



SCHOOL COMMISSION BY-LAWS

Introduction

The Catholic school is an expression of the educational mission of the parish. The parish school commission serves as an advisory body in support of the ministry for the good of the school community.

Article I. Name of the Organization

The name of this body shall be the St. Alphonsus Parish School Commission.

Article II. Purposes and Functions

The commission is established by the pastor, in accord with archdiocesan policy, to assist the pastor and principal in policy development and long-range planning for the school. When the commission meets with pastor, principal and members and agree on a policy matter, the decision is effective and binding on all. The pastor and principal shall consult with the commission prior to decisions being made in its areas of responsibility.

The overall purpose of the commission is to advise and support the principal as they form policy and direct the ongoing development of the school. The Board is advisory in nature – the operating principle is that the school administrators accept the advice of the Board when given, especially when consensus is reached. When the advice is not taken, it is customary, but not required for the administrators to let the Board members know the reason.

The advisory process is collaborative. The school commission's role is to make the principal as effective as possible, giving him or her the benefit of the school commission's collective wisdom.

The School Commission responsibilities are in the following areas:

Planning

- Collaborate with the School Administration (Pastor & Principal) and School Faculty on establishing the St. Alphonsus School mission and philosophy statements striving toward providing a quality education for the school's students.
- Periodically evaluate the St. Alphonsus School mission and philosophy statements are in accordance with the Archdiocese spiritual guidance and educational policies.
- Collaborate with the School Administration (Pastor & Principal) and School Faculty on establishing a St. Alphonsus School long range plan. The Long-Range plan shall be reviewed and revised on a five-year cycle; with the review to commence in year four and final approval to occur in year five. The School Commission may adjust the review and revision schedule as necessary to best meet the needs of the school.
- Establish annual School Commission goals and priorities consistent with the school's Long-Range Plan and in consultation with the Principal.



- Annually evaluate the Long-Range plan to monitor achievement of strategic goals and objectives.
- Review proposed major curriculum changes to ensure consistency with goal and objectives of the Long-Range Plan.

Policy Development

- Advise the Principal and Pastor on school and parish policies relevant to school operations.
- Review and evaluate policy development of non-academic related policies, including but not limited to tuition, Scrip program, and community outreach.
- Annually review Family Handbook.

Finance

- Principal to prepare the annual school budget with consultation with the School Commission treasurer. The annual school budget is reviewed by the School Commission for feedback. The pastor and principal approve the finalized annual school budget in consultation with the Parish Finance Council.
- Developing a plan and means to finance school programs, including evaluation of tuition rates, development and fundraising needs.
- Provide advice and consultation on school capital improvements and property maintenance.
- Monitoring the budget during the school year.
- Establish a long-range revenue plan (five year Pro Forma).

Public Relations

- Establish and maintain appropriate forums to communicate regularly with Pastor, parents, parish, and the local community about the school.
- Listening to the needs and concerns of the school community through appropriate forums set up for this purpose.
- Aid in the recruiting of students;
- Promote the school to the parish, parents, and the local community

Evaluation, which includes

- Determining whether commission goals and plans are being met;
- Evaluating the commission's own effectiveness in achieving the set goals

Article III. Membership

The membership of the parish school commission shall consist of at least six and not more than 8 members in addition to the pastor and principal. Members ordinarily serve for three years, renewable once and staggered so that council membership can rotate while maintaining a mix of existing and new members.



Any member absent without valid reason for three consecutive regular meetings per year shall automatically forfeit their membership.

Voluntary resignation shall be submitted in writing to the chairperson at least two weeks prior to date of resignation.

All departing members shall turn over their commission files at their final meeting.

Individual commission member responsibilities include:

- Actively supporting and promoting the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs
- Attend all school commission meetings and functions
- Review agenda and supporting materials prior to school commission meetings
- Serve on committees and task forces and offer to take on special assignments

Nominations and Selection

When new members are needed, appointed commission members compile a list of potential appointees who meet the following criteria:

- Interest in and commitment to Catholic education and to this school's philosophy and mission;
- Availability to attend meetings and periodic in-service programs and to participate in committee work;
- Maintain high level of integrity and confidentiality;
- Deal with situations as they relate to the good of the entire school community,
- Be a credible witness of the Catholic faith to the school community and the other publics the school serves. (A Non-Catholic parent of child/ren enrolled in the school may be a member of the commission.)

Ineligibility

A person currently employed by the parish or parish school or a close relative or in-law of or living in the same household as a parish or school employee.

Selection

The nomination list is presented to the entire school commission membership and the final selection is determined by the pastor based on who best meet current and specific needs, as well as the above criteria.

The selection of new member should begin in February. Selections should be made by March or April and new members should attend several school commission meetings for orientation purposes prior to beginning their term on July 1st.



Article IV. Officers

The commission should select members to serve in the positions of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. The officers are elected by the commission and serve one-year renewable terms.

The officers shall be elected annually at the June meeting. The Chairperson must have served on the Commission for at least one full year. The Chairperson shall be elected first and then the other officers elected in the following order: Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. All voting members are eligible for election to any office.

The above officers, pastor and principal form the executive committee. The executive committee may be called to meet and make decisions if necessary, in the absence of a full commission meeting.

