



Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls

DIOCESAN POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *Governance*

BISHOP

Roles & Responsibilities:

Acting in his role as herald of the faith, steward of grace, and shepherd of souls, the Bishop of Sioux Falls holds Canonical responsibility for all Catholic education and faith formation programs within the Diocese. Catholic schools are an essential apostolate intended explicitly to assist the bishop in his responsibility of teaching the Catholic faith. Catholic school apostolates are also a fulfillment of the Church's obligation to assist parents in the formation of their children. The responsibility for the formal religious instruction of the faithful remains always uniquely with the Bishop. Schools, therefore, are explicitly bound to uphold diocesan policies.

In the Diocese of Sioux Falls, the authority of the bishop has been delegated first to pastors and then to school administrators. Pertaining to the governance of schools, this delegation is limited. The following policy defines the limitations particular to the school governance circumstances that exist in the diocese.

To ensure that there is appropriate consultation and adherence to diocesan norms, the bishop's official liaison to the schools is the Director of Catholic Schools.

PASTOR

Roles & Responsibilities:

The Code of Canon Law states that the pastor is the shepherd of the parish entrusted to him by the Bishop and, as such, must carry out the duties of teaching, governing and sanctifying under the authority of the Bishop. Therefore, the pastor should be the chief administrator of the Catholic school and must represent the parish in all juridic matters except when otherwise provided for.

DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Roles & Responsibilities:

The director is appointed by the bishop and is the representative of the bishop in all educational matters in Catholic schools in the Diocese.

The director shall provide recommendations and consultative services to the Bishop on the governance and operation of the education and formation programs in Catholic schools of the Diocese. In addition, the Director shall provide services to the pastors, administrators, Governing Boards and school councils. The Director of Catholic Schools is to keep the Bishop or his delegate informed.

GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS

Governance:

The authority to oversee the operation of Catholic schools within the Diocese of Sioux Falls rests with the Bishop. However, he delegates this authority in differing ways according to the local circumstances. In the Diocese of Sioux Falls, there are three types of school structures.

Parish Schools:

The local pastor serves as the Superintendent and has ultimate authority in schools that are operated as an apostolate of a particular parish. The pastor, after consultation with the principal(s) and applicable advisory councils of the school, establishes policy in the school on matters not mandated by state regulation or diocesan policy.

Regional Parochial Schools:

In the situation of schools that are carrying out the Catholic education apostolate on behalf of two or more parishes, the school has been established as a juridic entity by decree of the bishop and as a civil corporation. The bishop, chancellor and local pastors serve as directors and officers on the corporation board.

The bishop may appoint one of the pastors to serve as superintendent or may direct the pastors to work as one body (*in solidum*). In which case, the details of the shared responsibilities will be determined in consultation with the director of Catholic schools. The superintendent or superintendent-*in-solidum*, after consultation with the principal(s) and applicable school advisory council(s), establishes policy in the school on matters not mandated by state regulation or diocesan policy.

Centralized Parochial Systems:

Centralized Parochial Systems deliver education from pre-kindergarten to secondary levels and are governed by a civil board entrusted with specified jurisdiction. This governing board supervises an administrator who serves under

the title of Superintendent or President. The bishop, through the pastors, is responsible for the appointment of directors to serve on the board. The civil authority for administration and oversight is entrusted to the corporation's governing board. The school corporation is obliged to remain true to the articles of incorporation which define the system's purpose as fulfilling the Catholic school apostolate on behalf of the sponsoring parishes. Diocesan policies for curriculum and administrative acts, along with all liturgical norms must be upheld by the system.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL PASTOR(S) OF PARISH AND REGIONAL PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

Governance:

1. The role of the pastor as superintendent includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Ensure that the *Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*, mandated by the bishop are actively enforced in the parish school
 - b. Meet with the school administration on a regular schedule
 - c. Cooperate and consult with the director of Catholic schools and other appropriate diocesan personnel to utilize available diocesan resources, such as but not exclusive of legal counsel, insurance, etc.
 - d. Review timely financial statements; develop the annual budget
 - e. Comply with diocesan policy for major expenditures, capital drives, alienation, and capital improvements by procuring written permission from the bishop on any acts exceeding \$10,000
 - f. Evaluate the principal(s) annually
 - g. Maintain a presence in the school building(s)
 - h. Act as an *ex-officio* member of the school advisory council
 - i. Submit all proposed non-personnel contracts which exceed \$10,000 to be reviewed and approved at the diocesan level.
 - j. Sign personnel contracts
 - k. Serve as advisor in disciplinary cases handled by the school administrator and be available:
 - i. To hear appeals made by parents when their child has received a disciplinary action
 - ii. Assist with disciplinary issues involving staff
 - l. Review and approve policies regarding religious education and faith formation consistent with diocesan policy
 - m. Work with the school council to:
 - i. Adopt the annual budget and determine the amount of parish financial support that is to be provided to the school operations
 - ii. Set tuition rates
 - iii. Participate fully in the process of selecting, hiring, or non-renewal of a school administrator
 - iv. Approve any significant proposed alterations to the school building

2. Major Changes within the School:

Whenever major changes within a school are proposed, such as adding or suspending the offering of a particular grade-level(s), changing the nature of the apostolate, building additions, etc., the pastor or pastors of the sponsoring parish(es) must seek the bishop's written approval before implementation of the changes can begin.

3. In the Event of Non-renewal of an Administrator:

Any decision not to offer the principal a contract for the coming year must follow the same guidelines as the non-renewal of teachers. The director of Catholic schools must be notified before any action is taken. Diocesan policy requires the consultation of legal expertise before taking such action. The local school council shall be advised.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH SCHOOL OR REGIONAL PAROCHIAL SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

School Advisory Council

Each local Parish or Regional Parochial Catholic school shall have a School Advisory Council or its equivalent. The School Advisory Council shall serve in a consultative capacity.

Essential Functions of the School Advisory Council:

The purpose of the School Council is to offer counsel to the pastor(s) in the role of local superintendent and school administration on matters pertaining to the school including without limitation (i) adherence to Diocesan Policy for Catholic Schools, (ii) major expenditures and budget, (iii) major changes in school apostolate (e.g. adding or deleting a grade), (iv) educational programs including human sexuality and religious education, (v) policies and procedures under which the school administrative staff shall operate the school, and (vi) the selection (though not evaluation) of the school administration.

Responsibilities of the School Advisory Council as a consultative body include:

- Participating in the formulation of the philosophy and mission statement
- Participating in short and long term strategic planning
- Recommending proposed budgets for school(s) and project(s)
- Assisting with recruitment, marketing and public relations

This group is advisory in nature. Therefore it is suggested that the word "board" be avoided as the participation of the laity in the schools' governance does not follow the American public school board model. The pastor(s) and administrator(s) have the serious obligation to consider such council conscientiously.

Orientation and Development

The administrator(s) and the School Advisory Council shall devise a plan/system for the orientation of new members along with an annual program of enrichment/development for all members of the School Advisory Council.

Membership

The School Advisory Council will be effective if those who advise are knowledgeable. Council members should be selected by reason of their interest, concern and expertise. Each member contributes to the whole and understands that no individual member of the Advisory Council is to speak or act for, or in the name of, the Council unless specifically authorized to do so by the School Advisory Council and pastor.

Advisory Council members shall be:

- Active registered members from the parish(s)
- Adult members of the parish(s) 18 years or older, whether or not he/she has children in the school
- Able to work effectively with others in achieving consensus in decisions for the good of the entire school community
- Able and willing to make necessary and substantial time commitment for thought and study as well as for meetings and related board activities, including orientation and subsequent training
- Willing to maintain high levels of integrity and confidentiality
- Supportive of school/diocesan philosophy and mission
- Willing to consider difficult tasks and decisions
- A visible and credible witness of the Catholic faith to the school and beyond

Employees of the school and parish are not eligible to serve on the School Advisory Council. Members of the school staff have a unique responsibility to give counsel to the administration and should not be considered for membership. Likewise, the administrator(s) is to represent the concerns and needs of staff to the Advisory Council.

Those matters pertaining to the qualification, number of terms of office, resignation and removal, selection or election to fill vacancies, and the duties of officers of the local School Advisory Council should be a matter for local decision. The specifics of these matters and those pertaining to meetings and how business is conducted shall be contained in the charter of the Advisory Council.

