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Office of Catholic Education and Formation

**BEST PRACTICES FOR MEMBERS OF
PARISH BOARDS OF EDUCATION
2024**

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Functions of an Advisory Board

- Mission driven
- Develop and defend policy
- Sustainability as their goal
- Data in decision making
- Stewards for the good of the parish and school
- Enable leaders to lead
- Good source of public relations
- Provide on-going leadership in strategic planning

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Mission Driven

- All acts of the board should be to **strengthen the mission** of the Catholic Church, our parishes and our schools!
- As effective board members, it is important to reflect on the following three statements;
 - * Is the act true to the school's mission statement?
 - * Does the act enhance our Catholic identity?
 - * Is the act student focused?

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PURPOSE OF THE BOARD

To advise the Pastor (and Principal) in developing, guiding, and revising **policy** for parish educational program.

To defend the Pastor and Principal in **implementing the procedures** which reflect the policy.

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POLICY VS. PROCEDURE

Policy	Procedure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy is a statement that gives direction for administrative action. • A policy sets a goal or an end to be achieved. • A policy answers the question, "What does the board want to see happen?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A procedure is a means of enacting the policy. • A procedure gives specific direction to the method used to enact the policy. • Procedures answer the questions, "Who?" "When?" "How?"

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SOME THINGS POLICY CAN DO

- Give general direction to the administration
- Anticipate and forestall crises
- Clarify expectations for students, parents, teachers and others
- Organize and preserve the board's decisions
- Reduces subjectivity and inconsistency

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SOME THINGS POLICY CAN'T DO

- Control or supervise administration
- Resolve specific problems after the fact
- Address isolated cases or petty items

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POLICY AREAS

- Mission Enhancement
- Instruction/Curriculum
- Student Issues
- Facilities and Safety
- Finance
- Personnel
- Enrollment Management (Development)

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POLICY AREAS

- **Mission Enhancement**
 - The school will provide opportunities for the teachers/staff to grow and develop in their own faith and in their ability to spread the Gospel message to the students entrusted to them.
- **Instruction/Curriculum**
 - Specific guidelines for student and faculty use of the computer and internet is developed by the school administration, in consultation with the technology committee.
- **Student Issues**
 - No student is to be subjected to any type of harassment. The school is to offer programs that reduce the incidents of harassment in the school.

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POLICY AREAS

- **Facilities and Safety**
 - The school provides supervision thirty minutes before the school day begins and thirty minutes after the end of the school day. Students are not to arrive before or remain after the designated times.
- **Finance**
 - The school finance committee is to present a report on the status of the school budget at each school board meeting.
- **Personnel**
 - “St. Vincent’s” is a Catholic school and preference in hiring will be given to practicing Catholics.

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Board Member Roles

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CHAIN OF COMMAND

- Teacher
- Principal
- Pastor

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The work of the Board

Meeting Preparations

- Agenda set by Administrator and Board President
- Reports sent to Board President
- Materials sent to Board Members at least 1 week prior to meeting
- Meeting announced publicly

Board Meetings

- Open Session
- Call to order
- Opening prayer
- Minutes
- Reports: Pastor, Principal, DRE, Committees
- Old Business
- New Business
- Closed Session (if necessary)
- Closing Prayer
- Adjournment

In between Meetings

- Committee Work
- Assign Tasks
- Work completed at least 2 weeks before next meeting
- Prepare report as necessary

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OPEN SESSION

- Call to order
- Opening prayer
- Minutes
- Reports: Pastor, Principal, DRE, Committees
- Old Business
- New Business

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OPEN SESSION CONT.

When a community member requests time before the board during a board meeting.....

- Contact prior to the meeting
- Time limit
- Response by the President
- Follow up by the appropriate person

*This process should be outlined in your board by-laws and constitution.

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CLOSED SESSION

- Executive members only
- Confidential conversation between board members
- Discussion of topics and policy may not be appropriate to be shared with the entire community – Policy discussions happen during closed session – voting happens during open session
- Closed sessions are not secret sessions
- Pastor/Principal confidentiality

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BOARD MINUTES

- Place and Date of the meeting
- Names of members present and absent
- Approval of the minutes of the last meeting
- Officers and committee reports
- All motions and the vote on the motions
- Record all decisions, action steps and persons responsible

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MOST DIFFICULT THINGS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

- Understanding your role and function and how to accomplish it effectively
- Learning to acknowledge publicly that the board can function only as a whole
- Learning how to respond appropriately to the complaints and concerns
- Understanding that you are representing all students and parents – no hidden agenda

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EFFECTIVE BOARDS

- Attend a Board Training /Orientation
- Support the Administration
- Furnish the vision, leadership, optimism, and courage to take risks
- Have members that are strategic and creative problem solvers
- Have a current constitution and by-laws and operate within their parameters

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EFFECTIVE BOARDS CONT.

- Understand the board's policy making role and the administrator's policy implementation role
- Evaluate their effectiveness as a board
- Communicate effectively internally and externally

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EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

- Are prepared for meetings and come with an open mind
- Respect confidentiality
- Are loyal to the Board and its decisions
- Refer concerns through proper channels
- Remember that your authority is only within board meetings

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Closing Thoughts

National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools

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 in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

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