

ST. JAMES SCHOOL
COUNCIL
CONSTITUTION &
BYLAWS

ST. JAMES SCHOOL
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL

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ARTICLE 1 — NAME

The following are the Constitution and Bylaws of the St. James School Council governing the operation of the St. James School Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council," as enabled by policies and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Chicago, its Office of Catholic Schools, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the St. James School Council.

ARTICLE 2 — MISSION

The mission of the St. James School Council is to act as a leadership group which serves as an advisory group to the Parish Pastor and school Principal, while modeling a faith community in a spirit of cooperation and interdependence with them. Understanding the school's mission is embedded within the work of this group and the Council's focus shall be on the key area of *school*. To be effective in their responsibilities as members of the Council, members need to be active and participate in school events and activities. Members should also have a love for the school and its mission, and develop a thorough understanding of the school's mission, goals, people and other resources.

ARTICLE 3 — PURPOSE AND DUTIES

St. James School is a school controlled and operated by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago. The school is under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocesan Cardinal and the Superintendent of the Office Catholic Schools. The purpose of this committee is to serve as a consultative and active body that assists the school's Principal and Parish Pastor in fulfilling the school's mission. While the Council does not have decision making authority, consultation is at the heart of the decision-making process – sharing information, listening, contributing to the discussion and promoting consensus. The Council cannot act apart from the Principal and cannot make decisions binding on the school without the Principal.

Council Duties:

1. Policy

- Follow the policies developed by the Archdiocese and its Office of Catholic Schools.
- Propose, polish, and help implement applicable policies for the operation of the school determined by a response to a need expressed by the Principal, Pastor, or the Council representing its constituents.

2. Operations

- Establish and maintain the Constitution and Bylaws in accordance with the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools policies and guidelines
- Collaborate with the Pastor in the hiring of a school Principal or other vacancies, when necessary.
- Provide counsel and advice to the Principal and Pastor in the operation of the school.
- Collaborate with the Principal and Pastor in the development, implementation and monitoring of the long-range plan for the school, including student recruitment and retention.
- Use their talents, gifts and insights for the common good of St. James School and to promote the mission and goals of Catholic education.
- Evaluate their effectiveness as a group, adequacy of their Constitution and Bylaws, and how they meet their responsibilities as Council members.

3. Finances

- Assist the Principal in the formulation of the school budget and to review tuition rates in concert with the St. James Parish Finance Committee.
- Determine and foster sources of additional funding beyond tuition and to encourage endowment funds, foundation grants, scholarships and grants for the benefit of the school or its individual students.

4. Representation

- Actively represent the parents of St. James School children.
- Be active, participating members of the school community (e.g. Open House, School Information Night)
- Conscientiously serve as a conduit to gather input from individual parents of St. James students and parishioners, Principal, and Pastor
- Positively advise the marketing and public relations arm of the school and its Principal, both internally and externally
- Actively seek potential candidates for Committee nominations

5. Other

- Perform all other necessary and/or desirable actions in accordance with the mission and duties of the Council.

Principal Duties:

The Principal's responsibilities with regard to the Council include, but are not limited to:

- Develop the monthly agenda and annual goals with the Council Chairperson
- Prepare and submit policy recommendations to the Council, prior to implementation where feasible
- Inform the Council of Archdiocesan processes and procedures, and changes to these; Implement as appropriate
- Prepare the annual school budget for the Council's review and report periodically on year-to-date finances
- Initiate the Principal Self-assessment and Evaluation process outlined by the Archdiocese's Office of Catholic Schools
- Participate in the school's development plans, student recruitment efforts, and long-range plans
- Provide periodic reports regarding the progress of the school and its pupils
- Create an environment of cooperation and collaboration

Pastor Duties:

The Pastor serves as an *ex-officio* member of the Council. The Pastor's responsibilities with regard to the Council include, but are not limited to:

- Participate in Council meetings and support the initiation and implementation of the school's development plans, student recruitment efforts and long range plans
- Approve all decisions and policies, particularly those that relate to religious education
- Hire the Principal according to Archdiocesan Procedures, including consultation with the Council

ARTICLE 4 — MEMBERSHIP

Membership guidelines:

