Catholic School and Faith Formation Commission Guide

A Companion to Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium

Journey of Hope 2001
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Catholic School and Faith Formation
Commission Guide

Archdiocese of Indianapolis
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

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FOREWORD

In 1997 Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium: Parish Structure and Organization was distributed as a guide for parish pastoral councils to raise the awareness of parish leaders about the organization of the parish for effective fulfillment of the parish mission through the various ministries of a vibrant faith community. In his introductory letter, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, O.S.B., stated that the process was intended to “insure that our Church’s mission endures the face of an ever-changing society.” Specifically, the process is a means to build stronger parishes by creating ways to foster discipleship and reach out to others through individual gifts of time, talent and treasure. This commission guide has been developed as a companion piece specifically for school and faith formation commissions associated with parish pastoral councils.

Parishioners have the right and the obligation to share the responsibility of ensuring that the mission of the Church becomes increasingly effective.

Commission members supporting faith formation or Catholic school ministries should know the mission and goals of the Archdiocese. The following are taken from the strategic plans of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and strategic plans for Catholic schools and faith formation.

Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Mission Statement

We the Church in Central and Southern Indiana, called to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ in the Roman Catholic tradition, strive to live the Gospel by:

Worshipping God in word and sacrament
Learning, teaching and sharing our faith
Serving human needs

We commit ourselves to generosity and to the responsible use of our spiritual and material resources.
Mission of Faith Formation  
in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Rooted in Jesus Christ and responding to our baptismal call to know, love, and serve God and each other, we, the catechetical and religious education leaders of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, seek to form ourselves and others in Catholic beliefs, traditions, and values in order to model and to foster a mature faith that is living, conscious, and active.

We commit ourselves to develop the personal, spiritual, physical, technological, and financial resources necessary to fulfill this mission in innovative, responsible, and effective ways.

Mission of Catholic Schools  
in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis operate as an extension of the family to unite faith and educational excellence through Gospel values, high educational standards, prayer, and sacraments. The archdiocesan Catholic Schools accomplish this educational mission through the responsible use of resources generously shared by the parents, faculty, parishioners, and the larger community.
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Vatican Council II called for “shared responsibility” which states that each member of the Church has the right and obligation to assist the Church by offering time and talent so that the Church’s mission will be more effective. This concept assumes the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibility.

Members of the school and faith formation commission are ministers exercising shared responsibility for one aspect of the Church’s total mission, namely, education/formation. Before defining this role, it will be helpful to explore briefly the relationship of the Church’s educational mission to its total mission.

Parish Pastoral Council and School and Faith Formation Commissions

The purpose of a parish is total ministry, that is, naming God present in all aspects of human life -- worship, education, finance, social justice, family life, etc. The pastor (or in some cases, the Parish Life Coordinator -- PLC) of the parish is accountable to the Archbishop for total ministry in the parish. The structure within which the pastor shares his authority and responsibility for total ministry in a consultative relationship is the parish pastoral council.

In the diagram below, total parish ministry is represented by the circle. The drawing illustrates the pastor/PLC sharing of responsibility with the parish pastoral council.

Total Parish Ministry

One aspect of total parish ministry is the education/formation ministry. The structure of shared responsibility for educational ministry in the parish is through the school commission and faith formation commission.
The diagram below illustrates the relationship of educational ministry to total parish ministry and the consultative relationship of the school commission and faith formation commission through the parish pastoral council and the pastor.

Faith Formation Ministry and School Ministry in the Total Parish Ministry
RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PASTOR/PLC AND ADMINISTRATOR

The vertical line denotes delegation from the pastor/PLC for shared responsibility.

The horizontal line denotes complementary responsibility to carry out the mission of the ministry. The commission is responsible for planning, policy-making, monitoring and communicating its activities and plans. The educational administrator is responsible for carrying out the plans and implementing the stated policies of the commission. The pastor/PLC and administrators are ex-officio members of each commission.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PARISH ENTITIES

The Pastoral Council sets the pastoral plan and approves the parish budget through the finance council. Therefore, the chair of a commission, who is also a voting member of the pastoral council, keeps the council informed of the manner in which the ministry is adhering to its budget, meeting its goals, accomplishing improvement plans and/or implementing policies. See Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium. The parish pastoral council is always consulted on issues affecting the common good of the parish (See Appendix J of Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium: “Parish Decision-Making Paths”).

The Finance Council provides local guidelines to develop the budget (for example, projected increases in fixed costs), approves the bottom line of the commission’s budget and incorporates this total into the parish budget. The council does not approve or disapprove individual line items in the commission’s budget. One member of each educational commission will serve on the parish finance council. See the Parish Finance Committee Norms issued by the Office of Accounting Services.
The School Commission and Faith Formation Commission, in parishes where both are utilized, have a joint meeting annually for sharing plans and vision. A person is also appointed to serve as liaison between the two commissions.

Other commissions of the pastoral council may be consulted or engaged in cooperative efforts. For instance, the faith formation commission may have issues in common with the spirituality commission. The school commission may have funding concerns to address with the stewardship commission.

The Archdiocesan Education Commission (AEC) forms strategic plans and sets broad policies for archdiocesan Catholic schools and faith formation programs in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Local policies must align with archdiocesan policies.

The Office of Catholic Education (OCE) implements archdiocesan strategic plans and ensures that archdiocesan policies, administrative rules and guidelines, Church policies and directives, and governmental regulations are being followed on the local level. A representative from OCE visits parishes and schools to review school and/or faith formation improvement plans. Selection of an administrator is initiated only with the help and guidance of OCE in accordance with policies on candidate screening and recommendation.

Interparochial high school boards may occasionally request the assistance of parish school and faith formation commissions. Communication and liaison with the high school boards are regular and ongoing.

The Indianapolis Deaneries Coordinating Committee or IDCC is a governing body formed by the four Indianapolis deaneries to address common school financial matters such as setting high school tuition and determining parish investments and teacher salary scales. Members are appointed by the dean of each of the four Indianapolis deaneries based on recommendations of administrators, pastors/PLCs, and commissions.
THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

The pastor/PLC is the employer/supervisor of the administrators (school administrator or parish administrator of religious education). The commissions provide input on the performance appraisal of the administrator, but are not the employer or supervisor as diagrammed below:

Pastor/PLC

- DRE
- Faith Formation Commission
- School Commission
- School administrator

Pastor refers to the Canonical head of the parish as appointed by the archbishop. This can be a pastor, a parish life coordinator (PLC) or an appointed administrator.

School administrator refers to the chief executive officer of a Catholic school – president, principal, or other persons assigned these duties.

Parish administrator of religious education refers to the director of religious education (DRE), coordinator or religious education (CRE), administrator of religious education (ARE), or others persons (i.e., pastoral associates) charged with administration of religious education/faith formation programs in a parish.
**Role of the School and Faith Formation Commissions**

Commissions serve as consultative bodies for the pastor/PLC and administrator(s) on matters concerning schools and faith formation. An attitude of teamwork, cooperation, unity and mutual respect is required for effective service. **The overall roles of the school and faith formation commission are classified in four (4) major categories: Planning, Monitoring, Policy-making and Communicating.**

**PLANNING**

The planning efforts of a commission must first align with the parish pastoral plan and the archdiocesan plan. With these plans as guides, the commission:
- Creates a vision and mission for the future rather than reviewing the past.
- Promotes Catholic identity of the ministry.
- Shares a major leadership and oversight role in the planning processes for schools and faith formation programs.
- Cooperates with the administrator(s) to develop the budget for presentation to the finance council of the pastoral council.
- Works with the pastor/PLC and the administrator to develop annual performance goals that are monitored and measured.
- Assists the pastor in appointing an administrator search committee in the event of a vacancy.

