



**St. Joseph Catholic School
LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Article I
Introduction and Rationale**

The Catholic parochial school is an expression of the educational mission of the 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 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.

All Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Dallas exist for two reasons: to help prepare students academically for college and to form students spiritually for heaven through educating the students in the truth of the Catholic faith. The schools are designed as social and moral development programs within a robust academic context that are meant to supplement the parents' role as the primary educator of their children, and to serve the vulnerable populations within the general community that are failed by other local options. Catholic Schools within the diocese are a mission of the church and are ultimately responsible to the Bishop of Dallas in all matters of faith and religious instruction.

Just as the parish council serves with the pastor on behalf of the total parish community, so the school advisory council serves with the principal for the good of the school community. Advisory councils are expected to provide value-add assistance to schools, by supplementing and not supplanting the essential functions of the staff. In short, the advisory council should provide support in areas in which the school does not employ direct experts and encourage the hiring of such experts when necessary.

Each advisory council ultimately serves at the pleasure of the pastor and the principal.

**Article II
General Statements**

St. Joseph Catholic School is an educational institution operated by St. Joseph Parish under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Dallas. As such, the school is subject to the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church and the duly enacted policies and regulations of the Diocese of Dallas, and the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Dallas.

All Acts of the St. Joseph Catholic School Advisory Council are subject to the approval of the pastor of St. Joseph Parish.

**Article III
Name of Organization**

The name of the body shall be St. Joseph Catholic School Advisory Council.

Article IV
Purposes and Functions

The advisory council is established by the pastor, in accord with diocesan policy, to assist him and the principal in the governance of St. Joseph Catholic School. Decisions made by the pastor are binding, and the advisory council exists to make recommendations regarding such decisions. 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. Because the advisory council is not a governing board and therefore not bound by fiduciary responsibility, many operational matters are not appropriate to share with the group. As such, it is important for advisory councils to remember the role of support and assistance to the school, not operations or governance.

The primary functions of an advisory council are therefore to provide support to the principal and the pastor, communicate to and with the school community, monitor and advise on the strategic direction of the school, collect information from the school community, and to provide value-add data analysis and assessment at the discretion of the pastor and the principal.

The school board shall provide advice in the following domains, which are operationalized versions of the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools.

1. Academics
 - a. Research other local offerings
 - b. Provide comparisons with other programs
 - c. Suggest directions, not programs, to the administration
 - d. Communicate to the local community academic achievements
2. Catholic Identity
 - a. Foster communication and connection between the parish and school
 - b. Monitor the social and moral development programs
 - c. Determine metrics for assessing proper formation
 - d. Communicate to the local community Catholic Identity achievements
 - e. Be aware of the strategic plan of the parish and provide input to the parish pastoral council regarding this plan
3. Community Vitality
 - a. Exhibits hospitality and a welcoming spirit to people of all different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.
 - b. Be a strong presence within parish and other local events
 - c. Monitor and foster appropriate school culture as well as parent and family engagement.
 - d. Participate in strategic planning processes and outreach initiatives as necessary
 - e. Suggest worthwhile community activities which the school can participate in.
 - f. Communicate to the local community school approaches, values, and mission
4. Finances

- a. Work with appropriate school and parish employees to monitor a high-level school budget
 - b. Ensure that fiscal priorities are met
 - c. Assist with fundraising / annual appeals
 - d. Ensure transparency for the local community
 - e. Communicate to the local community information about finances
5. Facilities
- a. Assist with the development and maintenance of a campus master plan
 - b. Act as a liaison to the parish finance council on these plans
 - c. Ensure that school programs have adequate facilities and maintenance to be successful
 - d. Ensure that parish priorities are achieved through the community facilities
 - e. Communicate to the local community information about school facilities

Article V
Relationships With Other Groups

1. **Parish** **Pastoral** **Council**

The school advisory council and the parish pastoral councils are 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. The pastor, in consultation with the principal, shall have a formal method for information sharing between these groups. These plans will be reevaluated every three years or upon the change of pastor or principal.