- The Council shall consist of an odd number of members (no less than seven or more than nine): the Pastor (ex-officio) as a nonvoting member, the Principal (ex-officio) as a non-voting member.
- Voting members shall be registered and participating members of St. James Parish, or a parent of a St. James School student, and shall be at least 21 years of age. Council members shall be genuinely concerned about contributing to the ministry of Catholic education and focus on the needs of the school before their own.
- Employees of St. James School or St. James Parish, and their immediate family, shall not be members of the St. James School Council. "Immediate family" is defined as spouse, child, parent, brother, sister or in-laws. In addition, membership is limited to one person per household. The members of this Council shall not serve in other parish/school leadership positions.
- Selecting new voting members for the Council is achieved by means of annual discernment/interviewing process, and/or by Pastor/Principal appointments.
- The term of office for an Officer shall customarily be one (1) year. Each voting member typically serves a term of three years, with the potential of term extension depending on the current situation. The Council terms shall be staggered so terms expire during different school calendar years.
- The officers of the Council shall consist of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (optional). The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be a member and have completed one year of being a member of the Council. The Vice-Chairperson is a merit-based position selected by the school council by the end of the current school calendar year. Customarily, the Vice-Chairperson will assume the role of Chairperson for the following year.
- All officers shall be members of the Council. The Principal and Pastor shall not be officers.

MEMBERSHIP SELECTION

Each spring Council and the Principal nominate candidates that reflect the diversity of the school and professional expertise as appropriate to carry out the duties of the Council.

The Principal will invite nominated candidates no less than two weeks prior to the new member selection meeting. This invitation may include, but is not limited to:

- Statement of the council's purpose, including short-term and long-term goals and plans
- Statement that the potential candidate has been personally nominated and is invited/encouraged to attend the selection meeting
- A description of the Council vacancies and responsibilities/expectations of those vacancies
- Potential questions the candidate may need to answer during the meeting
- Date, time, location, and approximate duration of the meeting

In addition to the personal invitations, a general letter of invite shall be posted in the Principal's newsletter or other similar communication to school parents, as well as published in the Parish bulletin, no less than one week prior to the discernment/interview meeting.

The discernment/interview meeting shall take place in spring of the current school year for new member terms that begin the following school year. All current Council members are expected to attend in order to obtain full benefit for all. *Ex officio* members should be present during the discernment/interview process.

Once the discernment/interview process is finished, the potential candidates leave the meeting and new member selection takes place. Each current voting Council member shall submit a confidential written list of names— one for each open Council position— to the Council Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for a tally of the votes. *Ex officio* members do not take part in this selection process. If a discussion is warranted regarding new member selection, this may occur.

The candidate(s) with the highest number of votes shall be the new Council member(s) for the following school year. If the selection results in a situation where the number of new members would total more than available open positions, these results are shared with all Council members present, and another round of selection is taken. Should necessary roles not be filled through this selection process, additional appointees shall be named by the Pastor and/or Principal.

Those candidates approved by the Council shall be notified promptly by the Council Chairperson in order to receive their acceptance. If a candidate decides not to accept, the candidate with the next highest number of votes shall be notified of approval as a new member. The council Chairperson will send a copy of the Council's Constitution and Bylaws, along with a letter/contract of congratulations and acceptance to all new members. The letter must be signed and returned to the Chairperson.

Announcement of new Council members for the following school year will be made through appropriate school communications, as well as within the school portion of the next available Parish bulletin.

APPOINTING VOTING MEMBERS

The Pastor and Principal may have one appointed member on the Council. As the terms of these appointed members end, new appointments may be made by the Pastor and Principal.

RESIGNATION/REMOVAL

A Council member may resign at any time by delivering written notification to the Council Chairperson and the Principal of St. James School. When a member is unable to promote the purpose of the Council, unable to abide by established roles and responsibilities as a member, or accept the Council's agenda, it may be necessary for the member to resign. In addition, for the common good of the Council, its members and the school community, it may be necessary to remove a member from the Council. The reasons for removing a member from the Council may include but not be limited to:

- Violating the confidentiality of executive sessions as outlined in Article VI, Section Four
- Acting contrary to parish/school mission and goals
- Impeding the Council's defined responsibilities
- Being excessively absent from meetings as outlined in Article VI
- Refusal or inability of a member to perform duties in an efficient, responsible or professional manner
- A conflict of interest, unethical behavior, or conduct that may be deemed detrimental to the school

Removal of a member would be made by the Chairperson and school Principal, with the approval of the Pastor.

