

# *Saint Ambrose School* School Advisory Board

## **Preamble**

The education and faith formation of youth is an essential ministry of the Catholic Church and of great value for Saint Ambrose Parish. The parish school is one manner in which this ministry is practiced at Saint Ambrose and other parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland.

Collaborative and cooperative leadership of parents and parishioners with the pastor and principal is integral and essential to carry out the mission of the Saint Ambrose Parish School. Each has specific roles and commensurate responsibilities. The goal is the shared responsibility and ministry of all members of the faith community: students, parents, administrators, faculty, staff, clergy and parishioners. As all the members work together, our parish and our school will help form young people of faith, aware of their God-given gifts and talents, motivated to grow as holy, bright and strong members of the faith community.

For Catholic elementary schools to thrive in our times within the current educational environment, curriculum, financial, legal, marketing, facility and other challenges must be met. These require time, talent and treasure beyond the resources and expertise of students and staff alone. In a spirit of collaboration and support, all are needed to contribute a variety of abilities, resources, and knowledge to help Saint Ambrose School achieve its mission and make our Catholic faith real and alive in the world and in the hearts of our children.

## **Mission of Saint Ambrose School and the School Advisory Board**

Saint Ambrose School is a partnership of families, parishioners and school/parish staff rooted in the mission of Jesus Christ. Saint Ambrose School educates with an emphasis on Catholic faith formation, academic excellence and social consciousness. Our quality Catholic education enables students to internalize these values to become persons of integrity whose leadership abilities benefit Church and society.

Saint Ambrose School is a Catholic community where Jesus Christ is everything for us and our students are challenged to reach their potential.

## **Mission of the School Advisory Board**

The Saint Ambrose School Advisory Board (SAB) aims to help formulate, develop and promote visions and policies that facilitate the operation and consistent growth of Saint Ambrose School. The Board is a consultative body to the school principal and pastor. The School Advisory Board is a significant part

of the school community and its efforts to support a strong, dynamic Catholic education accessible to all the children of Saint Ambrose Parish for years to come.

**The following Guidelines are adopted for the efficient and effective operation of the School Advisory Board of Saint Ambrose School.**

## ***Name and Purpose***

### **Name:**

The title of this organization is the "School Advisory Board" (SAB)

### **Purpose:**

The SAB is a leadership group of parents, educators and parishioners that supports the principal and pastor through consultation on shaping vision, direction, and goals needed for the school to fulfill its mission in an effective and compelling way.

## ***Roles and Responsibilities***

### **Roles and Responsibilities of SAB Members**

SAB members work together to promote the mission and purpose of Saint Ambrose School. Their responsibilities include:

- modeling a faith community in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration with the pastor and principal,
- inviting full, active participation of parents and parish community in the life of the school,
- actively engaging the listening process to hear and respond appropriately to the needs of students, parents, and administrators,
- facilitating good communication and dialogue among the stakeholders in the school,
- encouraging and inspiring creative thought in the academic enterprise,
- participating in the school's development and student recruitment efforts by taking active roles in the public relations and marketing efforts of the school,
- receiving and responding to the school's needs brought forth by parents, staff and administrators,
- reviewing administrative and other assessment/evaluation reports which speak to effectiveness of the school's programs,
- collaborating with the principal in establishing and evaluating short- and long-term goals for the school,

- reviewing and making recommendations regarding the school budget, tuition rates and other sources of financing,
- conducting the SAB's annual review for effectiveness,
- participating in an SAB retreat to coincide with the start of each school year,
- ascribing to the Standards of Conduct contained in the Addendum.

**The SAB does not:**

- act as a grievance committee or conciliator for any group or party,
- hire, evaluate or terminate faculty and staff,
- administer the school or become involved in its day-to-day operations,

**Role and Responsibilities of the Pastor**

As the primary spiritual and canonical leader of the parish, the pastor is responsible for the educational ministry and faith formation of the parish. The pastor is appointed by the Bishop of Cleveland with duties and responsibilities as set forth in the pastor's ministry description. The SAB shall work in close collaboration with the pastor, respecting the reserved powers held by the pastor on behalf of the Bishop.

