



**St. Alphonsus Catholic School
School Advisory Commission Operational Norms**

Updated 12/22/2021

Mission

The School Advisory Commission (SAC) exists as a permanent commission of the Pastoral Council. The purpose of the SAC is to assist leadership in ensuring the school will thrive and remain viable for the future, and to assist leadership in ensuring excellence in Catholic Culture, Academics, Whole Child Education and Stewardship of Resources. The SAC also supports the school in its efforts to collaborate with the parish.

These operational norms govern how the SAC works at St. Alphonsus Catholic School and are specific to St. Al's; however, the SAC also must follow the Archdiocese School Advisory Commission Responsibilities. These norms will be reviewed and updated annually, in May, or as directed by the school or Archdiocese.

School Advisory Commission Membership & Orientation

Appointment Process

Members to the St. Alphonsus Catholic School SAC are nominated by current Commission members and formally appointed by the principal, in conjunction with the Chair. The Appointment Process follows these steps:

- Nominated by another commission member or the principal
- An informational meeting with the principal or the Chair; either in person or virtually/conference call
- Commission discusses and reviews, decides whether to add the member via majority vote

Membership

Non-voting SAC members:

- Pastor or Pastor's Designee
- Principal
- Pastoral Council Liaison
- Home & School Chair or Designee
- Athletic Director or Designee

Voting Members (5-9 people in addition to the above):

- Parishioners
- School Parents
- Past Alumni Parents or Students
- Community Members (parents from other schools, etc)

Officers

Chair

Vice-Chair

Secretary

Officers are elected from current SAC members. Elections are held in September for applicable officer openings. Officers have a two-year tenure in their officer position. Employees of the parish or school cannot hold an officer position, and officers cannot be re-elected to the same position for multiple terms.

Terms

Each commission member serves a 3-year term; with the possibility of serving two consecutive terms (6 years total). Terms start in July and end the following June.

Orientation & Onboarding Materials

Orientation is held during the SAC's regularly scheduled October meeting each year. During the orientation, the SAC reviews responsibilities and if available, also receives a presentation from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee regarding the current roles & responsibilities of the SAC. Orientation will also include a full tour of the school, a review of the SAC email account & Google drive, and any other pertinent details related to the Commission. All SAC members review orientation every year.

Each commission member will receive a numbered onboarding binder that contains any documents/paperwork, bylaws, etc. that are needed to fulfill their role on the commission. Binders are given out at the Orientation in October and turned back in in June. The SAC Secretary keeps a running document of binder assignments and notes the location of where the binders are stored at the school when not in use by the Commission.

Responsibilities of the School Advisory Commission

The following are responsibilities of all School Advisory Commission members:

- Recruit/Vet potential new SAC members
- Assist with onboarding new SAC members
- Ensure adequate resources are available to principal to implement programming
- Continuous work on institutional advancement: develop third source funding, marketing/PR initiatives, enrollment management, and help to evaluate programming
- Be informed on current year school budget, and partner with principal to propose school budget

The commission is meant to have a long-term view and focus the majority of its efforts on long range and strategic planning. The SAC focus should be on programming, budgeting, and planning on a 1, 3, and 5 year+ scale.

School Advisory Commission Meeting Protocols

Meetings of the SAC are ***closed and confidential*** except for twice a year when meetings are Open Invitation for parents, teachers, and community members to attend. The Open Meetings will be decided on and scheduled for the year during the Orientation meeting in October, with the general rule being that Open Meetings should occur, if possible, in November and March. Parents may suggest agenda items for discussion to the Chair, at least 15 calendar days in advance of the Open Meetings. Open Meetings are also a time for parents to learn about the long-range planning for the school. Each Open Meeting will begin with a Parent Comment Period, during which parents can discuss the agenda items they have previously submitted to the Chair.

Meeting Minutes & Agendas are stored in the designated School Committee google drive, which is administered through the school's network. Each SAC member needs a Gmail account. If you do not have a Gmail account, one will be set up for you during October orientation each year so that you can access this drive.

A current contact list & phone tree will be maintained for all commission members. This contact list will be shared & reviewed at each meeting and also serves as the meeting's Attendance roster.

