

**Archdiocese of Hartford**  
**Office of Catholic Schools**

# Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards

2016 Edition





September 2016

Dear Friends in Catholic School Education:

We are grateful to the Leadership Committee of the Archdiocesan School Board for their work in reviewing the *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* (2010 Edition) and revising several sections of the *Manual* after five years of practical application in the network of Catholic schools. The purpose of this *Manual* is to offer guidance for elementary and secondary boards as they fulfill leadership roles as part of the educational mission of the Catholic school.

The Archdiocesan School Board first reviewed and endorsed the *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* at their May 17, 2010 meeting. During the 2010-2011 school year, the *Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards* was introduced and implemented in Parish Schools and Archdiocesan High Schools. In order for school boards to have a common frame of reference, common vocabulary, and best practices to ensure their success, on-going training will be provided.

The basic principles and insights outlined in this manual offer a clear direction concerning school boards within the Archdiocese of Hartford for Inter- parish and parish Schools and Archdiocesan High Schools. In the span of five years change has occurred, needs and trends have necessitated a review of the manual to ensure that it remains a vital directive to achieve excellence in the consultative board model.

The “signs of the time” have necessitated the exploration of new models for governance. “We are mindful of the research on Catholic school...governance that must be incorporated into best practices that will maintain and sustain its viability”, (*20†20 Vision: An Eye on our Future p.21*). Similarly, we proclaim in the ministerial plan that the Catholic identity of our schools is richly expressed through the living example and actions of the members of the school community. Included in this revised edition are sample reflection starters for school boards to use at the beginning of board meetings. This witness to our Catholic beliefs must be the foundation of all the board’s endeavors and accomplishments.

INSPIRING FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY



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# 1. Introduction

Within the Church there is understanding and appreciation for the role of the laity. The laity's effectiveness is clearly demonstrated in the activity of the local school board to assist in advancing the school's mission. The consultative, committee-driven board efficiently assists the Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator in the operations of the school. Operational viability is safeguarded and promoted through the tremendous effort of the Catholic school board. In addition, as new school models are developed, it is appropriate that various governance models be explored such as Limited Jurisdiction or Specified Jurisdiction.

Participation in the ministry of Catholic school education is one of the ways individuals can participate in the life of the Church in a significant way. This realization is the first and primary reason for having Catholic boards that provide concrete means for people to contribute to Catholic education and thereby build the kingdom of God.

In order to secure the best advice in matters of school concerns, the Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator should seek knowledgeable people to serve on the board. Guiding these volunteers is the **Leadership Manual for Catholic School Boards**, which is a resource for consultative boards. It should be used for initial in-service of members, for guidance and reference, for review, and for evaluation of the board's effectiveness. As the consultative boards in each school assume the general responsibilities of school board membership as well as those that arise from the individual committees, the **Manual** will reflect an adherence to the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*.

In community, the Catholic school board has the unique opportunity to protect and advance the teaching mission of the church. The dialogue that is created among board members stimulates unity of purpose and success. The reflections for starting a meeting will ensure the creation of a faith community. The increased responsibility of school boards to be consultative underscores the directive from the ministerial plan, *20<sup>+</sup>20 Vision: An Eye on our Future* "ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision."

The school board agrees to follow the policies and administrative procedures of the Archdiocese of Hartford and the Office of Catholic Schools. School board members agree that they will use their expertise and insights for the common good of the school community, and to promote the mission and goals of Catholic education. They will defer any personal agendas in order to discern with other school board members the issues, concerns, and challenges their schools face in meeting the educational needs of the students.

## 2. Reflective Faith Conversation Starters

### Reflective Faith Conversation Starters for Catholic School Boards to Reinforce Catholic Identity

Boards are more successful when they are focused on the school's mission – in the way members collaborate with one another and in recommendations each makes. Board members must follow the traditions of the Catholic school that include support, respect, love, mercy, and concern for young people. As a school board member, consider the following questions in your leadership role for advancing the mission of Catholic school education:

- What makes a Catholic school different from a non-Catholic?
- In what ways does our school reflect its Catholic mission well? In what ways could it improve?
- How does our school board support the Catholic mission of our school?
- What is the most important task of a Catholic school board?
- How can the board witness to the educational mission and evangelization?