**MONITORING**

The commission conducts periodic monitoring of all plans and policies and evaluates them for adjustment or improvement. In its monitoring capacity, the commission:
- Supports and shares with the administrator the responsibility for providing a quality ministry.
- Contributes to the performance appraisal of the administrator.
- Participates in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the ministry.
- Reviews goals and objectives quarterly and policies, periodically.
- Assists the pastor/PLC, through the administrator(s), in holding the staff accountable.

**POLICY-MAKING**

Good policy development expresses the commission’s vision for the school or faith formation programs. Very often, the needs or the vision of the entire faith community are reflected in commission policy. Developing good policy is an important function of the school commission. In this role, the commission:
- Develops policy only for the ministry and takes those issues which affect the common good of the parish to the pastoral council (please refer to Appendix J in Preparing Your Parish for the Next Millennium: “Parish Decision-Making Paths” for examples.
Advocates strategic leadership more than administrative detail. *The commission leads; the administrator implements the policies with professional discretion.*

Maintains awareness of archdiocesan policies and aligns local policies with these.

COMMUNICATING

The commission communicates its activities and plans to the pastor/PLC, parish pastoral council, other commissions and, when appropriate, the parish membership. In addition, the commission:

- Communicates regularly with the administrator.
- Provides a quarterly report to the pastoral council and ideally, a formal annual report to the council, parishioners, parents, and supporters, etc. (see Appendix E).
- Arranges for liaison with other parish, deanery and archdiocesan commissions.
- Acts as a unified body when presenting itself to the public or parish. *That is, no one member speaks for the commission unless that person has been appointed to do so.*
- Provides training opportunities on a regular basis for both new and experienced members.

OTHER ROLES

Some commission roles fall outside of the four major categories. In these roles, the commission:

- Forms itself as a prayerful community.
- Facilitates the recruitment, nomination, appointment, election or discernment of new commission members and election of officers.
- Serves in any role jointly agreed upon by the pastor/PLC, administrator(s) and the commission. *This may include development, fundraising, or service on an administrative task force.*
- Supports the ministry, especially with prayers.

Often, however, commission responsibilities are confused with administrative duties. It is, therefore, helpful to note what the commission *does not do.* The commission:

- *does not* employ the administrator, nor negotiate a contract.
- *does not* make administrative decisions.
- *does not* supervise the staff.
- *does not* act as a member of the staff.
- *does not* act as an adversary to the administrator.
FORMULATION OF THE COMMISSION:
BYLAWS and STANDING RULES

Commissions operate under the constitution of the parish, but should have specific bylaws and standing rules for operation (see Appendix E in Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium. The commission and standing rules flow from the parish constitution and are compatible with it.

BYLAWS

Commission bylaws describe the purpose and function of the commission and reflect the unique circumstances of the parish allowing freedom for structural and procedural innovations (See samples in Appendix F). The bylaws may include the following components:

♦ the name by which the commission shall be known and its relationship to the parish and other parish entities
♦ a statement of purpose and function
♦ membership
♦ officers
♦ meetings
♦ quorum
♦ amendments

STANDING RULES

The standing rules govern the internal operation of the commission. These also deal with actions on matters other than those described in the parish constitution and the commission bylaws. They make a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of the commission members and detail the manner in which the commission carries out the duties specified in the parish constitution and the commission bylaws (See Appendix F). The standing rules may include:

♦ membership criteria
♦ voting privileges
♦ the process of policy formation
♦ the process for replenishing commission membership
♦ duties of officers
♦ committee structure
♦ procedures for meetings
♦ the process for amending the rules
COMMISSION MEMBERS

QUALIFICATIONS

Commission members serve on behalf of the entire membership of the parish. They do not serve on the commission to advocate a single issue or set of issues.

♦ Commission members are registered adult members of the parish who are practicing Catholics.
♦ They are persons of integrity who have a genuine interest in and a strong commitment to the vision of the ministry.

In some specific situations, where appropriate, the following persons may also be qualified members for school commissions.

♦ Non-parishioner Catholic parents of children in the parish school.
♦ Non-Catholic parents of children in the parish school.
♦ Community leaders.

In any case, the majority of members should be active, registered adult members of the parish. The commission chair is a member of the parish who also meets the requirements for parish pastoral council membership (i.e., must be an active parishioner). See Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium.

The pastor/PLC and the administrator(s) are non-voting, ex-officio members of the commission and its committees. The pastor/PLC ratifies (or vetoes) all formal actions of the commission.

Schools financially supported by more than one parish, or with a combined membership, as specified in an agreement with the Office of Catholic Education, should reflect such a partnership in their commission’s membership. Likewise, a school with a large number of students of non-parishioners and non-Catholics may wish to have these groups represented on the school commission. Special circumstances such as these should be addressed in the bylaws and standing rules.

Members are either discerned or appointed by the pastor/PLC. They may also be discerned or elected by the parish with the approval of and letter of appointment from the pastor/PLC. The usual term of office is three years with no more than two consecutive terms allowed. Approximately one-third of the members’ terms expire each year.

The commission is a working group of five (5) to fifteen (15) members (an odd number). Other persons may serve on subcommittees and task forces of the commission.

Members are appointed, elected or discerned based upon the skills, work interests and expertise they can bring to the commission. Membership also reflects equitable representa-
tion of parish membership (i.e., gender, race, age, occupation, etc.) (Consult the Membership Matrix in Appendix G).

The commission bylaws further specify the commission membership requirements. See the sample school and faith formation commission bylaws and standing rules in Appendix A.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The commission executive committee formulates the agenda, and distributes any preparatory packets for members prior to the commission meetings. This committee also may establish *ad hoc* committees or designate a task force to fulfill special needs of the commission. The executive committee is comprised of the following members:

**The Chairperson (or Chair)** presides at all meetings and represents the commission at all parish pastoral council meetings. The commission chair is an *ex-officio* voting member of the parish pastoral council.

**The Vice-Chairperson** presides in the absence of the chairperson or when the chairperson desires to introduce, second or speak to a motion or resolution.

**The Secretary** maintains accurate minutes of meetings, handles all correspondence, and provides necessary communications to the archdiocese and other groups. With the assistance of the administrative officer, the secretary forwards the minutes of each meeting to commission members and assists the administrator with preparation of the monthly meeting packet for members.

**The Administrative Officer** is the chief school administrator or the parish administrator of religious education and is responsible to the commission for the implementation of the commission’s educational plan, goals and policies. The administrative officer provides professional educational leadership to the commission. The administrative officer chairs the executive committee which, among other duties, prepares the agenda for each meeting. If there is more than one administrator reporting to the commission, the administrators themselves determine the administrative officer for the year.

**INSERVICE TRAINING FOR NEW and EXPERIENCED MEMBERS**

In order for commission members to be effective, training is provided soon after election or appointment and continues throughout their term of office. Ongoing inservice training formation is the responsibility of the Membership Committee and includes:

♦ new member packets
♦ commission training provided by the archdiocese
♦ mentoring of new members
♦ training for group process, i.e., active listening, consensus building
SUGGESTED CONTENTS OF A NEW MEMBER PACKET:

Shortly after election, discernment or appointment to the commission, new members should receive:
♦ This Commission Guide, including a copy of Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium, and Parish Finance Committee Norms
♦ The commission’s bylaws and standing rules
♦ The commission’s last four quarterly reports to the parish pastoral council
♦ The ministry’s strategic plan, mission statement, goals, objectives and monitoring plan
♦ Other pertinent material

COMMISSION ETHICS

CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST

No paid employee of the parish or school, their parent(s), grandparent(s), spouse, child(ren), or sibling(s) should serve on any commission. If a member finds himself or herself with a conflict-of-interest, that person refrains from discussion and voting on issues that affect the member’s or member’s relatives’ employment status, salary, working conditions, or performance appraisal. For example, a budget committee considering changes to salary scale should not contain a relative of an employee. A conflict of interest may also arise when a member has business interest that effect the school or parish.