VACANCIES

Any vacancy of the selected members on the council may be filled, following a recommendation of Council voting members. The nominee(s) shall be discussed with the school Principal for acknowledgement. The same voting rules as outlined in above "Membership Selection" shall apply. Alternatively, the vacancy may be filled by an appointment of the Pastor and/or Principal.

ARTICLE 5 — DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Chairperson:

The Chairperson shall be the Chief Officer of the Council, shall preside over all meetings of the council, have general and active authority for management of the business of the Council and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Council are adhered to. The Chairperson is an ex-officio member of each committee of the Council. The Chairperson believes in the purpose of the Council, is loyal to those purposes and accepts the duties required by the position.

The Chairperson's responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Provide meeting agenda, in collaboration with the Principal, preferably in advance of the meeting to allow for member input
- Punctual attendance and is prepared for required meetings
- Inspire enthusiasm for the Council's purpose
- Recognize and cultivate leadership qualities in others
- Share appropriate leadership and responsibilities with the Pastor and school Principal regarding school improvement
- Develops yearly goals and objectives of the Council with the Principal

In addition, the Chairperson must:

- Be impartial, tactful, firm and competent
- Have a thorough knowledge of and accept the requirements of the Constitution and Bylaws
- Appoint all committee chairpersons, except when the Constitution and Bylaws require otherwise
- Preside at all meetings, or secure a suitable substitute if the Vice-Chairperson is unavailable
- Operate within the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese and its Office of Catholic Schools

Vice-Chairperson:

The Vice-Chairperson shall be the second officer of the organization. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside over meetings of the Council and perform all duties of the Chairperson.

In addition, the Vice-Chairperson shall be responsible for taking minutes at Council meetings, circulating minutes among Council members, and posting them to the website once approved by a vote.

ARTICLE 6 — MEETINGS

MEETINGS

The Council should meet monthly while school is in session, and at least one time during the summer to prepare for the new school year. The St. James Parish Pastor, the Principal of St. James School, or the Chairperson of the school council may call additional meetings, as they deem necessary or appropriate.

Adequate notice of the place, date, and hour of all meetings must be given to all Council members and school parents of St. James School. All committee chairpersons shall report on their project status. Members will discuss and recommend solutions to issues. All discussions conclude with either a decision or an action item. Responsibility for action items will be assigned.

ABSENCES

To the extent possible, voting members shall be required to notify the Council Chairperson of any expected absence prior to a scheduled meeting. In the event that a Council member misses two (2) consecutive or three (3) meetings in a given calendar year, or fails to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities as a member, the Council may vote to terminate his/her membership.

QUORUM

A majority of the voting Council members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Without a quorum, the Council cannot hold a vote. If *less* than a quorum is present, then a meeting may be adjourned. Each member of the Council shall have one (1) vote on any matter of business brought before them. A simple majority vote of those council members present at a meeting shall be sufficient for any decision or action of the Council.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

The Council shall meet in Executive Session to address sensitive issues that may not be shared with the public. The monthly agenda may reflect the Council will meet in executive session. Decisions made in an executive session are recorded. The decision, topic, issue or concern discussed in executive session is confidential and not published, including associated minutes.

Topics which may be covered in an executive session include but are not limited to:

- Final selection of a Principal hired to fill a vacancy
- Resignation or removal of a Council member
- Review of the school budget

The Pastor shall always be present for an executive session of the Council.

VISITORS ATTENDING MEETINGS

GENERAL VISITOR GUIDELINES

Parishioners and parents are encouraged to attend Council meetings, excluding executive session. The dates and times are announced in the school's monthly calendar.

