

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATION COMMISSION

Article I Name and Role of the Organization:

1. The name of this organization will be the Aquinas Catholic Schools Education Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.
2. The Commission is formed by the membership listed in Article II, Section 1 as a consultative body to assist the president, dean, and pastors in overseeing the operation of Aquinas Catholic Schools. The Commission derives its authority and responsibility from the Diocesan Bishop and the Dean of the La Crosse Deanery.
3. The Commission is a representative group of supporting parishes and organizations, responsible to the dean and pastors, which has delegated authority to identify and articulate Aquinas Catholic Schools educational goals and objectives, by being a policy forming and consultative body and an advocate of approved policies.
4. In its consultative role, the Commission is guided by the recognition that the responsibility of pastoral authority rests with the Office of the Bishop, the dean and the pastors; that the Commission is responsible for policy formation; and that the office of the president has the responsibility and authority to administrate and carry out the policies of the Commission, deanery, and diocese. See, Bishop John Paul, On Consultation in the Parish and Deanery, page 6 (8/15/85).

Article II Membership

1. Members of the Commission will include the dean and pastors of the La Crosse Deanery, the chaplains of the middle and high schools, and one (1) representative from each of the following parishes/organizations:

Roncalli Newman Parish
Blessed Sacrament Parish
Holy Trinity Parish
St. James Parish
Mary Mother of the Church Parish
St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral Parish
St. Patrick Parish
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
St. Mary Bangor Parish
St. Leo Parish

St. Mary Coon Valley Parish
St. Joseph Ridge Parish
St. Peter Parish
St. Charles Parish
Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation, Inc.
Aquinas Athletic Booster Club
Aquinas Music Parents Association

2. In addition, ex-officio members include:
 - a. President of Aquinas Catholic Schools
 - b. Diocesan Director of Schools
 - c. Diocesan Director of Consecrated Life
3. The role of the pastors is important and their active and regular participation in the affairs of the Commission is strongly encouraged.

Article III Purpose and Function

1. This Commission is established by the diocesan bishop to assist the dean and the president in the operation and governance of the Aquinas Catholic Schools in the following areas:
 - long range planning
 - policy formation
 - financing and budgeting
 - development, fund-raising, and alumni relations
 - public relations, marketing, recruitment and retention
 - consultation, evaluation, and information sharing
 - transportation and busing
 - cooperation with other school systems, both private and public
2. The Commission's responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, the establishing, maintaining, and managing of:
 - early childhood through secondary education programs
 - adjunct programs which support the ministry of the school
 - personnel practices and procedures
 - remuneration programs and schedules for administrative, instructional and support personnel
 - long-range plans, goals, objectives, programs, designs and evaluations
 - effective student recruitment and public relations/marketing practices
 - budget and finances
 - guidelines for educational, athletic, co-curricular, and other related programs
 - policy formation and recommendations

- consultation to the president and the dean
 - facilities and building usage
 - other duties and responsibilities as directed by the dean
3. All parishes and schools are obliged to follow the policies formulated by the Commission, and approved by the dean and the Bishop or his delegate, Formulated policies will be submitted for diocesan review and approval to ensure they comply with the law and with the policies and directives of the Diocese of La Crosse.
 4. The commission will be an advocate of approved policies and regulations of the Diocese of La Crosse relative to educational programs, personnel, and school system governance and administration.

Article IV Relationship with Other Groups

1. The Commission derives its responsibility from the Bishop and the dean as his representative. All Commission actions are subject to the review and approval of the dean and the Bishop. In order to appropriately carry out its educational mission, the Commission will establish close working relationships with the Office for Catholic Schools, the diocese, and the respective parish pastoral councils/finance councils. The Commission will also foster close working relationships with the booster and parent organizations in order to provide educational assistance to parents/guardians in fulfilling their role as Christian educators.
2. Each parish in the deanery has a Catholic Education committee as a part of its Pastoral Council. The Commission will establish close working relationships with the parish Catholic Education committees and maintain a communication link between the parishes and Aquinas Catholic Schools.

Article V Membership

1. In accordance with Article II, Section 1, the pastor/administrator is to appoint one member. The terms of lay representatives begin at the August Commission meeting.
2. The Presidents of the Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation, Aquinas Athletic Booster Club, and Aquinas Music Parents Association shall appoint the representatives for each organization, unless the organization adopts bylaws to make the commission representative a position elected by the members of the organization. Representatives from these organizations shall serve a one-year term and may be reappointed for up to five additional terms.
3. System employees, the spouse, parent, or children of system employees, may not serve as representatives on the Commission.

4. Lay Commission representatives from the parishes should also serve on the respective parish Catholic Education committees in order to foster communication of issues coming before the Commission.
5. Lay representatives from each parish shall serve a 3-year term, or any unexpired part of a term, and may be reappointed to one additional 3-year term. Membership will be staggered over a 3-year period to ensure that no more than one-third of the membership leaves the Commission in a given year.
6. Lay representatives will be expected to participate fully in regular meetings of the Commission and to actively serve on Commission committees; to promote the publication and communication of Commission deliberations to the parishes; and to faithfully support and promote the goals of Aquinas Catholic Schools.
7. The Dean, in consultation with the respective pastor or administrator, may remove a representative from the Commission if that representative has engaged in actions that are detrimental to the function of the Commission or school system.
8. Lay members, other than ex-officio, who are absent and unexcused from two (2) consecutive meetings without sufficient cause, may be removed by Commission consensus after consultation with the respective pastor/president/administrator.
9. Interim appointments are to be made through a similar process as regular appointments.
10. All appointed members must be in full communion with the Catholic Church, and known for their Catholic faith and prudent judgment.