The person with the conflict-of-interest should leave the commission at the end of the current academic year. A conflict-of-interest, or the appearance of conflict, should be avoided at all levels of commission service including committees, subcommittees and task forces of the commission.

ETHICAL PRACTICES

Many new members find commission membership offers new and different kinds of responsibilities and relationships. Therefore, it is crucial that all members understand the professional ethics required, and that each member makes a personal commitment to appropriate ethics.

♦ Commission members contribute their time, talents, and abilities as necessary to enable the commission to achieve its stated goals and objectives in relation to the mission.
♦ Commission members base their official decisions upon all available facts in each situation; voting or consenting with honest conviction. They do not base decisions on personal issues or feelings.
♦ Commission members publicly support and abide by the final consensus reached by the commission.
♦ Commission members work together in a spirit of Christian harmony and cooperation.
♦ Commission members have no authority except when meeting as a group in an official session.
♦ Commission members keep confidential any commission business discussed during closed sessions (See definition of closed and open meetings on page 17).

While this is not an all-inclusive list of commission ethics, it relates to most of those considerations that are primary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Commissions should issue regular reports to the parish/school community on business under discussion. Most business is not “secret”, yet pre-mature disclosure of possible decisions can be harmful to the decision-making process.

Commission members are often party to sensitive or controversial information. In these cases, the pastor/PLC and administrator depend on commission members’ support and trust that they will not disclose or render opinions outside the meeting on certain issues shared with them in their official capacity as members of the commission.

An example: a parent addresses the commission with concerns about the religious education program. Although the person may be speaking in open session, and the content may not be “secret;” it is, nevertheless inappropriate for members to repeat the concerns or express opinions on the issue outside the meeting.

A second example: in some cases, particularly the termination of teacher/staff employment, it is appropriate for the administrator to apprise commission members of the situation, sharing only those details that do not violate the employee’s right to privacy. Providing appropriate information to commission members in regard to personnel matters can engender their support and understanding of difficult decisions.

The discipline of children can also be controversial, but it is not within the commission’s scope of responsibility except at the policy level. In controversial disciplinary cases the administrator may outline the reason for the actions taken in a broad and general way, but must not disclose confidential parent-teacher communications involving minor children. Administrators and commission members must understand and uphold appropriate legal limits in such cases.

DECORUM

Decorum and order are important to conducting the business of the commission.
♦ The leadership and the agenda provide order.
♦ Members respond with courtesy and respect.
♦ Members refrain from engaging in conversations among themselves when reports are being given or when someone has the floor.
♦ Speakers shall be concise, clear, and to the point.
♦ Discussions focus on issues and not personalities.
♦ Items not on the agenda are out of order.
♦ An atmosphere of cooperation is created when individual opinions are offered and affirmed.

COMMITTEES

Committees are appointed to accomplish commission work effectively. Quality committee work makes the best use of limited commission time. The key to success for any particular committee is a clear understanding of its goals, allowing the group to focus on its assigned task. Committee work should not be confused with staff work. Some suggested guidelines for commission committees are as follows:

♦ **Develop a clear and concise charge.** The charge identifies the task to be accomplished, the questions to be answered and the time frame for completing the assignment. *Committees serve in a fact-finding or advisory capacity.* Final decisions are made by the total commission.

♦ **Recruit committee members wisely.** Seek commission members who have interest, experience or talent relevant to the purpose of the committee. Depending on the committee charge, other members may come from the parish or larger community. The chair of the committee is a commission member whose role is to bring recommendations, resolutions or motions from committee work to the commission. Potential conflicts-of-interest are to be avoided at the committee level as well.

♦ **Avoid committee involvement in administrative tasks.** For example, there is no need for a personnel committee; that is a function of the administrator.

♦ **Confine committees to appropriate work.** A committee does not involve itself in issues that should be the work of the total commission or delegated to the staff. For example, a committee member may solicit a donation for a fund-raiser, but should not do the bookkeeping associated with the event.

♦ **Conduct business or speak for the commission only** when appointed to do so or authorized by the commission.

Committees are created to meet or address the needs of the specific local commission. The following is a suggested committee structure (see Committee Norms in Appendix B). NOTE: These suggested committees are not all the same as examples given in *Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium*, 1997. A reconsideration of the role of commissions after the pilot year has resulted in the following new recommendations. See Committee norms in Appendix B.
SUGGESTED COMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMISSION:

♦ The Executive Committee of the school commission consists of the chair, vice-chair, secretary and administrative officer. This committee prepares the agenda and finalizes the commission packet.

♦ A Facilities Committee may be needed if responsibility for the upkeep of the school facility is seen as separate from parish properties or if the size of the plant requires specific attention in this area.

♦ A Finance or Budget Committee assists the administrator(s) in the development of an annual budget to present to the finance council of the parish pastoral council for approval and incorporation into the overall parish budget. One member of the school commission finance committee serves on the parish finance council.

♦ A Marketing/Development Committee assists the administration with the comprehensive development program, public relations and fund-raising responsibilities of the school commission.

♦ A Membership Committee assures that the commission is able to replenish itself and provides opportunities for spiritual growth and member inservice training.

♦ A Monitoring Committee oversees and reports on the measurable performance in given areas. For example, members of the monitoring committee for the school commission also serve on the School Improvement Team.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEES OF THE FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION:

♦ The Executive Committee of the faith formation commission consists of the chair, vice-chair, secretary and administrative officer. This committee prepares the agenda and finalizes the commission packet.

♦ A Facilities Committee may be needed if the maintenance of faith formation program facilities requires the attention of the commission.

♦ A Finance Committee assists the parish administrator of religious education in the development of the annual budget for all areas of faith formation. The faith formation budget is presented to the finance council/parish pastoral council for incorporation into the overall parish budget.

♦ A Marketing/Development Committee assists the faith formation administrator in those areas in which intentional development and public relations efforts can enhance the ministry of faith formation.

♦ A Membership Committee is appointed to implement the election or discernment process to maintain full commission membership and required commission officers as well as to provide opportunities for member training and spiritual formation.

♦ A Monitoring Committee oversees and reports on the progress and implementation of faith formation goals and objectives. Members of the monitoring committee also serve on the faith formation program improvement team.
AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad hoc committees are sometimes called special committees or task forces. They are temporary committees with a specific task, appointed or selected by the executive committee as the need arises. When the task has been completed and a report made to the commission, the ad hoc committee is dissolved. An example of an ad hoc committee is a administrator search committee.
SUGGESTED SCHOOL COMMISSION COMMITTEES

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL


Executive Committee

Facilities Committee  Finance Committee  Marketing/Development Committee  Membership Committee  Monitoring Committee

SUGGESTED FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION COMMITTEES

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL


Executive Committee

Facilities Committee  Finance Committee  Marketing/Development Committee  Membership Committee  Monitoring Committee
SUCCESSFUL COMMISSION MEETINGS

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Prayer is an integral part of the work of commissions and should precede any business to be addressed. Because we are a ministry of the Catholic Church, we are privileged to be able to pray at our meetings. Our Lord promised us that “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Matthew 18:20). Therefore, by asking for a blessing on the commission meeting, we acknowledge God’s guidance of our actions and our ministry.

