

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
ST. MARY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**ARTICLE I**

**TITLE**

The name of this body shall be the St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception (St. Mary) Board of Education.

**ARTICLE II**

**NATURE AND FUNCTION**

**Section A**

This board is an advisory body to the pastor/pastoral leader\* and the principal overseeing the educational programs at St. Mary's Parish, Greenville, Wisconsin, subject to such regulations as might be given by the Bishop of the Diocese and/or Diocesan Board of Education.

**Section B**

This advisory body, in consultation with the pastor/pastoral leader and principal, shall oversee all aspects of the formal educational programs of the school. In fulfilling this charge, this board is guided and limited by the duties prescribed to it.

**Section C**

The duties and functions of the board shall be:

1. To discern the educational needs of the school community and to study the educational directives of the Diocese of Green Bay (From these needs and directives, the board will establish goals and objectives for educational activities in the school.);
2. To establish policies for the educational programs designed to meet the goals and objectives;
3. To assist the pastor/pastoral leader in the hiring of the principal to implement the policies and direct the programs;
4. To provide the necessary resources by recommending the annual educational budget to the finance council;
5. To evaluate its own effectiveness; and
6. To be accountable to the parish community by reporting to the St. Mary's Pastoral Council.

\* A pastoral leader is a deacon, lay person, or religious order brother or sister who has been appointed by the bishop of the diocese to oversee the daily operations of a parish that does not have a priest or parish administrator.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Section A**

1. Members of the St. Mary's Board of Education shall be the pastor/pastoral leader (ex-officio) and elected/selected/appointed representatives. All elected/selected/appointed members shall be voting members.
2. Ex-officio, non-voting members of this board shall be:
  - a. The Bishop of the Diocese or his representative
  - b. The Diocesan Director of Education or a representative
  - c. The pastor/pastoral leader
  - d. The principal

##### **Section B**

Each elected/selected/appointed voting member shall serve a term of three years and may serve a second term but may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Terms for members shall be staggered so that approximately one-third of the members' terms expire each year. Following one year of absence from the board, a former member may be elected/selected/appointed for another three-year term.

##### **Section C**

Any registered adult (18 years or older) member of the parish and/or school student is eligible for membership on the board.

##### **Section D**

In the event of a vacancy among the elected/selected/appointed positions on the board, the Board of Education shall recommend to the pastor/pastoral leader a qualified member from the parish and/or school to fill the unexpired term.

##### **Section E**

Elections/selections/appointments for membership on the board shall take place in May and membership on the board will begin with the August meeting of the board.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **OFFICERS**

##### **Section A**

The officers of the board shall consist of president, vice-president and secretary, all of whom shall be elected annually at the August meeting of the board.

##### **Section B**

Any elected member of the board is eligible for any office. No member shall hold more than one office at a time.

##### **Section C**

The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

1. The president shall preside at all meetings of the board.

2. The vice-president shall perform all duties of the president when the president is absent or unable to act.
3. The secretary shall maintain a written record of all official acts of the board; receive and dispose of all correspondence as directed; maintain the minutes and all reports and documents committed to the care of this office.

**Section D**

The principal shall have the additional responsibility to execute the actions of the board and to assist the officers and the board as directed.

**ARTICLE V**

**MEETINGS**

**Section A**

The board shall meet on Tuesday of the second week of each month in a publicly designated room. Special, additional meetings may be called by the pastor/pastoral leader as needed.

**Section B**

To transact official business, it is necessary for a majority of the voting members to be present. A simple consensus of the majority of those present (and voting) shall carry the motion unless otherwise specified in the operating guidelines.

**Section C**

All other decisions will also be made by consensus.

**Section D**

All meetings of the board shall be open meetings unless designated as being executive sessions. Executive sessions shall be limited to discussions of personnel, finances and subjects that ethics dictate be respected as confidential. These sessions are held to allow free discussion and to formulate a decision. Decisions formulated must be moved and voted on in open session before becoming effective. Minutes of executive sessions must be kept in a locked file – accessible to board members only.

**Section E**

The right of non-members to address the board shall be limited to those approved by the pastor/pastoral leader and president in advance of the meeting. Requests to be on the agenda should be received at least 10 days before the meeting.

**Section F**

A written record of all acts of the board and minutes of all meetings, maintained by the secretary, shall be preserved in a secure, designated place.