(adapted from the *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis)

*“It is clear that when we create a vision and formulate a clear and workable ministerial plan, the Catholic school transforms.”*

*20 / 20 Vision: An Eye on Our Future*

### 3. School Board's Responsibility to the School's Mission

The purpose and function of the school board is to establish a center of excellence in Catholic schools by providing leadership, direction, and support to the school leaders and leadership teams.

The school board is involved with the adoption of the school's mission statement and periodic review of its operational validity and Catholic identity. The mission statement asks the question, "What are we called to do?"

What we are called to do and who the school serves often change over the years. Review is necessary to determine who the school is currently serving and how; and if the mission statement accurately reflects the school of today.

#### **Examples of an elementary and secondary school mission statement:**

*Our mission as a Catholic Parochial school is to foster spiritual and academic growth in a nurturing, safe environment. The educational, physical and cultural experience supports the development of the child in a faith-based community. We strive to instill in our students the desire to know, love and serve God. We endeavor to provide a challenging academic setting that encourages our students to gain mastery of skills and subject matter through active engagement in the learning process.*

*Faculty and administration, in partnership with each family, encourage students to excel in academics and effectively utilize technology. We aspire to graduate students who are spiritually alert, morally aware and ethically empowered young adults.*

(St. Mary Elementary School, Simsbury, CT 2015)

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*The mission of Sacred Heart High School is to educate students of diverse backgrounds in a strong Catholic tradition in order to empower these students to be moral and productive members of society.*

*Sacred Heart High School:*

- *Integrates the teachings of Jesus Christ into every facet of school life.*
- *Provides an excellent education for students of all ability levels.*
- *Fosters higher order thinking skills and intellectual curiosity to enable students to become life-long learners.*
- *Motivates students to fulfill their God-given potential spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially.*
- *Challenges students to embrace their call to service within the larger community.*
- *Creates a safe and a supportive environment to facilitate the learning process.*
- *Promotes a strong partnership with parents to enhance the student learning experience.*

*The administration, the faculty, and the staff of Sacred Heart High School are dedicated to enabling all of our students to experience the fullness of life that results from the development of individual talents.*

(Sacred Heart High School, Waterbury, CT 2015)



## 5. Constitution

Catholic schools are required to follow Archdiocese of Hartford and School Policy in all matters related to the operation of the schools. Each school shall have a consultative school board. A **Consultative board** is a body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adopting, and recommending policy to the person with authority to enact it. The person with authority is required to consult the board before making decisions in designated areas, but is not bound by the board's advice. The people in authority, in parish schools, are the Pastor and Principal, and in Archdiocesan High Schools, the Archbishop, Superintendent, and Chief Administrator.

The **Constitution** is the founding document of an organization that establishes and defines mission, structure, authority and process. See Appendix for *Model Constitution for Parish School Boards* or *Model Constitution for High School Boards*.

Constitution	Topics included in the Constitution are as follows:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The official title of the board</li> <li>The purpose and function of the board</li> <li>The responsibilities of the board</li> <li>Relationship with other groups                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archdiocese of Hartford</li> <li>• Office of Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Parish and Pastoral Councils</li> <li>• Parent Organization</li> <li>• Faculty</li> </ul> </li> <li>Membership</li> <li>Officers of board</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Quorum</li> <li>Role of Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator</li> <li>Role of Committees</li> <li>Amendments</li> </ul>



## 6. Bylaws

The **Bylaws** are rules adopted by an organization to govern its operation. Use the following materials as a point of reference when developing or revising the constitutions and bylaws. See Appendix for *Model Bylaws for Parish School Boards* or *Model Bylaws for High School Boards*.

Bylaws	Bylaws will usually include the following topics:
<b>a. Formulating and Adopting Policy for the School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process for adopting policy</li> <li>Enactment of policy by Pastor/Chief Administrator</li> <li>Process for review of school policies</li> <li>Procedures for publication of new policies</li> </ul>
<b>b. Developing the School Budget</b>	Policy and Procedure #2.101 established by the Office of Catholic Schools.
<b>c. Selection of the Principal</b>	Policy and Procedure #1.203 established by the Office of Catholic Schools.
<b>d. Performance Appraisal for President and Principal</b>	Policy and Procedure #1.207 established by the Office of Catholic Schools.
<b>e. School Improvement Process</b>	Participate in and monitor the School Improvement Process.
<b>f. Membership on the Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code of Ethics and Conduct (Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, Objectivity, Unity, Culture of Mercy, and maintenance of unity)</li> <li>Number of members</li> <li>Composition of membership</li> <li>Procedures for nomination of members</li> <li>Membership eligibility</li> <li>Resignation of a member</li> <li>Removal of a member</li> <li>Filling vacancies</li> <li>Attendance at meetings</li> </ul>