AGENDA

Successful meetings follow an agenda. A properly prepared agenda is conducive to an orderly meeting and ensures that all items to be addressed are indeed brought to the table (See sample agenda in Appendix D).

OPEN MEETINGS/CLOSED SESSIONS

Meetings of the commissions are generally open, but not public. This means that interested persons are invited to attend meetings, but not to participate in discussions unless they have made prior arrangements to be recognized or included on the agenda. These prior arrangements are made before the executive committee meets to prepare the agenda. The time limit for persons to address the commission is stipulated in advance.

Occasionally, a portion of the meeting may be designated as “closed” or the commission goes into “executive session”. The commission either adjourns to another room or asks visitors to leave. Executive sessions include all commission members, the pastor/PLC and administrator(s). Sensitive issues may require executive or closed sessions, but these should be infrequent.

MEETING MINUTES

The secretary prepares the minutes of each meeting. Minutes are prepared from a completed agenda and include only reports given or actions taken. Minutes are a record of what was done -- not what was said -- decisions made -- not discussions. If committee reports are sent to members prior to the meeting or distributed at the meeting, they become part of the permanent record for that month and are kept with approved minutes. At the end of each year, approved minutes are filed in the parish archives or official records. The commission’s approval of the previous month’s minutes “as submitted”, “as corrected”, or “as amended”, etc., is a monthly agenda item. Corrections, deletions, etc., are hand-written on the original which is kept on file.

MEETING PACKETS
Approximately one week prior to the meeting, each member receives and reads a packet prepared by the administrator with the assistance of the secretary and/or the executive committee. This packet contains:

- Agenda for the upcoming meeting
- Written reports from the administrator(s) and committees
- Resolutions for action with any supporting documents
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Reminders of meeting duties such as opening or closing prayers, refreshments, etc.

Members are expected to thoroughly read and familiarize themselves with the material in this packet prior to the meeting. Being prepared to discuss each item on the agenda is the responsibility of each commission member, not just the executive committee or the committees reporting on the agenda.

**DECISION-MAKING**

Consensus and parliamentary models of decision-making are not mutually exclusive. Both models may be used appropriately in the same meeting. Commissions should adopt models that fit their local situations, but allow for effective decision-making.

**Consensus Model**

In making decisions by consensus, issues are freely raised, debated and modified until the members of the group share a common feeling that the group is ready to act. True consensus is attained when each person has freely expressed an opinion. The commission examines all ideas and makes a decision which is supported by the entire commission (see “A Process for Seeking Consensus” in Appendix H of *Preparing Your Parish for the Next Millennium*).

A group arrives at consensus when nearly all members can express their commitment to a particular course of action. This commitment does not indicate unanimous agreement. It instead indicates that those who still oppose the decision will help to implement it because their opposing viewpoints have been heard with respect. This process also helps to achieve creative compromise or bring about modifications or improvements of the original proposal.

The consensus model may be modified at times. On matters of lesser importance such as those not setting policy or overall commission direction, the chairperson may ask if there is *general consent*. In this case, brief discussion takes place before the chairperson asks for an indication of agreement from the members. If no one disagrees, the issue is settled. Otherwise, the discussion continues until consensus is reached.

Major decisions determined by consensus are submitted in writing to the pastor/PLC for final ratification (or veto) (see sample resolution in Appendix E).

**Parliamentary Procedure Model**
Parliamentary procedure is an age-old process for conducting a meeting which has its roots in British Parliamentary law. In terms of making decisions, parliamentary procedure involves a series of specific steps (motion, second, discussion, amendment, etc.) which lead to a formal vote by the members of the commission. These steps are explained in detail in Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (latest edition).

When a motion or resolution has been presented, a simple majority of affirmative votes is enough for the motion to pass. If a vote is close, it may be feasible to consider amending the motion to make it more agreeable to all. However, the amendment process should be used carefully and should not compromise the intent of the original resolution. Amendments must always be germane to the original motion or resolution.

A resolution to adopt a formal policy or to amend the bylaws should have three readings before the commission, with ample time allowed for discussion and amendment before a vote is taken. The chairperson should seek divergent points-of-view and be comfortable with dissenting opinions. Consistent agreement with little or no discussion may indicate that the members feel dissent is unwelcome or the issues at hand are of little importance.

Commission members should agree that a decision resulting from a fair process is thereafter the official position of the whole commission, and should refrain from further expressions of dissent.

The Chairperson presides at all meetings. The chairperson should refrain from discussions while a motion is on the floor. The chairperson may speak if there is some information that only she or he possesses that could help with the deliberation. If the chairperson wishes to speak to a motion, she or he must “pass the gavel” to the vice-chair and not preside while the motion is on the floor.

The chairperson votes only in the following cases:
1) A paper ballot is used,
2) To break a tie,
3) To make a tie (a tie means the measure is defeated).

The normal sequence to bring a topic to the table for a vote is:
(1) the motion is made,
(2) the motion is seconded,
(3) the motion is discussed,
(4) amendments are made to the original motion*,
(5) a vote is taken.

*Any amendments to the original motion should be made, seconded and voted upon before the vote for the motion as a whole is taken. Amendments should be germane to the topic.
A quorum is generally recognized when a majority (one over half) is present for the meeting. This should be addressed in the commission bylaws

RESOLUTIONS and POLICY

Resolutions

A resolution is a formally written motion or recommendation for adoption that sets forth a concise statement of intent by the recommending administrator, committee or commission member. Generally, a resolution begins with the word *Whereas* followed by a statement of rationale for the motion. There may be multiple *Whereas* statements. A resolution should contain no more clauses than are strictly necessary to explain the history or rationale. These are followed by the resolution itself beginning with the words *Be It Resolved That*… followed by the resolution statement. If there are multiple statements to the resolution, they are preceded by *Be It Further Resolved That*…

A resolution has no more weight than any other motion, but is a concise way to present supporting rationale with the resolution or motion so that all commission members have the opportunity to consider the motion ahead of time. The written format can also be useful for inclusion in the packet and minutes (refer to Appendix E for a sample resolution).

The administrator(s) as well as the pastor/PLC who will be asked to support the resolution, should be consulted in its writing.

Policy

Policy is a brief declaration of principle that enunciates the commission’s expectation. **Policy-making is the function of the commission.**
Policy is a guide for discretionary action by the professional educational administrator. It must be sufficiently narrow to give clear direction to the administrator, but sufficiently broad to allow for professional discretion. A policy which is not broad in scope – leaving discretion for action by the administrator -- is not a commission-level policy. Policy should not be made in reaction to crisis, but should be more forward looking to guide the future activities of the ministry.

The implementation of policy is the job of the administrator. As a way of implementing policy, the administrator may formulate administrative rules or regulations as necessary – lower level policies aligned with commission policies. Administrative-level policy specifies a required action – what is to be done, who is to do it, and when.

The bylaws normally outline the number of times a resolution on policy needs to be read before it is allowed to be brought to the table for a commission vote. Upon the commission’s acceptance or adoption of a policy resolution, it is then forwarded to the pastor/PLC for final ratification (or veto). Policy adopted by the commission shall be kept on file with previously adopted policies.

REPORTING TO THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

The commission chairperson presents a report to the parish pastoral council quarterly (see the sample in Appendix F). The report, usually prepared by the monitoring committee, consists of:
♦ Monitored items relating to policies, and items on the improvement plans -- their measurement and targets, goals, objectives and the success of the plans.
♦ Special accomplishments not contained in monitored items.
♦ Direction and concerns for the coming fiscal year.

