



A guide to Membership on the St. Theresa Catholic School Board

What is the role of a school board?

The school board provides the opportunity for members of the school, parish and diocesan communities to support the mission of Catholic education in the school. Working with the Principal, Pastor, and staff, the school board members provide leadership to the wider school community.

The school board works in an advisory role to support the mission of the school. The Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school. The school board often operates as a “sounding board” in considering ideas and providing advice and counsel to school leadership.

School boards also play an important role in helping to define and celebrate the special religious character or charism of the Catholic school.

Mission of St. Theresa Catholic School

St. Theresa Catholic School is a diverse educational community rooted in the Catholic faith and committed to providing students with a comprehensive, creative, and challenging program of studies. In a nurturing environment, students are encouraged to discover their full potential and to generously put their gifts at the service of God and others.

What does a school board do?

A school board has the following responsibilities:

- To support and promote the Catholic identity of the school and contribute to its evolving charism such that the school remains reflective of Catholic mission and values.
- To work to ensure the school has a dynamic function in the life of the Parish and wider community.

- To provide advice and counsel to the Pastor and Principal, as appropriate, on a wide range of school operational functions including, but not limited to:
 - ✓ strategic planning and school renewal
 - ✓ budgets and financial management,
 - ✓ curriculum and the school's educational program,
 - ✓ inclusive practices,
 - ✓ capital works and school development,
 - ✓ school maintenance,
 - ✓ parent and family engagement,
 - ✓ communication and marketing,

while always having regard for diocesan and TCCB Ed requirements and areas relating to professional judgement.

- To work to ensure that the school fulfills its potential as an option for all who seek its values, including the poor and students with disability.
- To contribute to the evaluation and selection process for the school Principal.
- To contribute to the formation and evaluation of school policies and core documents, particularly those which assist in defining the character and purpose of the school.
- To contribute to the induction and ongoing formation of School Board members so that they understand the scope and extent of their role.

Are school boards different from company boards?

A very important distinction is that school boards are about service, not power. Decisions are based on the process of the Shared Wisdom Model, which values everyone's input into the discussion.

Matters are decided through reflection and consensus rather than being put to a formal

vote. There is a higher regard for listening to and understanding the views of others, rather than advocating one's own opinion or position. Boards must strive to reach consensus on all issues. Consensus does not imply one hundred percent agreement, instead consensus means that all members will support the final decisions reached by the Board as a whole.

The experience of many board members is that membership adds depth to their own personal and faith development.

What does a school board look like?

School boards generally have no less than 5 and no more than 11 members. The Parish Pastor and Principal are *Ex Officio* members, meaning they are members by virtue of the positions they hold.

Members will consist of parents of current, prospective or recent students of the school, parishioners and community members who wish to serve the ministry of the school. Members should reflect a diverse range of backgrounds and skills and help develop relationships with the Parish and wider communities.

Staff are not eligible to be members of school boards for schools at which they are on staff, but staff of the school may be invited to Board meetings to provide briefings and join discussions where their expertise is required.

What background should board members have?

All school board members should have:

- A demonstrated commitment to Catholic values and the ministry and mission of Catholic education. Members do not necessarily need to be Catholic but should be supportive of the values of Catholic Education and the Catholic Church.
- A genuine desire to be of service to the school community.
- The necessary skills to contribute to the school board's work.
- The ability to work collaboratively and constructively with other members

- Adequate time to give to school board duties.
- An open mind to consider the overall needs of the school, without motivation of personal agendas
- Willingness and desire to work together towards long term school goals.
- Willingness to act within the code of ethics for school board members.

How are board members appointed?

The process of Discernment is used when choosing new School Board Members.

Discernment is a process associated with the virtue of prudence, by which we try to decide what God wills us to do in particular circumstances. In the case of selecting school board members, a facilitator leads all those who have been called to the meeting in a series of prayer and reflection, with the meeting concluding when all open school board positions have been filled. Everyone is welcome to attend Discernment, knowing that a candidate involved in discernment may withdraw from the process at any time. Individuals who choose to continue as candidates will share thoughts, perspectives and experiences with the group. It is trusted and understood that whatever is shared in Discernment is held in confidence and not shared with others. Through this process of prayer, reflection and sharing, we trust in the Holy Spirit to aid in the process of discerning the new school board members for the upcoming school years.

What time commitment is required?

Board appointments are for three years with provision for a three-year extension. Regular School Board Meetings occur monthly and usually last one hour. School Board Members also serve on sub-committees for the Strategic Plan to ensure successful adherence to and completion of the school's long-range goals. Board members attend an annual Archdiocese School Board training, as well as other board training as necessary. As advocates for the school, Board Members also show support through their attendance at important school functions and fundraisers.