2. **Parish Finance Council**

The school advisory council and the parish finance councils are consultative to the pastor. Therefore, it is essential that good communication exists between the groups. The finance committee of the school advisory committee will assist in budgeting and sharing this with the parish finance council. The relationship which exists is one of information sharing and common planning for the benefit of the total parish community. The pastor, in consultation with the principal, shall have a formal method for information sharing between these groups. These plans will be reevaluated every three years or upon the change of pastor or principal.

3. **Parent Organization**

The president or other official designee of the parent teacher organization is a member of St. Joseph Catholic School Advisory Council.

4. **Diocese**

The relationship between St. Joseph Catholic School Advisory Council and the diocese is expressed in the general statement of this document as well as in diocesan educational policies which are available for local school advisory council members.

Article VI

Organization of the School Advisory Council

1. **Membership**

Membership on the School Advisory Council shall be representative of the Catholic community of the parish and/or area that the school serves. It shall be composed of at least 9 but not more than 12 members.

2. **General Eligibility**

Any person who is twenty-one years or older and who has shown a deep interest in and commitment to Catholic school education and shall be willing to give time and energies for the betterment of the Catholic school is eligible to become a member of the council.

3. **Ex-officio Membership**

The pastor, school principal, advisors and president or other official designee of the parent teacher organization are ex-officio non-voting members.

4. **Appointment/Election**

Members of the school advisory council may be appointed by the pastor. It is recommended that all members of the advisory council complete an application and are interviewed prior to being offered a position of service.

5. **Term of Office**

The term of office for all appointed and/or elected members of the school advisory council shall be three years. The terms of office shall expire June 30th and new terms commence on July 1st. No one shall serve more than two consecutive terms. Council members having served two consecutive terms may again be candidates for council membership after a lapse of at least one year. The pastor may grant extensions to terms when deemed appropriate.

6. **Removal of Members, Vacancies**

A vacancy occurs when a member resigns and or is removed from the school advisory council. Any member who misses two consecutive meetings of the school advisory council and with inactivity in their subcommittee, unless excused by action of the pastor, shall cease to be a member. In addition, when a member of the school advisory council chooses to withdraw his or her children from the school and subsequently enrolls them in another school, or provides education under an alternative program, he or she ceases to be a member of the school advisory council. When a vacancy occurs, the pastor will appoint an individual to complete the unexpired term.

7. **Persons Ineligible for Service**

Employees of the school, their spouses, and members of their immediate families (father, mother, brother, sister, children) will not be eligible to serve as voting members of the school advisory council. However, the pastor or principal may grant ex-officio membership in the event an individual displays unique qualifications or expertise that would benefit the council and/or school. No student still enrolled in secondary education is eligible to join the council.

Article VII

Officers of the School Advisory Council

1. Designation of Officers

The officers of the school advisory council shall be the chairperson, vice-chairperson and the chairperson of finance, whose duties shall be as follows:

- A. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the school advisory council; conduct internal elections; call all regular and special meetings; direct the functions and goals of the school advisory council; enforce the by-laws and perform any and all duties incident to the office of chairperson. The chairperson shall appoint all standing and *ad-hoc* committees and their chairpersons.
- B. The vice-chairperson shall perform all duties of the chairperson in his or her absence.
- C. The chairperson of school finance shall assist the pastor and principal in financial planning. He or she is the chair of the school finance committee if one exists.
- D. A special provision for a secretary/recorder may be included in the articles of this constitution.

Article VIII

Meetings of the School Advisory Council

1. Time and Place of Meetings

Regular meetings of the school advisory council shall be held at a public designated place suitable for the orderly conduct of business and attendance by members and non-members. The date and time for each regular meeting shall be made public. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, principal, or chairperson, in consultation with the pastor and principal. The principal must be present at all meetings. The pastor is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings. All school advisory council members will be notified of the date, time, place and purpose of each special meeting at least twenty-four hours in advance of each such meeting. If school advisory council meetings are attended by non-members, the school advisory council will go into executive session whenever the issues involve confidential matters.