## 6. Bylaws (Continued)

Bylaws (Continued)	Bylaws will usually include the following topics:
<b>g. Officers of the Board</b>	<p>Procedures for selection/election of officers Responsibilities of officers</p> <p><b>Chair</b>  <b>Chair must be a practicing, active Catholic</b>            Presides at all meetings            Develops agenda with the Principal/Chief Administrator and Vice-Chair            Appoints committee Chairs and members            Assigns additional duties to members</p> <p><b>Vice-Chair</b>            Performs duties in absence of Chair            Serves on committees</p> <p><b>Secretary</b>            Maintains written record of minutes            Takes care of correspondence            Distributes agenda one week before the meeting            Prepares other reports as requested</p> <p>An individual without voting power could be appointed to serve as “secretary of the board.” The “appointed secretary of the board” does not participate in the meetings. This would allow all board members to fully participate in the meeting’s agenda.</p>
<b>h. Meetings</b>	<p>Place Duration and schedule Procedures for calling special meetings Procedures for visitors Procedures for Open Forum Robert’s “Rules of Order” Order of business Executive session</p>

## 6. Bylaws (Continued)

Bylaws (Continued)	Bylaws will usually include the following topics:
<b>i. Committees</b>	<p>Responsibilities Standing or ad hoc Accountability</p>
<b>j. Amendments to the Bylaws</b>	<p>Process to be followed</p>
<b>k. Review the Bylaws</b>	<p>The content should be checked at least once every five years to ensure that it: Models the faith community. Is consistent with the Archdiocese of Hartford Policies and Procedures of the Office of Catholic Schools. Is clear and readable. Articulates the roles and responsibilities of the members. Describes the school board as consultative to the Pastor and Principal/Chief Administrator. Indicates how the board operates. *(There may be other forms of board models such as Limited or Specified Jurisdiction) Before final approval of the board's constitution and bylaws, a copy should be given to the Deputy Superintendent at the Office of Catholic Schools for review. A final copy and any revisions of the board's constitution and bylaws should be sent to the Office of Catholic Schools. *For schools interested in Limited or Specified Jurisdiction please consult with the Office of Catholic Schools.</p>
<b>l. Executive Session</b>	<p>Procedures should be established for the board to meet in executive session when necessary. The board meets in executive session in order to deal with sensitive issues that may not necessarily be shared with the public. The agenda may reflect that the board will meet in executive session. Decisions made in an "executive session" are recorded. The decision, topic, issue or concern discussed in executive session is not published. The minutes of the executive session are confidential. These minutes are not made public. Some of the topics that may be covered in "executive session" include but are not limited to: the insights from Principal/Chief Administrator regarding the search process for a new administrator, the resignation or removal of a board member; the review of the Administrator's formal performance appraisal. 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 and Principal/Chief Administrator is always present for an executive session of the board. The Principal/Chief Administrator will be present except when his/her formal performance appraisal is being discussed.</p>

## 6. Bylaws (Continued)

### Bylaws (Continued)

When an action requires a vote.

#### m. Rules for Operations

An organized plan for meeting operations should always be used. i.e. Robert's Rules  
When an action requires a vote, the following process should be used:  
The action is stated by the committee chair.  
A motion is made.  
The motion must be seconded.  
The request for a vote must be made.  
The board Chair will ask for all those in favor and the count will be taken.  
The board Chair will ask for all those opposed and the count will be taken.  
The board Chair will then announce the motion is accepted or the motion is denied.

Examples of meeting operation plans:

1. Robert's Rules
2. American Counseling Association: Simplified Rules of Order

## 7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities

### Size and Composition

It is recommended that the board be composed of 7-9 members (excluding Pastor, Superintendent, Principal, and Chief Administrator). They should include:

#### Issues to be Explored

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#### **ARCHBISHOP**

Governance of Catholic schools rests with the Archbishop, who exercises it directly or through his delegates. In accordance with Canon Law, the Archbishop is the chief catechist of the Archdiocese with final authority over schools.