**ARTICLE VI**

**AMENDMENTS**

This constitution and bylaws may be amended by consensus of the total voting membership of the board and approval of the pastor/pastoral leader. A proposed amendment must be presented to the members of the board in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which it will be presented for consensus.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD**

Boards of education have six primary functions. The effectiveness of a board depends upon how well it performs these vital functions:

**Catholic Identity.** The board cooperates with the principals to provide leadership in directing the mission, vision and core values of the educational programs in the school. The foundations of this mission, vision and core values are rooted in Catholic identity. The board and the principal, ensure that the school conforms to the dogmas, teachings and laws of the Catholic Faith. They are committed to uphold the teaching of Faith and to integrate this teaching and values into all aspects of the student's life. This is the most important duty. It is strongly recommended, as a source of the board's Catholic identity, that this group seek opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist as an educational body.

**Planning.** It is essential that every catechetical ministry be actively engaged in a planning process. At minimum each parish ministry should have a rolling three-year strategic plan. This plan should be evaluated and added to each year by the board, so at least three years of planning are in front of the board. The annual goals are articulated in the strategic plan as well as other short-term goals. The expenses as noted in the budget planning year of the strategic plan should be included in that year's budget that is sent to the finance council of the parish. Copies of the strategic plan should be shared with the stakeholders of the educational ministry including the pastoral and finance councils of the parish.

**Policymaking.** Communicating educational ideals is another vital function of the board. In writing, these become policies -- or guides to ensure consistency and efficiency of action. The board sets the policy and the parish and principal are responsible to put it into action. It is important to note that the board does not tell the principal how to carry out the policy. This administrator should have the professional expertise to do this.

**Hiring and Evaluating the Administrator(s).** The next responsibility is the hiring of a qualified principal to oversee educational programs and activities. In the parish, the pastor/pastoral leader directs this hiring process, which includes advertising the position, interviewing, calling on references and using judgment. There should be a job description so that the board members and applicant all understand the exact duties to be performed. This is vital both for the hiring process and later evaluation of the principal's performance. (To be clear, this evaluation of the principal is the duty of the pastor/ pastoral leader.) The educational needs and goals will determine the number of educational administrators needed. The board should review the parish budget and needs with the pastor/pastoral leader and the finance council when making recommendations for educational administrators. It is strongly recommended that schools use the partnering services and expertise of the Diocesan Department of Education and the Diocesan Department of Human Resources when the need arises to search for a new educational administrator.

**Financing/Budgeting.** The fifth task of the board is financing the educational operation. The budget is a decision-guiding tool. Decisions should be based on the needs, priorities and goals of the educational ministry. These action items should be included in the annual goals of the parish as articulated by the pastoral council to the finance council. Action items from the planning year of the strategic plan should be included in the proposed educational budget. Education is just one parish or community mission, thus the pastoral council must determine its place among all parish goals. The education board should approve a proposed budget, prepared with input from the principal before submitting it to the finance council. Based on input from educational leaders, the board, and the parish priorities articulated by the pastoral council and the pastor/pastoral leader, the parish finance council recommends how much will be allocated to the educational mission.

The parish finance council drafts an overall parish budget which includes the educational component. After the parish budget has been drafted, a review of the budget is done in a joint meeting of the full pastoral and finance councils with the pastor/pastoral leader for consensus approval. If consensus is not realized, then a subcommittee of these two councils is formed. This subcommittee is comprised of two members of the pastoral council and two members of the finance council along with the pastor/pastoral leader. After no more than two meetings, if consensus is yet to be realized, the pastor/pastoral leader makes the final parish budget determinations, including the allocation for the educational ministries of the parish.

**Public Relations.** The sixth function of the board is to instill confidence in the community regarding its educational mission and activities. The board represents and is accountable to the pastor/pastoral leader and parishioners. Communicating with various publics is known as public relations. The community has the right to know: (1) local educational goals, (2) which programs are designed to meet those goals and (3) how effective the programs are. Good public relations includes listening to the various publics involved. The pastor/pastoral leader is generally the spokesperson for the parish and board, and also the key contact, but he/she may designate someone else for many public relations tasks.

## ARTICLE II

### **MEMBERSHIP ON THE BOARD**

#### **Qualities of the Ideal Board Member**

Each member should have a commitment to the philosophy and excellence of Catholic education, as shown in:

- willingness to serve on at least one standing committee;
- ability to listen well, think and speak clearly;
- readiness to give of time, talent and service;
- understanding of and belief in the decision-making process;
- respect for and understanding of pastor/pastoral leader, organizational structure and accountability; and
- openness to creativity and, as needed, change.

