSIP.
- Implementing policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- Developing policies and procedures aligned with the school mission and Archdiocese of Chicago policies and procedures.
- Keeping the advisory board informed of Archdiocesan policies and procedures. Informing the board of local policy implementation.
- Developing 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 meetings for new members.
- Providing 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 and interdependence with the pastor and principal.
- Adhering to Archdiocesan policies that enable the school to fulfill its mission.
- Reviewing 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.
- With the parent ambassadors, acting as the public relations and marketing arm of the school and its programs.
- Participating, upon request, in the AdvancED School Accreditation process.
- Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the AdvancED school improvement plan.
- Supporting the efforts of local 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.
- Developing and periodically reviewing the board constitution and bylaws with final approval of the Office of Catholic Schools.

Advisory boards are NOT responsible for:

- Acting as a grievance committee or conciliators for any group or individual in the school.
- Evaluating or conducting a performance review of the principal.
- Administering the school or telling the principal how to administer the school.
- Advising the principal in personnel matters.
- Hiring, evaluating, or terminating faculty and staff.
- Implementing school rules, procedures, or policies.
- Enacting or implementing Archdiocesan or school policy.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY: **CHAIRPERSON**

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

- Works with the principal in developing the agenda for meetings.
- Believes in the purpose of the board and is loyal to that purpose.
- Inspires enthusiasm for the board's purpose.
- Shares appropriate leadership responsibilities with the pastor and the principal.
- Recognizes and cultivates leadership qualities in others.
- Accepts duties required by the office to which elected.



- Attends required meetings. 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.
- Attends an annual *Safety Review Meeting* with the pastor, principal and first responders. See the Appendix for the official ISBE forms to document this meeting.

In addition, the chairperson must:

- Be impartial, tactful, firm and competent.
- Have a thorough knowledge of and accept the requirements of the constitution and bylaws.
- Appoint all committees, except when the bylaws require otherwise.
- Preside at all meetings, or secure a suitable substitute.
- 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**

- 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.
- Maintains written record of the minutes at each board meeting.
- Provides written minutes from previous board meetings for approval.
- Takes care of any additional board correspondence.
- Distributes the meeting agenda prior to the meeting.
- Prepares other reports as requested by the pastor, chair or principal.

An individual without voting rights could be appointed to serve as "Secretary of the Board." The appointed secretary does not actively participate in the meetings 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.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

The Abuse & Neglect Child Reporting Act [ANCRA] has specific language about a School Board's responsibilities to report.

If an allegation is raised to a school board member during the course of an open or closed school board meeting that a child who is enrolled in the school district of which he or she is a board member is an abused child as defined in Section 3 of this Act, the member shall direct or cause the school board to



direct the superintendent of the school district or other equivalent school administrator to comply with the requirements of this Act concerning the reporting of child abuse. For purposes of this paragraph, a school board member is granted the authority in his or her individual capacity to direct the superintendent of the school district or other equivalent school administrator to comply with the requirements of this Act concerning the reporting of child abuse.

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 agenda, it may be necessary for the member to resign. 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 constitution and 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.

Normally, the Executive Committee consisting of the pastor, principal and chair will inform a member if they are being removed from the board. A meeting should be conducted with all parties and specific documented reasons should be provided to the member being removed. The Executive Committee should cite specific violations to the Code of Ethics and/or constitution and bylaws as the reason(s) for dismissal.

COMMITTEES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

The committee structure contributes to the efficient operation of the advisory board. It is impossible to address all of the work of the board without using the committee structure. The committee structure is also a way to recruit new members to the board and provide opportunities for members of the school community to become involved in the work of the board. Committee members may include both non-board members and board members. The chair of each committee should 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 monthly 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. See the Appendix for a Committee Meeting Report form.

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. The board's bylaws should list the standing committees of the board and probable ad hoc committees.