#### **PASTOR**

The ultimate responsibility of the parish and school rests with the pastor who is appointed by the Archbishop. The pastor supports the work of the board and should be regularly consulted and informed in the work of the board. The pastor approves local school board decisions. The pastor attends all regular and executive board meetings, represents the interests of the parish to the board and represents the interests of the school to the parish. He serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the consultative board. As an ex-officio, all discussion and varying opinions must take place before a vote is taken. If the Pastor changes his view after a vote is taken, a motion must be made to revisit the decision, and the Pastor's reason must be documented in writing.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT**

The Superintendent of Schools serves as the Archbishop's educational executive, charged with the task of coordinating and facilitating the services of the Archdiocese to elementary and secondary schools. The Superintendent provides leadership and support to the Priests and Principal/Chief Administrator of all schools in the Archdiocese. The Superintendent attends regular and executive board meetings and serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Archdiocesan High School Boards. The Superintendent may assign the Deputy Superintendent to serve as ex-officio, non-voting member of the Archdiocesan High School Boards.





## 7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities (Continued)

### Responsibilities of the Board Members

The school board is by its nature consultative to the Pastor and Principal in parish, inter-parish schools; and to the Archbishop, Superintendent, and Chief Administrator in the Archdiocesan High Schools. In parish schools, the consultative board shall relate to the parish finance council as directed by the Pastor. In Archdiocesan high schools, the board relates to the Corporation Officers through the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent and Chief Administrator. The school board is a leadership group within the mission of Catholic education. As such, the responsibilities include:

1. **Executive:** includes Pastor, Principal/Chief Administrator, School Board Chair, Vice Chair
2. **Mission Formation & Evangelization:** adoption of the school's mission statement, and periodic review of its operational validity
3. **Policy:** the formulation and adoption of policy for the school, as needed, within the framework of Archdiocesan policy and monitor the implementation of school policy and procedure
4. **Planning:** the development and regular updating of a 3-5 year plan for the school; annual goal-setting for the school and for the board. The long-range plan should follow the guidelines of the Office of Catholic Schools (i.e. includes but not limited to marketing, facilities, enrollment management)
5. **Advancement:** the formulation and implementation of an Advancement program for the school, following Archdiocesan guidelines
6. **Budget:** adopting the school's operational budget, according to the format specified by the Office of Catholic Schools; receiving periodic reports from the Principal/Chief Administrator on the implementation of the budget. The finance committee formulates, approves, and adopts the budget, and the chair of the finances committee is responsible for reporting the status of the budget at each regular meeting
7. **Nominating:** Exploring a variety of expertise required by goals
8. **Evaluation:** systematically evaluating:
  - The school's mission statement, goals and policies
  - The board itself
  - The Principal/Chief Administrator within the process of the Archdiocese
9. **Recommendation for the Appointment of the Principal/Chief Administrator:** when a vacancy occurs, some board members will be asked to participate in the search process. The school board chair may serve as the chair of the search committee.

*The Catholic school community therefore, is an irreplaceable source of service, not only to the pupils and its other members, but also to society.*

*Pope Francis (to the Roman Curia)*



## 7. School Board Membership and Responsibilities (Continued)

### Responsibilities of the Board Members (Continued)

#### PASTOR

- Canonical administrator of parish; spiritual and administrative leader
- Hires, supervises, and with the Office of Catholic Schools, evaluates the Principal of parish school
- Brings his overall knowledge of the parish to the board
- Approves budget prepared by the Principal and recommended by the school board
- Cooperates in the initiation and implementation of the school's advancement plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plan
- The school board is consultative to the Pastor. Pastor has ultimate responsibility.
  - While he may make a decision contrary to majority vote, this is usually infrequent since the presumption is that the board is worthy of the trust he has placed in them.
  - If he does not approve a board decision, he should provide a written statement of his reasons to the board. If a change of heart occurs after a vote has been taken, the Pastor must respond in writing and a motion to revisit the decision must be made. In this and all cases, the board must recognize his ultimate authority.

