

St. Madeleine Sophie Parish School Ministry Commission By-Laws

Introduction

St. Madeleine Sophie Catholic School Ministry is an expression of the educational mission of the parish as well as the Church of Western Washington. Therefore, the pastor is responsible to the Archbishop for the administration of the total parish, including the parish school ministry. The principal functions as the chief administrator of the school and is a member of the parish staff. Regular and open communication between the pastor and the principal is essential.

Just as the parish Pastoral Council serves with the pastor on behalf of the total parish community, so the parish School Ministry Commission serves with the principal for the good of the parish school ministry community. Today's Catholic school principal, with the many demands of the role, needs assistance from a group of community members who are committed to the unique mission of the school and are willing to work for the good of the school and the parish.

Article I. Name of the Organization

The name of this body shall be the School Ministry Commission of St. Madeleine Sophie Parish.

Article II. Purposes and Functions

The pastor, in accord with Archdiocesan policy, establishes the commission to assist him and the principal in policy development and long rang planning for the school ministry. When the commission meets (as pastor, principal, and members) and agrees on a policy matter, the decision is effective and binding on all. The commission will be consulted prior to decisions being made in their areas of responsibility.

The commission responsibilities are in the following areas:

A. Planning

- Establishing and maintaining a mission statement for the school.
- Establishing commission goals for the year.
- Establishing future plans for the school.

B. Policy Development

- Assisting in formulating policies that serve as an aid to the pastor and principal in guiding the general direction of the school ministry.

C. Financing

- Helping develop plans/means to finance the school programs including: tuition, development and fund-raising.
- Allocating resources according to a budget.
- Monitoring the budget

D. Public Relations

- Communicating with various publics about the school ministry.
- Assisting the pastor and principal in listening to the needs and concerns of the community through appropriate forums set up for this purpose.
- Recruiting students.
- Promoting the school ministry to the parish and parents.

E. Evaluation

- Determining whether commission goals and plans are being met.
- Evaluating the commission's own effectiveness.

Article III. Relationships with other groups

The School Ministry Commission is related to the Archdiocese and at least three groups on the parish level: The Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Finance Council, and the Parent Organization (APPLE).

A. Archdiocese

The relationship between the School Ministry Commission and the Archdiocese is stated in Archdiocesan education policies that are available for school commission members.

B. Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council is responsible for assisting the pastor in establishing priorities, broad goals and policies for the parish. It is in response to the overall parish directions and priorities that the School Ministry Commission establishes direction for the school ministry. For example, it is within the context of the Parish Mission Statement that the School Ministry Commission establishes a Mission Statement for the school ministry.

The Parish Pastoral Council establishes parish priorities regarding the use of parish resources, personnel and finances, and is the body that recommends a final budget to the pastor. Therefore, the responsibility for determining the amount of parish funds allocated for the school rests with the pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council. The principal and the School Ministry Commission are responsible for clearly and accurately articulating the needs of the school.

The School Ministry Commission should maintain regular communication with the Parish Pastoral Council about the direction of the school, the state of the health of the school, and future planning.

C. Parish Finance Council

The Parish Finance Council is responsible for assisting the pastor about effective stewardship of the parish's financial resources. It is responsible for developing and overseeing a parish budget process, as well as conducting long range financial planning. The Parish Finance Council is not responsible for determining priorities or evaluating the worth of parish programs and ministries.

The School Ministry Commission is governed by the budgetary financial policies and procedures established by the pastor in consultation with the Parish Finance Council.

The Parish Finance Council oversees an annual budget development process in response to priorities set forth by the Pastoral Council. The pastor makes the final decision on the annual budget. The School Ministry Commission and the principal have the responsibility for the effective use of the parish financial investment and are accountable for keeping expenditures within the budget set.

D. Parent / Parish / Student Organization (APPLE)

The Parent / Parish / Student Organization is responsible for assisting in good communication between the home and school, for providing a vehicle through which parents and parishioners can provide service to the school (for example, volunteers and fund-raising), for offering a mechanism for parent and parishioner education, and for serving as a structure for political action when needed (for example, letter writing, phone calls, visits to legislators).

The Commission works closely with the officers of APPLE in order to understand more fully parent and parishioner needs and concerns. It works with APPLE to identify volunteers to help fulfill the mission of the school ministry. It works with parent and parishioner volunteers through a fund development committee as part of coordinating the overall financing of programs for the school. It uses the communication mechanism of the parent / parishioner / student organization to report to school families and parishioners about commission activities.

Article IV. Membership

The membership of the parish School Ministry Commission shall consist of no less than seven and no more than nine members in addition to the pastor and principal. Members serve terms of three years renewable for one additional term. If appointed to fill less than half of an unexpired term, the member is eligible to serve two additional terms. Members fulfilling their maximum commitment per these guidelines may regain eligibility for consideration after a two-year leave.