2. Presentation by Non-members

With the exception of the bishop and the superintendent of schools for the Diocese, no person or group shall have the right to address a meeting of the school advisory council unless prior written approval has been obtained. Any person or group desiring to address a meeting of the school advisory council shall notify the chairperson, in writing, of the nature of their request no less than seven (7) calendar days prior to the next meeting of the school advisory council. On receipt of such a request, the chairperson shall contact the pastor and the principal. The pastor is the final decision maker on such requests. Notice of such presentations shall be given to each advisory council member in advance of the meeting at which it is to be made.

If a request to address a meeting is made and the chairperson, pastor and principal all agree that the request is of an emergency nature, approval of such an emergency request shall be granted no less than forty-eight (48) hours before a school advisory council meeting and all members of the school advisory council shall be notified of the nature of the request and the presentations. Approval of an emergency request will specifically provide the person or persons to make the presentation, the nature of the presentation and the time allotted. No final action may be taken on any matter presented to the school advisory council in accordance with these provisions until the next school advisory council meeting following the meeting at which the presentation is made.

3. Rules of Order

Ordinarily, decisions regarding policy matters and other major issues are not made at the “first reading” which is for information and clarification. At that time, the council begins its decision-making process.

To make the best decisions, the consensus method of decision-making should be used. When the school advisory council is unable to reach a consensus, a vote should be taken, and the minutes should reflect the different positions and appropriate reasons. In cases involving voting and business procedures, Roberts Rules of Order should be used.

After the school advisory council approves a recommendation, the pastor and principal will provide written notice within one week to the advisory council of whether the recommendation will be enacted into the school operations. At the next school advisory meeting, a report will be made as to the implementation of this approved new operation. If the pastor/principal chooses not to implement the recommendation, the notice will be given which may contain the reasons for not approving the recommendation.

4. Order of Business

The ordinary order of the meeting shall be:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Prayer
- III. Routine Matters
Roll Call
 - A. Approval of previous meeting minutes
 - B. Acceptance of Agenda
- IV. Communications
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business
- VII. Information and Proposals
 - A. Principal’s Report
 - B. Pastor’s Report
 - C. Parent Teacher Organization Report (may be provided within Principal’s Report)
 - D. Committee Reports

- VIII. Future Business
- IX. Adjournment
- X. Closing Prayer

Article IX
Committees of the School Advisory Council

There shall be committees as deemed advisable.

1. **Standing Committees**

Members of standing committees need not be school advisory council members. However, the chair of each committee shall be an advisory council member appointed through consultation between the pastor and the school advisory board chairperson.

The following standing committees shall be maintained:

- a. Academics
- b. Catholic Identity
- c. Community Vitality
- d. Finance
- e. Facilities

The pastor may appoint additional standing committees at his discretion. Each committee shall maintain a committee charter approved by the pastor that contains the following information: a description of the roles and responsibilities of the committee; a listing of reports and expectations of work output for the committee; a reporting structure to be used at advisory council meetings; and specific metrics to define success of the committee.

2. **Ad-Hoc Committees**

Ad-Hoc committees will be appointed as needed. The chairperson and members of Ad-Hoc committees need not be members of the council. The appointment of each ad-hoc committee shall state the duration of the committee.

Article X
Amendments

This constitution and articles may be amended at any regular or special meetings by consensus of the school advisory council or by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the advisory council present and provided:

1. The proposed amendments have been presented in writing to the membership two weeks in advance of a meeting to consider the amendments.
2. The membership shall have an opportunity to consider and discuss the proposed amendments, reserving final approval of the amendments until the next meeting.

3. The proposed written amendments are approved by the pastor of Parish in consultation with the Catholic Schools office by affixing his signature to the written proposal.

Adopted: _____
Date



Signature of Pastor

6 Sept. 2023

Date

APPROVED:



Signature of Superintendent of Catholic Schools

9-15-2023

Date