#### SUPERINTENDENT

- Chief spokesperson for mission of Catholic schools
- Ex-officio non-voting member of Archdiocesan High School Boards
- Under the authority of the Archbishop, the Superintendent is responsible for the establishment and implementation of Archdiocesan policy governing Catholic schools, and for the direction of the Office of Catholic Schools in providing guidance and service to schools in the Archdiocese.
- The Superintendent is responsible for the oversight of the Archdiocesan High Schools.
- Superintendent and staff of the Office of Catholic Schools establish regulations, programs and procedures to implement the policies promulgated by the Archbishop in the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*.
- The Superintendent of Catholic Schools interprets Archdiocesan policies; provides in-service programs; consults; receives recommendations for additions/changes to Archdiocesan Catholic School procedures.

\* The Deputy Superintendent is responsible for school board development at the local level

#### CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR / PRINCIPAL

- Educational leader and administrator of School – responsible for operation of the School program
- Parish, Inter-Parish School Principal responsible for employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff; the establishment of educational programming; evaluation and management of student behavior; and implementation of school policy, all in accordance with Archdiocesan policy.





## 8. Committees and Responsibilities (Continued)

### Standing Committee Responsibilities

The recommended **standing committees** and a brief description of their responsibilities are:

#### EXECUTIVE

The Executive Committee prepares full board meetings, transcribes minutes of meetings, and provides guidance and direction to the chairs of committees as well as professional development as needed to the school board.

#### Responsibilities:

1. Developing and regular (annual) updating and aligning to 20/20 Vision the long-range strategic plan to assess where the School is currently and where it hopes to be in 3-5 years
2. Including an environmental scan and a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) into the plan
3. Making the plan strategic – explaining how the School will achieve its goals and not just projecting current trends over 3-5 years.
4. Developing a value proposition statement for the school
5. Including consultation from constituents; parents, teachers, parish, principal, pastor
6. Preparing eight areas of the plan: Catholic Identity, Enrollment, Staffing, Excellence in Catholic Education, Physical Plant, Financial Plan, Advancement, and Nominating  
For each area: stating dream/vision; setting goals; prioritizing goals; establishing objectives and action steps (including cost, staffing, and timing)
7. Creating a case statement including data gathered and a narrative. The case statement provides platform for why donors should contribute.
8. Using the plan as the school's yearly road map that drives all advancement activities
9. Planning annually for the third/fifth year out so school always has a 3-5 year plan

\*\*Strategic plan is necessary to maintain school's NEAS&C accreditation and to receive funding from the Archdiocese.

## 8. Committees and Responsibilities (Continued)

### Standing Committee Responsibilities (Continued)

The committee is responsible for:

#### MISSION AND EVANGELIZATION

The local school board and the leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.

##### Responsibilities:

1. The school board must participate in formulating the mission statement and periodically reviewing its operational validity.
2. Leadership, faculty and governance teams must accept that the Catholic school is the center of evangelization.

The board must assist the school by supporting a culture that welcomes diversity, by appreciating their role as laity called and gifted within the Catholic school community, and by supporting the need for cultivation of a strong Catholic identity.

#### ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

The school board participates in the formulation and implementation of strategies for the School which includes; enrollment management, public relations and marketing, and is in line with the Office of Catholic Schools guidelines.

##### Responsibilities:

1. Participating in marketing support to drive enrollment
2. Assisting in the analysis of student recruitment and retention programs
3. Collaborating with communication planning and tools

## 8. Committees and Responsibilities (Continued)

### Standing Committee Responsibilities (Continued)

The committee is responsible for:

#### FINANCE

The school board assists in adopting and monitoring the school's operational budget, according to the format specified by the Office of Catholic Schools. Preparation of periodic reports from the Principal/Chief Administrator on the implementation of the budget is vital to the stability and viability of the school.

##### Budgeting Responsibilities:

1. Adopting the budget (income and expenditure) according to the Archdiocesan format; monitoring the budget via periodic reports from the Principal and Pastor with recommendations from the parish finance council for parish schools, and aligned with the benchmarks from 20/20 Vision's domain – Operational Vitality. For Archdiocesan High Schools, financial reports are developed by the Chief Administrator, business manager, and finance committee and sent directly to the Office of Catholic Schools
2. Developing the plans and means to finance on-going educational program (i.e. setting the tuition, negotiating the parish subsidy with the Pastor and parish finance council, developing the annual operating budget)
3. Participating in development of financial plan section of the Strategic Plan  
Catholic schools are funded from a combination of tuition, subsidy (parish, Archdiocesan, religious congregation, donated services), fundraising, and advancement.
4. Integrating tuition assistance line item into budget

##### Advancement Responsibilities:

5. Formulating and implementing advancement program, including public relations and marketing, fund development, alumni and constituency relations, and enrollment management
6. Friend-raising, not fundraising (Raise funds, friends, and freshmen)
7. Supporting the advancement team
8. Identifying, cultivating, and soliciting major donors; serving as School ambassadors in the community; participating in fund development; recruitment; marketing; and alumni relations.