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 particular focus area their committee has been charged with. The following is a list of potential committees on an advisory school board.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY COMMITTEE

Consists of one or more members who work closely with the pastor, director of religious education (DRE) and/or parish catechetical leader, pastoral associate (PA) and principal to ensure that the school is identifiably Catholic, teaches the precepts and doctrines of the Catholic church and promotes a commitment to social justice. This committee also assists with the faith formation of the board members.

DEVELOPMENT 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 continuous activities for the continued financial support and operation of the school.

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.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Consists of one or more members of the board who monitor the academic standards of the school including but not limited to: curriculum, admission standards, accreditation, technology and other academic concerns.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Consists of one or more members of the board who assist the pastor and the principal with the ongoing maintenance and/or remodel or expansion of the physical plant. This committee develops a facilities plan for the school and has the knowledge of and adherence to federal, state, local and Archdiocesan building codes.



FINANCE COMMITTEE

Consists of one or more members of the board who assist the pastor and principal in recommending financial procedures and policies based on best practices, assists in preparing the annual school budget and monitors ongoing revenue and expenses of the school.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

Consists of a member of the board who represents the school community and informs the board of pending legislation and legislative initiatives for the benefit of the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese.

MARKETING/ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Consists of one or more members of the board who assist in implementing the marketing plan of the school to the parish and local community, as well as assist in the recruitment and retention of students. This committee also works to maintain and enhance the positive image of the school in the community, and create a school profile and marketing materials.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad hoc Committee members are selected because they are knowledgeable, service-centered and possess 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. Non-board members of the 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.
- **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.
- **Membership/Nominating Committee:** This committee develops and implements the election/appointment procedures to fill vacancies on the advisory board. They announce the timeline for elections/appointments, seek nominees to fill vacancies and conduct the election/appointment of new members.
- **Strategic Planning/Long-Range Planning:** Consists of one or more members of the board to monitor and implement the school's strategic plan. This committee will track progress on current plans/goals and will be instrumental in developing a new plan. It is recommended that strategic plans be completed on a rotating basis and last anywhere from 3-5 years depending on the needs of the school.



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 about the annual school goals developed in collaboration with faculty members and gives a monthly report of the progress being made to implement the school's goals and objectives. The advisory board's goals should align and support the school's goals and objectives. The advisory school board's goals should also be aligned with the school's published mission or purpose statement. 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 a S.M.A.R.T. goal 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 Committee might create.

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 by January xx, 20xx as 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 the Appendix for a S.M.A.R.T. Goal template that the various committees can use.

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.

Additional school policies, aligned to Archdiocesan policies, may be developed as necessary to assist the principal in the operation of the school. The advisory board may review and recommend or develop policies at the pastor's or principal's request. In some instances, parent input may indicate that consideration should be given to developing a school procedure and/or policy. Information of this nature may come from data received through an open forum, parent surveys or the results of input from focus groups conducted by the school or advisory board. The advisory board is advised that not all issues are a matter of policy, and existing policies can sometimes be handled through a simple change in procedures. The principal should apprise the advisory board of ordinary changes in policies and procedures so all members are well informed. All school policy is contained within the Student/Parent Handbook. This handbook should be reviewed and updated annually to ensure proper compliance.

Note the principal is the only one with the authority (delegated to him/her through the pastor or other juridic person) to enact and implement policies. The advisory board does not enact or implement policy.

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.

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
- Powers of Members or Lack Thereof
- Relationships with Other Groups
- The Responsibilities of the Board Members
- 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

- Official Title of the Board

ARTICLE I - GENERAL INFO

- Name of School
- Address of School

ARTICLE II - MISSION/PURPOSE

- Mission of the School Board
- Purpose of the School Board
 - Developing the School Budget - Follow current policies established by the Office of Catholic Schools and the Office of Finance of the Archdiocese of Chicago.
 - Monitoring school Improvement Process or Strategic Plan - Participate and Monitor the School Improvement Process (CSIP and AdvancED Accreditation Process).

