



By-Laws of Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School Advisory Board

PREAMBLE

This document is intended to be the bylaws of the Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School Advisory Board (SAB) and will regulate the powers and responsibilities of the Board, its officers and committees and will be observed for the procedure and dispatch of business at the meetings of the Board and its committees.

These bylaws will be approved by the Pastor of Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Community and will be reviewed annually as directed by the Pastor or as recommended by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston. Likewise, the administrative organization of the School Advisory Board will be subject to periodic review by the Superintendent and/or the Pastor to ensure that it is designed to meet the needs of the school.

All dealings of the Board will be their best efforts to be in compliance with the philosophy, mission, terms, and intent of the Document labeled "PURPOSE OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD" and issued by the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston (also referred to as the *School Board Handbook*), where it is both practical and reasonable to do so.

The purpose of the Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School shall be to maintain a day school offering a strong academic program in a Christian atmosphere and character training for the entire personality of a child regardless of race, creed, gender, or color.

Epiphany of the Lord has the following as its Mission Statement:

"Rooted in Catholic tradition, Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School promotes growth in the foundations of faith, knowledge, compassion, and character."

ARTICLE I – NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The name of this organization will be the "Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School Advisory Board," hereafter called the School Advisory Board.

ARTICLE II – JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD

Section 1. Purpose and Function

The School Advisory Board, a board of delegated responsibility, gathers in the spirit of the gospel to promote, sustain and ensure the ministry of quality Catholic education. This is

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accomplished by providing vision, leadership, and accountability in collaboration with diocesan and local administrators as well as with other key representatives of the school, parish, and business communities. This is further achieved by making informed recommendations concerning policies and goals to the Pastor and Principal.

The Board is advisory in nature and consults with the Pastor and Principal in recommending policies, budgets, and financing. However, the Board is a non-voting Board. The function of the Board is to discuss and offer recommendations to issues addressing general policy, budgeting and finances of the school. Issues related to discipline, personnel, and day to day operations are the responsibility of the Principal.

Section 2. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles of the Board include the following:

- a. Actively assist the Pastor and Principal in the role of short and long-term planning.
- b. Support identification, development, and assessment of progress for initiatives identified in the Strategic Plan for Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School.
- c. Identify and articulate the educational needs and aspirations of the school and the community;
- d. Mobilize resources at Boards discretion (primarily via the Committee structure, with the approval of the Pastor and Principal) to meet the identified goals. Provide advice and guidance to the Pastor in the area of finances for the School.
- e. Provide the opportunity for appropriate communication with parents.
- f. Evaluate Board members and the Principal as required by the Archdiocesan Schools Office
- g. Actively assist school with hosting the Accreditation Team.

A major task for the Board is to provide advice and guidance in the area of finances. Approving tuition rates and salary increases for the staff is the Pastor's responsibility, but the Pastor will rely upon solid information provided by the Principal and the Board. The Board should assist the Principal in providing communication to parents about the financial status of the school.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP, APPOINTMENTS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Section 1. Number and Term of Members

The Board will be composed of at least six members or such number as approved by the Pastor. New members will serve a term of three years. They may, at the sole discretion of the Pastor, be discerned to serve one additional three-year term. Members may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. An absence of at least one (1) year is required before one may be discerned to the Board after having served two (2) consecutive terms.

The terms of the members should overlap so that a maximum of no more than one third are leaving the board at any one time. This allows for stability and continuity of the Board.

If, for any reason, a Board member does not complete their term, it may be necessary to make an irregular appointment to the Board. This appointment will be at the sole discretion of the Pastor, but it will be the responsibility of the President of the Board to make recommendations to the Pastor and to assist the Pastor in the process. The appointee will be designated to serve the remainder of the unexpired or incomplete term. Members appointed to unexpired or incomplete terms in this manner may later be discerned to one three-year term.

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For special circumstances identified by the Pastor or Superintendent, a member may be appointed to additional terms beyond the limits of this section without a change of bylaws.

Section 2. Qualification and Selection of Board Members

Each year no more than one third of the members will end their terms of service and new members will be added to the board through the discernment process by the Nominating Committee. Members of the Board will ordinarily be practicing Catholics in good standing and will represent the parents, patrons, parishioners, and friends of the School.

Members will be selected through a process of discernment at a meeting of the board to be held in May/June of each year. The discernment process will not be part of the Board's regular monthly meeting unless the Pastor, President and Principal have otherwise reached prior consensus with the Board's current members.

The Board, Principal, and Pastor select potential candidates for Board membership through an application and discernment process. Potential candidates shall meet the qualifications for Board members as described by the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese.

Persons in the following categories may not be considered as candidates for the Board:

- Employees of the parish and school, whether teaching or non-teaching personnel
- Spouses, children or siblings of employees of the parish or school
- More than one member of an immediate family at a time
- Board members or professional educators of another school or school system.

Application and Discernment Process

1. The Nominating Committee shall solicit eligible candidates to apply for School Advisory Board membership through a standardized form developed by the Nominating Committee.
2. The Nominating Committee, Principal, and Pastor shall review all applications received and nominate a list of candidates to participate in the discernment process. The Nominating Committee will present a list of candidates to the School Advisory Board
3. The Nominating Committee, Principal, and the Pastor shall develop questions and/or topics of discussion for discernment based on the applicable needs and goals of the school.
4. The nominated candidates shall be provided with notice of the questions and/or topics of discussion prior to discernment.
5. The members of the School Advisory Board, the Principal, and the Pastor shall participate in the discernment. A quorum of the members is required for discernment proceedings.
6. Following the discernment of all candidates, a consensus list shall be prepared in order of preference to present to the Pastor.
7. The Pastor shall notify the candidates and the School Advisory Board of the newly appointed members.