\*\*Budget must be approved/enacted by the Pastor and implemented by Principal of parish schools or reviewed by the Office of Catholic Schools Director of School Finance and approved by the Archdiocesan High School Corporation and enacted by the Chief Administrator for Archdiocesan High Schools.

## 8. Committees and Responsibilities (Continued)

### Standing Committee Responsibilities (Continued)

The committee is responsible for:

#### NOMINATING

The school board creates a nominating committee to seek new board members to replace those whose terms have expired. The Pastor must approve the nominations for Parish School Boards. The Archbishop with the Superintendent's recommendation must approve appointments to Archdiocesan High School Boards.

#### Responsibilities:

1. Ensuring that the school board membership is representative of the school community and is comprised of members whose talents speak to the priority needs of the school as stated in the long-range strategic plan
2. Gathering biographical information on candidates including their statement of interest/candidacy which presents their vision for the school, their willingness to share their time, talent, and treasure with the school, and their interests and expertise that can be matched with the school's needs and goals. For Archdiocesan High School Boards, candidates must complete the *Statement of Candidacy Archdiocesan High School Board* form and a *Pastor's Approval Form*, see Appendix.
3. Developing a slate of eligible candidates for board membership, to be given to the board Chair for discussion and consensus by the board and submitted to the Pastor for appointment to parish schools, or to the Archbishop with the recommendation of the Superintendent to Archdiocesan High Schools.
4. Providing Confidentiality Statement to be signed by new board members. Refer to Appendix for *Confidentiality Statement for School Boards*.
5. Preparing and executing a board orientation annually for new members.
6. Suggesting topics for board in-services.
7. Preparing slate of nominees to be elected as officers of the board.
8. The Nominating Committee Chair conducts the election of officers for appointment to the board.

Refer to Appendix for *School Board Nominating Committee Guidelines*.

## 9. Annual Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps

A **goal** is a statement of broad direction or purpose. A goal, by definition, will identify some outcome that will be achieved. An **objective** is the specific time-oriented and realistic statement of what is going to be done to achieve a goal. The **action steps** further specify the **how, when, who, where, and cost** for each objective.

### Issues to be Explored

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Annual goals, objectives, and action steps are developed to accomplish the ongoing work of the board. They must be specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, and timely. The Principal/Chief Administrator informs the board about the annual school goals developed by faculty members and gives a report of the progress being made to implement the School goals and objectives. The board's goals support School goals as reflected in the long-range strategic plan.

*“We must pay our students the respect of high expectations, which include the opportunities we give them to prove to us and to themselves that they have reached and exceeded those expectations! It is the quality of the assessment that determines the limits the students’ minds will be stretched. It is the format and the delivery... that will provide an opportunity for all students with varying learning styles to excel.”*

*20/20 Vision  
Mary Jane Krebbs, Ph. D., 2012*





## 10. Policy Development (Continued)

### Proposing a New Policy

An issue or topic may be brought to the board by one or more members for discussion and, if the board determines there is a need, the individual or group who proposed the policy may be asked to develop a rationale for the new or changed policy. This formalizes the process but does not imply that it will receive approval.

#### Issues to be Explored

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The need for a potential new policy or change to existing policy should be submitted to the administration and to the board using the *Proposed New Policy or Change in Policy Form* (see Appendix) that includes: a statement indicating the need for the policy and the perceived consequences of implementing the change.

Once the topic is placed on the agenda, the following occurs:

- Discussion about the topic, issue, concern,
- Study of the issue is conducted by the principal, and possibly by an ad hoc committee
- Questions, concerns are clarified by the individual or group who initiated the policy,
- A statement is formulated that is brief, simple, clear,
- The statement is written to describe what will be accomplished.