The benefits of such a report are:
♦ It helps the parish pastoral council to understand the mission, goals and accomplishments of the commission.
♦ It consolidates the work of the commission into one document.
♦ It is useful for incoming commission members as background for future agenda items and meetings.
♦ It is useful for experienced commission members to see the total picture apart from their specific committee work.
♦ It sets aside a specific time to reflect on recent accomplishments and contributes to planning for the coming year.

Commissions are also encouraged to write a more formal narrative annual report which is shared with the pastoral council, parents, parishioners, and supporters. This type of reporting is a basic cornerstone of the commission’s development and marketing efforts.
PLANNING

“One of the most important responsibilities of a pastoral council and its commissions is pastoral planning. A carefully formulated pastoral plan will unite the council, commissions and committees in a shared vision for the future of the parish driven by the mission of the parish” (see Preparing Your Parish for the New Millennium, page 14).

In past years, pastoral planning and educational planning have been separate. Now the processes need to be closely coordinated around the shared mission and vision. Plans from the school and faith formation commissions are viewed as “satellite plans” connecting directly to the education and faith formation goals of the parish pastoral plan, even though the planning may not be on the same cycle as the parish planning.

Planning now for a future yet to come is a hallmark of successful organizations. Commissions enter fully into a disciplined, continuous planning process in order to better prepare to grow and succeed in a world in which change is a constant.

SCHOOL PLANNING

The focused planning process for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is found in Partners On The Journey: An Integrative Planning Process for the Educational and Institutional Advancement of Catholic Schools. This five-year cyclical planning process integrates the issues of institutional advancement with those educational advancement areas outlined in the Performance Based Accreditation (PBA) process of the State of Indiana. It provides each school with a method of developing a comprehensive plan that involves the total school community within a framework of Catholic Identity.

FAITH FORMATION PLANNING

The focused planning process for faith formation programs in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis flows from Rooted in Jesus Christ: A Strategic Plan for Lifelong Faith Formation. Planning for program improvement in faith formation addresses those tangible and intangible elements which provide for excellence in parish programs. Models of best practice provide a foundation for measurement and attainment of goals and objectives. The Team Plan model for parish faith formation planning was introduced in 1999-2000.

COMMISSION INPUT FOR ADMINISTRATOR APPRAISAL

The Office of Catholic Education has a process for the performance appraisal of educational administrators. As Good Stewards is the handbook that describes the process.

The commission gives input to the pastor/PLC on the performance of the administrator. Only those items that have previously been accepted from the administrator’s annual goals and objectives, position description and the improvement plan of the school or faith forma-
tion program should be considered when the commission provides input. Commissions that have properly instituted monitoring and reporting procedures find the performance appraisal process a simple one.

The chairperson leads the commission through its part of the performance appraisal process. This is accomplished in a closed, or executive session. The administrator gives a summative report to the commission, then leaves the room. The chairperson then engages the commission in discussion. The chairperson invites the administrator to return to the meeting to hear a summary of the commission’s input for the performance appraisal.

The performance appraisal is designed to affirm the administrator while it holds him or her accountable for program improvement. It also increases communication among the pastor/PLC, the commission, OCE and the administrator.

**ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH PROCESS**

The pastor/PLC hires and retains administrators. It is very important to select an administrator who not only meets the requirements established by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, but one who can also embrace and advance the vision and mission of the local faith community and/or school. The commission is involved through an ad hoc search committee appointed by the pastor or PLC with the advice of the commission planning committee.

The Office of Catholic Education (OCE) provides orientation and a packet containing guidelines and forms for the search process. OCE identifies and recommends qualified candidates for the committee to consider for employment. An OCE representative participates in the local search process.

**WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

When questions concerning School or Faith Formation Commissions arise, call:

**The Office of Catholic Education**

1-800-382-9836 ext. 1430 (outside Indianapolis)
236-1430 (inside Indianapolis)

“Ethical Practices” information on pages 11, 12 and 13 -- from an article by Sister Mary Benet, O.S.B., while serving as a consultant to School Boards in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

**APPENDICES**
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COMPONENTS OF BYLAWS AND STANDING RULES

COMMISSION BYLAWS

1. **Name of Organization**
2. **Purpose and Function**
   ♦ Expresses the objectives and major responsibilities of the organization.
3. **Membership**
   ♦ States the requirements for membership; addresses consecutive terms, elections and selection process.
   ♦ Nominations and Elections: Provides rules for nominations, eligibility, elections, length of terms, reasons for removal of a member, provisions for filling vacancies and installation.
4. **Officers**
   ♦ Lists the officers of the commission, their duties, manner of election and term of office, re-election rules, consecutive term issues and installation.
5. **Meetings**
   ♦ Indicates schedule of meetings, defines quorum, presiding officer in absence of chair, provides an agenda prior to meeting, rules of procedure, open meetings, minutes (taking, keeping, distributing), margin needed for passing policy, regulations for addressing the commission, delegation, input, provisions for closed or executive session, provision for suspension of bylaws.
6. **Quorum**
   ♦ Indicates the minimum number of members who need to be present to conduct commission business.
7. **Amendments**
   ♦ Procedures governing revision and/or amendments to the bylaws, notification time, votes required.

COMMISSION STANDING RULES

The standing rules of a commission may include:

1. **Membership Criteria**
   ♦ Specifies qualifications for membership on the commission.
2. **Voting Rights**
   ♦ Indicates voting privileges of regular and ex-officio members and any special circumstances.
3. **Policy Formation**
   ♦ Specifies the steps necessary to introduce, pass and promulgate policy resolutions.
4. **Appointment of Members**
   ♦ Specifies the process by which persons become commission members (appointment, discernment, election, etc.)
5. **Election of Officers**
   ♦ Indicates the process by which members become commission officers.
6. **Committee Structure**
   ♦ Specifies the function of the executive committee, standing committees and special committees.
7. **Rules of Order**
   ♦ Indicates the regular order of business and procedural authority (i.e., *Robert’s Rules of Order*).
8. **Amendments**
   ♦ Indicates the process for amending the standing rules.
Sample Bylaws for School Commissions

Article I  Name
The name of this body shall be the School Commission of the Parish of ________________, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

Article II  Purpose and Function
Section 1. The pastor or PLC and the parish pastoral council shall establish the Commission as the policy-making body for the school. Commission policy and decisions shall be binding throughout the school upon written ratification by the pastor or PLC.

Section 2. The Commission shall be responsible to the pastor or PLC and the parish pastoral council for the following:
   a. provide input to the performance appraisal of the school administrator on how he/she has administered Commission policy and met the goals set by the commission using the prescribed Performance Appraisal Process of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, initiated by the pastor;
   b. develop goals and objectives specific to the school, through *Partners on the Journey: An Integrative Planning Process for the Educational and Institutional Advancement of Catholic Schools*, and in agreement with parish and archdiocesan goals, policy and objectives;
   c. assist in the development of the annual operating budget for the school in conjunction with the parish finance council;
   d. achieve, through the school administrator, archdiocesan and parish goals for Catholic school education;
   e. report on the status of the school in the parish and deanery; and,
   f. direct the implementation of archdiocesan educational policy in the school program.

Section 3. The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

Article III  Membership
Section 1. The pastor or PLC shall be an *ex-officio* member of the Commission.

Section 2. Five (5) to fifteen (15) persons elected by the parish, or discerned or appointed by the pastor or PLC shall be decision-making (voting) members of the Commission. The school administrator of the school, shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission and the Commission Administrative Officer. He or she has no voting rights and shall not be counted for purposes of determining quorum.

Section 3. Members shall serve a three-year term. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. Terms begin on July 1 and end June 30.

