

PREAMBLE

CONSTITUTION OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL is an inter-parish parochial school of the Fort Worth Diocese. The bishop is the authority over the school. The school is a part of the educational mission of Immaculate Conception and St. Mark parishes in Denton, Texas. The pastors delegate administrative authority in collaboration with the principal. The purpose of the School Advisory Council is consultative. The School Advisory Council is involved in planning, formulating, and modifying policies. The School Advisory Council does not enact policy. Regular and open communication among the pastors, principal and School Advisory Council is essential for success of this educational ministry. The School Advisory Council serves with the principal for the good of the school and parish communities.

MISSION

The mission of Immaculate Conception School is to provide quality Catholic education to those families who choose it.

VISION FOR ACCOMPLISHING MISSION

The school seeks to develop students to their highest potentials in Catholicism, academics, and citizenship. To be successful this school must build a dynamic Christ-centered community within the school and extend that spirit to the parishes and communities surrounding the school. The teachers and administrators in the school must be highly qualified professionally, personally committed to their faith, and enthusiastic advocates for children. They must be individuals who are dedicated to sharing and passing on the Catholic faith and instilling a love for learning in the students. The principal and teachers could find no better model for their lives than to teach as Jesus taught. The success of the school requires the collaboration, talents, facilities, and resources of the teachers, principal, parents, School Advisory Council, Diocese of Fort Worth, Immaculate Conception Parish, and St. Mark Parish to meet the current and future educational needs of Catholic students in or near Denton.

CONSTITUTION

Article I - Official Title

The pastors of Immaculate Conception and St. Mark Parishes, in accordance with Diocesan policy, create the Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council, (herein called the “School Advisory Council”).

Article II - Purpose

A. The School Advisory Council:

Develops, formulates and adopts policies.

Selects the principal in collaboration with the pastors and in compliance with Diocesan policy.

Reviews the annual school budget and provides input and advice regarding sources of funding.

Acts as the publicity and public relations body of the school.

Evaluates the performance of the School Advisory Council.

Performs other functions as deemed appropriate by the pastors and principal.

B. The School Advisory Council helps the Immaculate Conception School principal by providing guidance, expertise and service. Members recommend, but cannot act apart from the pastors and principal. The pastors and principal will consult and advise the School Advisory Council in all major matters.

Article III - Membership

Section I. Membership

Membership of the School Advisory Council is composed of fourteen to seventeen members. This number includes the principal, and a representative of each parish.

The representative from each parish is appointed at the discretion of the pastor. The parish representative’s role is to be a vehicle of communication to and from the pastor/parish and the school.

A representative of the Home and School Association (usually the president) serves as an ex-officio member. This representative may not be a household member of a current School Advisory Council member.

Two-thirds of the members must be practicing Catholics.

To the extent possible, membership should be proportioned equally between Immaculate Conception and St. Mark Parishes.

The Immaculate Conception and St. Mark pastors and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools are ex-officio, non-consenting School Advisory Council members.

Section 2. Eligibility

Full-time and part-time school or parish employees or their spouses and persons providing contracted services, such as accountants or bookkeepers, or their spouses are not eligible for membership on the School Advisory Council. Such membership would present an appearance of a conflict of interest.

Only one member of an immediate family is eligible to serve at a time on the School Advisory Council.

Section 3. Term of Commitment

An individual's term of commitment is three years.

Members may serve two consecutive three-year terms.

All terms begin on the first of July and end on the thirtieth of June, the following year.

Annually, and before the first discernment session, non-continuing School Advisory Council members who's term has not expired, should confirm in writing their inability to serve.

Section 4. Pastor

As stated by the Bishop, the Immaculate Conception pastor is the designated pastor of the School Advisory Council. He must approve all policies and is the official agent of local level contracts.

Section 5. Principal

The principal serves as the executive officer of the School Advisory Council and the educational leader of the school.

Article IV - Officers

Section 1. Titles

The officers of the School Advisory Council are the chair, vice-chair, and recording secretary.

Section 2. Eligibility

Only Catholic School Advisory Council members are eligible to fill the offices of chair and vice-chair. All members are eligible to serve as recording secretary.

Section 3. Term of Office

Term of office is one year, July 1 to June 30. Officers may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

Article V - Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The School Advisory Council will hold meetings monthly or every six weeks as determined by the membership.

The School Advisory Council never meets without the principal and/or either pastor present.

Section 2. Special Meetings

The School Advisory Council may call special meetings or retreats at the request of the chair, the principal, either pastor, or by three or more School Advisory Council members.

Section 3. Quorum

A quorum is a simple majority of consenting members of the School Advisory Council.

Section 4. Executive Session

The School Advisory Council will meet in executive session when called by the chair or when directed by the majority of its members to discuss or deliberate on confidential matters.