Confidentiality

Each local School Advisory Council shall determine its own methods of operation, the setting of and preparation for agenda items and procedures to be utilized during the meetings. However,

personnel matters and topics deemed sensitive by the pastor(s) and administrators(s) shall not be discussed in open session but may be discussed in executive (closed) session. Personnel issues requiring decisions reside solely with the principal and pastor.

Confidentiality is to be maintained in regards to information shared in a closed session. Any member not maintaining confidentiality is subject to removal from the Council.

Records

Each local Advisory Council should maintain an official set of records. These records include a Charter, minutes and policies. They should be maintained by the school principal or someone officially designated by the Committee. These records should be kept in the school administrative offices or in the parish offices.

Each local School Advisory Council shall file their Charter (previously known as By-Laws), as well as all revisions, with the Diocesan Director of Catholic Schools.

Policy

The School Advisory Council of each local Catholic school should formulate and approve policies for the governance of the school. All policies shall have the prior approval of the pastor(s). The policies of the local Catholic school shall not contradict nor hinder the policies of the Diocese of Sioux Falls. The principal, or someone designated by the principal, should be involved in the formulation of all school policies.

Handbooks

The administrator(s) shall devise procedures and regulations to implement policies of the Diocese and the local Advisory Council for the smooth and efficient operation of the school. The procedures and regulations shall be compiled in the faculty/staff handbook and the student handbook.

Committees

From time to time and with the prior approval of the Pastor(s), the Council may appoint persons to committees to assist and advise the Council with respect to its duties and responsibilities. Such committees may be permanent standing committees or temporary ad hoc committees. At least one member of each such committee must also be a member of the Council. The committee structure shall be covered in the charter of the local Advisory Council.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTRALIZED PAROCHIAL SYSTEM GOVERNING BOARD

Governance:

The local pastor has Canonical responsibility for the parish, and within the parish, for the school. The pastor then delegates to the system administrator responsibility for the routine operations of the school system yet retains his Canonical responsibilities through involvement on the system's governing board.

A centralized parochial system is a legal entity whose existence is initiated by multiple parishes, decreed as a juridic entity by the bishop, forming a South Dakota Business Corporation set forth by articles of incorporation and enlisted to administrate the school apostolate on behalf of the participating parishes. Sponsoring parishes provide the system with financial resources. The system is governed by a board with bylaws defining its composition. This governing board is to be composed of individuals representing broad professional expertise which strengthens the educational and spiritual leadership of the participating pastors.

Essential Functions of the Governing Board:

The governing board is to collaborate in providing for a strong and vital infrastructure for the school in the specified areas of:

- Ministry Effectiveness (mission, vision, faith based core values)
- Planning and Policy (development of needed local policy)
- Fiscal Management (financial resources, physical resources)
- Institutional Advancement (communication, development, marketing, enrollment, recruitment and retention)

Those matters pertaining to membership, meetings and how business is conducted shall be contained in the By-Laws of the Governing Board. Each Governing Board shall file their By-Laws, as well as all revisions, with the Diocesan Director of Catholic Schools.

Membership

Employees of the school or parish, or their spouses, are not eligible to serve on the Governing Board except in unique situations where the Bishop grants an exception. Members of the school staff have a unique responsibility to give counsel to the administration and should not be considered for membership. Likewise, the administrators are to represent the concerns and needs of faculty and staff to the Governing Board.

Advisory Committees Serving the Governing Board

Board members serve on committees where much of the board's work is accomplished. Matters for decision are brought to the governing board by the committee. The Board may appoint persons to committees to assist and advise the Board with respect to its duties and responsibilities. Such committees may be permanent standing committees or temporary ad hoc committees. At least one member of each such committee must also be a member of the Board.

Members on the committees that serve the governing board are diverse and selected for specific skill sets. Committee members are selected from the parish(s) and can be alumni, parents of current students or parents of alumni, individuals from local universities, and the business community. Members must be persons of good repute, who accept the role of Catholic education and the maintenance of Catholic identity and Catholic teaching.

Authority Reserved for the Bishop:

Areas of governing authority that are reserved for the Bishop of Sioux Falls or his delegate include:

- Theology curriculum
- Catholic identity
- Safe Environment requirements

SELECTION OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Governance:

The selection of the school/system administrator, typically a principal / president / or superintendent, is one of the most crucial and important decisions to affect the school community. Pastors, who have responsibilities toward local schools, must be involved in the process of recruitment, selection, and employment of the school administrator(s). In recognition of the bishop's Canonical responsibility for the school apostolates, the director of Catholic schools must also be directly involved in the hiring process.