Article IV  Officers
Section 1. The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The officers shall be chosen by consensus of the Commission.

Section 2. Officers of the Commission shall serve a one-year term. No officer may serve more than two consecutive terms.

Section 3. The responsibilities of the Commission officers shall be as follows:
   a. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all parish pastoral council meetings;
   b. The Vice Chairman shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second or speak to a motion;
   c. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of meetings, forward the minutes to each Commission member, and with the assistance of the Administrator and Executive Committee, provide each member with the agenda and preparation materials for the next meeting, and provide all necessary correspondence.

Section 4. The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and School Administrator. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda.
Section 5. The chief administrator of the school shall be the Administrative Officer of the Commission and shall be responsible to the Commission for implementation of Commission policy.

Article V Meetings
Regular meetings of the commission shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be requested by the Chairperson, the school administrator, or the pastor or PLC and shall be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third of the Commission members. Written notice must be made to all voting members and be postmarked at least five days prior to special meetings.

Article VI Quorum
A simple majority of the appointed members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

Article VII Amending the Bylaws
The Bylaws may be amended by a consensus of two-thirds of the members of the Commission and formal ratification by the pastor or PLC. Commission members must receive written notice of proposed Bylaw amendments two months prior to the call to consensus.

Sample Standing Rules for School Commissions

Article I. Members

Section 1. Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing Catholic of integrity, who is at least eighteen years of age, is confirmed and is registered in the parish.

Section 2. Members of the Commission should have a strong commitment to the mission of the school.

Section 3. Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings and to participate in committee work. A member who has more than three unexcused absences from regularly scheduled Commission meetings may be asked to resign by the Chairperson and the pastor or PLC.

Section 4. The Commission shall fill vacancies for the remainder of the term vacated.

Article II Voting

Section 1. Each elected, discerned or appointed member of the Commission shall have the right to vote.

Section 2. Ex-officio members of the Commission shall have a right to passive participation only.

Article III Election/Appointment of Members to the Commission

Section 1. The Commission shall establish a schedule that will provide for replacement of approximately one-third (1/3) of the voting members of the Commission each year.

Section 2. The election, discernment or appointment of Commission members shall take place during the month of May.

Article IV Officers

Section 1. Commission officers shall be determined at the July meeting.

Section 2. A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after officers are determined.

Article VI Executive Committee

Section 1. Members of the Executive Committee shall be the officers of the Commission and the Administrative Officer (school administrator).

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall meet at least two weeks prior to the regular commission meeting to prepare the agenda. The agenda and written committee reports will be available to members at least one week prior to the regularly scheduled Commission meeting. The Administrative Officer shall be responsible for sending written notice of Commission meetings to members.

Article VII Standing Committees

Section 1. The Standing Committees of the Commission are Facility, Finance, Marketing/Development, Membership and Monitoring.
Section 2. Special or Ad hoc Committees shall be established as deemed necessary by the Commission executive committee. Each Special or Ad hoc Committee shall be dissolved as its mission is completed.

Article VIII Meetings
Section 1. Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the Bylaws.
Section 2. All meetings shall be open, unless designated to be an Executive Session.
Section 3. Non-members wishing to address the Commission shall address requests to the Executive Committee in advance of its monthly meeting.

Article IX Order of Business
The order of business shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

Article X Amending the Standing Rules
With written prior notice of one month to all commission members, the Standing Rules may be amended with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission, and upon ratification of the pastor or PLC.
Sample Bylaws for Faith Formation Commissions

Article I  Name
The name of this body shall be the Faith Formation Commission of the Parish of ____________, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

Article II  Purpose and Function
Section 1. The Commission shall be consultative to the pastor or PLC and the parish pastoral council for the following:
  a. establish policies and set goals pertaining to life-long faith formation of the parish;
  b. collaborate with the parish administrator of religious education to implement Commission policy and attain goals set by the Commission;
  c. assist the administrator with the development of the annual operating budget for the faith formation program in conjunction with the finance council of the parish pastoral council;
  d. provide input in the appraisal process for the parish administrator of religious education using the prescribed performance appraisal process of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis;
  e. achieve archdiocesan and parish goals for ongoing faith formation;
  f. report the status of the faith formation programs in the parish to the parish pastoral council; and,
  g. direct the implementation of archdiocesan and deanery educational policy in the faith formation program.

Section 2 The Commission shall establish the necessary means and instruments to communicate Commission policy and decisions to the parish community.

Article III  Membership
Section 1. Five (5) to fifteen (15) persons of integrity, discerned, elected or appointed by the pastor or PLC, shall be voting members of the Commission.

Section 2 The pastor or PLC, parish administrator of religious education and youth minister, shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission.

Section 3 Members shall serve a three-year term. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. Members’ terms begin on July 1 and expire on June 30.

Article IV  Officers
Section 1. The officers of the Commission shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Administrative Officer. The officers shall be selected by the consensus of the Commission.

Section 2. Officers of the Commission shall serve a one-year term. No officer may serve more than two consecutive terms.

Section 3 The parish administrator of religious education is the Administrative Officer for the Commission.

Section 4. The duties of the Commission officers shall be as follows:
  a. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and represent the Commission at all parish pastoral council meetings.
  b. The Vice-Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the chairperson or when the Chairperson desires to introduce, second or speak to a motion;
  c. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of meetings, forwarding the minutes to each Commission member, notifying each member about the agenda for the next meeting and for all necessary correspondence.

Section 5. The Executive Committee of the Commission shall consist of the officers of the Commission and the parish administrator of religious education. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to formulate the Commission meeting agenda.

Article V  Meetings
Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, the, parish administrator of religious education or the pastor/PLC. A special meeting may
also be called by the Chairperson upon written request of one-third of the Commission members. Written notice must be postmarked at least five days prior to special meetings.

Article VI  Quorum
A simple majority of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for each meeting.

Article VII  Bylaws Amendments
The Bylaws may be amended with the consensus of the Commission or a two-thirds vote followed by formal ratification by the pastor or PLC.

Sample of Standing Rules for Faith Formation Commissions

Article I  Members
Section 1. Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing, confirmed Catholic of at least eighteen years of age and a registered member of ______________ parish.
Section 2. Members of the Commission should have strong commitment to the mission of life-long faith formation.
Section 3. Members are required to attend and participate at all scheduled meetings.
Section 4. The Commission shall fill any vacancy for the remainder of the term vacated.

Article II  Voting
Section 1. Each elected, discerned or appointed member of the Commission shall have the right to both active and passive participation. That is, each member shall have the right to a vote or an opinion in poling for consensus decision-making as well as the right to express an opinion in discussion.
Section 2. Ex-officio members of the Commission shall have a right to passive participation only.

Article III  Appointment of the Members of the Faith Formation Commission
Section 1. The Commission shall establish an appointment schedule that will provide for appointment of approximately one-third (1/3) of the members of the Commission each year.
Section 2. The appointment of the members of the Commission shall take place during the month of May each year.

Article IV  Officers
Section 1. The appointment of Commission officers shall be held at the August meeting each year.
Section 2. A formal installation shall be held at an appropriate time after the appointment of officers.

Article V  Standing Committees
Section 1. The Standing Committees of the Commission are Facility, Finance, Marketing/Development, Membership and Monitoring.
Section 2. Special Committees or Ad hoc Committees shall be established as deemed necessary by the Commission.

Article VI  Meetings
Section 1. Meetings shall be held as prescribed in the Bylaws
Section 2. All meeting shall be open unless designated as Executive Session.
Section 3. Non-members wishing to address the Commission shall address requests to the Executive Committee prior to its monthly meeting.