Article VI - Roles and Relationships

Section 1. School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council fulfills its roles by assuming all responsibilities as outlined in this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. Principal

It is the responsibility of the principal to enact the School Advisory Council's policies, to follow diocesan policy, and to collaborate with the School Advisory Council and pastors.

Section 3. Pastors

The pastors collaborate with the School Advisory Council in all matters concerning the school and support the policies of the School Advisory Council.

Section 4. Bishop

The Diocesan Bishop is the authority over all Catholic schools in the Diocese.

Section 5. Diocesan Education Office

The superintendent of schools is the representative of the bishop. All responsibilities of school personnel are set down in the Fort Worth Diocese's *Catholic School Policy Manual*.

Article VII - Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees

Standing committees, as listed below, perform their regular duties and other duties assigned to them by the School Advisory Council. Reports of each committee's activities are submitted to the School Advisory Council as needed.

Finance
Development
Plant Operations
Public Relations
Long Range Planning

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees

The School Advisory Council may create other committees as it deems necessary and may discontinue these committees at its convenience. The chair of the School Advisory Council will assign members to these committees and establish their scope and duties.

Section 3. Eligibility

Current School Advisory Council members and other qualified and interested members of the school and parish communities are eligible to serve on these various committees.

BY-LAWS

Article I - Policy

Section 1. Formulating

Policies are formulated by the principal or other School Advisory Council members when a specific need arises. Policies are presented in writing to the School Advisory Council and given a first reading. A second reading is required at the following meeting. The policy must then be approved by the pastors before it becomes effective.

Section 2. Publicizing and Maintaining

Policies are published in the *Parent/Student Handbook* which is distributed to all parents at the beginning of the academic year. An agreement to accept statement at the front of this document is signed by each child's parent or guardian and returned to the principal.

Section 3. Annual Review

Policies are reviewed annually when the *Parent/Student Handbook* is revised.

Article II - Membership

Section 1. Annual Recruitment

During March and April announcement of School Advisory Council openings are published in both the Immaculate Conception and St. Mark weekly church bulletins.

School Advisory Council membership is a ministry. Members do not represent specific constituencies within the school, parish or community, but work for the greater good of all.

Potential School Advisory Council members undertake a process of discernment to decide their appropriateness for serving in this ministry and their ability to contribute to meeting the goals and objectives of the School Advisory Council.

Section 2. Discernment

The decision to consider serving on the Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council should be made in a deliberate and prayerful manner. Individuals called through that prayer to this ministry should attend two discernment sessions. Sessions are planned by a committee appointed by the chair. Discerning individuals and continuing members determine the composition of the next year's School Advisory Council.

TIME SEQUENCE

The discernment process begins in April or May and is completed by June 30.

SESSION 1

The potential members will hear about the nature of the Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council. The relationship between the School Advisory Council, the school, the parishes, and the Diocese is explained. Possible conflicts of interest are discussed. The expectations of membership and the demands in commitment, responsibilities, and limitations of power are clarified.

TIME BETWEEN SESSIONS

A minimum of one week is provided between sessions to allow potential members to pray and reflect on what they have heard. The individual has time to discern the goodness of the match between his or her talents and the needs of the Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council.

SESSION 2

This session involves discussion, additional formation and the opportunity for each individual and the group to decide who will serve. The number of School Advisory Council members required each year may vary slightly based on current size of the School Advisory Council, the number of members whose term of service is completed, and the professional expertise needed for a balance of interests and abilities. Current, non-retiring School Advisory Council members are encouraged to attend the second discernment session. This second session can be a regular meeting of the School Advisory Council.

SELECTION

Personal decision-making and group consensus during this meeting determine final membership. The new School Advisory Council is formed by the end of the second session.

Section 3. Vacancies

Mid-term vacancies that occur leaving the total membership less than twelve, will be filled by the chair canvassing the School Advisory Council for suggestions and appointing a replacement for the remainder of the school year. In April this member may enter the discernment process and be eligible for regular School Advisory Council membership.

The time served by members who fill mid-term vacancies counts toward their first three year term on the School Advisory Council.

Article III - Officers

Section 1. Selection

Officers will be selected at the regularly scheduled May meeting. The selection process is based on consensus.

Officers unable to carry out their duties may resign. If the chair is empty, the vice-chair will serve the unexpired term. The School Advisory Council will then discuss and select, by consensus, one member to serve as vice-chair. The School Advisory Council will select a replacement for other officers through discussion and consensus.

Section 2. Duties

The chair presides at all meetings of the School Advisory Council, calls all regular and special meetings, prepares the agenda with the principal, helps prepare the budget, directs the functions and goals of the School Advisory Council, ensures that all members adhere to this Constitution and By-Laws, reports School Advisory Council actions to the pastors, and performs all duties incident to the office of the chair.

The vice-chair will, in the absence of the chair, perform the duties and exercise the functions of the chair, serve as parliamentarian, and perform such other duties as are designated by the chair.