Section 3. Suspension and Removal of a Member

The Pastor, after consulting with the Superintendent, may suspend or remove a Board member from office at any time during their term with or without cause. Such suspension or removal will be executed by written notice to the affected Board member.

Section 4. Resignation

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A Member may resign by delivering to the Pastor and President of the Board a written notice indicating that he or she is resigning. The resignation will be effective upon receipt unless specified to be effective at some other time.

Section 5. Board Member Responsibilities

Members show their acceptance of responsibility as members by regular attendance and participation at meetings. Members shall furthermore participate in at least one training session a year that is specifically designed by the Galveston-Houston Archdiocesan Board of Education for local boards. The Board must provide an orientation detailing the work of the board for all new members.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section 1. The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will be comprised of the following:

- a. Pastor
- b. Principal
- c. President of the Board
- d. Vice President of the Board
- e. Chairperson of the Finance Committee
- f. Communications/Marketing Liaison
- g. Secretary of the Board

Section 2. Functions of the Officers.

The Officers' functions include planning and preparation for Board meetings, coordination and communication among Board members, planning and organizing for orientation of new members, coordinating ongoing Board education for all members and succession planning for the Chief Administrator or Principal as necessary, in addition to performing other duties that may be determined by the President.

Section 3. Appointment and Duties of the President

The President will take over that position the year following that individual's role as Vice President. The President of the School Board will serve in that role for a term of one (1) year.

The President of the School Board will:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Board and exercise and perform such powers and duties as may be assigned from time to time to the office.
- b. Work with the Principal and the Secretary to prepare the agenda prior to all meetings.
- c. Actively coordinate assignment of committee chairs as advisable to the Principal and Pastor. Approval and establishment of school committees are based on the authority and approval of the Pastor and Principal.
- d. Call special meetings of the Board as necessary.
- e. The President of the Board, when present, will be an ex-officio member of all committees. The President will not be counted in determining a quorum of the committee.

Section 4. President's Participation in Debate and Discussion

The President may participate in any debate or discussion from his/her position as President. Should the President elect to vacate the Presidency to take part in any debate or discussion or for any other reason, he/she will call upon the Vice President or in his/her absence, one of the Members to fill his/her place until he/she resumes it.

Section 5. The Appointment and Duties of the Vice President

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The Vice President will be appointed by the President. The Vice President will:

- a. Serve in the absence of the President
- b. Perform duties as outlined by the President
- c. Will become the President the year immediately following the year he/she serves as the Vice President.

Section 6. Secretary of the Board

The Secretary will:

- a. Attend all meetings of the Board.
- b. Prepare, in consultation with the other officers of the board, the draft agenda of the Board meetings. He or she may construct the Board Agenda after the draft has been developed and approved by the principal, pastor and board president. All items to be placed on the Agenda must be given to the Principal & President 10 working days prior to the meeting date for their approval
- c. Prepare minutes of all meetings.
- d. Maintain reports from committees and/or subcommittees.
- e. Keep records as directed by the Board.
- f. Receive and pass on to the Board, or relevant committee, all correspondence, petitions and reports of other officials as determined by the Executive Committee.
- g. Maintain a current record of all policies as approved by the Pastor. The Board suggests and assists in policy making, and the Pastor approves. The school principal enacts or implements the policy after the Pastor's approval.
- h. Maintain charge of all correspondence, reports, and other documents of Board business, including these By Laws and any Amendments hereto.

Section 7. The Chair of the Finance Committee

The Chair of the Finance Committee will:

- a. Communicate with the Parish Finance Committee with the approval of the Pastor.
- b. Submit to the Board for review the preliminary budget for the upcoming year in the January Board meeting of the current year.
- c. Assist any committee in need of financial information.
- d. Coordinate with appropriate school administrators and staff to obtain and review all available information needed to perform the responsibilities of this office.
- e. Consult and assist the principal on preparation of a balanced budget.

Section 8. The Principal of the School

The Principal of the School serves at the discretion of the Pastor. Should the need arise to select a new Principal; at least three Board Members should participate in the search process. The Pastor retains sole decision-making authority on the selection of the Principal of the School.

The Principal will be a member of the Executive Committee and will approve with the President and Pastor the appointment of Committee or Subcommittee members. The Principal will provide an update to the Board in Monthly Meetings on issues of interest to the Board, as appropriate and have prepared for submission to the Board the annual financial reports.

Board members are required to give assistance to the Pastor in the annual evaluation of the Principal as part of the Principal Professional Growth Process identified in the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston School Board Handbook. The Principal will provide Board members with the Principal Professional Growth Form and review the document with them. Each Board member will complete the Principal Professional Growth Form and submit the form to the Principal. The Principal and Pastor will meet to review the forms.

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Section 9. At Large Members

Any member of the board not designated as one of the aforementioned positions will be considered an "At Large Member of the Board" with the approval of the Pastor and Principal.

Section 10. Ex-Officio Members

- President of Parent Association (PA)

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

Section 1. Meeting Schedule and Location of Meetings

Unless otherwise ordered by special motion, the Board or Board Committees will conduct regular meetings on a monthly schedule. Standing and Ad Hoc Committees will meet as necessary. A schedule of all Board meetings is to be submitted to the Pastor and Principal by September 1 of each year. School Advisory Board meeting dates will be posted on the school calendar.