#### **Recruitment of Board or Committee Members**

A quality system for recruiting board or committee members is important for overall effectiveness. Such a system needs:

- A perception by potential members that, by serving on a board or committee, they make a valuable contribution to the faith community. Effective boards or committees attract well-qualified members. Board or committee membership should be valued as a position of trust and service.
- In recruiting, it's necessary to distribute complete information and set forth a positive image. Prospective board or committee members will have a better idea of what's expected of them by seeing operating guidelines and a sample of meeting minutes and being informed about the time commitment, i.e., how many meetings per year. To increase parish awareness of the board or committee, accomplishments and programs could be highlighted in the parish bulletin and/or school newsletter. It should be clear that the board or committee:
  1. represents the educational/parish community,
  2. understands the educational needs of the parish/educational community and
  3. takes action to meet those needs.

- It's helpful to have a standing committee assigned to recruitment activities such as those described. This standing committee would also keep a list of persons who are qualified for board or committee membership and would encourage such individuals to come forward. A parish stewardship committee is an effective way to provide and capture potentially interested parish members to serve on the board or committees.

### **Election/Selection of Members**

The nomination/selection committee of the board works with the pastor/pastoral leader to decide upon a nomination process.

- The board representatives recruit qualified nominees for open positions.
- Timing of the selection process should coincide with other parish groups', especially the pastoral council's, selections. This often takes place in the spring.

### **Orientation and In-Service**

Orientation for new board members is essential for effective participation on the board.

- Each year, the Diocese of Green Bay Department of Education offers such orientation. Boards should be knowledgeable about these in-service sessions, with appropriate members attending.
- Local orientation should be led by the pastor/pastoral leader, the board president, other board members and the principal.
- Orientation should be uniform, from year to year. The following points should be included:
  1. After the opening prayer, summarize the institution's purpose, philosophy and history.
  2. Introduce the board handbook, with attention to the role and function of the board and how the board relates to the pastor/pastoral leader, parish leadership groups, and other constituent groups.
  3. Review basics on finances, budget and long-range plans.
  4. Tour facilities, meet staff members, discuss programs.
  5. Make available relevant educational material.
  6. Encourage attendance at conferences and in-service programs.
  7. Offer a first-hand look at educational programs.
  8. Discuss special issues.
  9. Review the policy process.
  10. Summarize board ethics.
- An orientation meeting may last about 90 minutes. Veteran board members should be encouraged to attend, both for their own information and their input.
- An effective board will schedule regular in-service sessions. Two half-hour sessions during the year would be required; four would be more effective. Ideally, the board should schedule a half day retreat for spiritual growth and board in-services. Topics could include:
  1. spiritual formation in the Catholic Faith;
  2. goal-setting and planning;
  3. communication and public relations;
  4. evaluation;
  5. budgeting process;
  6. current issues in education;
  7. policy process;
  8. meeting skills and techniques.

## ARTICLE III

### **COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD**

Special committees as may be found necessary in the development and carrying out of goals may be appointed by the board president as the need arises. These committees shall consist of a board member as chairperson and may be composed of board members and non-members as special persons.

#### **Function**

To function effectively, standing committee members must clearly know their duties and how to cooperate with the pastor/pastoral leader and other parish ministries. Members will help monitor and evaluate programs and projects, and formulate policy recommendations for the full education board. Final decisions are made by the pastor/pastoral leader with input from the full board or committee. Members must be sensitive to the policy implications of issues before them which might require board action.

#### **Types of Committees**

Below are suggestions that can serve as examples for standing committees:

1. The Catholic Identity Committee should:
  - suggest ways to increase Catholic identity in all catechetical and educational programs, including the board or committee;
  - ensure that Catholic symbols are clearly visible throughout all facilities;
  - ensure that all catechetical and educational programs conform with the dogmas, teachings, and the laws of the Catholic Church;
  - plan and help implement concrete ways for Catholic youth to take a more active and visible role in the parish.
2. The Budget/Finance Committee should:
  - review the financial aspects of board policies;
  - monitor and evaluate financial decisions for consistency with the mission statement;
  - review planning documents to make sure projected costs are in line with the mission statement and the strategic plan;
  - provide timely, clear financial reports to the board and the finance council;
  - determine whether funds are available from tuition, parish/diocese, state/federal grants, etc., to meet costs;
  - recommend, when insufficient resources are available, that the board and the finance council adjust plans or raise additional revenue;
  - review the operating budget process and the revenue/expenditure estimates, and prepare for the board a recommendation for approval before forwarding the recommendation to the finance council;
  - develop the budget according to the timeline recommended by the Department of Education for the Diocese of Green Bay.
3. The Policy Committee should:
  - write local policies which do not conflict with diocesan policies nor relax diocesan policy timelines or response times;
  - review policies on a three-year rotation, minimally;
  - revise policies as needed;
  - work closely with pastor/pastoral leader in making policies.