**Role and Responsibilities of the Principal**

As the educational and catechetical leader of the school, the principal is responsible for its day to day operations. The principal's responsibilities per the SAB include:

- fostering a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and effective communication with SAB,
- developing the monthly SAB meeting agenda with the chairperson(s),
- developing and implementing school policies and procedures,
- informing the SAB of diocesan policies and procedures,
- providing educational direction to the SAB,
- participating in the school's development plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range planning.

***Membership***

**Ex-officio Members**

The pastor and principal are ex-officio members of the SAB. In concert with the responsibility directed by Canon Law, the pastor retains ultimate approval of decisions.

**Number and Terms**

Membership of the SAB is composed of no fewer than seven (7), and no more than eleven (11) voting members, a simple majority of whom are parents of

children in the school. The remaining members may be parishioners at-large or other parents.

- Members serve for a term of three (3) years.
- Members may serve a second consecutive term of three (3) years.
- The terms of SAB members are staggered, to include five (5) members of the initial Board serving terms of two (2) years.
- Members may return to the Board no earlier than two (2) years after the completion of their term.
- In rare and exceptional cases, two-thirds (2/3) of the Board can recommend that a member be allowed to exceed the two consecutive term provision.
- Terms shall end on June 30 of each year.
- Two-thirds (2/3) of the Board may recommend that a member be removed from the Board due to unexcused absence from three (3) or more regular meetings in a twelve (12) month period.

### **Eligibility Requirements/Qualifications**

All SAB members must be Catholics in good standing with the teachings of the Church and active members of Saint Ambrose Parish, have a genuine interest in the advancement of Catholic school education, witness to prayerfulness, participate in consensus process, capable of teamwork. In addition, they must be able to discuss matters, weigh options and recommend practical considerations. Individuals employed by Saint Ambrose School may be eligible for membership if they fulfill the eligibility requirements and their employment and the goals of the Board are not in conflict.

### **Nomination/Selection Process**

The selection process for new members is as follows:

- As early as March 1, and no later than May 31, in years in which there is one or more existing or expected vacancies (due to one or more expiring member terms), the school newsletter will state the number of vacancies on the SAB along with the timeline and process for submitting applications. The notice will identify some of the describable gifts, talents, and knowledge sets needed to create a strong and effective SAB.
- Eligibility requirements are published along with the purpose of the SAB, its roles and responsibilities.
- Nomination forms shall be made available at both the School Office and Parish Office.
- Existing Board members will call nominees to confirm their interest and provide any appropriate additional information.
- Following an orientation session, interested parties complete and submit a form stating their motivation to serve, and identifying the gifts they can contribute to the SAB.
- The SAB will utilize a process of discernment for the selection of new members. The Executive Committee will facilitate this process.

### **Resignation of an Advisory Committee Member**

If for any reason, a member cannot fulfill his/her responsibilities on the SAB, a letter of resignation is submitted to the Chairperson.

- The Board submits names of three potential candidates to serve as an interim replacement.

### **Removal of a SAB Member**

SAB members may be removed for the following reasons:

- violating the confidentiality of executive sessions,
- acting, in word or behavior, contrary to the parish or school's mission and goals,
- impeding, by word or action, the SAB's defined responsibilities as articulated above,
- unexcused absence from three (3) or more meetings in a year.

## ***Leadership***

### **Leadership**

The leadership of the SAB includes the chairperson and the vice-chairperson (or co-chair). Along with the pastor and the principal, these members make up the Executive Committee of four parties.

- Discernment of officers for the SAB takes place at the June meeting.
- Installation of Leadership should take office as final order of business of the June meeting.
- Officers are discerned for a term of one year with the possible renewal up to and including three consecutive terms.

### **Duties of the Chairperson**

The chairperson presides at meetings of the SAB. In addition, the chairperson:

- Prepares meeting agendas in consultation with the principal, and circulates the agenda to Board members prior to each meeting.
- Shares leadership responsibilities with the pastor and principal,
- Represents the SAB in other forums as needed (e.g. Parish Pastoral Council)
- Participates (or designates a representative) in the Collaboration Commission of the Parish Pastoral Council.

### **Duties of the Vice-Chairperson (co-chair)**

The vice-chairperson (co-chair) presides at meetings and serves as SAB representative in the absence of the chair.

# ***Committees of the SAB***

## **Creation of a Committee**

The tasks and projects of the SAB are accomplished through committee work.