ARTICLE III - AUTHORITY

- Advisory - Role and Specific Areas of Involvement
- Pastor - Juridic
- Principal - Policy Formulation and Implementation
- Relationships with Other Groups

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

- Number of Members
- Procedures for Nomination/Election of Members
- Vacancies
- Ex-Officio Members
- Terms of Service - Years and Limits
- Rolling Terms
- Qualifications/Disqualifications
- Code of Ethics
- Resignation/Removal of Members
- Compensation - None

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

- Titles
 - Chair
 - Vice Chair
 - Secretary
- Eligibility
- Appointment/Election
- Clearly Defined Responsibilities
- Term Limits



- Removal of Officers

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

- The Number of Regular Meetings
- Special Meetings
- Executive Sessions
- Decision Making Process - Consensus
- Rules of Order - Robert's Rules
- Agenda Format
- Minutes
- Meeting Protocol
- Visitor Protocol

ARTICLE VII - QUORUM

- What Constitutes a "Quorum"?
 - Majority
 - Pastor Must Be Present

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

- Standing Committees and Descriptions
- Descriptions
- Committee Membership

ARTICLE IX - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Gifts
- Reimbursement Procedures
- Deposits and Checks

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

- Amendment Process
- Review Process

PROMULGATION

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



REVISING A CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

From time to time the constitution and bylaws will need to be revised to meet the current needs of the parish and school. The original Constitution and bylaws should have a provision for the amendment/revision process. There should be a consistent periodic review of the constitution and bylaws every three to five 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, the pastor has the final say.

A relatively easy intervention to address a seemingly dysfunctional board or one that seems to be “stuck” is to revise, edit or totally rewrite the constitution and bylaws. Problems may arise when there is not a clear guiding document to inform the work of the board and establish its governance structure.

FINAL APPROVAL OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

As the bylaws and constitution are either written or reviewed, it is advised that the content should be checked to ensure that it:

- Is consistent with Archdiocese of Chicago policies and procedures of the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Is clearly written and easy to understand.
- Articulates the roles and responsibilities of the members.
- Describes the school board as advisory to the pastor and principal.
- Indicates how the advisory board operates.
- Models the philosophy of the faith community.

Before final approval of the advisory board’s constitution and bylaws, a draft copy should be given to the appropriate elementary Regional Director at the Office of Catholic Schools for review. Any final revisions of the advisory board’s constitution and bylaws should also be sent to the appropriate Regional Director at the Office of Catholic Schools and will be kept on file.

ELECTION/NOMINATION OF ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The advisory board constitution and bylaws stipulate how members are elected or appointed. The Office of Catholic Schools guidelines for boards specify who is eligible to fill a vacancy on the board. 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 in order to listen to the membership. They are not hesitant; they speak up in respectful and sincere ways.

The procedures and processes for election or appointment of members to the board should be included in the constitution and bylaws. Specific duties of the Membership Committee are delineated. Membership is clearly defined. Duties are outlined in the bylaws. Timeline for nomination and election or appointment is promulgated to the school and parish community. The pastor approves the list of nominees before they are placed on the ballot or considered for appointment.



There is ongoing communication to the public about the impending vacancies on the advisory board. Recruitment of nominees is an important aspect of the nominating process and is handled by the Membership Committee. To assist in determining board staffing needs and engaging in a process for identifying potential candidates, see the Appendix for two forms: *Diversity Matrix* and the *Civic Power Grid*.

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 and may 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 particular school. See the Appendix for a complete list of *Interview Questions*.

- *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 particular 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?*

The parish and school communities are informed about the nominees, which identifies who the nominees are and their area of expertise, and provides some information about their background in Catholic education and a statement about why the individual has accepted the nomination. The election committee ensures that the ballots are prepared and announcements are made about the times, place and requirements for voting procedures for counting ballots and announcing the results of the elections specified. All nominees should be personally informed before the results of the election are shared with the community. Nominees should be thanked for offering to serve.

