

# **BYLAWS OF THE ST. MARY SCHOOL BOARD**

## **INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

The mission of the Catholic School Board of St. Mary School is to promote a Catholic School system with an excellent academic program founded on Christian virtues, directing students towards a conscious choice of living a responsible Catholic life.

### **Article I**

#### **Name of the Organization**

The name of this body shall be the School Board of St. Mary Catholic School.

### **Article II**

#### **Purposes and Functions**

Catholic School Boards are advisory to the Principal and Pastor in Parish Schools. The Board assists the Principal and Pastor to recommend policy, identify and articulate the educational needs and aspirations of the school and school community and engage in long range planning.

**Section 1:** The Board shall be consultative to the Principal in all school matters for which the Principal seeks the Board's advice and expertise.

**Section 2:** The Board shall give advice to the Principal and the Pastor on financial matters concerning the School.

**Section 3:** The Board, with the Principal, shall help and formulate and monitor the School's budget.

**Section 4:** The Board shall be involved as advisors in issues and written policies that further the mission and goals of the School and are subject to the approval of the Pastor.

**Section 5:** The Board shall continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of its policies once approved by the Pastor. The Pastor shall receive any reports concerning the effectiveness of the policy/policies.

**Section 6:** The Board will research, develop, and communicate for itself and the school specific actions and strategies for a 3-5 year long range plan. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

**Section 7:** Board Members shall be actively involved in the fund-raising efforts of the School.

### **Article III**

#### **Membership**

**Rationale:**

Serving on a Catholic School Board is a ministry. Members provide a service for the Catholic School community. Boards will seek members committed to Catholic education with specific areas of experience and only a few positions ought to be filled by current parents. Catholic School boards are **NOT like public school Boards.** A Catholic school board member's role is to give advice and not to become involved in the day-to-day operation of the school.

Members should never be motivated to serve on a Board for the purpose of accomplishing personal agenda items. A Member who offers to serve needs to be open-minded and use relevant data to make informed decisions. The Member must keep in mind the overall good of the school as the basis for one's advice and input. A Board Member has no authority as an individual. Only when the Board meets as group does the person function as a Board Member. Board Members do not serve as conduits to the administration for parents/guardians who have questions, complaints and /or concerns. Board Members must always refer such calls to the appropriate school representative. An explicit chain-of-command must be followed or parents/guardians will not be communicating with the appropriate School representative.

Discernment is a process by which we try to decide what God wills us to do in particular circumstances. Discernment is the preferred method for making decisions such as major policy and new board members. Discernment is a formal process for filling board seats whereby those with knowledge of the work of the Board and its long- term goals select the new members based on the school's needs.

**Section 1:** The Membership of the School Board will consist of a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 11 voting members. Every effort must be made to represent the diverse populations of the schools. Membership must include person/s with a background in finance. The Pastor will serve as an ex officio member of the Board and he possesses the right of approval or the right of veto in

administrative decisions. The Principal serves as an ex officio member and school administrator for the board.

**Section 2:** A Board Member's term is three (3) years, renewable for One (1) additional three year term. The terms of the members should overlap so that a maximum of no more than one third are leaving the board at any time. If a person is appointed to complete a vacated Board position, the appointed Member may serve the remainder of the vacated term, provided that the appointed Member's consecutive years of service will not exceed a maximum of six consecutive years.

**Section 3:** Those ineligible for service on the Board are:

- A. Employees of St. Mary Catholic School and of the Parish, whether teaching or non-teaching personnel.
- B. Spouses, children or siblings of employees of the Parish or School.
- C. More than one member of an immediate family at a time.
- D. Board members or professional educators of another school or school system, primary through secondary.

\*Immediate relatives include spouses, children, siblings, and/or any relative closer than a first cousin.

## **Article IV**

### **Nominations, Selections, and Appointments**

**Section 1:** Those eligible for service on the Board:

- A. Are members of St. Mary Parish or any other Catholic parishes or non – Catholic faith communities that are representative of said School's student population,
- B. Have interest in and commitment to Catholic education and the philosophy and mission of St. Mary Catholic School,
- C. Are available to attend meetings regularly and participate in activities sponsored by the Board,
- D. Shall participate in one yearly in-service program specifically designed by the Galveston-Houston Archdiocesan School Council for local boards,
- E. Shall participate in committee work, and
- F. Shall maintain a high level of integrity and confidentiality.

**Section 2: Selection of New Board Members by Discernment**

During the months of January and February, the nomination committee will seek and invite individuals to allow their names to be proposed for a Board position. Those seeking a position will apply with the nominating form which shall then be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Board. Those approved candidates' forms will be sent to the Pastor for final approval. A discernment process will then be held with the approved candidates.

