

**BYLAWS OF THE  
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

**INTRODUCTION**

The School Advisory Council of Immaculate Conception is established to assist the Pastor and the Principal in the governance of this parish school. The Pastor is the Canonical Representative of the parish, including the school, and the enactor of local policy. The Pastor hires, supervises, and annually evaluates the Principal, using the assessment tools and guidelines provided by the Office for the Mission of Catholic Education. In addition, the Pastor is responsible for the supervision of religious education and formation programs and approves the school's annual budget.

The Pastor entrusts to the Principal the daily operation of the school program, as specified in his/her terms of employment and/or job description. This responsibility includes the general administration of the school's operations, management of the school's financial affairs within the limits of ordinary administration<sup>1</sup>, recommendations regarding employment of new staff, supervision and evaluation of teachers and school staff, the establishment of curriculum and other educational programming, and the evaluation and management of student behavior. The Principal shall be responsible to the Council for carrying out its policies and informing the Council of the need or the requirements for policies.

The establishment of policy is accomplished through the activity of the School Advisory Council. The Council is composed of the administrative team (Pastor and Principal) and the other Council members. When the Council (administrative team and members) meets and agrees on a policy matter, it is effective so long as it does not conflict with Archdiocesan mandates or applicable law. The Council's responsibility is solely for policy matters; it has no authority for the school's administration or daily operations, including employment-related matters for school administration, faculty, and staff.

The School Advisory Council's primary purpose is the development and advancement of the school community, in accordance with these Bylaws and the school's mission statement:

*The School of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic community ministering to the children within the parish and throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are dedicated to fostering academic excellence, spiritual growth, and a strong commitment to living Gospel values.*

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase "within the limits of ordinary administration" refers to canonical limitations on the authority of local parishes. For example, financial transactions in excess of \$25,000 (amount as of 11/1/11) require Archdiocesan approval.

## ARTICLE I

### NAME

The name of this body shall be the Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council (“School Advisory Council” or “Council”).

## ARTICLE II

### NATURE AND FUNCTION

**Section 1. Nature:** The School Advisory Council is an advisory council and is consultative to the Pastor and the Principal. The members cannot act apart from the Pastor and the Principal and cannot make decisions binding for the parish school without the approval of the Pastor and the Principal. Consultation also means that decisions by the Pastor or the Principal should not be made in major matters affecting the parish school until and unless the School Advisory Council has been consulted, unless an emergency circumstance arises.

**Section 2. Function:** The School Advisory Council has responsibilities in the following areas:

1. Advancement/Development
  - a. Represent and communicate the work of the parish school with all segments of the school, parish, alumni, and broader community.
  - b. Assist in public relations and marketing.
  - c. Parent Ambassadors in recruitment and retention
2. Education Programs
  - a. Provide ongoing review of the school’s Mission Statement and Philosophy.
  - b. Provide support and feedback to the school’s administration in the development of the parish school’s Catholic Identity and its curriculum.
3. Finance
  - a. Review rates of tuition and fees.
  - b. Review fundraising efforts.
4. Policy
  - a. Formulate policies for the governance and direction of the parish school consistent with its Mission Statement and the mandates of the Archdiocese.
  - b. Recommend policies for the Parent Student Handbook.
5. Selection of the Principal  
Assist the Pastor in the search process for the Principal. Pastor makes ultimate hiring decision.

6. Strategic Planning
  - a. Annually review goals of the school, both immediate and long range, in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council.
  - b. Provide advice for implementation of goals including but not limited to: Accreditation Strategic Plans for K-8 and Preschool Programs.
  - c. Communicate and collaborate with the parish's other strategic planning groups.