The **first reading of the proposed policy** is considered at the board meeting. (This may occur at an executive session.) If the policy will be considered, the initiator or a committee assigned by the Chair “writes” the policy with the suggestions made by the board in a **second draft**. The **second reading of the proposed policy** allows the board to either accept or reject the proposed policy, or ask for another draft. An approved policy is dated, submitted to the Pastor in parish schools or the Superintendent in Archdiocesan High Schools for enactment, and then included with the other policies.

**Publication of the policy** occurs when the board adopts the policy and it is promulgated by the Pastor/Chief Administrator. Appropriate constituents are informed about the new policy. This may occur through the school newsletter, the parish bulletin and/or the school’s handbooks.

**Reviewing and rescinding policies** is also the responsibility of the board. Policies are tested every time they are used, and they should be changed as soon as they become obsolete in order to achieve a balance of justice and care.

When the policy has been approved, and enacted, the Principal/Chief Administrator determines how the policy will be **implemented** and informs the board about the progress being made.

# 11. The Agenda

## Planning the Agenda for board meetings.

The Principal/Chief Administrator and Chair of the board plan the meeting agenda and have it distributed to the members along with an agenda packet at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Include the name of the school, date, time, and place of the meeting on the agenda. Topics for future agendas can be raised at meetings. The format for the meetings is the same for all meetings. Meetings are usually scheduled for no more than two hours. Refer to Appendix for samples of a *Template for School Board Agenda*.

<p><b>a. Set Times for each of the following:</b></p>	<p>A planning meeting is essential for the school board. It should occur in June of the present year or late August preceding the new year. At this meeting goals should be clearly assigned to each committee. The goals should be communicated on the school's website.</p>
<p><b>b. Gathering</b></p>	<p>Usually occurs 10-15 minutes before the meeting. The purpose is to socialize. Rotate task of bringing refreshments.</p>
<p><b>c. Call to order</b></p>	<p>Welcome and Opening Prayer Recognition of visitors Roll call</p>
<p><b>d. Consent Agenda</b></p>	<p>A group of items that may include previous meeting minutes for approval, general reports, committee reports, routine correspondence, and/or informational materials that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not require discussion</li> <li>• Are self-explanatory</li> <li>• Are noncontroversial</li> <li>• Were submitted in writing and distributed to the board prior to the meeting</li> </ul> <p>Consent agenda items can be removed from the group and placed on the meeting agenda. The consent agenda is voted on as a whole and acceptance is stated in the meeting minutes. The purpose of a consent agenda is to free up time for discussion of critical issues and ongoing planning.</p> <p>The Chair handles this part of the agenda.</p>
<p><b>e. Presentations (See page 25)</b></p>	<p>Presentations to the school board could be offered early in the meeting</p>
<p><b>f. General Reports (See page 25)</b></p>	<p>Pastor: updates and shares general information that has not been included in the consent agenda. Principal: gives information not already included in the consent agenda about the school's program; gives a progress report about the school's goals and objectives; informs about the coming School activities; clarifies questions raised in report; provides data regarding enrollment trends. Board Chair: gives information regarding board events and activities.</p>



## 11. The Agenda (Continued)

### Planning the Agenda for board meetings. (Continued)

g. <b>Committee Reports (See page 27)</b>	Indicate who will present the report on behalf of the committee and the purpose of the report, e.g., seek input from the board or make a final recommendation. Not all committees give reports at each meeting. Written updates can be given to the board as part of the consent agenda.
h. <b>Standing Committees (See page 27)</b>	List each committee that will apprise the board about its progress, only if they need input from the board or have some final recommendations for the board to consider. Otherwise, a written report may be included in the consent agenda.
i. <b>Ad hoc committees</b>	List each committee that will apprise the board about its progress, only if input is needed from the board or there is some final recommendation for the board to consider. Otherwise, a written report may be included in the consent agenda.
j. <b>Old Business</b>	Consider items addressed at a previous meeting
k. <b>New Business</b>	Indicate the topic or issue to be addressed
l. <b>Visitors Comments (See page 28)</b>	Non-members who wish to speak at a board meeting shall submit their request in writing to the Chairperson 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. Their requests will be honored if their business is appropriate for the board's responsibilities and agenda. Such persons shall be given a specific time limit for speaking. Guests should be informed that someone would respond to them later. Do not make promises about resolving the issues raised.
m. <b>Planning for Next Meeting's Agenda</b>	Suggestions or items not covered should be carried over.
n. <b>Closing Comments (See page 28)</b>	
o. <b>Closing Prayer</b>	A board member may be selected to close the meeting with a prayer.
p. <b>Executive Session</b>	Executive Sessions are held as needed either before the regularly scheduled meeting or after the meeting. Executive sessions need not be part of every board meeting.