The duties are those ordinarily performed by such officers and as follows:

Chairperson

- Preside at all commission meetings
- Plan an agenda two weeks in advance of each commission meeting in coordination with the Principal, Pastor, and Vice Chairperson
- Distribute an agenda to the School Commission membership one week in advance of each meeting
- Sign all School Commission policies and official correspondence
- Serve until a successor has been elected

Vice Chairperson

- Assume and perform the duties of the Chairperson during the Chairperson's absence or temporary inability to perform

Secretary

- Keep a record of the proceedings of the commission monthly meetings, including attendance record.
- Prepare and distribute minutes of each meeting to the School Commission membership.
- After approval of the minutes, place in a permanent and easily accessible location a summary of each meeting on the school website/repository.
- Serve as the custodian of the School Commission By-Laws

Treasurer

- In the commission monthly meetings, report on the school's monthly budget performance in coordination with the principal and the pastoral assistant for administration.



Article V. Meetings

The chairperson and principal should meet to plan the agenda for the commission meetings and the agenda and written committee reports should be available to members at least one week prior to regularly scheduled commission meetings.

The school commission meets every month beginning in August through the following June of the school year. Specific meeting dates and times are determined by the school commission.

Meetings shall be conducted in an orderly and courteous manner and should include approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, Principal's report, Pastor's report, standing committee reports, and new business.

All meetings of the Commission shall be open to parents, guardians, and other members of the school and parish community unless designated as an executive session called by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson. Executive sessions may be called for confidential matters or sensitive issues. The Commission membership shall be advised in advance of any executive sessions whenever feasible.

Parents, guardians and other members of the St. Alphonsus school and parish community are welcome to attend Commission meetings. In order to participate in the discussion of any issue, an individual shall advise the Chairperson of his or her intent, purpose, topic or subject at least seven (7) days before the meeting. Discussion of any issue may not exceed 10 minutes unless otherwise approved by the Executive Committee.

In the event the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson determine a vote is required expeditiously due to exigent circumstances or a time-sensitive issue, a motion may be made by electronic mail to all Commission voting members. In such instances the motion may be seconded and voted on by Commission members by electronic mail outside of the regularly scheduled meeting to obtain authorization to resolve the issue. In the event of a motion is conducted by electronic mail, the motion and the outcome shall be reflected in the next month's meeting minutes.

Standing and Ad Hoc committees meet at other times. If commission meetings are open to the public, there should be a provision in the operating procedures of the commission in regard to executive sessions covering either personnel issues or other confidential matters.

Article VI. Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

Standing and/or Ad Hoc Committees can be named and a chairperson delegated by the School Commission. The committees may address the current and future needs of the school and may include the following:

- Annual Operating Plan and Budget
- Budget Oversight
- Tuition and Parish support rates



- Major Capital Projects
- Public Relations and Development
- Long-range plans
- Review of school policies and procedures
- Maintenance and Operation of the school facilities
- Representative to Parish Council, Finance Council and/or Parent Club
- Development and Endowments
- Alumni Relations

Article VII. Relationships with Other Groups

The Catholic school commission is related to the Archdiocese, the parish school administration, and at least two groups on the parish level: The Parish Finance Council and the Parents' Club Organization.

A. ARCHDIOCESE

The relationship between the parish school commission and the Archdiocese is stated in Archdiocesan educational policies.

B. PASTOR

The pastor is the chief administrator of all parish programs – including the Catholic School. The pastor also serves as executive officer of the School Commission. The pastor provides leadership to the School Commission based on his knowledge of the school and archdiocesan community. The pastor is the employer of the principal; responsible for hiring, supervision, evaluation, and contract renewal.

C. PRINCIPAL

The principal, whose authority is delegated within his or her employment contract and job description, is primarily responsible for the operation of the school. The principal's responsibility includes employing, supervising and evaluating the school's staff, establishing academic programs, and evaluating student behavior.

The principal is the education leader and an executive officer of the School Commission. He or she is the link between the Board and the school with the staff, students and parents. He or she shares information from these constituencies with the school commission, as well as current educational trends, assessment results, and federal and state programs.

D. FACULTY

School Commission is responsible for communicating with the faculty through the principal. Teachers and staff should feel comfortable approaching a commission member regarding policy issues. However, the school commission has no authority outside of the school commission meeting.

E. PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The Parish Finance Council is a consultative body that provides the pastor with advice concerning the stewardship of the parish's fiscal resources. It assists the pastor by:



- Conducting long-range financial planning with regard to funding operational and capital needs in the parish;
- Developing and overseeing a parish budget process which results in an annual parish budget. This process should involve the participation of those responsible for parish programs. It should be so designed that it addresses the parish's priorities and goals as determined by the pastor and parish pastoral council;
- Providing financial analysis of current fiscal status reports;
- Providing fiscal analysis of proposed goals, strategies, programs and administrative aspects of parish life.

While the finance council has significant responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is not the role of the finance council to recommend directions, priorities, or programs other than those related to its delegation: namely, fiscal stewardship. For this reason, the other consultative structures must be in place for the finance council to fulfill its role responsibly and effectively.

The school commission is governed by the budgetary financial policies and procedures, which are established by the pastor in consultation with the Parish Finance Council.

The principal has the responsibility for the effective use of the school finances including the parish financial investment (subsidy) and is accountable for keeping expenditures within the budget set.

F. PARENTS' CLUB ORGANIZATION

The Parents' Club Organization is responsible for maintaining good communications between the home and school, for providing a vehicle through which parents can provide service to the school (i.e., volunteers and fund-raising), for offering a mechanism for parent education, and for serving as a structure for political action when needed (i.e., letter writing, phone calls, visits to legislators).

The school commission works closely with the officers of the parent organization in order to understand more fully parent needs and concerns. It works with parent fund-raising groups as part of coordinating the overall financing of programs for the school. It uses the communication mechanism of the parent organization to report to school families about commission activities.