In cases where elections are not feasible due to a lack of qualified nominees or other contributing circumstances, new members should be recruited by the board and appointed by the pastor or the juridic. Appointed prospective board members should complete an application as well as participate in an interview to ensure that they understand the complexities of the appointment as well as their roles and responsibilities. As a means of introducing a new appointment, the school community should share a short bio and other relevant information about the new member including their area of expertise, information about their background in Catholic education and a statement about why the individual has accepted the appointment.



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 revising the constitution and bylaws, training the members, and instituting best practices is the decision of the pastor in consultation with the principal.

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

Create the constitution and bylaws for the proposed board. Taking adequate time to create a comprehensive and thorough constitution and bylaws will ensure the overall effectiveness in the short term and the longevity of the board for the long term. See the Appendix for the *Constitution Bylaws Checklist*. **TIME NEEDED: 1-2 Months.**

PHASE 3 - RECRUITMENT

First, identify the various areas of expertise needed to ensure a board that 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 Appendix for two forms that will help with recruiting: *Diversity Matrix* and the *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 all participate in the interview process. Based on the interviews, select the most highly qualified candidates. **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, including roles and responsibilities
- Past year’s meeting minutes
- Calendar of upcoming meetings and other advisory board events
- Roster and directory of current members
- Listing of the various committees, their roles and their membership
- School’s strategic plan
- 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 Appendix for a complete Orientation Checklist as well as Code of Ethics, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest forms.

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; any review of the performance of the principal as invited by the pastor (or juridic person); 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 and discussion. 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 help children learn and grow in the faith and achieve academic success.
 - **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 or perceptions.
 - **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:
 - **Assess and reflect** what worked well and what did not, using the Plus/Delta protocol and Ignatian spiritual questions.
 - **Provide next steps** for future meetings to continue the work of the board into the next cycle.

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. These notes serve as a point of reference in further discussions or for review about the topic. Any item that is stated “Off the Record” is not to be included in the notes. The secretary should take care to summarize and generalize the notes so they do not reflect poorly on any individual.



When the secretary has completed the notes, the document should be turned into a PDF so 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.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Meeting Wise Agenda Template</h2> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 5px 0 0 0;">Taken from: <i>Meeting Wise - Making the Most of Collaborative Time for Educators</i>, Kathryn Parker Boudett & Elizabeth City; Harvard Education Press</p>	
<p>ST. MARY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA Monday, August 29, 20xx 7:30-9:00 pm School Library</p> <p>Please note: Hospitality will be available from 7:00-7:30 pm. Please park in the lot adjacent to the school.</p>	
<p>TOPIC:</p> <p>August 20xx Board Meeting</p>	<p>ROLES:</p> <p>Attendees: 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</p> <p>Guest: Sr. Margaret Mary</p> <p>Visitor: Sue Vaneer</p> <p>Facilitator: Yu Tube</p> <p>Note Keeper: Justin Case</p> <p>Timekeeper: Rick O'Shea</p>
<p>MEETING OBJECTIVES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 1 - Pastor's Report - Discussion ● Objective 2 - Principal's Report - Discussion ● Objective 3 - Catholic Identity Committee Report - Discussion ● Objective 4 - Education Committee Report - Discussion ● Objective 5 - Marketing/Enrollment Committee Report - Discussion ● Objective 6 - Finance Committee Report - Discussion 	
<p>TO PREPARE FOR THIS MEETING, PLEASE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read this agenda ● Read minutes from meeting on June 21, 20xx ● Read the various committee reports ● Read the article on 1:1 technology integration in the classroom 	
<p>Schedule: 90 minutes</p>	