Meeting Agendas

Standard meeting agenda items include:

- Prayer
- Attendance/Review of Attendance Roster
- Budget Report
 - Budget Proposal – in December or January the principal and/or business manager reviews their presentation to the SAC. The following month (usually in February) is when the budget is formally presented at Budget Review Night. The chair and the principal attends Budget Review Night, along with the business manager.
- Facilities & Technology Report
- Membership Report
- Long Range Planning
- Institutional Advancement
 - Recruitment Report
 - Enrollment Report
 - Upcoming Events
 - General Marketing & PR
 - Evaluation of Current & Future Programming

Sub Committees of SAC

- Marketing (under Institutional Advancement)
- Finance
- Commission Recruitment & Retainment
- School Enrollment & Recruitment
- Engineering (works with parish Buildings & Grounds Commission)
- Fundraising (i.e. Home & School)
- Programming (i.e. athletics, etc.)

Annual Events that SAC is responsible for attending:

- Back to School Night
- Open House
- Ministry Fair
- SAC Orientation (October)
- Annual Retreat

Meeting Attendance

- Common Night: the parish holds Common Night the third Tuesday of each month in the Community Room. This is a meeting when all parish councils and commissions meet to give their monthly reports. The SAC meets from 5:00 – 6:15pm in the Community Room, prior to the Common Night meeting which runs from 6:30-7:00pm in the same room. One member of the SAC must stay to attend Common Night each month. The SAC will rotate who stays for Common Night, and further committee meetings.
- One member of the SAC should also attend the Buildings & Grounds Committee meetings, when they are held.

School Advisory Commission Policy Responsibilities

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee *Parish and School Policy Manual* establishes the essential policies and directives for schools. The SAC, in collaboration with the school principal, may propose local policy that is more prescriptive, but any proposed policy may not in any way conflict with or supersede archdiocesan policy. Proposed policies require the approval of the pastor.

Areas where the SAC is NOT involved:

- Day-to-day operations of the school
- Student discipline
- Parent complaints
 - SAC members need to remind parents of the established procedure to raise concerns. This would be through the principal and up to the pastor if necessary.
- Teacher complaints
 - There is an established grievance procedure for teachers and staff to use.
 - The collective voice of teachers and staff can be heard through their SAC representative member, if such a position exists on the SAC
- Issues related to employment or evaluation of school/parish personnel
- Evaluation of the principal

- Note: the supervision / evaluation of the principal is the sole responsibility of the pastor. The pastor may seek input from the SAC regarding the principal's working relationship with it.

Key Tenets of an Effective Principal/SAC Relationship

The school vision and mission must be understood by all and is the foundation for all SAC business. The roles and responsibilities of the SAC/Principal/Pastor are understood and respected by all parties. The Principal and the SAC work together to establish procedures by which the SAC can fulfill its roles and responsibilities. The Principal views the SAC as an integral part of the school community and uses the SAC as a consultative body to further the mission of the school. ***The Principal and the SAC engage in open, honest discourse at meetings and once a decision or course of action has been reached, all parties present a unified front to the school community.***

If any member of the SAC cannot adhere to the above guidelines, they should step down.

School Advisory Commission Communication Protocols

At least once per school year, there will be a letter of communication to the parents in the school newsletter about what the purpose and responsibilities of the School Advisory Commission are.

The officers of the SAC maintain a text group (Principal, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary) that is controlled by the Chair, so the officers can help deal with last minute agenda or meeting changes, and other issues that may come forward outside of SAC regular meeting protocols.

The School Committee maintains its own email address which is monitored by the Chair & Vice-Chair.

Parish Communication

Bulletin announcements need to be emailed to Barbara Kowalczyk at barb@st-alphonsus.org. The deadline for the following weekend's bulletin is the previous Monday at noon. The request should be sent in a word document. She will publish it based on space availability.

Mass announcements from the podium need to be emailed to Terry Piontkowski at terry@st-alphonsus.org. The deadline for a podium announcement for the following weekend's mass is the previous Monday at noon. The request needs to list the exact date of the needed announcement.

Distribution of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from SAC meetings are sent to all SAC members within 7 days and are also stored in the Google Drive. ***Meeting Minutes are confidential and should not be forwarded to anyone outside of the commission.*** For the twice yearly Open Meetings, the meeting minutes for the Parent Comment Period are shared school-wide within a week (in the school newsletter).