Article VII  Order of Business
The Executive Committee determines the order of business. Members shall receive the meeting agenda prior to the meeting.

Article VIII  Amending the Standing Rules
The Standing Rules of the Faith Formation Commission may be amended with consensus by the Commission and ratification of the pastor or PLC.
SCHOOL COMMISSION COMMITTEE NORMS

SCHOOL FACILITY COMMITTEE NORMS

Good stewardship calls for the leadership of Catholic schools to address the facility needs in a systematic way that will prevent future crises. As a result, the school commission should create a school facility committee that works in cooperation with the parish facility committee and parish finance council. The committee, chaired by a member of the school commission, assists and advises these key parish groups and the school administrator in the management of the school facilities.

Membership and Terms of Office

♦ Members are men and women who are skilled in facility maintenance and who are registered members of the parish or have students in the school.
♦ Three to seven members should be appointed by the school commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson must be a member of the school commission.
♦ Members of the committee should be appointed to three-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.
♦ Members of the school facility committee may not have conflicts-of-interest due to relationships, affiliations, or other reasons.

Responsibilities

♦ Conducts an annual survey of the condition of the facility.
♦ Conducts periodic space utilization surveys in light of curriculum, technology, enrollment and staffing needs.
♦ Develops a facilities maintenance plan.
♦ Ensures that facilities and grounds are properly cared for and maintained through effective policies and procedures and administrative accountability.
♦ Evaluates safety, fire and health code and facility insurance liability issues.
♦ Develops a capital improvement plan for the future in collaboration with the parish facilities committee.

SCHOOL FINANCE COMMITTEE NORMS

One of the key responsibilities of the school commission is to approve and monitor the school’s annual operating budget within the guidelines established by the parish finance council. The school administrator is responsible for budget development with the assistance of parish/school financial staff and guidance of the school finance committee. The committee, chaired by a member of the school commission, assists and advises the school administrator in the fiscal matters of the school.

Membership and Terms of Office

♦ Members are skilled in finance or business matters, registered members of the parish or have students in the school. Members should represent the diversity found in the school.
♦ Three to seven members are appointed by the school commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson is a member of the school commission. The parish finance council should be represented on the school finance committee. In addition, in those parishes operating under a full stewardship program, a member should also serve on the stewardship commission.
Members of the committee should be appointed to three year terms and may be re-appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered to provide both for continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.

It is particularly important that members of the school finance committee not have conflicts-of-interest due to relationships, business affiliations, or any other reason. They may not influence any decision that would benefit them personally, their family or business.

Responsibilities

- Responds to requests for consultation from the chief administrator of the school regarding the administration of the school’s business affairs.
- Reviews and assists in the preparation of the school budget and long-range financial plans in accordance with the mission, values, and goals outlined in the educational plan.
- Ensures that accurate budgets and financial statements are submitted to the school commission and subsequently the Archdiocesan Office of Accounting Services.
- Periodically evaluates the financial condition of the school by analyzing revenues and expenses against the approved budget. This analysis should include a thorough review of the financial statements and, where applicable, the results of the tuition collection process.
- Ensures the presentation of monthly financial statements to the full commission.
- Ensures that permanent and accurate minutes are kept as a record of all school finance committee meetings.
- Provides the school commission and pastor/PLC with quarterly written reports on the financial condition of the school as well as periodic reports on steps to be taken to improve the school’s business operations, as requested by the school commission, pastor/PLC, school administrator, or archdiocese.

SCHOOL MARKETING/DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE NORMS

“Development is both a process and a concept which holds that the highest destiny of an institution can be realized only when everyone involved in the life of the institution does several things together:

- analyze the mission;
- crystallize the goals and objectives;
- project these into the future;
- and take the necessary steps to realize the objectives and attract the human and financial resources to enable the institution to flourish into the next century” Gonser

A major responsibility of the school commission is to assist in the communication, marketing and development of the school. The Office of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis endorses the concept of comprehensive development in a Catholic school environment. Comprehensive development in its broadest sense includes:

- communications and public relations,
- marketing,
- enrollment and retention,
- development (of financial resources).

This committee may establish various task-oriented sub-committees to accomplish the objectives such as special events, annual fund, student recruitment, etc.

Membership and Terms of Office
Members are skilled in marketing/development and have an interest in development for the school.

Three (3) to seven (7) members are appointed by the school commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson is a member of the school commission.

Members of the committee are appointed to three-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms should be staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.

Members of the school marketing and development committee may not have a conflict-of-interest due to relationships, affiliations, or other reasons.

Responsibilities

Assists the preparation of an annual comprehensive development plan that promotes the school’s image.

Prepares a communication plan that informs internal and external publics about the “good news” in their school.

Prepares and assists in the implementation of a student recruitment and retention program.

Plans and designs an annual development plan which provides for fundraising events and the implementation of an annual giving program.

Prepares and assists the parish in the implementation of any capital campaign programs.

Promotes the growth of educational endowments.

SCHOOL COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NORMS

The membership committee is appointed to implement the recruitment, election or discernment process to maintain full commission membership and officers as well as to provide opportunities for member training and spiritual formation.

Membership and Terms of Office

Members are men and women who are registered members of the parish or have students in the school.

Three to seven members should be appointed by the school commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson must be a member of the school commission.

Members of the committee should be appointed to three-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.

Committee members may not have a business or financial interest in any of the areas addressed by the committee.

Responsibilities

Ensures a process for full commission membership.

Serves as a nominations committee for officers of the executive committee.

Provides inservice training for new members and officers for their terms.

Develops an annual plan for the training and spiritual formation of members.

SCHOOL MONITORING COMMITTEE NORMS

The monitoring committee holds a unique position in the Catholic school setting. While all commission members may serve as part of the Partners on the Journey/Performance Based Accreditation process, members of the monitoring committee are charged with oversight on how the plans are monitored by the commission through their planning cycle. They also may set up monitoring processes for other aspects of policy and commission operation.
Membership/Term of Office

♦ Members are skilled in planning and registered members of the parish or parents/guardians of students in the school.
♦ Three to seven members are appointed by the school commission with the approval of the pastor/PLC. The chairperson is a member of the school commission.
♦ Members of the committee are appointed to three-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms should be staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.
♦ Members of the monitoring committee may not have a conflict-of-interest due to relationships, affiliations, or other reasons.

Responsibilities

♦ Assures that the commission reviews annual and long-range strategic plans emanating from the Partners on the Journey/PBA planning processes on a quarterly basis.
♦ One or more members of the committee serves on the school improvement team following the initial planning process.
♦ Reviews annual committee charges within the context of the commission plans and policies.
♦ Prepares an annual assessment of the accomplishments of each commission committee.
♦ Prepares and submits to the parish pastoral council a quarterly report of school commission accomplishments, and a more formal annual report for the pastoral council, school families, school supporters and the parish at large.
FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION COMMITTEE NORMS

FAITH FORMATION FACILITY COMMITTEE NORMS

While a facilities committee may only be necessary for faith formation programs in cases where there is a separate religious education center, good stewardship calls for the leadership to address the facility needs in a systematic way that will prevent future crises in these cases. If necessary, the faith formation commission should create a facility committee that works in cooperation with the parish facility committee and parish finance council. The committee, chaired by a member of the faith formation commission, assists and advises these key parish groups and when applicable, the administrator in the management of the facilities utilized by faith formation programs.

Membership and Terms of Office

♦ Members are men and women who are skilled in facility maintenance and who are registered members of the parish or have children in the religious education program.
♦ Three to seven members should be appointed by the faith formation commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson must be a member of the faith formation commission.
♦ Members of the committee should be appointed to 3-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.
♦ Members of the facility committee may not have conflicts-of-interest due to relationships, affiliations, or other reasons.