Section 2. Summer Meetings

The Board will recess from its regular meeting schedule only in July. The President, with the approval of the Pastor and Principal, is authorized to schedule Board meetings and executive sessions during June and August, with the June meeting recommended to be designated as the Inaugural Meeting of a newly appointed Board.

Section 3. Special Meetings of the Board

Special meetings of the Board may only be called by the Pastor or the President, or at the request of the Principal. The members will be given 24-hour notice for special meetings, except in emergency situations. Such meetings will be called for specific reasons. Such subjects will be stated in the notice calling the meeting. Subjects addressed cannot relate to personnel or discipline issues. Notwithstanding any other provisions to the Board's bylaws, no other business will be considered at such special meetings.

Section 4. Quorum for Meetings

A majority of the Members of the Board will constitute a quorum for meetings of the Board. If a quorum is not present within fifteen (15) minutes after the time appointed for any meeting (or such longer time as may be agreed upon by the Members who are present), the person assigned as recording secretary will record the names of the persons present and the meeting will stand adjourned, to be reconvened within seven (7) days at the call of the President. A member can be present via electronic communications so long as the board feels the individual has ability to participate.

Section 5. Notice of Meetings

Written notices of all regular meetings of the Board will be transmitted by the Board Secretary, along with the agenda of the meeting, at least 72 hours before the time of meeting.

The agenda may be amended at the opening of a meeting with the consensus of Board Members present at the meeting and with approval from the pastor and principal.

Section 6. Absences

A Member who cannot attend a Board meeting will inform the President at or before noon on the day of the meeting; or in the case of a morning meeting, the evening prior to the scheduled meeting. If a Member is absent from three consecutive regular Board meetings without being authorized by resolution entered in the minutes, that Member thereby vacates their seat and

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procedures will be initiated to replace the Member. The Board President may authorize an extended absence of a Member; this authorization will be noted in the minutes.

Section 7. Code of Conduct

The Board may adopt rules for the conduct of their meetings and the management of the Board, as they deem proper and consistent with these bylaws, canonical law, "*Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Secretariat for Catholic Schools, Catholic Schools Office School Board Handbook*", and the laws of the State of Texas. The Board Code of Conduct is as follows:

The board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members. Accordingly, members of the board:

- a. Will uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church and protect the Catholic identity of the school;
- b. Must represent un-conflicted loyalty to the interests of the school;
- c. Avoid conflict of interest with respect to the fiduciary responsibility. May not attempt to exercise individual authority over the school except as explicitly set forth in the board policies;
- d. Do not have any power or authority over the Principal or staff members of the school
- e. In their interaction with the public, press or other entities must not speak for the board except to repeat stated board decisions;
- f. Will not engage in conversations or correspondence with non-board members about confidential board matters in which information is shared, solicited or received unsolicited. Board members should always direct concerned individuals to the appropriate channels of authority;
- g. Will respect all confidential matters;
- h. Will be properly prepared for board deliberations.

ARTICLE VI – STANDING AND AD HOC COMMITTEES

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 of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) 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 is as follows:

Long-Range Strategic Plan

- Is a process to develop both long-term vision and goals for the school with specific interim steps to reach these goals;
- Flows from the school's mission statement
- Encompasses a period of 3-5 years;
- Outlines realistic operational and strategic goals;
- Addresses areas such as Catholic identity, enrollment, personnel, curriculum, facilities, development, administration, finances and any other needs specific to the school community;
- Involves an annual review of the school's mission statement, philosophy, goals and objectives as well as a review of the plan's goals and action steps, with any necessary adjustments being made including goals. These plans will provide a road map for all involved in the parish/school community.

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Section 1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will include the Officers of the Board as defined in Article V, Section 1. In addition to carrying out the duties listed in Article V, the Executive Committee may be authorized to act in the name of the full Board when authorized by the full Board to do so. Specific functions will include:

- a. Primarily responsible for developing & monitoring strategic plan and ensuring its alignment with the school's mission statement.
- b. Develop the succession plan of the Board

Section 2 Standing Committee Membership

Each standing committee will have at least one Board Member representative.

Section 3. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will include the Chair of the Committee, the Principal, a member of the school staff or administration having adequate working knowledge of the school's financial records and statement, and other board members as deemed appropriate by the Chair. The finance committee members will be appointed by the President with the approval of the Pastor and Principal and should include the school bookkeeper.

Functions of the Committee include:

- a. Communicate with the Parish Finance Council and Parent Association (PA).
- b. Monitor the development and evaluation of the school budget.
- c. Work closely with the Principal to create budget drafts for the Pastor and the Board.
- d. Support school staff and administration in preparation of long-term strategic planning in conjunction with the Planning Committee of the Board.
- e. Review internal budgetary controls and make recommendations for any deficiencies.
- f. Review financial reporting process and develop recommendations to ensure integrity with regard to the school's financial statements.
- g. Support school staff and administration in development of financing strategies for the long-term strategic plan.
- h. Help to ensure financial records and reporting conform to requirements of the Archdiocese and cooperate with Archdiocesan auditors.

Section 4. Advancement Committee

The Advancement Committee will include at least one Board member and a member of the school staff or administration having adequate working knowledge of the school's fundraising efforts. With the approval of the Pastor and Principal and in accordance with Archdiocesan Policy and procedure, the Committee functions include:

- a. Supporting development of capital campaigns tied to requirements developed by the Finance and Planning Committees.
- b. Ensuring that all fund raising is coordinated by a centralized group and planned with appropriate goals.
- c. Supporting development of a public relations plan tied to the strategic plan to promote enrollment and effective communication with students, parents, faculty and administration.

