

\_\_\_\_\_ School Council

for

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Name)

**BY-LAWS**

**INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

The Catholic school is an expression of the education mission of the Church parish with which it is associated and of the diocese. Therefore, the pastor is responsible to the bishop for the administration of the total parish, including the parish school. The principal functions as the chief administrator of the school and is a member of the parish staff. Regular and open communication between the pastor and the principal is essential.

Just as the parish council serves with the pastor on behalf of the total parish community and the Church, so the parish school council serves with the principal for the good of the school community. Today’s Catholic principal, with the many demands which are made, needs assistance from a group of people who are committed to the Catholic school and are willing to work for the good of the school and parish.

**ARTICLE I            NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION**

The name of this body shall be \_\_\_\_\_ School Council.  
(school name)

**ARTICLE II            PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS**

The council is established by the pastor, in accord with diocesan policy, to assist him and the principal in the governance of the parish school. When the council meets as pastor, principal, and members and agrees on a policy matter, the decision is effective and binding on all. The council is consultative in the following sense: the members cannot act apart from the pastor and principal and cannot make decisions binding on the parish school without the approval of the pastor and the principal.

Consultation (cf. Canons 495-501) also means that decisions will not be made in major matters until and unless the school council has been consulted. The areas in which the council has responsibility and will be consulted are:

- A. Planning
- B. Policy development and formulation
- C. Financing (including budgeting and policies for financial management)
- D. Public relations
- E. Assist in selection of the principal according to diocesan guidelines

- F. Evaluation of the principal's relationship with the council.
- G. Major curriculum changes, especially in the areas of education in human sexuality and religious education.

**ARTICLE III                    RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS**

**A. Parish Pastoral Council**

The school council and the parish pastoral council are both consultative to the pastor. Therefore, it is essential that good communication exists between the groups. The relationship which exists is one of information sharing and common planning for the benefit of the total parish community.

**B. Parish Finance Council**

The finance committee of the school council and the parish finance council meet to plan the financial contribution/subsidy from the parish to the school. The parish finance council includes the financial support to the school as part of the total parish budget which is approved according to the practice of the parish.

**C. Parent Organization**

The president or an elected representative to the Home and School Association is a non-voting member of the \_\_\_\_\_ School Council

**D. Diocese**

The relationship between the parish school council and the diocese is stated in diocesan education policies which are available for local school council members. Policies recommended by the \_\_\_\_\_ School Council shall be in concert with the stated diocesan policy.

**ARTICLE IV                    MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the parish school council will consist of seven to nine members in addition to the pastor and principal, who are both ex-officio. Members are elected for a three-year term which begins in May after the election. Council members may serve for a maximum of two full consecutive terms. Staggered terms are recommended so that each year only one third of the Council members would be new.

Other members are:

President or an elected representative of the Home and School Association or parent organization (non-voting).

Two to four members may be selected /appointed by the pastor as the need of \_\_\_\_\_ School and parish demands. (voting)

## ARTICLE V

## NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

### ELIGIBILITY

A nominating committee consisting of the pastor, the principal, and the chairperson of the council shall seek out and prepare a slate of prospective council member nominees who meet the following criteria:

- Are members of the parish and/or parents/guardians of students of \_\_\_\_\_;
- Have interest in and commitment to Catholic education and to \_\_\_\_\_'s philosophy and mission;
- Are available to attend meetings and periodic in-service programs and to participate in committee work;
- Maintain high levels of integrity and confidentiality;
- Deal with situations as they relate to the good of the entire school community; and
- Be a credible witness of the Catholic faith (or to one's own religion) to the school community and beyond.

### INELIGIBILITY

Paid employees of the school or parish or their spouses are not eligible for Council membership.

### ELECTIONS/APPOINTMENTS/VACANCY/REMOVAL

During February, the nominating committee will invite eligible candidates to place their names in nomination for elected council positions. Nominations from Council members will also be invited during February. This committee will have ballots prepared with names of eligible nominees listed in alphabetical order. Voting shall take place by the council at the April meeting.

If some members are to be appointed, the nominating committee should prepare a list of possible appointees according to the stated criteria and specific needs of the council. Appointments by the pastor should be made by the May meeting.

All new members are expected to attend the May and June school council or committee meetings for orientation purposes prior to beginning their term on July 1.

Members who miss three council meetings in a 12-month period and are unexcused may lose membership by action of the council. The following procedure will apply: the member will be notified by the chairperson or administrator; the member shall be given opportunity to respond; the council may act or not act as the case may indicate. The pastor, in consultation with the council, shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term vacated. In other instances where a vacancy to the council may occur the pastor, in consultation with the council, shall also appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term vacated.

### REMOVAL

One or more members of the school council may be removed with cause by the pastor. A successor member of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council may then and there be appointed to fill the vacancy thus created.

**ARTICLE VI                    CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

In the event any member of the school council has a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, concerning any issue before said school council which that member would otherwise be entitled to vote upon, that member shall not participate in the debate or discussion concerning the said issue, and shall not be permitted to vote on said issue. In the event that there is a question concerning whether a conflict of interest exists concerning an issue, the school council member shall inform the pastor of the potential conflict. The pastor, after being fully informed of all relevant facts, shall have the authority to decide whether that member will be permitted to vote on said issue, which decision shall be final and binding.

