



National Association of Boards,  
Commissions and Councils  
of Catholic Education of  
the National Catholic  
Educational Association

## APPLICATION

1. Make up a profile of the ideal board member and the traits he/she possesses. Also make a form with questions your nominating committee might ask prospective board members.

effectiveness as a member of the board. Each board member should also assess his/her own level of leadership, commitment, participation, and accountability to other members. Board members need to be honest about their commitment to the board. Such an assessment should include listing ways in which the board member can improve his/her effectiveness along with resolutions to improve during the following year.

Board members are rewarded for their dedication and their hard work with the knowledge that they have affected the destiny of Catholic education and with the satisfaction that comes from a job well done.

## QUESTIONS FOR

# REVIEW & DISCUSSION

1. Does your board follow a regular procedure in its decision-making function?
2. How are board members in-serviced about their responsibilities?

**The National Association of Boards, Commissions and Councils of Catholic Education** produces a series of Thumbnails to be used as a handy reference library by members. Also use this resource for board and staff inservices and for parent meetings. Use it for fifteen minutes at each board meeting or as the basis for an extended session.

The National Association of Boards, Commissions and Councils of Catholic Education is the component of the National Catholic Educational Association that provides advocacy, support, and services for all types and models of Catholic governance boards, commissions and councils.

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# DUTIES OF AN EDUCATION BOARD MEMBER

**P**eople who have been elected or appointed to a Catholic education board have a rare opportunity to make a difference in the quality and availability of Catholic education in their parish or diocese. Because of the importance of Catholic education boards to the planning, operation, and viability of the educational programs, board members need to take seriously the responsibilities they have assumed by saying “yes” to service on the board.

The need for the expertise, experience, and insights of the laity has never been more urgent in the history of Catholic schools. So it is vital that board members be aware of their duties and responsibilities. This Thumbnail discusses qualities that board members should aspire to possess and responsibilities they should strive to fulfill.

## **Leadership**

Individuals may be asked to fill leadership positions on the board and board members should be willing to undertake the added responsibility of becoming officers.

Moreover, every member of a board, whether called to be an officer or not, assumes a leadership role within the educational community by virtue of being part of the Catholic education board. As leaders of the board and in the community, all members need to maintain certain standards of conduct by keeping the following two ideals in mind:

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Because his or her public and private opinions take on an added weight with

parents and others in the community, the board member should strive to maintain the confidentiality of the board and to make comments in public which are positive, constructive, and helpful to the board's mission. Board members should not voice rash opinions, spread rumors or gossip, or make public remarks that would be harmful to the board and the educational programs.

- **MUTUAL SUPPORT**

Board members should exemplify the spirit of cooperation and consensus. Each individual member has the duty to support the board's final decisions, regardless of his or her personal opinion. Spreading or encouraging dissension only serves to impede the general effectiveness of the board.

## **Participation**

Board members are not only expected to attend meetings regularly, but also to be knowledgeable about the education program and its curriculum. All members should be prepared for every meeting, whether it is a meeting of the full board or a committee. Before each meeting, members should familiarize themselves with the agenda and any supporting documents that will be discussed.

- **COMMITMENT**

A board member cannot participate fully in board activities without a sense of commitment. A commitment to the

ideals of Catholic education is crucial to the efficacy of the Catholic education board.

## **Decision Making**

At times decisions and their effects seem very clear cut to the board; at other times, reaching decisions and seeing their implications is very difficult.

- Decision making includes:
- Seeing all sides of an issue
  - Relying on the expertise and insights of others
  - Being mindful of the effects of one's decision on others.

Catholic education boards see the necessity of prayer in their deliberations. They call on the Holy Spirit at the beginning of each meeting and during difficult deliberations.

## **Evaluation**

At least once a year, the board as a whole needs to evaluate its effectiveness as well as its relationship to the community. Perhaps the board can schedule an annual retreat and make this type of evaluation a significant part. At this time the consequences of policies, the success of committees, and the overall health of the education program could be examined. Boards should determine what measures were successful during the year and what improvements can be made for the next year.

- **SELF-EVALUATION**

Each individual board member should also take time to evaluate his/her own