Section 5. Facilities & Plant Committee

The Facilities Committee will include at least one Board member and a member of the school staff or administration having adequate working knowledge of the school's physical plant and

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property needs. With the approval of the Pastor and Principal and in accordance with Archdiocesan Policy and procedure, the Committee functions include:

- a. Develop and monitor maintenance plan for buildings and grounds
- b. Develop and monitor improvement plan for buildings and grounds.

Section 6. Communications/Marketing Liaison

- a. Work as Liaison between Parish, Parents Association (PA), and School on marketing and communication needs/efforts
- b. Advises School and PA on communication/marketing efforts within the community

Section 7. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will include the Principal, two members of the School Advisory Board, and a member of the Pastoral Council. With the approval of the Pastor and Principal and in accordance with Archdiocesan Policy and procedure, the Committee functions include:

- a. Develop annual solicitation and nomination process of eligible candidates for each vacancy.
- b. As described in Article III – Section 2, the Nominating Committee conducts yearly discernment process for new Board members.

Section 8. Ad Hoc Committees

The Board with the approval of the Pastor and the Principal may establish ad hoc committees as deemed appropriate. The establishing motion will indicate the mandate of the committee, the membership of the committee, the length of the committee's service and the due date of the final report or activities.

Section 9. Committee Procedures

Each committee will record its deliberations, recommendations and conclusions and will deliver a copy of the report to the Principal and Secretary of the Board for submission to Board Members and Pastor. Meetings of any committee will be coordinated with the Principal and notice given to the committee members and the President of the Board, each of whom will have the right to attend and participate in the deliberations of the committee. The President or the committee Chair may invite to any committee meeting any individuals who may be helpful to the deliberations of the committee. A majority of the members of each committee will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the act of a majority of the members of any committee at which a quorum is present will be the action of the committee.

ARTICLE VII – ACCESS TO MEETINGS

All meetings of the Board are to be open to the public, but such individuals may not address the Board without being on an agenda which was approved by the Pastor, Principal and President. The presiding officer or Pastor may expel or exclude from any meeting any person who has been guilty of improper conduct at the meeting. The Pastor, at his sole discretion, may ask anyone to leave a Board meeting at any time for any reason. Person(s) asked to leave must leave the meeting immediately.

ARTICLE VIII – DELEGATIONS

Section 1. Request to Address the Board

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Any stakeholder or group may request to address the Board as an individual or as a delegation. Topics will only be in those areas of the Board's jurisdiction. The individual or delegation must provide the request in writing to the Principal or President, at least ten (10) days prior to the next regular meeting of the Board or committee at which the individual or delegation wishes to be heard. The request will contain the topic to be discussed and the identity of the spokesperson(s). The person or persons wishing to address the Board or committee will be notified of the date, time and location of the meeting at which the presentation will be made.

The President, on behalf of the Board and after consultation with the Pastor and Principal, may deny the request of an individual or delegation to address the board. The Board will notify the person or persons making the request in writing of the denial.

Section 2. Procedures

Individuals or delegations will, upon notification, have these regulations shared with them prior to their presentation. Copies of the presentation will be shared with the full Board or Executive Committee at the time that the agenda is distributed or at such time as the presentation is made. Nothing of a confidential nature should be addressed such as discipline problems or personnel issues. In any case, the subject matter of the individual or delegation may not be discussed at the meeting at which the presentation is made, and a decision may not be made, other than in closed session. An individual or delegation's presentation will be limited to 15 minutes. Amendments as to the length of time are at the discretion of the President, Pastor and Principal.

Following the presentation by the individual or delegation, only the President will allow questions of clarification. No discussions will follow the presentation. Notwithstanding the above, the Board, the Pastor, and the Principal retain authority to decide all matters concerning individual or delegations as well as the right to invite an individual or delegation to the Board for consideration. Response will be given in writing by the Board President within five working days.

ARTICLE IX – VOTING PROCEDURES

The School Advisory Board is an advisory role only, therefore no voting should occur.

ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER

The rules of order to be observed at meetings will be in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws and will be interpreted and enforced as necessary by the Board President. In all cases for which no specific provision is made in these bylaws, the rules and practice of *Robert's Rules of Order, latest revised edition*, will govern as applicable. The presiding officer will preserve order and decorum and decide upon all questions of order.

ARTICLE XI—CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Board members must disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest and abstain from discussions or other actions in those areas where a conflict exists. The Board minutes should reflect abstention. A conflict of interest would occur if the outcome will grant the Board member any financial or personal benefit.

ARTICLE XII—CONFIDENTIALITY

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All Board members are bound to maintain confidentiality with respect to certain information obtained in their role as Board members (including verbal presentations, written materials, discussions and deliberations). A serious moral obligation exists to not release confidential information. Certain information shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a. Financial information for individual school families
- b. Information discussed in closed sessions of the Board

The President, Pastor, or Principal may further determine that certain other information shall be treated as confidential. Any breach of confidentiality may result in a member being removed from the Board. If a topic of confidential nature is allowed by the Pastor or Board President, a regular meeting will be adjourned, all guests asked to leave temporarily and the meeting reopened in an executive or closed session. Anything said in the executive or closed session will be treated as confidential and not subject to disclosure unless required by law. The minutes, as recorded by the Board's Secretary, will only reflect that a discussion was held in an executive or closed session. The specific topic of discussion will not be listed in the minutes.

