

Boards of Catholic Education

Elementary and Secondary
School Boards, Education
Commissions, and Councils

In-service for New Board Members

- Board achievements
- Current projects
- Challenges/recurring issues
- Relationships with key groups/persons
- Meeting structure
- Committee structure
- Board member list
- Resources

In-service Outcomes

- Be an energetic and informed board member
- Adopt practices to be part of an effective board
- Understand the purpose and procedures of the board

A Brief History

- Prior to Vatican Council II
 1. Membership--priests
 2. Purpose—assist bishops
- Vatican Council II—board renewal
 1. Membership--laity
 2. Purpose—develop ownership/enable principal

Types of Schools

- Parish
- Diocesan
- Private (religious congregation)
- Regional / interparish

Types of Boards

- Jurisdictional boards
- Regulatory boards
- Boards of limited jurisdiction ***
- Consultative boards ***

***The last two models are the only appropriate models for Catholic boards.

Catholic school boards differ from public boards:

- A public school board is constituted as regulatory, one that enacts or uses existing rules and regulations to govern the operation of its institution.
- This type of board is considered administrative and differs significantly from the consultative or limited jurisdiction board appropriate for Catholic schools.

Limited jurisdiction School Board

A board with limited jurisdiction, also called a policy-making board, is a body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and enacting policy. The board has been delegated final authority to enact policy regarding certain areas of institutional operation, although its jurisdiction is limited to those areas of operation that have been delegated to it by the constitution and/or bylaws and approved by the delegating church authority¹.

¹ A Board with Limited Jurisdiction as defined J. Steven O'Brien, Ed., A Primer on Educational Governance in the Catholic Church, Washington, D.C., NCEA, 1987, 2nd Edition, 2009.

Limited Jurisdiction School Board

A board with limited jurisdiction consists of 9 to 17 members appointed by the Pastor with categorical membership as follows:

- Parents (no more than 40% of membership)
- Alumni/parents of alumni
- Leaders within the civic, business and professional communities
- Parishioners

Note: 90% of members shall be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church.

Boards and Canon Law

- Bishop supervision over religious education programs of schools and those who teach in such programs
- Governance and educational ministry—
Catholic and dependent on each other
- Authority of the Bishop
- Board models in packet

Rationale for Fostering Boards

- Opportunity for laity in educational mission
- Unity, direction, stability
- Rights and duties of students/employees
- Support/promote the institution's mission
- Support the administration

School Mission / Philosophy

- To be familiar with the school mission
- To be sure everything done supports the mission
- To be able to articulate the mission
- To annually revisit the mission as a board
- To be sure the mission reflects/includes message, worship, service, and community

Resources

- Diocesan Policies
- Bylaws / Constitution
- Local policies
- Past minutes
- Mission statement / philosophy
- Goals / objectives
- Handbooks—faculty; student/parent

On-going In-service for All Members

- Official documents relating to education
- Programs and activities of school
- Opportunities for faculty to share information on departments/programs
- Thumbnail Series
- National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)

Areas of Board Responsibility

- Planning
- Policy formation
- Finances
- Development/public relations/marketing
- Evaluation of board effectiveness
- Evaluation of principal/board relationship
- Selection of principal/DRE/youth minister

The Board Does Not:

- Discipline
- Develop curriculum
- Approve instructional materials
- Hire or fire staff
- Write regulations
- Handle grievances (note exceptions)
- Micromanage the school

Consensus

Consensus building is an appropriate model of decision making for the Board. All members agree to support the decision that is best for circumstances and for the greatest number of people.

Standing Committees

- Executive
- Policy / Planning
- Finance / Budget
- Development
- Public Relations
- Building / Grounds
- Legislative Research Committee

Ad Hoc Committees

- Search for new members
- Search for new administrator
- Steering committee for new ventures
- Evaluation of the board itself
- Evaluation of the administrator

Committee Structure

- Chairperson
- Membership
- Job description
- Goals / strategies / action steps
- Reporting forms

Board Planning

- Where have we been?
- What factors influence us historically?
- Where are we today and why?
- Where are we going and why and how?

Long Range Planning

- Board in place and in-serviced on strategic planning
- Mission statement created or revisited
- Narratives written
- Strategic plan written with 5 years of goals
- Goals and objectives carried out and monitored by the board

Areas of Long Range Plan

- Catholic identity
- Enrollment
- Curriculum
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Finances
- Development / public relations
- Ownership / governance
- School in the community
- Technology

Long range plan—representation from:

- Pastor
- Principal
- Board members
- Faculty members
- Parents of current students
- Members of various councils and committees
- Parishioners at large
- Alumni
- Individuals from the community

Policy Formulation and Enactment

- Policy—guide to discretionary action by the administrator—states what should be done, not how it should be done
- Three aspects
 - * Formulate
 - * Enact
 - * Implement

Policy

- Policy proposal
- Dialogue, study, information
- Formulation
- Present to authority for enactment
- Implementation by principal

Policy or regulation

- Policies—broad, general, direction-setting statements
- Regulations—specific, concrete, tightly written with few loopholes (administrator's means for specifying how people are to act or how something is to be done)

Policy or Regulation?