Responsibilities

♦ Conducts an annual survey of the condition of the facility.
♦ Conducts periodic space utilization surveys in light of curriculum, technology, enrollment and staffing needs.
♦ Develops a facilities maintenance plan.
♦ Ensures that facilities and grounds are properly cared for and maintained through effective policies and procedures and administrative accountability.
♦ Evaluates safety, fire and health code and facility insurance liability issues.
♦ Develops a capital improvement plan for the future in collaboration with the parish facilities committee.

FAITH FORMATION FINANCE COMMITTEE NORMS

One of the key responsibilities of the faith formation commission is to approve and monitor the annual operating budget for the faith formation program within the guidelines established by the parish finance council. The parish administrator of religious education is responsible for budget development with the assistance of parish financial staff and guidance of the faith formation finance committee. The committee, chaired by a member of the faith formation commission, assists and advises the administrator in the fiscal matters of the faith formation programs.

Membership and Terms of Office

♦ Members are skilled in finance or business matters, are registered members of the parish or have students in the religious education program. Members should represent the diversity found in the parish.
♦ The committee is composed of three to five members appointed by the commission with the approval of the pastor/PLC. The chairperson is a member of the faith formation commission. The parish finance
council should be represented on the faith formation finance committee. In addition, in those parishes operating under a full stewardship program, a member should also serve on the stewardship commission.

- Committee members serve three year terms and may be re-appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered for both continuity of service and the benefit of new perspectives.
- It is particularly important that members of the school finance committee not have conflicts-of-interest due to relationships, business affiliations, or any other reason. They may not influence any decision that would benefit them personally, their family or business.

Responsibilities

- Assists the administrator(s) in the development of an annual budget. Responds to requests for consultation from the administrator regarding relevant business affairs.
- Facilitates the presentation of the budget to the finance council or the parish pastoral council for incorporation in to the overall parish budget.
- Reviews and assists in the preparation of the faith formation department budget and long-range financial plans in accordance with the mission, values, and goals outlined in the faith formation plan.
- Ensures that accurate annual budgets and financial statements are submitted to the faith formation commission and subsequently the Archdiocesan Office of Accounting Services.
- Periodically evaluates the financial condition of the faith formation programs by analyzing revenues and expenses against the approved budget. This analysis should include a thorough review of the financial statements and, where applicable, the results of the fees collection process.
- Ensures the presentation of monthly financial statements to the faith formation commission.
- Ensures that permanent and accurate minutes are kept as a record of all faith formation finance committee meetings.

FAITH FORMATION MARKETING/DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE NORMS

A major responsibility of the faith formation commission is to assist in the communication, marketing and development of faith formation programs. The Office of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis endorses the concept of comprehensive development in the faith formation environment. Comprehensive development in its broadest sense includes:

- communications and public relations,
- marketing,
- enrollment and retention,
- development (of financial resources).

Membership and Terms of Office

- The marketing/development committee is composed of three to five persons skilled in marketing and/or development, and appointed by the commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the commission.
- Committee members serve three year terms and may be re-appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered for both continuity of service and the benefit of new perspectives.
- Members of the marketing/development committee may not have conflicts-of-interest due to relationships, affiliations, or other reasons.

Responsibilities

- Assists in the design and implementation of efforts to improve and enhance public relations for faith formation endeavors.
- Supports effective communications for faith formation.
- Identifies marketing strategies to promote enrollment and attendance in faith formation programs.
- Identifies and secures resources for faith formation as needed.
♦ Promotes the growth of faith formation endowments.

**FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NORMS**

The membership committee is appointed to implement the recruitment, election or discernment process to maintain full commission membership and officers as well as to provide opportunities for member training and spiritual formation.

**Membership and Terms of Office**

♦ Members are registered members of the parish or have students in the religious education program.
♦ Three (3) to seven (7) members should be appointed by the commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson must be a member of the faith formation commission.
♦ Members of the committee should be appointed to three-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms are staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.
♦ Committee members may not have a business or financial interest in any of the areas addressed by the committee.

**Responsibilities**

♦ Ensures a process for full commission membership.
♦ Serves as a nominations committee for officers of the executive committee.
♦ Provides inservice for new members and officers for their terms.
♦ Develops an annual plan for the training and spiritual formation of members.

**FAITH FORMATION MONITORING COMMITTEE NORMS**

The monitoring committee holds a unique position in the Catholic faith formation setting. Members of the monitoring committee are charged with oversight of the plans monitored by the commission through the planning cycle. They also may set up monitoring processes for other aspects of policy and commission operation.

**Membership/Term of Office**

♦ Members are skilled in planning and are registered members of the parish.
♦ Three to seven members are appointed by the faith formation commission with the approval of the pastor or PLC. The chairperson is a member of the faith formation commission.
♦ Members of the committee are appointed to three-year terms and may be appointed for a second term. Terms should be staggered to provide continuity as well as a new perspective to the committee.
♦ Members of the monitoring committee may not have a conflict-of-interest due to relationships, affiliations, or other reasons.

**Responsibilities**

♦ Assures that the commission reviews annual and long-range strategic plans emanating from faith formation planning processes on a quarterly basis.
♦ Reviews annual committee charges within the context of the commission plans and policies.
♦ Prepares an annual assessment of the accomplishments of each commission committee.
♦ Prepares and submits to the parish pastoral council, an quarterly report of faith formation program/commission accomplishments and, ideally, a more formal annual report to the council, religious education families and the parish at-large.
SAMPLE COMMISSION AGENDA

DATE ______________________ TIME: :________ :
PARISH ____________________________________________
PLACE _____________________________________________

Please Read: ______________________
Please Bring: ______________________

I. Call to Order
A. Opening prayer - Leader: ______________________
B. Roll Call (secretary)
C. Approval of Minutes from the ____ / ____ meeting.
   - Approved as Submitted: _______ or Amended/Corrected: _______

II. Action Items
A. ______________________________
B. ______________________________
C. ______________________________

III. Information and Reports
A. President’s Remarks
B. Administrator’s Report
C. Persons approved to address the Commission
D. Other: ______________________________

BREAK

IV. Committee Reports - Standing Committees
A. ______________________________
B. ______________________________
C. ______________________________
D. ______________________________

Committee Reports - Ad Hoc or Special Committees
A. ______________________________
B. ______________________________

V. Future Business Review
A. Dates of Importance
   1. Executive Committee Meeting date: _____ / ____ / ______
   2. Due date of reports or agenda item requests to be included in the
      next packet by: ______ / ______ / ______
   3. Next Commission Meeting ______ / ______ / ______
   4. Other __________________________ / ____ / ______
B. Preview of Topics for Future Agendas: ______________________________
   ______________________________

VI. Closing Prayer. Leader ______________________________
VII. Summary and Meeting Evaluation
Sample Resolution Format

Motion by: ____________________________  Second by: ____________________________

WHEREAS, ____________________________________; and,

WHEREAS, ____________________________________; and,

WHEREAS, ____________________________________; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That __________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Vote: ___________ / ___________ / ___________

(for)  (against)  (abstaining)

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION BY THE ADMINISTRATOR:

_____________________________________________________

Administrator __________________ Date ______________________

Signature

p Ratified / p Vetoed by: Pastor/PLC ______________________

Signature

Date ________________________________
Quarterly Report to the Pastoral Council - Sample

____________________________ Commission

Report for _____________________ Parish   Fiscal year ______-_______

Presented by: _____________________, Chair   Date ____/_____/_____

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