ARTICLE XIII –AMENDMENTS

Bylaws of the Board may only be amended with the signature consensus of all Members of the Board and the approval of the Pastor, under the following conditions:

- a. The Pastor has had adequate opportunity to review proposed amendment text prior to the Board's deliberation and/or discussion.
- b. Written notice of a motion proposing the amendment(s) will have been given at a regular meeting held prior to the meeting.
- c. The text and a brief statement of intended purpose of the amendment will have been included in the notice of motion;

INTERPRETATION

Definitions and Meaning of Terms

For the purpose of these bylaws, the terms used will have the following meaning:

- "AD HOC COMMITTEE" means a temporary committee or task force established to address a specific issue.
- "ANNUAL MEETING" means the first meeting held at the beginning of the school year.
- "BOARD" means the Epiphany of the Lord Catholic School Advisory Board.
- "CLOSED MEETING" or "Executive Session" means a private meeting of the whole Board or a committee from which the public are excluded.
- "CHAIRPERSON" or "CHAIR" means the lead Board member of any committee or subcommittee established by the Board.
- "COMMITTEE" means any standing, special or ad hoc committee established by the Board. Any Committee that is recommended by the Board must have the approval of the Pastor and the Principal.
- "EX-OFFICIO" means by "virtue of office." The President of the Board when acting in "ex-officio" capacity to a committee is not counted in the quorum of the committee, but has the right to make motions, discuss motions and vote on all questions.
- "INAUGURAL MEETING" means the first meeting of a newly appointed Board to be held following appointment and the commencement of the term of office.

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- “MEETING” includes a meeting of the Board and/or of Board committees.
- “MEMBER” means a person appointed to the office of Member of the Board.
- “MEMBER AT LARGE” means an individual appointed to represent the interests of the general school community and conducts projects and accepts duties as assigned by the President of the School Board.
- “OFFICERS” means the President of the Board, the Vice President of the Board, the Secretary of the Board, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee of the Board, the Principal, the Pastor and the Superintendent/Superintendent’s Delegate when necessary.
- “PASTOR” means Canonical administrator of the Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Community or Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Parish.
- “PRESIDENT” or “PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD” means the President of the ECS Advisory Board.
- “PRINCIPAL” means Chief administrator of the school.
- “STANDING COMMITTEE” means any committee to which the Board continually or regularly appoints one or more members.
- “STRATEGIC PLAN” means the Long-Range Strategic Plan the school prepares to meet requirements of the Archdiocesan School Council of the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston.
- “SUPERINTENDENT” means the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston.
- “SUPERINTENDENT’S DELEGATE” means a member of the Office of Catholic Schools staff assigned to represent the Superintendent.
- “VICE CHAIR” means the designated representative of the Chair of any committee or subcommittee established by the Board.
- “YEAR” means, unless qualified by the word “calendar,” the school year.

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These bylaws are hereby approved on this _____ day of _____, 20____ by the following School Board members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Approved by: Rev. Tom Lam – Pastor

Attachment 1

**Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston
Secretariat for Catholic Schools
Catholic Schools Office
School Board
Handbook**

Latest edition

We Transform the World!

**CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS**

THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON



School Board Handbook

**Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston
Secretariat for Catholic Schools**



Our Mission...

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston - Houston call young people to holiness and prepare them to live and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In collaboration with families, we teach the values of our faith and tradition, serve our community, and ensure academic excellence.

Our schools are committed to the evangelizing mission of the church to educate and form witnesses who transform the world.

PURPOSE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Catholic school boards are advisory to the Principal and Pastor in Parish schools or the Principal and Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools. Boards assist the Principal and Pastor in Parish schools or the Principal and Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools to recommend policy, identify and articulate the educational needs and aspirations of the school and school community and engage in long-range strategic planning. These goals become the basis for program objectives, policies, and action plans for the educational program.

MEMBERSHIP

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 expertise, and only a few positions ought to be filled by current parents. 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 data to make informed decisions. The member must keep in mind the overall good of the school as the basis upon which to make decisions. A board member has no authority as an individual. Only when the Board meets as a 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 person. An explicit

chain-of-command must be followed or parents/guardians will not be communicating with the appropriate school representative.

Persons in the following categories may NOT be considered as candidates for the Board:

- Employees of the Parish and school, whether teaching or non-teaching personnel;
- Spouses, children or siblings of employees of the Parish/school;
- More than one member of an immediate family at a time;
- Board members or professional educators of another school or school system;

Membership of the Board should be at least five members and no more than eleven. Ordinarily the process of discernment should be used when choosing board members. The Board should reflect the cultural diversity of the school served in as much as possible. The Pastor in Parish schools 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. In Archdiocesan Regional schools, the Designated Pastor will serve as ex officio member with the right of approval or veto in administrative decisions. The Principal serves as an ex officio member and school administrator for the Board.

Discernment is a process associated with the virtue of prudence, by which we try to decide what God wills us to do in particular circumstances. Discernment should be used as an operating principle for boards. 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.

TERM OF OFFICE

Each selected member may not serve more than two terms of three years. The terms of the members should overlap so that a maximum of no more than one third are leaving the board at any one time. This allows for stability and continuity of the Board. A resigning member's uncompleted term should be filled through discernment. First consideration to fulfill an uncompleted term should be given to prospective members previously discerned and favorably received, but not selected to serve. Board members who serve are subject to removal by the Pastor in Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools.

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. A platform statement given by those interested in serving as officers may be beneficial to the discernment process. Officers are subject to removal by the Pastor in Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools.