The Discernment Process shall include the following: all voting members of the Board, the Principal, the Pastor, the past President, and the candidates. Those present will vote on the candidates until the appropriate numbers of Board Members are chosen. New Board Members will begin their terms in April.

**Section 3: Vacated Position**

In the event that a Board Member must vacate his/her position during the term, an alternate from the most recent discernment process will be appointed. If any candidate is unavailable or unwilling to serve, then an alternate from previous discernment processes will be appointed. If all candidates are unavailable or unwilling to serve, then a replacement will be appointed by the President with the agreement of the Principal.

**Article V**

**Officers**

The officers of the board should include a President, Vice-President and secretary. Any member of the board is eligible to hold office. The process of discernment is recommended for the selection of officers, optimally to be held in May.

**Section 1: Officers**

The Board President shall preside at all regular and special meetings. He/she works with the Principal to prepare the agenda prior to all meetings.

The Board Vice-President, in the absence of or at the request of the Board President, performs the duties and exercises the responsibilities of the Board President.

The Board Secretary is responsible for recording and distributing accurate minutes of meetings, posting the agenda, handling correspondence, preserving reports and documents and submitting to the Superintendent a current roster of local school board members. Existing or revised by-laws should be submitted to the Archdiocesan School Superintendent for review.

## **Article VI**

### **Meetings**

Meetings should be held at a regular time and place each month except for July, in which there is no meeting. The standing committees shall meet as needed. Special Board meetings can be called by the Pastor, the Principal, and/or the President. If Board meetings are attended by non-members, the Board will go into Executive Session whenever the issue/s is of a confidential matter. Two-thirds (2/3) of the regular Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any special or regular meeting. Following discussion, Boards shall reach consensus on all issues. All Members will support the decision reached by consensus. Meetings shall last no longer than one or two hours.

A person may address the Board provided a written request is given to the Principal and board President ten (10) working days prior to a scheduled meeting and is accepted for inclusion on the agenda.

Presentations to the board should:

- Have a time limit of 5 minutes; and
- Nothing of a confidential nature should be addressed, such as discipline problems or personnel issues. The Pastor or Board President may at any time stop the presentation if it is of a sensitive nature.
- No discussion with the presenter will follow the presentation.
- A written response from the School Board President will be sent to the presenter within five (5) working days of the presentation.

Executive/Closed Session:

When an executive/closed session is called, the regular meeting is adjourned, all guests are asked to leave and the executive/closed session begins. Any conversation or written submissions that are part of an executive session are confidential and are not subject to disclosure unless required by law. Any breach of confidentiality may result in removal from the Board by the Pastor. The minutes as recorded by the Board's secretary, simply reflect that a discussion was held in executive session and no specifics are recorded.

## **Article VII**

### **Standing Committees**

#### **Strategic Planning Committee**

The various committees and the board as a whole should be actively involved in assisting the Principal in the role of short and long-term planning. The Texas Catholic Conference Education Department requires each school, under the direction of the local governing body and leadership, to have a written site-based long-range strategic plan. An outline of this plan follows:

##### **Strategic Plan Process**

##### **Purpose:**

- To assist the administration in the formulation of a long-range strategic plan that flows from the mission statement;
- Encompasses a period of 3-5 years;
- Outlines realistic operational and strategic goals;
- To assist the administration in the formulation of policy to guide academic, student, business, development and faith community affairs.

#### **Finance Committee**

##### **Purpose:**

- To monitor the current year budget and to develop and propose to the Board a budget for the next fiscal year;
- To prepare, update and monitor long-range financial plans for the school;
- To oversee, from a policy and planning perspective, business operations of the school.

#### **Marketing and Advancement Committee**

##### **Purpose:**

- Promote the school's value and achievements to the community,
- Build a strong image in the community,

- Publicize the value and benefits of Catholic education,
- Support/enhance advancement efforts, and maintain and increase enrollment.

**Article VIII**

**Amendments**

An amendment or revision to the By-Laws requires two readings by the Board. The By-Laws may be amended or revised by consensus of the Board and are subject to the Pastor's expressed approval.

**Article IX**


**Rules of Order**

Ordinarily, input toward policy development and other major issues are not made at the "first reading," which is for information and clarification. The "second reading" of the proposed policy occurs after additional consultation and clarification.

In order to make the best decisions, the consensus method of decision-making shall be used. In all matters of procedure, Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, should be used.

Approved this 26th day of October, 2015.

The Bylaws of St. Mary Catholic School are hereby ratified by:

President 

Date: 10/26/15

Pastor 

Date 11/3/15