In the event that it is determined that a council member does have a conflict of interest concerning an issue before the school council, that member shall so state that the conflict exists at any school council meeting in which said issue is before the school council, and excuse herself or himself from any such meeting until the debate/discussion and vote on said issue is concluded.

**ARTICLE VII                    OFFICERS**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Election of officers to the \_\_\_\_\_ school council shall be held at the May or June meeting each year.

**OFFICER POSITIONS**

Officers of the school council shall be:

**A. Chairperson**

The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the school council. He/She shall have all the general powers and duties which are usually vested in the office of chairperson of the council, including the power to appoint committees as he/she may deem appropriate. The chairperson shall serve a maximum of two years in that position.

**B. Vice Chairperson**

In the absence or disability of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of chair. The vice-chairperson shall also perform other duties as prescribed by the chairperson of the council.

**C. Secretary**

The secretary shall insure that minutes are kept of all meetings of the school council and will insure that copies of agendas, minutes, resolutions and other council actions are maintained in a permanent record. He or she shall perform the duties and functions customarily performed by the secretary of the council. A copy of the minutes shall also be sent within one week of the meeting to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the diocese.

## ARTICLE VIII

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### MEMBERS

Members of the executive committee shall be the elected officers of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council, the pastor and the principal.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The executive committee shall meet at least two weeks prior to the regular meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council to prepare the council agenda. The agenda and written committee reports will be available to council members at least one week prior to the regularly scheduled council meeting.

## ARTICLE IX

## STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEES

The standing committees of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council are:

- a. policy/planning
- b. finance
- c. buildings and grounds
- d. executive
- e. development (marketing, endowments, annual fund, and communication)
- f. mission/effectiveness
- g. nominating

Members of standing committees, including the chairpersons, are appointed annually by the council chairperson.

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special committees shall be established by action and approval of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council.

### DUTIES

The duties of all committees shall be established in writing and approved annually by the \_\_\_\_\_ school council. Members of all committees shall be appointed by the chairperson after consultation with the council. The chairperson of the council and the administrative officer shall be ex-officio members of all standing committees. The purpose and responsibilities of each committee are in Appendix A.

## ARTICLE X

## MEETINGS

### OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

All meetings of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council shall be open to the public.

#### CLOSED MEETINGS

The chair may call the council into a closed meeting when he/she determines that to be appropriate, for example when dealing with personnel issues or other confidential matters.

#### QUORUM

A simple majority of the voting members of the school council constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business shall be determined by the executive committee. Members shall receive the meeting agenda prior to the meeting.

Non- council members may address the council at the discretion of the chair provided that they have made their request at least one week prior to the meeting and are listed on the agenda.

### ARTICLE XI            **MANNER OF ACTING**

#### RULES OF ORDER

Whenever an agenda item is presented for action at a school council meeting, the members will attempt to reach a consensus after careful consideration and discernment in a spirit of cooperation. To obtain this objective, rules of order shall be maintained by the chair in accordance with the following norms:

1. The chair may call for directed discussion which shall proceed as follows:

The chair will invite each member, in an order to be determined by the chair, to address the question; each member may pass until the others have spoken; no one may speak twice until all have been given the opportunity to speak; after all have spoken, the chair may attempt to formulate a consensus, with directed discussion continuing until the chair has, in his or her judgment, expressed the consensus of the council and directs that the final formulation of the consensus be recorded as such in the minutes.

2. The chair may permit free (non-directed) discussion until satisfied with the formulation of a consensus as provided above.
3. Any member of the council has the right to propose that a particular meeting or portion of a meeting be conducted strictly in accordance with parliamentary procedure. Without permitting discussion of this proposal, the chair will call for a vote, with a majority consenting, using ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER.

4. If any member makes a parliamentary motion at any time during any meeting with the words, "I formally move," or their obvious equivalent, the consideration of that motion and any amendments to it must be conducted in accordance with ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER.

## ARTICLE XII            **PRINCIPAL**

### ROLE

The principal of \_\_\_\_\_ will serve as the chief administrator of the school with responsibility for ordinary administration of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the following areas, subject to the approval of the pastor:

- Academic affairs
- Student affairs
- The Catholic identity of the school
- Business affairs
- Development affairs

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL COUNCIL

The principal of the \_\_\_\_\_ shall serve as administrative officer of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council and shall be responsible for the implementation of council policy.

The \_\_\_\_\_ school council shall have a role in hiring and evaluation of the principal's relationship to the council as determined by the pastor and diocesan policies.

## ARTICLE XIII            **AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

The bylaws of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council may be amended by a majority vote of the school council and ratified by the pastor. Council members must receive written notice about the bylaw amendments one month before the vote to amend.

Except as otherwise required by law, these bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the school council or at any special meeting called for that purpose, provided that a written notice of the proposed amendment shall be given at least ten days prior to such meetings. Such amendments shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the school council present at a duly constituted meeting, as well as written permission of the pastor, or other appropriate ecclesiastical authority. Amendments must also be submitted in writing to the Catholic Schools Office for approval by the Superintendent and Bishop.

Proposed amendments to the bylaws of the \_\_\_\_\_ school council may be developed by a majority vote of the school council. Council members shall receive written notice about bylaw amendments one month before the vote to amend. All votes to amend shall be presented to the pastor for ratification.



Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_  
Council Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bishop