The Board President presides at all regular and special meetings, works with the Principal to prepare the agenda prior to all meetings and the appointment of all committees unless otherwise specified by the Board or the Pastor in Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools, and performs all duties incident to the office of a Board President and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the Pastor in Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools.

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 board members. Existing or revised by-laws and/or school board constitutions should be submitted to the Archdiocesan School Superintendent for review.

COMMITTEES

The school board may recommend the establishment of committees, as it deems advisable, to the Principal and Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools or to the Principal and Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools. Approval and establishment of school committees are based on the authority and approval of the Pastor and Principal in Archdiocesan Parish schools or the Designated Pastor and Principal in Archdiocesan Regional schools. Members of the committees may be drawn from board membership and from the community at large. The school board with the approval of the Pastor and Principal in Archdiocesan Parish schools and the Designated Pastor and the Principal in Archdiocesan Regional schools may provide for such committees, as it deems advisable and may discontinue committees at its discretion. The board may need only two or three “standing committees” e.g. facilities, finance, and public relations. The board may appoint “ad hoc” (temporary) committees when the need arises.

The Principal, in consultation with the board finance committee, will prepare a balanced school budget in terms of expenditures and revenues with a rationale that justifies any major or capital expense requested. A copy of the budget will be sent to the Superintendent for review. School accounting requires a separate school bank account from the Parish account. The Principal and Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools and the Principal and Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools are the only authorized school check signatories.

MEETINGS

Meetings should be held at a regular time and place each month. Meetings should last no longer than one or two hours. Some scheduled meetings will offer time for committee work, and some meetings will have committees report to the school board as a whole. The executive committee shall calendar these. Special meetings may be called only by the Pastor and Principal/Board President with the approval of the Principal and Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools and by the Designated Pastor and Principal or Board President with their approval in Archdiocesan Regional schools.

The agenda should be prepared jointly by the Principal and the Board President. Board members should contact the Principal ten working days prior to the scheduled meeting to include agenda items. The secretary of the Board should send the Agenda and all related information to the board members seven to ten working days prior to the scheduled meeting. It is suggested that board meeting agendas follow a structure such as Opening Prayer, Approval of Minutes, Old Business, New Business, and Adjournment. The executive committee assigns a different board member to provide refreshments and prayer for each meeting.

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; and
- Nothing of a confidential nature should be addressed, such as discipline problems or personnel issues. The Pastor or Board President in Parish schools or Designated Pastor and Board President in Archdiocesan Regional schools 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:

Items requiring strict confidentiality may require that the Pastor and the Board President in Parish schools or Designated Pastor and the Board President in Archdiocesan Regional schools call an executive / closed session. The school Principal or a school board member may also request this type of session. Should the Pastor and the Board President in Parish schools or the Designated Pastor and the Board President in Archdiocesan Regional schools accept the request for an executive / closed session, then the item will be scheduled on the agenda.

When an executive / closed session is called, the regular meeting is adjourned, all guests are asked to leave temporarily and the executive / closed session begins. Any

conversation or written submissions that are part of an executive / closed 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 in Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools. When the executive / closed session is adjourned, the open school board meeting is begun anew. The minutes, as recorded by the Board's secretary, simply reflect that a discussion was held in executive / closed session and no specifics are recorded.

AGENDAS / MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETINGS

Agendas and previous meeting minutes should be readily available at the school's office or on the school web site. A copy of these minutes should be gathered for school accreditation during the self-study year.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of a School Board shall show their acceptance of responsibility as members by regular attendance and participation at meetings and activities sponsored by the Board. Members shall furthermore participate in at least one training session a year that is specifically designed by the Catholic Schools Office. The Board President must provide an orientation detailing the work of the board for all new members.

It is extremely important to understand that Catholic school boards are NOT like public school boards. Public school boards hire and fire, approve expenditures and mandate the implementation of procedures and programs. Catholic school boards assist the Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools and the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools in hiring of a Principal. It is important for board members to understand that a board member's role is to give advice and not to become involved in the day-to-day operation of the school.

Boards must strive to reach consensus on all issues, and voting should not ordinarily occur. However, healthy discussion on issues can and should take place.

Consensus does not imply one hundred percent agreement, instead consensus means that all members will support the decision reached by the Board as a whole. When consensus is attained, everyone agrees to the decision and is willing to take ownership of that decision. Consensus is achieved when there is general agreement or accord among the members of the group. This is an approach to group decision-making. It presents an opportunity for all to be heard and avoids a "win/lose" posture that voting promotes. Consensus results in growth and is instrumental in building community within a group.

FINANCES

A major task for the Board is to provide advice and guidance in the area of finances. Approving tuition rates and salary increases for the staff is the Pastor's decision in Parish schools and the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools, but the Pastor and

Designated Pastor will rely upon the solid information provided to them by the Principal and the Board's finance committee to make the most prudent decision. The Board finance committee will work closely with the Principal to create budget drafts for the Pastor and Designated Pastor and their school boards. All questions from the committee members should have been addressed at the meeting where the budget was finalized.

Note: All proposed school budgets must be balanced.

Following certain guidelines will make the budget process much easier for all. Income (tuition and fees) from parents/guardians should at least cover the cost of employees' salaries and benefits, and may be as much as 80% of a school's income and expense. Following this guideline, an overestimated fundraising year will not result in payroll not being met.

Board members need to understand the importance of per pupil cost. Per pupil cost (PPC) is the amount of money needed to educate one child. The per pupil cost is derived by dividing the total annual expenses (excluding costs of cafeteria, sports programs, before-after school programs and other costs not directly related to the education of students and capital spending) by the average enrollment during the school year. Once the PPC is determined, other funds are considered to balance the budget.