Prayer for guidance and discernment are necessary components that should accompany each stage of this process. The selection process consists of the following steps:

1. Immediately upon the knowledge of a vacancy in the position of principal, president or superintendent, the pastor(s) of Parish Schools and Regional Parochial Schools, or the superintendent/president of a Centralized Parochial System must notify the director of Catholic schools.

2. The director of Catholic schools then notifies the bishop and the diocesan human resources director.
3. The bishop reserves the option to meet with the superintendent and the school board or council prior to the initiation of the search. The bishop also reserves the option to present his own candidate for the position.
4. The pastor(s) with responsibility for the school(s) will convene a search committee. Members shall include representatives from the church and school community, such as members of the school's board or council, parish finance council, school staff, and parish at large. The director of Catholic schools shall represent the bishop as a member of the search committee. The bishop or his delegate may exercise the option to appoint members to the search committee.
5. The members of the search committee shall review the school's policies and have a working knowledge of the specific school, with special attention given to the concept of a Catholic educational leader. The search committee shall develop a profile of a Catholic educational leader that will meet the total educational needs of the student population at the school.
6. When a profile has been developed, the search committee will establish an appropriate time-line, determine the type of information an applicant should submit and advertise the position. A contact person should be designated to receive the documents the candidates submit.
7. At the selected time, the search committee will review the files of the candidates and rank them on how each candidate best meets the predetermined criteria.
8. The search committee will then select the most qualified candidate(s) and schedule personal interviews. For the first interview, phone or Internet interviews are acceptable if time and distance are an issue.
9. When the first interviews have been completed, the search committee will narrow the field to the top candidate(s). The search committee will select one or more committee members to contact current or previous employers and other references for each of the top candidates. The director of Catholic schools will inform the bishop and provide him with the resume/curriculum vitae submitted by the candidate(s).
10. The search committee may authorize a background check, using the recommended diocesan background check service or may condition the hire on a clean background check.
11. Adequate time should be allowed for the search committee to analyze the information that has been collected and to align the demonstrated skills of the candidate(s) with the desired, well-rounded profile.

12. The search committee will come to a consensus agreement on the top candidate(s) and schedule a second interview. At this point, the committee may choose to invite the candidate(s) to spend time in the school(s) observing the program, meeting the staff and students. This provides the candidate with a realistic view of the environment and allows them a frame of reference for concluding interview questions. Either the search committee or the entire school board or council will perform the second interview.
13. The Director of Catholic schools, performing the role of liaison to the bishop will keep the bishop informed about the interview(s) and the consensus opinion of the search committee or school board or council.
14. The local pastor as superintendent or in the case of a centralized parochial system, the chairperson of the governing board shall formally request by letter, permission from the Bishop to hire the selected candidate. The bishop may exercise the option to meet the candidate in person. Mindful of the responsibilities entrusted uniquely to the bishop, any offer of employment made without the bishop's approval is in violation of policy and, therefore, invalid.
15. Upon receiving approval from the bishop, either the local pastor acting in the role of superintendent or the president of the governing board will formally offer the successful candidate the position.
16. Should there be a need to negotiate the contract, two or more people should be selected and the pastor(s) must be consulted before finalizing any changes to the contract.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Governance:

The Catholic school administrator, under the pastor(s) or governing board, is responsible for the total functioning of the school. He/she has a threefold responsibility as religious leader, educational leader and manager of the total school program. The Catholic school administrator serves as one who inspires and guides the staff in creating a faith community within a program of academic excellence. The Catholic school administrator needs to assume responsibility for the on-going Christian formation and religious development of the teachers as well as the students.

The pastor(s) and local school council or governing board should establish the necessary qualifications for the position of principal, president or superintendent. The administrator should meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Be an active and practicing Catholic in good standing that follows the Code of Ethical Standards for the Diocese of Sioux Falls (cf. *Code of Ethical Standards Appendix IV*)
2. Hold administrative certification or equivalent degree or currently working toward certification.

3. Be interested and willing to be involved in professional and spiritual growth that includes, but not limited to, attendance at diocesan meetings and workshops, regional and national professional development opportunities.