The recording secretary will record and maintain minutes of all regular and special meetings of the School Advisory Council. An e-mail copy of the minutes will be sent to the chair within one week of all regular and special meetings. The chair will edit the minutes and submit them to the principal for final edit before they are sent to members of the School Advisory Council. The minutes will be approved at the next regular School Advisory Council meeting, after which they will be posted on the school web site and sent to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and his/her secretary.

The principal will act as a professional consultant to the School Advisory Council, carry out all policies enacted, and store all records of the School Advisory Council in the school.

Article IV - Meetings

Section 1. Schedule

Members consent as to the specific dates that the School Advisory Council meetings will be scheduled.

Section 2. Meetings

All meetings of the School Advisory Council are open to the public. The School Advisory Council may go into Executive Session, if required.

Non-council members sign in as guests at the meeting. If they request to make a presentation, they are allowed two minutes at the beginning of the meeting. No discussion follows their presentation and they are informed that the School Advisory Council will take their concerns under advisement.

Members wishing to place an item on the agenda may contact the chair or principal at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. The item, if appropriate for School Advisory Council consideration, will be placed on an appropriate agenda with a time limit for discussion.

Section 3. Agenda

The chair and principal prepare the agenda prior to each meeting. All School Advisory Council members may submit items to the chair for inclusion in the agenda.

Copies of the agenda and the attachments will be given to all School Advisory Council members one week prior to the meeting date. A copy of the agenda will be posted on the school web site and appropriate parish/school bulletin boards.

Section 4. Decision Making Process

Consensus building is the appropriate mode of decision making, but in those cases, where a vote is needed for legal purposes, the School Advisory Council will use *Robert's Rules of Order-revised*. A quorum must be present for a decision requiring a vote.

Section 5. Attendance

Members are expected to attend all regular and special School Advisory Council meetings and to carry out all committee and School Advisory Council assignments.

Members who cannot attend meetings, do committee assignments, or prepare for meetings, should reassess their commitment. They may decide to leave the School Advisory Council and should notify the chair.

The School Advisory Council may recommend an individual reevaluate their commitment if after prayer, reflection and reaching a consensus, the School Advisory Council finds cause for such a recommendation.

Article V - Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees - Function

Standing committees are composed of no more than three members of the School Advisory Council. Standing committees perform the regular duties described below and other duties assigned to them by the School Advisory Council. Reports of each committee's activities are submitted to the School Advisory Council as needed. Both council and non-council individuals may serve on standing committees, but only School Advisory Council members may chair the committee.

Non-council committee openings shall be announced in both parish church bulletins and school communications.

Finance: Recommends policies to the School Advisory Council regarding finance and tuition issues related to the school. Assists the principal and School Advisory Council chair in preparing for the School Advisory Council monthly and annual financial reports and the annual Immaculate Conception School budget.

Development: Oversees long-range capital development campaigns and annual fundraising events. Development establishes RELATIONSHIPS for the long term donors, sponsors and the community. The Home and School Association committee must work closely with this committee in the development and scheduling of fundraising events through a master calendar. This committee recommends policies and strategies with the Principal and School Advisory Council for long-range planning for the school.

Public Relations: Creates communication with the parents, parishes, and public about the school. Promotion of the school and recruitment of new students are the focus for this committee.

Plant Operations: Recommends actions to the School Advisory Council regarding the conditions of the physical plant and grounds. Recommends cost-effective improvements and preventive maintenance. This committee cooperates with the church committees on plant and ground issues.

Long Range Planning: Reviews the current status of the school based on the 5-Year Plan and provides the instruments for strategic planning and evaluation of the 5-Year Plan. This committee works closely with appropriate planning committees of both parishes.

Section 2 Ad Hoc Committees

The School Advisory Council may create other committees as it deems necessary and may discontinue these committees at its convenience. The chair of the School Advisory Council will assign members and establish their scope and duties.

Article VI - Amendments

Section 1. Review

This Constitution and By-Laws will be reviewed by School Advisory Council members prior to the annual retreat.

Section 2. Revisions

A motion for amendment to this document must be presented in writing, by a member or committee of the School Advisory Council, to the chair prior to the regular meeting at which the motion is to be given a first reading. A second reading is required at the following meeting. The School Advisory Council will consent on this motion no sooner than the time of the second reading. Consensus of the total membership is required for the adoption of the Amendment or By-Law. Substantial revisions to this document are subject to approval of the Diocesan School Board.

Section 3. Adoption

This Constitution and By-Laws is considered adopted when the consensus of the School Advisory Council is reached and with the approval of the pastors and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

This Constitution and By-Laws for the Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council will take effect on the day it is approved by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and will then rescind and revoke all previous Constitutions and By-Laws.

Approved this _____ day of _____ 2005.

Pastor, Immaculate Conception Parish

Principal, Immaculate Conception School

Pastor, St. Mark Parish

Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Chair, Immaculate Conception School Advisory Council

Effective Date for this Constitution and By-Laws: _____