Serious consideration should be given to raise tuition by a minimum of three percent per year. Raising the tuition any less than three percent will risk not having sufficient revenue to cover expenses.

While care must be taken to understand the financial plight of parents/guardians, the needs of the school and school staff must also be considered and discussed. Staff members should be given at least cost of living raises each year. The Archdiocese provides a salary scale based on a goal of reaching 80% of public school salaries over a five year period. With Archdiocesan benefits this then is very comparable compensation to public schools.

Boards should also assist the Principal in providing communication to parents/guardians about the financial status of the school, as well as emphasize to parents that tuition and fees paid do not cover the entire per pupil cost (PPC). The difference between actual tuition and PPC will demonstrate the amount of financial aid that each family is receiving. Each school should provide tuition assistance for families that demonstrate a need.

When building a budget, begin by reviewing the vision of the school and then start with expenses. Project all possible increases for salaries and benefits, utilities, operational costs and instructional materials. Project different raises for staff members, including health costs and other benefits. These figures are provided by the Archdiocese each year. Prepare two or three different expense statements based on different percentage increases in staff salaries. Next, provide a conservative number of potential students. Experiment with different tuition increases to assess the income needed to meet the various expense

drafts of the budget. If the tuition gets too high to balance the budget drafts, then the salary increases will need to be less generous in order to provide for an anticipated fund balance.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTING

Financial Responsibilities of the Principal include ensuring that:

- Principal is responsible for the budget preparation, which should begin by late fall each year with assistance from the school board finance committee.
- Principal is responsible for submitting the next fiscal year's preliminary Annual School Operational Budget to the Catholic School Office by March of current school year and the final Approved School Operational Budget for the next fiscal year by June of current school year.
- Approval for the final budget and parish investment in the school is granted by the Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools and the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools after review by the School Board Finance Committee.

LONG-TERM SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLANNING

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 of Bishops 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

- Is a process to develop both long-term vision and goals for the school with specific interim steps to reach these goals;
- Flows from both the Catholic Schools Office mission and vision as well as the school's mission statement;
- Encompasses a period of 3-5 years;
- Outlines realistic operational and strategic goals;
- Addresses areas such as Catholic identity, enrollment, personnel, curriculum, facilities, development (including marketing and public relations), ownership, governance, administration, finances, and any other needs specific to the school community;
- The Board plays an important role in many aspects of the long-range strategic planning while school administration develops other aspects of the plan;
- Involves an annual review of the school's mission statement, philosophy, goals and objectives as well as a review of the plan's goals and action steps, with any necessary adjustments being made including goals. These plans will provide a road map for all involved in the Parish/school community.

PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PROCESS

The Pastor in Archdiocesan parish schools and the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan regional schools evaluates the Principal each year in the month of February for the first 3 years of service and then periodically afterward. Board members give input in that process.

The Principal will provide the Board with the Archdiocesan Professional Growth Process and review the document with them. The timeline should be followed carefully. The Professional Growth Process has been designed to assist Principals in growing professionally, spiritually and personally.

The Professional Growth Process should affirm and validate what the Principal is doing well, and the process should pinpoint areas where improvement could and should be made. When completing the Professional Growth Process Form, a board member should not base his/her opinions on single or isolated incidents. Rather, the board member should look at patterns and attempt to accurately gauge the Principal's effectiveness during a given period.

Board members should always provide very specific examples when highlighting a Principal's strengths or when listing areas where improvement is necessary. Generalities do not provide someone with a basis for continuing positive behavior or for correcting areas where improvement is necessary. Only when specifics are shared, can a Principal truly gain by the Professional Growth Process.

The Principal Professional Growth Process affirms and validates the Principal's areas of strength and assists him/her in identifying areas of growth. The process aids the Principal in establishing goals for the school year and fosters ongoing dialogue between the Principal and Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools or the Principal and Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools. The Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools, as the employer, is solely responsible for contract decisions. In an Archdiocesan Regional schools, the Designated Pastor is responsible for contract decisions involving the Principal.

Each board member completes the Principal Professional Growth Form and submits the form to the Principal. The Principal and Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools meet to review these forms, as well as faculty and staff forms. In Archdiocesan Regional schools, the Principal and Designated Pastor meet to review these forms as well as faculty and staff forms.

SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING CALENDAR

Monthly meetings are planned by the Principal and School Board President. Agendas are set based on the business of the board as guided by the Strategic Plan. The entire School Board should meet 4 or 6 times annually, with the committees meetings for the other months.

Sufficient time should be given to committees to meet and bring forward recommendations to the Pastor and Principal for implementation in the school community.

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY WRITING

Policy development rests with the Board. A policy is a guide for discretionary action.

1. The issue should be clearly identified.
2. Brainstorm solutions so that choices are not limited.
3. Clear guidance and room for action should be evident.

Although the Principal usually recommends development of policies, anyone may recommend that a policy be considered.

1. All persons affected by the policy will be consulted.
2. All policies should include clear and concise language.
3. All factors for evaluation will be identified.

Local school board policies cannot conflict with Archdiocesan policies or regulations. The Principal is accountable to the Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools for the implementation of policy. While the board does not tell the Principal how to implement policy, it is the responsibility of the Principal to keep the Board informed on how the policy is being implemented. The Board may review policy (not implementation) and make suggestions for adjustments.