### ARTICLE III ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

**Section 1. Parish Pastoral Council:** The parish pastoral council is a consultative council to the Pastor which advises him on all aspects of parish life. The School Advisory Council should inform the council of the school's accomplishments and needs and may bring to the attention of the parish pastoral council any matters which are broader than the educational programs of the school.<sup>2</sup>

**Section 2. Parish Finance Council:** The parish finance council advises the Pastor in administering the temporal goods of the parish. The Parish Business Administrator meets with the Pastor, Parish Trustees and Parish Finance Council. The Administrator advises the principal based upon the advice from these councils, as well as decisions by the Pastor. The financial contribution to the school from the parish is determined by the Parish Finance Council, which should be in accordance with any applicable Archdiocesan mandates. The school income and expenditure budget is prepared by the Parish Business Administrator and the Principal and is subject to final approval as a part of the parish-wide budget prepared by the parish finance council and parish pastoral council and approved by the Pastor.<sup>3</sup>

**Section 3. Home and School Committee:** Duties that would fall within a Home and School Committee are considered by the School Advisory Council. If a Home and School Committee is reestablished, it will act as a vehicle through which parents can provide service to the school (e.g., volunteers, fund-raising) and parent education programs can be offered. The Council works with the Principal, school staff and future officers of the Home and School Committee in order to understand parent needs and concerns and to coordinate overall fund-raising programs of the school.

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<sup>2</sup> Each parish is encouraged to consider whether the Vice Chair or other member of the School Advisory Council should be invited on a standing basis to attend parish pastoral council meetings in order to ensure good communication and that all of the parish ministries are working together to serve the mission and ministries of the parish. Should a decision be made to make a member of the School Advisory Council an official member of the pastoral council, then changes must be considered to the pastoral council's constitution and will require approval from the Chancery. If a parish does not have a pastoral council, it is encouraged to consider how the establishment of one might be extremely helpful to the faith community.

<sup>3</sup> If the finance council is a standing committee of the pastoral council, then this section can be revised to reflect that fact. Each parish is encouraged to consider inviting the finance chair of the school advisory council on a standing basis to the parish finance council meetings in order to ensure effective and frequent financial communications.

**Section 4. Archdiocese:** Local school policies may not conflict with Archdiocesan mandates. The Bylaws of the Schools Advisory Council must be approved by the parish corporate board after review by Archdiocesan staff. The same approval is required for any changes to the bylaws. In addition, the school submits a copy of its annual accreditation report, including progress on the school's strategic plan, to the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools. The school or the Council also may submit recommendations for Archdiocesan-wide mandates, policies, practices, or programs to the Chair of the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Advisory Council.

#### **ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. General Eligibility:** Each member of the School Advisory Council shall be:

- at least 18 years of age;
- a registered parishioner who is a fully initiated and actively participating Catholic, a parent of a student(s) in the school, an alumnae of the school, or a person active in the business or development community for the geographic area in which the school is located;
- prepared to give time and energy to the advancement of the parish school, including importantly, attendance at Council meetings. Members shall attend 4 of 5 meetings.
- competent in at least one of the areas of responsibilities set forth in Article II, Section 2;
- willing to maintain high levels of integrity and confidentiality and to work effectively with others in achieving consensus; and
- ready to support school/diocesan philosophy and mission.

Except as may be set forth in these Bylaws, salaried or paid parish employees or their spouses, or anyone currently holding elected or appointed parish office, normally, are ineligible to be a member of the Council.

**Section 2. Number of Members and Representation:** Members of the School Advisory Council shall consist of the Pastor, the Principal, six (6) ~~Pastor~~-appointed members and three (3) members chosen by a process of spiritual discernment. Voting members are the six (6) appointed members and the three (3) members chosen by discernment. Members shall be representative of the demographics of the school community. Non-voting members are the Pastor and the Principal. The Principal shall function as the executive officer of the School Advisory Council. The Principal is responsible for implementing policies formulated by the School Advisory Council and approved by the Pastor, informing the School Advisory Council about the education system, and proposing the adoption of needed policies.