# 11. The Agenda (Continued)

## Planning the Agenda for board meetings. (Continued)

### q. Open Forum

#### Issues to be Explored

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Board meetings, other than those held in executive session, may be open to the public. The dates and times are announced in the school’s monthly calendar and/or the church bulletin. A particular time may be stipulated on the agenda to allow visitors to address the board.

The Open Forum 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 allows the board, Pastor and School administrator to hear from the parents and guardians of the students. Parents and guardians are given the opportunity to express what they are thinking about the School and its mission of Catholic education for their children.

- Parents and guardians are invited to attend an open forum with the board.
- The date and time is announced well in advance.
- The purpose of the open forum is clearly stated.
- The protocol for participating is announced. This is not a time to resolve specific problems or express grave displeasure with an 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 collated by the school board.
- Parents and guardians will be asked:
  - What do you like about the school?
  - If you could change one thing in the school, what would that be?
  - If you could add one thing to the school’s program, what would that be?
- 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 school board since the input will serve as a means of continuous improvement in the school’s program and its operation.
- The results of the Open Forum become an agenda item at a future board meeting. The board determines a way to 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 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 mission, means 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.





## 13. Office of Catholic Schools - Contacts

The Office of Catholic Schools will provide services of orientation and training, guidance, and direction so that the purpose of and function for the consultative, committee-driven school board will be sustainable and viable.

### Issues to be Explored

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

Archdiocese of Hartford  
Office of Catholic Schools  
467 Bloomfield Avenue  
Bloomfield, CT 06002  
(860) 242-5573

### RESOURCES

Office of Catholic Schools Website:  
[www.catholicedaohct.org](http://www.catholicedaohct.org)



# 14. Annual Planning and Self-Assessment of the School Board

**Issues to be Explored**

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For a Catholic school board to be effective, it must provide time for goal setting and periodic evaluation. It is important that at least one day be set aside each year for an annual planning meeting for board members to meet with the school’s administrators in order to set the board’s goals for the year, as well as to review the administration’s goals. The board will plan annually for the election of officers for appointment. It is also important that the board evaluates its performance. Refer to the Appendix for the *School board Self-Assessment* tool to be used for this purpose. The *School Board Self-Assessment* should be completed by each board member and submitted at least seven (7) days prior to the annual meeting to the Secretary of the board. The Secretary will file a report of the data to the board Chair for discussion at the annual planning meeting and for consensus on planned changes. A summary of the results of the self-assessment must be sent to OCS by July 1 signed by Principal and School Board Chair.

*“Both research and experience suggest that operational vitality and, indeed, long-term viability are enhanced by clarity of roles and responsibilities...collaborative efforts...clearly written school foundational documents...strategic long-range plans...operational plans...and professional development.”*

*20/20 Vision  
Br. John R. Paige CSC, Ph. D., 2012*

## 15. Acknowledgements

### Resources:

The Archdiocese of Chicago

The Diocese of Providence

The Diocese of St. Augustine

*Effective Characteristics for Parish School Boards in the Archdiocese of Hartford.* Hoyt. (2012).

The National Catholic Educational Association

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Amy Boucher, Member of Archdiocesan Planning Committee

Maria Maynard, Deputy Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Diane Newell, Administrative Assistant, Office of Catholic Schools

## 16. Appendix

Commissioning a School Board  
Model Constitution for Parish School Boards  
Model Constitution for High School Boards  
Model Bylaws for Parish School Boards  
Model Bylaws for High School Boards  
School Board Committee Report Form  
Statement of Candidacy Archdiocesan High School Board  
Pastor's Approval Form  
Confidentiality Statement for School Boards  
School Board Nominating Committee Guidelines  
Proposed New Policy or Change in Policy Form  
Template for School Board Agenda  
School Board Self-Assessment  
Glossary of Terms