Care is taken to ensure that the membership reflects the diversity of the community. At least two thirds of the membership shall be active parishioners of St. Madeleine Sophie parish. All members shall be 21 years of age or older.

Appointed members are:

- Chairperson of the School Ministry Planning/Policy Formulating Committee;
- Chairperson of the School Ministry Finance Committee;
- Chairperson of the School Ministry Buildings and Grounds Committee;
- Chairperson of the School Ministry Development Committee;
- President or appointed representative of APPLE; and
- Two to four other members selected from the community at large reflecting the specific needs of the school and parish.

Article V. Nominations and Appointments

An ad hoc Membership Committee seeks and prepares a slate of prospective Commission members who meet the following criteria:

- Interest in and commitment to Catholic education and to the school and parish's philosophy and mission;
- Availability to attend meetings and periodic in-service programs and to participate in committee work;
- Ability to maintain a high level of integrity and confidentiality;
- Capacity to deal with situations as they relate to the good of the entire school and parish community; and
- Serve as a credible witness of the Catholic faith (or to one's own religion) to the school community and the other publics the school serves.

Ineligibility:

Those who are paid employees of the school or parish are not eligible for membership. Two or more members of the same family may not hold positions simultaneously.

Appointments:

During the spring, the Membership Committee will invite eligible parishioners, parents and community members to submit nominations to fill vacated commission positions. The committee then prepares a list of possible appointees according to the stated criteria and specific needs of the commission and submits to the pastor. The pastor, in consultation with the parish Pastoral Council and principal, will make the final selections - balancing the needs of all parish commissions and committees - on or before May 31.

Once notified of their selection, all new members are expected to attend the remaining scheduled School Ministry Commission or committee meetings, as well as any planned orientation sessions, prior to beginning their term on July 1.

Members who miss two consecutive commission meetings and are unexcused will lose membership. The School Ministry Commission participates in a public commissioning service in the fall.

Article VI. Officers

Before the June meeting, the Membership Committee should present to the commission nominees for the positions of chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The officers are elected by the commission and serve one-year terms, renewable once. Their duties are those ordinarily performed by such officers.

Article VII. Meetings

The full board meets every month beginning in August or, through consensus, as needed. Standing committees meet at other times as needed. Commission meetings are open to the public; however the commission reserves the right to call for an executive session when covering either personnel issues or other confidential matters. At such time, the meeting is closed to all but the appointed members, pastor (or his designate) and the principal.

Official meetings of the full commission are held in parish facilities (except for scheduled retreats or planned socials) and require a majority of members to be present (including the pastor and/or principal).

Article VIII. Executive Committee

The members of the executive committee are the pastor, principal, chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary of the commission. The executive committee meets regularly (in person or through electronic means) to plan the agenda for the commission meetings. The agenda and written committee reports shall be available to members at least one week prior to regularly scheduled commission meetings.

Article IX. Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

The Standing Committees are:

A. School Ministry Planning/Policy Formulation Committee

The functions of this committee are to inaugurate and monitor the long-range planning process for the school and to formulate policy statements for commission action.

B. School Ministry Finance Committee

The functions of this committee are to work with the principal and pastor to develop the annual budget (reflective of parish financial commitment), to monitor the budget and present regular financial reports to the full commission, Parish Finance Council (as needed) and to work with the School Ministry and Parish Development Committees to develop a community annual report.

C. School Ministry Building and Grounds Committee

The functions of this committee are to assist in developing and monitoring a maintenance and improvement plan for the current and future building and grounds in conjunction with the overall parish plant.

D. School Ministry Development and Public Relations Committee

The function of this committee is to plan the overall institutional advancement program for the school in conjunction with parish development efforts including a case statement, marketing plan, fund-raising initiatives, financial development programs and public relations.

Ad Hoc Committees may be formed for such purposes as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee, serve for the duration of their assignment, and are then disbanded.

Article X. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended according to Archdiocesan policy.

Article XI. Rules of order

Ordinarily, decisions regarding policy matters and other major issues are not made at the “first reading” which is for information and clarification. The “second reading” of the policy occurs after additional consultation and clarification. At that time, the commission begins its decision-making process.

In order to provide the best consultation, the consensus method of decision-making shall be used. When the pastor is present at the meeting and concurs with the decision reached, the commission minutes shall report his concurrence and the decision may then be implemented. When the pastor is unable to attend a commission meeting, he should receive the minutes and have the opportunity to comment on issues prior to the minutes' being distributed. His signature on the minutes constitutes concurrence. The minutes are then circulated and decisions may be implemented.

If, at the gathering of the commission, the group assembled is unable to reach a consensus, the minutes shall report the differing positions and appropriate reasons. The pastor and principal take these views under advisement and recommend the final plan of action.