- An SAB member or ex-officio member may chair each SAB committee.
- Committee membership may include members, ex-officio members and non-members of the SAB as recruited by the committee chairperson.
- Committees perform duties as assigned and provide recommendations for action.
- Committee chairpersons report to the SAB on the committee progress and obtain SAB affirmation/approval/input when appropriate.

## **Committees of the SAB**

- Executive Committee: Consists of the principal, pastor, the chair, and the vice-chair of the SAB.
- Standing committees will be created, modified or disbanded by majority vote of the Board as needed. Other committees may include, but are not limited to: *Public Relations, Spirituality, Development, Student Life, Wellness, Technology, etc.*

## **Committee Regulations**

- Committee meetings are determined by the committee members.
- A majority of a committee's members constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

# ***Meetings***

## **Meeting Schedule**

Meeting dates are established by agreement of the Board and published in the school newsletter and parish bulletin.

- Ordinarily, SAB meetings are held monthly.
- The chairperson may call emergency meetings, closed sessions or cancellations.
- Special meetings may also be called or closed at the pastor's/principal's request.

## **Agenda**

The principal and chairperson of the SAB plan the monthly agenda and distribute it prior to the meeting. Topics for future agendas are elicited at the monthly meeting.

## **Open Meetings**

Ordinarily SAB meetings are open meetings which are announced in advance so that interested parents, faculty and parishioners may attend.

- The SAB chairperson provides a period of time at open meetings for comments from the floor.
- If a question or issue can be easily resolved, the response is offered by appropriate Board Members.
- If the issue requires information or research, the chairperson delegates that responsibility to the appropriate person(s) or committee.

### **Decision Making Process and Consensus**

The method for making recommendations is consensus. Decisions of the SAB take place only when a quorum is present. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the SAB's voting members, respectful discussion continued until all members can agree.

- If consensus cannot be reached, the chairperson determines whether to continue the discussion at the next meeting, table the discussion for a period of time or bring the matter to a formal consensus ballot.
- A majority is needed for a recommendation. A majority consists of one over half of those members at a meeting where a quorum is present.
- This consensus ballot, along with the final wording of the recommendation, appears in the minutes.
- It is understood that under the Code of Canon Law, final decisions and responsibility for Saint Ambrose School lies within the purview of the Pastor

### **Minutes**

The SAB's minutes are the official statement of discussions and recommendations. The SAB member serving as secretary is responsible for recording the minutes of each meeting. SAB members shall rotate this responsibility.

- The chairperson oversees the preparation and timely distribution of the minutes.
- The minutes of each SAB meeting require approval of the members at the next meeting.
- The minutes are made available to the school and parish community.
- Minutes are given to the Parish Pastoral Staff and the leadership of the Parish Pastoral Council.

## ***Amendments to the By-Laws***

By-Laws may be reviewed and changed as needed. When time or circumstances warrant a change in these By-Laws, they may be amended by a majority vote of the SAB members with approval of the pastor.

## ***Standards of Conduct for SAB members***

By accepting a position to serve as a member of the SAB, an individual must ascribe to the following Standards of Conduct.

As a member of the Saint Ambrose School Advisory Board, I agree:

- to acknowledge, confirm, and uphold the mission of Saint Ambrose Parish and School,
- to actively practice my Catholic faith,
- to commit myself to the highest level of honesty, integrity and good judgment,
- to pray for the wisdom to offer insights and ideas for the well-being of the school community,
- to be prepared for each meeting and to complete assigned tasks,
- to become knowledgeable about the school's programs and educational and catechetical goals and trends.
- to stir new ideas and creative programs for the enrichment of the next generation of Church members and leaders,
- to respect the confidentiality of all shared information,
- to set aside personal goals and desires for the sake of the SAB's goals and agenda,
- to think and act without bias toward any person or idea,
- to be open to alternative solutions to problems,
- to refrain from SAB discussion and recommendation in the event of a conflict of interest with my family or business,
- to share my gifts and talents generously and freely for the good of the school community,
- to willingly support all SAB decisions and recommendations once they are published,
- to pray daily for the students, faculty and staff of Saint Ambrose School.

I understand that I am a member of a committee that is advisory only; therefore, my role is to support and advise the pastor and principal in making decisions and plans that fulfill the mission of the school. I commit myself to uphold the By-Laws of the School Advisory Board and these Standards of Conduct.