- Question: Does this statement leave room for discretionary action on part of the administration?
- “YES”—you have a policy.
- “NO”—you have a regulation.
- Occasionally very specific policy for things like tuition payment plan or grievance procedures

Policies CAN:

- Give general direction to the administration
- Anticipate/forestall crises
- Clarify expectations for students, parents, teachers, etc.
- Codify and preserve the board's decisions
- Reduce subjectivity, inconsistency, arbitrariness

Policies CANNOT:

- Control/supervise administration
- Resolve specific problems after the fact
- Address isolated cases or petty items
- Contradict Church teachings or diocesan policies

When to develop policies

- When the board does annual goal setting
- When there is a problem to be resolved / decision to be made
- When the board is reviewing its manual of policies on a regular basis

Policy Process

- Determine need
- Identify issues/facts
- Gather data
- Draft policy
- First reading
- Consultation
- Second reading
- Approval by board
- Enactment by authority
- Promulgation
- Implementation
- Follow up

Areas Needing Policies

- Financial reports to the school community
- Use of school facilities
- Hiring, evaluation, releasing personnel
- Job descriptions for nonprofessional staff members
- Personnel benefits
- Purchasing procedures
- School visitors
- Admissions criteria and priorities
- Discipline/suspension and dismissal
- Field trips
- Uniforms
- Tuition payment; penalties for non-payment
- Athletic eligibility
- Substance abuse
- Married students/pregnancy/single parents
- Communicable diseases

Good policies. . .

- Respond to or anticipate educational needs
- Are clear enough to give guidance, broad enough to give space
- Are stated in clear, simple language
- Are communicated to all
- Are written down
- Are systematically indexed and stored in manual
- Are regularly evaluated

Board Policy Book

- States policy
- Includes date
- Includes signature of authority
- Includes rationale

Role of Board in Finances

- Budget
 - preparation
 - approval
 - reporting
- Tuition / fees
 - collection policy
- Financial Management

Role of Administrator with Board

- Gives direction to board
- Provides information about school
- Cooperation, mutual respect, trust
- Demonstrates accountability

Role of Principal as CEO of Board

- Assist in agenda formulation
- Attend all board meetings
- Give monthly report
- Incorporates prayer/reflection into meeting
- Identifies school program needs
- Acts as resource person
- Helps prepare initial budget
- Provides on-going in-service
- Provides special in-service for new board members

Principal's Report

- Enrollment updates
- Good news about school
- Staff development
- Curriculum updates
- Upcoming events
- Concerns
- Staffing
- Special programs
- Policy implementation / evaluation
- Special reports
- Testing results
- Legislation / state & federal funding
- Building needs / conditions
- Educational trends

Administrator's Accountability

- To Boards of Limited Jurisdiction
 - Hired by the board
 - Evaluated by the Board (or President, if applicable)
 - Delegated on-site manager of the program
 - Implements policy formulated and enacted by the board

Principal Evaluation by Boards of Limited Jurisdiction

- Performance in relation to the school community as a whole according to job description
- Collaboration/visibility of the principal in parish/community
- Relationship of principal with the board and with the total religious education program in the school

Evaluation Forms

Forms are available for:

- the advisory board
- the pastor
- the faculty/parents/principal or self-evaluation

Successful Meetings

- Agenda preparation
- Committee reports
- Checklist for planning meetings
- Effective boards points

Characteristics of Effective Boards

- Have members that include business people and alumni.
- Take ownership of issues.
- Be involved with issues pertaining to budget, policy, mission, and planning.
- Have goals, review or update them annually, and then use them as a basis of self-evaluation.
- Have actively working committees.

Effective Boards (cont.)

- Have contact and communication with constituencies.
- Assess progress periodically.
- Have effective meetings—no more than 2 hours.
- Be dedicated and committed to the school's mission.
- Train new members and provide annual in-service for all members.

REMEMBER TO---

- Acknowledge publicly that you have no power and authority as an individual—the board must function as a whole.
- Recognize the difference between formulating policy and administering the school.
- Represent all the parents/students.

REMEMBER THAT-----

- Change comes slowly.
- You can't solve everyone's problem by yourself.
- You must think deeply and may have to accept a reality contrary to your beliefs.
- Being an effective board member means being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting on an issue, but then openly supporting the majority/consensus.

Summary

- Be an energetic and informed board member
- Adopt practices to be part of an effective board
- Understand the purpose and procedures of the board

Contact information

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