Customarily, visitors would observe the Council while in session. They would not engage in the discussion nor do they actively participate in the agenda either through comments or by offering their opinions on discussion topics. However, a visitor may receive time on the agenda of a monthly meeting. Additionally, if a Council member is approached by a visitor wishing to have an issue addressed, that Council member should direct the person to the Principal or Council Chairperson, in order to receive a place on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Subcommittee member visitors follow the same "General Visitor Guidelines" as addressed above, however may participate during updates/progress reports pertaining to the sub-committee(s) they are working on.

VISITORS PRE-ARRANGED ON AGENDA

A particular time may be stipulated on the agenda to allow visitors to address the Council. Visitors should be aware of the protocol observed by non-members who attend Council meetings, understanding that the Council meeting will be of a diplomatic venue.

The protocol to be followed by visitors during the meeting is generally as follows:

- Personnel issues or individual family needs are not permissible topics
- Provide to the Chairperson or Principal a short written summary of agenda item, preferably two days prior to the meeting.
- Time permitting; visitor would receive a brief letter from the Chairperson or Principal including a statement of welcome and an outline of this protocol
- Reasonable period of time will be allotted at the meeting for an introduction of the visitor and their presentation
- Topics will not be debated between the visitor(s) and the Council members; Members will listen and if necessary, either the Chairperson or designee can assist in clarifying the question or topic
- Chairperson will thank the visitor(s) for their comments and inform them that the appropriate party will respond to them at a later date.

In general, issues and concerns raised will not be resolved at the current meeting. Resolution may occur through referral to the appropriate person, for example, Pastor or Principal or a future committee meeting. Follow up communication will be provided to the visitor as appropriate.

ARTICLE 7 — COMMITTEES

The Council may consist of standing committees and ad hoc committees. Standing Committees provide continuity for the ongoing operations of the Council and should be developed in partnership with the Principal and/or Pastor. School and Archdiocese surveys can also be leveraged to identify standing committee needs. Ad hoc Committees are established to meet a specific objective at a given time.

Membership on any Committee shall not be limited to members of the Council. The leader of a standing committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson and must be a member of the Council.

Ad hoc committees consisting of at least one Council member may be appointed by the Chairperson. The leader of an ad hoc committee shall be appointed by Council's Chairperson. When the work of an ad hoc committee is complete, the committee may disband.

A Council member may be appointed to one or more committees by the Chairperson.

Examples of Standing Committees include:

- Internal Communications and Parent Satisfaction
- Development, Advancement, and Fundraising
- Marketing
- Technology
- Alumni
- Retention
- After School Care

In addition, other roles may include:

- Designing process for family exit interviews along with an implementation plan
- Liaison to the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools— also known as *Legislative Action Representative*. This Council member shall disseminate all pertinent information received from the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.
- Members performing work for the School Improvement Process, as required
- Modification/updating, the Council Constitution and Bylaws documents

FINANCE COMMITTEE

One member of the Council, in partnership with the Principal and Parish Controller, will be responsible for the administration and preparation of the school budget, including a comparative analysis of tuition and fees. The tuition recommendation will also consider guidance from the Archdiocese and should be presented to the Council as early as possible, generally in February, for Council concurrence. The Pastor has the ultimate authority for approving the school and parish budget as directed by the Finance Parish Council.

The Council Finance representative shall attend the monthly Parish Finance Committee meeting.

ARTICLE 8 — HIRING A PRINCIPAL

When hiring a Principal, the Pastor initiates formation of a search committee to seek out candidates who have been accepted by the Archdiocesan Teacher Personnel Department or its equivalent. The Pastor and representatives of the School Council shall be part of the makeup of the search committee.

The search committee will review applicants using Archdiocesan guidelines and make recommendations to the Pastor from its list of qualified candidates.

Recommended candidates will be interviewed by the search committee and one will be chosen by the Pastor, with the counsel and advice of the search committee. The decision will be formalized with the Archdiocesan contract signed by the Pastor and Principal.

The announcement of the new Principal will be made and appropriately communicated to the Parish and School.

The Pastor evaluates the Principal with prior feedback from the Council as necessary. The appraisal should include topics of teamwork/cooperation, communication, job knowledge, dependability, problem solving and any other applicable performance factors.