**Section 3. Term:** Each member shall serve a term of three (3) years and may serve one additional term. The term of office shall run from July 1 to June 30. The members' terms shall

be staggered equally over a period of three (3) years to provide for continuity of a majority of the membership from year to year.

**Section 4. Appointment:** Every year, one (1) voting Council member shall be appointed by the Pastor and one (1) voting Council member shall be appointed by the School Advisory Council, as follows:

- In March of each year, a Nominating Committee consisting of the Chair, the principal, and one School Advisory Council member shall be formed. This Nominating Committee, acting on behalf of the Council, shall seek candidates, publishing the eligibility requirements for Council members.
- A packet of information about the Council is given to each potential candidate, and the Nominating Committee shall confirm that each candidate is willing to expend the appropriate time and energy to participate as a Council member.
- Appointments may be made from the nominees on this list or other persons may be chosen; provided that in all cases such persons meet the eligibility requirements of Article IV, Section 1.
- In making its appointments, the Council will give primary weight to ensuring that the Council members will have a diversity of talent so as to be effective as a whole.

**Section 5. Discernment:** Every year upon completion of the appointment process described above, one (1) voting Council member shall be chosen by a process of discernment by the Council. Any suggested appointee not selected for appointment shall be included in the discernment process along with all other eligible Council candidates who identified themselves to the Nominating Committee.

**Section 6. Vacancies:** With the exception of ex officio members, any vacancy in membership shall be filled by appointment of the then current Council. The Nominating Committee shall provide the Council with a list of recommended candidates from which the appointment shall be made. All appointees must meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Article IV, Section 1 above. The successor member shall serve on the Council for the unexpired term of the vacating member.

**Section 7. Resignation:** Any member may resign at any time by written notice to the Chair.

**Section 8. Removal:** A member may be removed by the Pastor with the approval of the Principal and the parish trustees.

## **ARTICLE V OFFICERS**

**Section 1. Officers:** The Council's officers shall be the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the Secretary.

**Section 2. Chairperson:** The Chair shall:

- preside at meetings of the School Advisory Council;
- plan Council meetings with the Principal;
- make committee assignments and see that the committees function properly;
- execute written documents on behalf of the School Advisory Council;
- ensure that Council recommendations are addressed; and
- in general, perform all duties pertaining to the office of the Chair.

**Section 3. Vice-Chair:** The Vice-Chair, in the absence of the Chair or at his/her request, shall perform the duties and exercise the functions of the Chair and, when so acting, shall have the authority of the Chair and shall perform such other duties as are delegated by the Chair.

**Section 4. Secretary:** The Secretary shall maintain minutes of all School Advisory Council meetings, provide such minutes to members, notify members of meetings, and, in general, perform all duties pertaining to the office of the Secretary.

**Section 5. Election and Term of Office:** The Council's officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Council for a term of one (1) year, which shall begin on June 1. Nominations of officers shall be presented by the Nominating Committee. Election may be by voice vote or by secret written ballot. The Principal will count the ballots in a written ballot. The officers shall hold office until the next annual election and thereafter, until their successors are duly elected and qualified. No member shall hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive years unless otherwise approved by the pastor and/or principal. All voting Council members are eligible to serve as an officer, but the Chair must be a registered parishioner who is a fully initiated and actively participating Catholic.

## **ARTICLE VI MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Meetings:** Regular meetings shall be held on the second Tuesday evening of five months of the school year, for example, September, November, January, March, June. Any deviation from this schedule will be decided at the prior month's meeting. Special meetings may be held when requested by the Pastor, the Principal or Designee, the Chair, or a majority of the members. The Principal or Designee must be present for a meeting to take place.

**Section 2. Notice:** Written notice stating the date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting shall be given to members. Such notice shall be mailed to each member, delivered to him or her personally, or given by a form of electronic communication. Agenda items will be solicited at that time and are due Thursday of the preceding week.

