

## **OUR LADY SCHOOL BOARD CONSTITUTION – June 2, 2016**

### **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the School Board of Our Lady School (hereafter School Board or Board).

### **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The Board is established by the Pastor, in accordance with the diocesan policy, to assist him and the Principal in governance of the parish school program. Once the Board reaches consensus on a matter of policy, the decision is effective and binding when and if it is approved by the Pastor in consultation with the Principal. Canon Law governs all aspects of the Catholic school. The Board is advisory; the members cannot act apart from the Pastor and Principal, and cannot make decisions binding on the parish school without the approval of the Pastor. The purposes of the Board are to:

1. develop and define policies which shall provide the educational needs of the Kindergarten through Grade 8 members of Our Lady School, recognizing the ultimate authority of the Pastor and the rights and responsibilities of parents as the primary educators of their children;
2. be models of the Catholic Faith in all aspects of their lives;
3. give full support to the Pastor's decisions to external publics;
4. ensure positive public relations through positive communication;
5. create a better understanding and support of Catholic Classical Education and the mission of Our Lady School;
6. provide a forum for the discussion of policies, plans, and problems in all areas of Our Lady School;
7. review and recommend for approval to the parish finance council the annual operating budget for Our Lady School;
8. collaborate with the Pastor and Principal in developing and implementing the OLS strategic plan; and
9. collaborate with the Pastor in the hiring and periodic performance review of the Principal. However, the Pastor alone shall be responsible for formulating and maintaining employment contracts for the position of Principal. The School Board does not have supervisory authority over school personnel.

The following are outside of the prerogative of the School Board:

1. become involved in day-to-day operations of the school (e.g. discipline);
2. represent his/her own interests or that of a special group (i.e. parents, teachers, HASA, OLSAA, parishioners);
3. act as an official or unofficial ear for grievances or problems of specific individuals; or

4. become involved in any personnel issues of the school (i.e. evaluation of staff, teachers, or administrators; disciplinary or PIP procedures).

### **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **The Pastor of Our Lady of Good Hope Parish/Our Lady School**

1. is an ex officio, non-voting member of the Board;
2. represents the Bishop, and is therefore the final and binding authority;
3. is the spiritual and temporal leader of the parish and the school; and
4. approves all recommendations of the Board prior to their becoming binding.

#### **The Principal of Our Lady School**

1. is an ex officio, non-voting member of the Board;
2. is the administrator of the total educational program of the school and the school's educational leader;
3. provides the Board with its direction, enabling it to develop good policy;
4. is responsible for the implementation of the Board's policies in the school;
5. sets the tone and atmosphere of the school spirit and culture;
6. represents the Pastor in his absence and is, therefore, a spiritual leader of the school community; and
7. assists the School Board in the implementation of the Pastor's decisions.

**Voting, lay members of the School Board** shall be eight (8) in number. This number may be increased as determined by the Pastor and is based on his perception of the needs of his school. With a change in number, the proportion of member types and number for quorum will need to be recalculated and published in the by-laws.

The membership shall consist of lay members over the age of eighteen who are Catholics of good standing and can pledge faithfulness to the School Board Commitments. Only one elected member of any family is eligible to be on the Board at one time. A salaried employee (or spouse) of Our Lady School or of Our Lady of Good Hope Parish cannot serve as an elected member of the School Board. No member of the Board may serve more than two consecutive terms, and Parish Pastoral Council members, Parish Finance Council Members, and the officers of HASA and the OLSAA are restricted from being seated on the School Board.

The School Board membership will be as follows:

- Six (6) Board Members who must be parents of children attending Our Lady School, elected for a three-year term by the school community in May (cf. By-Law Article II, Section 2.05).

- Two (2) At-Large Members appointed by the Pastor (at least one of whom may be a member of the parish without children in the school) and who serve at his pleasure or for three years, whichever less.

#### **ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS**

The Officers of the School Board shall consist of a President, Vice President, and Secretary. Officers shall be selected annually from the lay members of the Board. The election for the officer positions will take place as soon as possible after the end of the current school year so that the new officers have the summer months for transition.

#### **ARTICLE V: MEETINGS**

The School Board meets monthly, with a minimum of (10) meetings per year required. For the purpose of transacting business, it shall be necessary that at least five lay members be present for quorum. The Board cannot transact business in the absence of the Pastor. Board members may request to add items to the agenda either in advance of the meeting, or as “new business” during the adoption of the agenda. School Board meetings are open to the public except in unusual circumstances in which the Pastor declares that there will be a closed session of the entire Board.

#### **A person wishing to address the School Board shall:**

1. Submit a request in writing to the Principal fifteen days prior to the School Board meeting. This request shall include a written copy of the statement to be read at the meeting. The statement must relate the issue to a local School Board policy or other direct responsibility of the School Board.
2. The Pastor, in consultation with the School Board President and/or the Principal, shall make the final decision concerning the appropriateness of the request. Typical criteria for allowing a petitioner to address the School Board are if the concern is directly related to policy, finances, or the strategic plan and if the concern is not related to an individual student discipline issue or an individual teacher and/or staff personnel issue or evaluation.
3. If the Pastor approved the concern as an agenda item, then the Principal places the item on the agenda. There is a 3-minute time limit for the person speaking to the Board.
4. At the conclusion of the visitor’s remarks, the visitor will be excused. The President shall yield the handling of the issue to the Pastor, Principal, or Board committee, as appropriate. Board discussion and a response letter will occur within 45 days.

#### **ARTICLE VI: RELATIONSHIPS**

All policies developed and defined by the School Board and this constitution as established or amended, shall be consistent with all diocesan policies. In order to better serve the parish, the

School Board shall familiarize itself with educational programs and legislation. The Board shall conduct open forums as necessary to communicate with families regarding Board activities and current issues.

#### **ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES**

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend requires all diocesan schools to have the following School Board committees: Policy, Budget/Finance, Development, Marketing, and Catholic Life and Culture. Ad hoc committees are also the prerogative of the School Board, but the following must be in place when needed: Nomination (to the School Board), Strategic Plan, Principal Evaluation, and Principal Search. Committees are abolished at the end of each academic year and reconstituted at the first meeting of the next year.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended if at least a three-fourths majority of the total voting membership of the School Board vote for the amendment. Amendment action is, however, circumscribed by the authority of the Pastor, Diocesan Policy, and Canon Law. In order for a vote to be taken on amendment, it will have been read at the previous meeting.