TIME	MINUTES	ACTIVITY
7:30-7:35 pm	5 min.	<p>Welcome!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Prayer - Sara Bellum and Don Stairs. • Welcome guests/visitors. • Determine role of Timekeeper if needed. • Take Attendance. • Review the meeting's objectives. • Review any Next Steps or Plus/Deltas from previous meeting.
7:35-7:40 pm	5 min.	<p>Review Advisory Board Meeting Norms Prior to Each Meeting.</p> <p>Meeting Norms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume positive intentions. • Take an inquiry stance. • Use "I notice" statements and "I wonder" questions. • Ground statements in evidence. • Start and end on time. • Be here and now. • Stick to protocol - hear all voices.
7:40-7:45 pm	5 min.	<p>Approval of Minutes of June 21, 20xx</p> <p>NOTES:</p>
7:45-7:55 pm	10 min.	<p>OBJECTIVE 1 - Pastor's Report - Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Campaign Update • Youth Ministry Update <p>NOTES:</p>
7:55-8:05 pm	10 min.	<p>OBJECTIVE 2 - Principal's Report - Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AdvancED Accreditation Update • Teacher Orientation and Professional Development Plan • New school staff <p>NOTES:</p>
8:05-8:15 pm	10 min.	<p>OBJECTIVE 3 - Catholic Identity Committee Report and Sr. Mary Margaret - Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and Parish Religious Education theme for the year <p>NOTES:</p>
8:15-8:25 pm	10 min.	<p>OBJECTIVE 4 - Education Committee Report - Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Technology Initiative • Article Discussion <p>NOTES:</p>



8:25-8:35 pm	10 min.	OBJECTIVE 5 - Marketing/Enrollment Committee Report - Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Projected enrollment ● Summer outreach to new families in the area NOTES:	
8:35-8:45 pm	10 min.	OBJECTIVE 6 - Finance Committee Report - Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget Update NOTES:	
8:45-8:50 pm	5 min.	Visitor Comments NOTES:	
8:50-8:55 pm	5 min.	Review Next Steps NOTES:	
8:55-9:00 pm	5 min.	Closing Prayer - Principal Jones Assess what worked well about this meeting and what we would have liked to change. <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> Based on Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.	
		+ Plus	▲ Delta
		●	●
		●	●
		●	●



Each section of the Meeting Wise agenda is described below:

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 an agenda packet including materials to preview at least one week prior to the meeting.

Includes the topic of the meeting, attendance and the various roles and responsibilities needed to the meeting. 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.”

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

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.

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. 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.**

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.**

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.**

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* is in the Appendix. **TIME: 10 minutes for each objective.**

The facilitator acknowledges any visitors. **Visitors** 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, and visitors should be thanked for coming forward and informed that someone will respond to them later. 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 Appendix for a handout that can be given to visitors prior to the meeting's commencement. **TIME: 5-10 minutes.**

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.**

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 table should speak to ways that affirm what is going well and challenge the group towards more effective engagement. **TIME: 5 minutes.**

See the Appendix for a blank School Board Meeting Wise Agenda template that can be adapted to suit 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 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, the clarification of the points being discussed 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 topic 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. Families are informed that the issues raised will be addressed in one of the following ways, e.g., item for discussion of the board agenda, policy recommendation to the principal and to the board, goals and objectives for action plans for school board or the school faculty and staff. Some items may be deferred for action at a later date. Others may be discerned as impossible or inconsistent with the resources, mission and philosophy of the Catholic school. Periodic reports are given to the school families. These updates are a response to the families, that board members have heard them and that they will, when possible, deal with the issues raised.



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 effectiveness to its stakeholders.

Board members can first reflect on their own performance and then the performance of the board as a whole using the internal evaluation form found in the Appendix. 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.

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 their function. They realize that, according to Archdiocese of Chicago policy, the boards are 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 communication. See the Appendix for an external effectiveness board evaluation form that school community can complete.

The evaluation forms that appear in the Appendix can easily be turned into online surveys to quickly gather data. Whether to offer those 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

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 with regard to 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.

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.

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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