**Section 3. Conduct of Meetings:** The School Advisory Council shall operate in a spirit of collegiality and shall seek consensus. All meetings of the Council are open meetings unless

designated as being an executive session. Motions approved in executive session must be presented at an open Council meeting for approval before becoming effective.

**Section 4. Quorum:** Two-thirds of the voting members of the School Advisory Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting, and each such member shall be entitled to one (1) vote, either in person, by proxy, or by remote communication. A majority vote of those present and voting (an abstention is not a vote) shall be sufficient for any recommendation or election, except as set forth in Article IV, Section 8 and Article IX. A member not physically present in person or by proxy at a meeting may, by means of remote communication, participate in a meeting.

**Section 5. Annual Meeting:** An annual meeting of the School Advisory Council shall be held each year in June. The meeting shall constitute a planning meeting and shall include on its agenda the election of officers for the ensuing year, the recognition of those members whose terms have expired, and a review of plans for the following year. The first meeting of the school year will include an agenda item for Orientation. This will include a review of the bylaws and how the Council meetings will proceed.

**Section 6. Written Authorization Without A Meeting:** Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the members may be taken without a meeting by written action signed by a quorum, which is two-thirds of the voting members of the School Advisory Council, to vote on that action.

**Section 7. Visitors:** Visitors wishing to make a presentation at a School Advisory Council meeting must request a place on the meeting agenda by contacting the Principal or the Chair, verbally or in writing, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. Such presentation shall be no longer than ten (10) minutes in length.

## ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

**Section 1. Committee Membership:** All School Advisory Council members are expected to serve on one (1) or more standing committees as needed. Each standing committee shall have such authority and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to it by the School Advisory Council Chair. The Chair shall assign and appoint committee memberships, including committee chairs, after consultation with the Principal. Committee members may be Council members. Committee members may include persons who are not Council members, but who are competent or expert in an area of responsibility of the committee to which they are appointed. Teachers and other staff at the parish school are eligible to serve on committees, but are not normally eligible to serve as Council members. A representative of the School Advisory Council may also be a non-voting member of the parish's finance council. The Principal and/or his/her designee may attend all committee meetings.

**Section 2. Standing Committees:** To carry out the functions set forth in Article II, Section 2, review and form committees to address the school's needs. It is strongly recommended that schools have standing committees or staff that work in the areas of Advancement (marketing, development, and student recruitment/retention) and Strategic Planning.

**Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees:** The School Advisory Council may appoint such ad hoc committees as it deems advisable and may discontinue the same at its discretion.

**Section 4. Committee Work:** Committee meetings shall be conducted in a spirit of collegiality, and committee chairs shall seek consensus, striving to reach outcomes that all committee members can support. Committee recommendations shall be forwarded to the Council for a vote or further action.

## **ARTICLE VIII PERIODIC REVIEW OF BYLAWS**

At least once every five (5) years, or more often if determined by the School Advisory Council, a review of the current Bylaws shall take place.

## **ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

Subject to the approval of the parish corporate board (Pastor and two Parish Trustees), these Bylaws may be amended by a quorum, two-thirds of the voting members of the School Advisory Council, present and voting affirmatively at a regular meeting; provided that the amendment was presented in writing at the preceding regular meeting. Publication of the amendment to the school and parish community prior to approval is encouraged. The bylaws may be published on the parish/school website.

## **DOCUMENT HISTORY**

- September 2012 – Approval of new Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council Bylaws
- 2015-16 School Year – Review of Bylaws formerly approved on 9-11-2012. Approval will be sought on 9-13-2016.
- 2016-17 School Year – Reviewed on 9-13-16. Updates will be reviewed again at the 10-11-16 meeting.
- 2016-17 School Year – Approval of Bylaws at the 11-8-16 meeting
- 2018-19 School Year – Review of Bylaws formerly approved at the 11-8-16 meeting
- 2018-19 School Year – Revised and Approval of Bylaws, January 2019