Article VI Officers and Executive Committee

1. The officers of the Commission will be: Chairperson, and assistant chairperson. They will be chosen by election by, and from, the regular members of the Commission. Nominations for officers shall be accepted at the April meeting and the election shall be held at the May meeting. The term of office will be one year. Officers may be reelected for consecutive terms. A recording secretary will either be chosen from the regular members of the Commission or may be appointed from the secretarial staff of Aquinas Catholic Schools.
2. The Commission Chairperson will:
 - preside at all meetings and supervise the affairs of the Commission
 - serve as the dean's delegated spokesperson for the Commission
 - with the president, prepare annual Commission objectives and meeting agendas and recommend standing and ad-hoc committee members and chairs for review by the Commission and appointment by the dean.

3. The Assistant Chairperson will:
 - assume the duties of the chairperson in his/her absence
 - perform such duties as the chairperson and/or Commission directs
4. All Standing and Ad-hoc Committees will submit regular reports to the Commission.
5. The President of the school system will:
 - serve as an ex-officio member of all standing and ad-hoc committees.
 - keep permanent files of all regular and special meetings
 - distribute agendas and minutes of all regular and special meetings
 - with the chairperson, prepare annual Commission objectives and meeting agendas and recommend standing and ad-hoc committee members and chairs for review by the Commission and appointment by the dean.
6. The Recording Secretary will:
 - record minutes of all regular and special meetings, providing them to the president for distribution
 - maintain attendance of members and visitors.
7. The Executive Committee of the Commission will be comprised of the dean, the president, the chairperson, and the assistant chairperson. This committee may meet as required between meetings of the Commission to discuss or act on Commission business. The Executive Committee will be responsible for preparing recommendations for the Commission on matters which do not fall under the guidelines of any other standing committee. It has the authority to act on emergency matters between meetings.
8. The dean, in consultation with the president, may remove an officer and appoint a replacement to fulfill the remainder of that officer's term.

Article VII Standing and Ad-hoc Committees

1. The Standing Committees of the Commission will be: the Executive Committee (see Article VI, 7.), the Finance Committee, the Marketing Committee, and the Policy Committee.
 - a. The Finance Committee will address financial issues and will assist the president in preparing an annual budget to be presented to the Commission.
 - b. The Marketing Committee will address public relations and marketing issues.

- c. The Policy Committee is responsible for identifying issues requiring policy formation and the preparation of written policies for consideration by the Commission.
2. Ad-hoc Committees may be established by the Commission as necessary, or upon the recommendation of the chairperson and president. These committees will dissolve upon completion of their designated task.
3. The dean, after consultation with the chairperson and the president, will appoint committee chairs. Membership on the various committees is not restricted to members of the Commission.
4. Committee members and chairpersons recommended by committees will be presented annually at the August meeting for review by the commission and appointment by the dean.

Article VIII Meetings

1. The Commission will meet monthly, August through May. Additional meetings may be called by the Executive Committee
2. Meeting agendas are to be prepared by the president, in consultation with the chairperson and the dean, and distributed to each Commission member, normally one week prior to the scheduled meeting. Items submitted for placement on an agenda must be received at least one (1) week prior to meeting.
3. Commission meetings are, generally, open meetings. However, the Executive Committee reserves the right to hold a closed session of the Commission. The Executive Committee will determine who may remain in attendance at closed meetings.
5. Policies or revisions of policies are to be formulated or introduced at one meeting and recommended to the dean for approval at a future meeting. Diocesan policy always supersedes local policy.
6. The meetings and recommendations of the Commission will be conducted on the principles of consensus rather than on parliamentary procedures. Commission recommendations are made by the consensus of the members present. Consensus does not require unanimity; it is the mutual agreement that all legitimate concerns have been addressed and members agree to support the recommendation as the best possible course of action.
7. The president will seek the counsel of the diocesan director of schools on legal matters.

Article IX Annual Budget Process

The Commission has the responsibility to approve an annual budget to be prepared and submitted by the president. Normally, the following schedule is to be followed:

- November Building and system budgets are begun with administrators, president, and Finance Committee.
- December Preliminary budget and tuition scale is presented to Commission.
- Jan. – April Budget updates and revisions (based on enrollment and staffing) presented to Commission each month.
- May Budget is finalized for approval by the dean.

Article X Amendments

Any part of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Aquinas Catholic Schools Education Commission can be altered/amended by consensus of the Commission at any regular meeting, provided that:

- the proposed amendment was presented to members at a prior meeting
- the proposed amendment is consistent with the policies, directives and regulations of the Diocese of La Crosse as they pertain to Catholic schools
- the amendments are approved by the dean.

Commission Approval _____
Therese Boisvert, Chairperson Date

Dean’s Approval _____
Rev. Michael Gorman, Dean Date

Diocesan Approval _____
Diana Roberts, Dir. of Catholic Schools Date