4. The Accreditation/Long-Range Planning Committee should:
  - assist in the accreditation self-study process;
  - set religious education program/school improvement goals with the principal;
  - assist principal with the annual report and review the report before being submitted;
  - develop at least a rolling three-year strategic plan.
5. The Nomination and In-Service Committee should:
  - develop criteria for board membership;
  - monitor board composition to maximize expertise in all areas of responsibility;
  - work with the pastor/pastoral leader on the nomination process;
  - identify prime candidates for future board selections;
  - ensure adequate orientation and development for board members;
  - oversee evaluation of individual members as terms expire and renewals are proposed;
  - work with the pastor/pastoral leader on the nomination process.
6. The Building and Grounds Committee should:
  - monitor building and grounds management;
  - identify repair/replacement needs for building(s) requiring board action;
  - write a five-year maintenance plan for self-standing educational buildings
  - recommend spending of funds to meet needs of the five-year maintenance plan;
  - evaluate requests for expansion, renovation and maintenance;
  - coordinate with the parish building and grounds committee.
7. The Development Committee should:
  - review and evaluate planning and development activities;
  - help the board set fund-raising goals with the parish finance council;
  - assess achievement of “third-source” funding goals along with the parish finance council;
  - oversee, with approval of the parish finance council, third-source funding in the jurisdiction of the board;
  - raise funds in an annual giving campaign in cooperation with the parish finance council.
8. The Marketing and Recruiting Committee should:
  - develop and implement marketing, retention and recruitment plans;
  - develop marketing materials;
  - provide successful marketing procedures which help student recruitment;
  - lead public relations efforts;
  - assess annual enrollment goals.
9. The Athletic Association/Committee should:
  - direct the athletic program in cooperation with the principal;
  - plan and direct fund-raising along with the finance council;
  - schedule the use of gyms and prioritize group access by policy to athletic facilities and equipment;
  - help the principal recruit and interview coaches;
  - organize teams and assign coaches for sports offered by the parish or school.

## ARTICLE IV

### BOARD MEETINGS

#### A. The Agenda

The agenda should be prepared by the board president and the principal in consultation with the pastor/pastoral leader and/or delegated staff. Members should be encouraged to contact the president or the principal in order to place items on the agenda. People who are not members of the board who

want to address the board should contact the board president before the agenda is prepared, usually about 10 days before the meeting. It is advisable to have a policy in place that outlines this process.

The agenda shall be distributed to board members at least one week before the meeting. The agenda also should be posted or published for the benefit of interested parishioners. It's a good idea to include all reports with the agenda.

A standardized format should be used for the agenda, allowing for some flexibility. It might include:

1. Call to order and opening prayer
2. Introduction of guests
3. Correspondence
4. Approval of minutes
5. Reports of officers and standing committees
6. Administrators' reports
7. Pastor/Pastoral leader's report
8. Old business
9. New business
10. Adjournments
11. Executive session (as needed)

## **B. The Meeting**

There are some time-tested strategies for effective meetings, which require involvement by the president AND each member of the board.

1. Hospitality helps to create a positive, welcoming environment. It includes everything from including a time for prayer; to providing an information binder for each new board member; and, of course, offering refreshments.
2. Common-sense meeting rules include starting and ending on time; keeping to the agenda; being respectful when a person is speaking; and waiting until everyone has had the chance to speak before calling for a consensus/vote.
3. To keep the meeting on track, remember to: state the issues, explain key points, and sum up information.
4. An effective meeting may require some brainstorming, sharing of research/knowledge and recognizing avenues for change.
5. In making decisions, remember that consensus can help members feel as though they are part of a team and invested in the outcome of their actions!
6. An Executive Session or closed session is:
  - used for confidential finance or personnel matters. Minutes should be kept separate from regular board minutes.
  - within the rights of the board to schedule; and used to discuss and create a resolution to be acted upon in an open session, as appropriate.
  - available only to voting board members and/or pastor/pastoral leader. All other parties must be invited to attend the Executive Session, including the principal. All invited parties must be recorded in the minutes before going into executive session.
  - a time when the board may develop a resolution to be acted upon in open session. Consensus/vote is taken out of executive session.
  - confidential and the board must respect this confidentiality. An official record or minutes of the executive session should be taken and kept in a locked file in the parish or school. Minutes of the executive session are not distributed to members.
7. Prayer should be included in every agenda.