GENERAL POLICY AREAS

- A. Finance and financial reports.
- B. Use of the school or Parish facilities.
- C. Maintenance of facilities.
- D. Uniforms.

POLICY vs. REGULATION

- A. A regulation is a specification of a required action (rules) to implement the established policy.

1. A regulation is the responsibility of the Principal and relates exactly what procedure will be used to implement the policy.

Example of Policy: School uniforms will be required for all students attending our Catholic Elementary School.

*Example of Regulations: School uniforms will consist of...color, style, etc...
School uniforms will be purchased at ...
School uniforms will be worn each school day beginning ...*

- B. In contrast to regulations, policies are broad, general, and direction-setting statements. Regulations are specific written rules for implementation. Ideally, regulations contain few loopholes. To determine whether or not the statement is a policy or a regulation, ask: “Does this statement leave room for discretionary action on the part of the administrator (Principal)?” If the answer is “yes,” the statement is a policy. If it is “no,” the statement is a regulation. The regulation of the policy lies with the role of Principal and is outlined in the Student Handbook and/or Faculty Handbook.
- C. Some policies require regulations, and other policies exist primarily to set a tone or to establish the school’s position (for example, a personnel policy calling for nondiscrimination in hiring practices). By this analogy, not every administrative regulation has to flow from policy. Some arise out of practical concerns of the need to implement applicable state or federal law; others are an outgrowth of the school or Parish philosophy or tradition. Guidance from the Catholic Schools Office will assist in determining policies and regulations.

Examples of what a policy can do:

- *Provide general direction to the administration.*
- *Anticipate and avoid crises.*
- *Clarify expectations for students, parents/guardians, teachers, and others.*
- *Reduce subjectivity, inconsistency, and arbitrariness.*

Examples of what a policy cannot do:

- *Control or supervise administration.*
- *Resolve specific problems after the fact.*
- *Address isolated cases or petty items.*
- *Substitute for programs.*

Attributes of good policies are:

- *Responsive to or anticipate needs of the staff, parents/guardians or students;*
- *Brief and to the point;*
- *Available and promulgated;*
- *Stable for long periods of time;*
- *Understandable;*
- *Systematically indexed and placed in a notebook;*
- *Evaluated regularly; and*
- *Communicated effectively and disseminated.*

PROCEDURES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- A. The initiator of the policy, in consultation with the Principal, presents the recommendation in writing. The recommendation includes:
 - A statement of the expressed need in clear and concise terms;
 - A recommended solution in the form of a simple policy statement; and
 - The rationale, which includes the relationship of the need, the implications and some timeline for implementation.

- B. The recommended policy with the above rationale is sent to all board members before the meeting so that it can be reviewed.

- C. During the meeting.
 - The initiator of the policy introduces the issue;
 - The chairperson assumes the members have studied the material;
 - Time is given for questions and discussion; and
 - The Principal makes plans to survey the audiences who will be affected by the policy;

- D. At the next meeting, the board has a more in depth discussion of the policy proposal, including:
 - The feasibility of the policy, pros and cons are considered;
 - Alternate solutions are presented and discussed;
 - The Board considers who will be affected by the proposal; and
 - Gathers feedback from stakeholders.

- E. The policy statement is now written and submitted to the Board and analyzed:
 - Does the statement make sense?
 - Is it clear, simple, brief and to the point?
 - Does it state what is to be done?
 - Is there any conflict with Archdiocesan policy? All Archdiocesan policies are automatically policies of every school and religious education programs.
 - What adjustments are appropriate? and
 - Can the Board reach consensus?

- F. The policy statement is then given to the Pastor in Archdiocesan Parish schools or the Designated Pastor in Archdiocesan Regional schools for approval and signature. The signature makes the statement a policy.

- G. The policy is recorded and given to the Principal to implement through regulations:

- The Principal will distribute the policy and regulations to all persons affected by implementation; add to the Faculty and Student Handbooks; and
- Evaluate the policy and its implementation. Present results to the Board.

ARCHDIOCESAN GRIEVANCE ISSUES

Any concern brought to a board member by a parent or employee should be sent to the Principal in order to follow subsidiarity and the process as outlined by the Archdiocese and Catholic Schools Office. Board members should be clear that these issues are handled by the school administration not by school or education boards.

- A. Student/Parent Complaint Process. Although the Archdiocese endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within the schools, the Archdiocese recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinions sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian meeting with the immediate authoritative person. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian's satisfaction, the parent or guardian may make a formal complaint. A formal complaint form will be obtained from the Principal and guided by the Catholic Schools Office.
- B. The Archdiocesan Appeal Process for Employees. Employees may grieve any dispute pertaining to the application or interpretation of policies relating to employment, including any dispute pertaining to the application or interpretation of a formal employment contract, if one exists (excluding not being offered a new contract). Nothing contained herein shall be construed to vary the terms of any such employment contract or the employment-at-will relationship.

The intent of this policy is to resolve employment disputes at the lowest possible administrative level and in a cooperative Christian atmosphere. The process is not intended to be adversarial in nature. To that end, prior to using the steps set forth, the employee shall meet with his/her immediate supervisor to discuss the dispute and attempt conciliation, if at all possible. Additionally, neither the employee nor the employer shall be represented by legal counsel during any phase of the conciliation or grievance process. An Archdiocesan Uniform Appeal Process Form may be obtained from the Principal.

- C. Private Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. These schools shall adopt a grievance or appeal process which addresses the problem situations in an equitable and expeditious manner in keeping with the Archdiocesan Appeal Process. A copy of this process shall be sent to the Superintendent of Catholic schools.