ARTICLE 9 — DEVELOPING ANNUAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Annually, the Principal and Chairperson shall meet to determine the Council's goals for the upcoming school year prior to the initial Council meeting for that school year. The Chairperson shall write the Council's goals and objectives and present them at the meeting. The Council shall affirm its annual goals and objectives and periodically evaluate progress against them. A variety of sources are available for goal setting including the school survey and goals developed by the faculty.

ARTICLE 10 — EVALUATING SCHOOL COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

School Council shall evaluate their effectiveness, how they meet their responsibilities as Council members and assess the implementation of the Council's annual goals. The evaluation should consider the internal effectiveness of School Council, the community's perception of their effectiveness and the external effectiveness of School Council to its constituents. The evaluation should be conducted annually or more frequently as deemed necessary by the Chairperson and/or Principal.

ARTICLE 11 — CODE OF ETHICS

Members, by accepting the position to serve on the Council, ascribe to this code. Periodic review of the code reminds members that they are working together for the common goal: to promote the mission and purpose of Catholic education. The Code of Ethics addresses the following: *conflict of interest, confidentiality, objectivity, justice, fairness, and maintenance of unity*. Council members may not individually send out any communications to school parents, parishioners, or others, without knowledge and approval of Principal or Pastor.

Copy of this code shall be read and agreed to by new members. Their signature on the document indicates their willingness to abide by this code.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Council members shall avoid situations that present actual, perceived or potential conflict between their interest and the interest of the school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential information should be treated with discretion and maturity.

OBJECTIVITY

Since total objectivity is impossible for anyone to achieve, members are asked to identify and manage their own personal biases. It is important that members see situations from multiple points of view rather than solely from their own perceptions, assumptions and feelings.

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

Decisions made by the Council and approved by the Pastor should be the result of honest and open discussion by all members: Pastor, Principal and parent/parishioner membership. Consideration of the good of the total parish/school community should be integral to the decision-making process. Every member shall uphold decisions. When decisions will affect various constituencies, those constituencies should be informed at the same time through an agreed upon vehicle of communication.

MAINTENANCE OF UNITY

In achieving its objectives within the faith community of the parish/school, the Council is to do all it can to avoid creating factions, sides or other divisive groupings in the parish and school community. Members should function within the framework of the School Council, acting as a committee of the whole.

ARTICLE 12 — AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a majority of the members and with the acknowledgement of the School Principal and/or Parish Pastor. The proposed amendment and the notice of the proposed amendment must be sent to all members of the School Council not less than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws may be initiated at any regular meeting of the council. Proposed amendments must be presented in writing by a Council member to the Council at a regular meeting and may be acted upon at a subsequent meeting of the Council.

ARTICLE 13 — INDEMNIFICATION

In consideration for serving as a member of the School Council, the Parish Pastor, on behalf of St. James Parish and School agrees to defend, indemnify, protect, and hold harmless, the members of the Council, jointly and severally, their heirs, executors, administrators and agents and all other persons liable or who might be claimed to be liable, because of any and all claims, damages, actions or suits of any kind or nature whatsoever, including actual attorney's fees and court costs, and particularly but not limited to all injuries known or unknown, both to person and property, which arise in the scope and course of the duties and purposes of the members of the Council, jointly and severally.

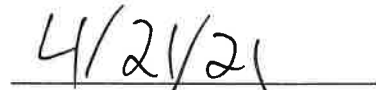
ARTICLE 14 — RATIFICATION

These Constitution and Bylaws shall be considered ratified and in effect when signed by the Pastor, school Principal, and members of the St. James School Council.

Signed:



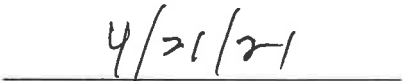
Michael Kendrick, SJS Principal



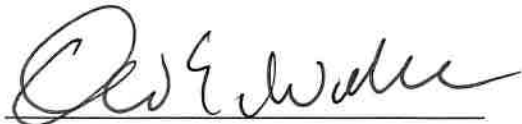
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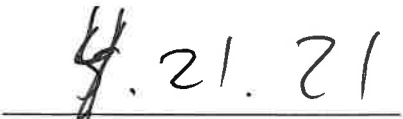
Father Ryan McMillin, Pastor



Date



Chad Woehrle, SJS Council Chair



Date