**C. Minutes and Records.**

Every board member shall receive the minutes of the preceding meeting, sent with the agenda and other backup materials as preparation for the upcoming meeting. Remember that minutes frequently hold key information regarding proposed actions. Minutes should not be posted until approved at the next meeting.

1. Each board member should receive and keep adding to a binder of board business. It should include: (1) agendas; (2) minutes of meetings from current year; (3) policies and regulations; (4) a membership list with street and email addresses, and phone numbers; (5) assignments, member list and minutes for the current year's standing committees; and (6) a copy of these guidelines for boards of education and committees.
2. Board records should be maintained, including all official business, and stored in the parish and/or school office by the principal with the assistance of the board secretary.

**D. Follow-up**

1. In developing the agenda for the next meeting, the board should be sure to include any items which they did not have the opportunity to discuss at the last meeting, as well as items on which action has not been taken.
2. In looking forward, it also is important to make sure that the various committees continue to work towards completion of their respective projects.

**ARTICLE V**

**ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

**Pastor/Pastoral Leader and the Education Board:**

- a. The pastor/pastoral leader assists the board in accomplishing the educational mission within the overall objectives of the parish.
  - The pastor/pastoral leader is regarded as an extension of the Bishop in the parish. Church and civil law hold this person responsible.
- b. The pastor/pastoral leader fulfills his/her responsibility in three ways:
  - He/she directs and helps in the spiritual formation of the board.
  - He/she hires and evaluates the principal, who will uphold the true Catholic message. He/she may solicit input from the board in the evaluation process, but the board members do not themselves evaluate the principal. Termination, when necessary, is the sole responsibility of the pastor/pastoral leader. (In the event that a termination is being contemplated, the pastor/pastoral leader MUST contact the diocesan Director of Education and Director of Human Resources.)
  - The pastor/pastoral leader joins in board discussions, contributing a vision of the educational mission for the parish and making sure that this mission is in keeping with the teachings of the Church.
- c. The pastor/pastoral leader is responsible for directing the coordination of educational activities within the overall ministry of the parish:
  - He/she provides the board with updates concerning programs, facilities and finances that will affect the board's decisions and outlines decision-making processes.
- d. The pastor/pastoral leader is not just another member of the board.
  - He/she is a board participant AND administrator of the parish. It is key to remember that the success of boards of education and committees is based upon mutual respect and cooperation among the pastor/pastoral leader and board members.
  - When there is a difference of opinion, the pastor/pastoral leader has the final authority.

**The Finance Council and the Board of Education:**

The finance council and the board of education coordinate issues concerning the educational budget of the parish. The educational budget is submitted by the board to the finance council, which evaluates the budget in light of the other needs of the parish. The finance council establishes the educational budget, as part of the overall parish budget. This budget is distributed to the pastoral council and to the pastor/pastoral leader. (Note: the finance council says how much money can be spent and the pastor/pastoral leader, principal and the education board determine how it will be spent.)

**The Board of Education and the Administrator:**

- a. The board primarily serves in an advisory role for the principal -- or those professional educators hired by the pastor/pastoral leader -- in administering an educational program or programs.
  - The most common example is the hiring of a principal. The board may help the pastor/pastoral leader as a potential search committee in the search process, while working with the Diocese of Green Bay Department of Education and Diocese of Green Bay Department of Human Resources. However, the pastor/pastoral leader does the actual hiring.
- b. The pastor/pastoral leader, working with the education board, may assign the principal to be the board's liaison.
  - The principal should help to: implement board policies; assess educational needs and resources; set educational priorities and goals; and prepare agendas, minutes and records. This individual also reports to the board about educational personnel, programs and budget.
  - The principal is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board of education.

**The Board of Education and the Staff:**

The board assigns responsibility to the principal to help the pastor/pastoral leader in hiring needed staff members. The principal is the intermediary between the board and staff. (To avoid conflict of interest, staff persons and members of their immediate families should not be members of the board or committee.)

**The Board of Education and Members of the Parish:**

Members of the parish community should have access to the board. When a matter concerns the actions or duties of a principal and/or staff member, parish members should first bring their concerns to the principal or staff member; then to the pastor/pastoral leader who will determine whether the matter should be brought to the board. It is suggested that policy be adopted to outline this process.