

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Religious Education Boards (REB) can be an effective tool for administering parish religious education programs. The use of a Board provides for a wide and diverse input into the nature and function of the religious education program. If a pastor, in consultation with the religious education leader, chooses to establish a Religious Education Board, the Board would assume the following functions:

FUNCTIONS

The Parish Religious Education Board:

Assists in the assessment of the parish's needs and values regarding the parish's educational endeavors.

Receives the goals and objectives for the parish's educational programs established by the parish's administrators, e.g., pastor, REL.

Establishes goals and objectives for itself.

Formulates and recommends policies.

Engages in an ongoing evaluation of parish educational policies and revision as necessary.

Calls for an evaluation of parish educational programs.

Calls for a regular evaluation of the administrators (e.g. REL) and catechists to be done by the appropriate person. (The board itself does not evaluate the administrators or catechists.)

Reviews the parish religious education budget and presents it to the appropriate agency in the parish.

Establishes a process for hiring and recommending administrative personnel.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

ESTABLISHING A BOARD

WHO BEGINS THE PROCESS

It is the task of the pastor or the Pastoral Council to call for the establishment of the Religious Education Board. This does not mean however that the Pastoral Council is the body that brings the REB into being. It is recommended that a Steering Committee be formed which will tend to the actual formation of the REB. The Steering Committee may be a subcommittee of Pastoral Council members or another group of people recruited from the parish at large.

It would also seem wise to include some parish administrators - the Pastor, the REL in the process. Since the administrators oversee the daily operation of the parish's educational programs, they will have important insights into the tasks that the board will have to undertake.

The Steering Committee needs to consult the parish leadership, the parish's administrators and other parishioners about two important questions:

- What is the purpose of the education programs in the parish?
- What are the most important education needs of the parish?

This information can be gathered through any appropriate form of survey, including questionnaires mailed to parishioner's homes, phone surveys, discussion at meetings of various parish organizations, etc.

This information will determine what issues the REB should address. It will give the background for forming a vision of what direction the REB should take. In a sense it will give the purpose or reason for the existence of the REB.

THE MISSION/VISION STATEMENT AND CONSTITUTION

One of the first tasks to be completed is the writing of the board's mission and vision statements and the constitution. When the REB writes its own mission/vision statements and constitution, there will be a sense of ownership on the part of the new board members. The new board members will need to work to achieve an initial sense of direction and purpose. The REB's mission/vision statement and Constitution should be approved by the pastor and the pastoral council. See section 110 and 120 for guidelines in the writing of mission/vision statements.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

MEMBERSHIP

THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON

In an established REB, the Chairperson would be elected in some appropriate fashion. However, when a REB is being established, the chairperson should be chosen by the steering committee and/or the pastor. This will enable the chairperson to be part of the steering committee when it is time for the recruitment of new members. By being part of the recruitment process the chairperson will be able to establish his or her leadership, and will be able to give direction to the board as it is being formed.

BOARD MEMBERS

It is also the responsibility of the steering committee to recruit the first members of the REB. The parish at large could be encouraged to submit names of prospective candidates through the parish bulletin or some other means. In order to ensure that all segments of parish life are represented, a potential list of candidates should be drawn up.

When beginning a board for the first time, it is advisable for the steering committee and the pastor to appoint the first board members. The candidates should be approached individually and asked to commit themselves to a specific term on the Board.

COMMISSIONING THE BOARD

When the REB has been recruited, a commissioning process would serve both to inform the parish community about the new REB and to give the board members a formal sense of beginning and the importance of their task. This might best be done at one of the parish's Sunday Masses. It could also be done as an installation ceremony at the first meeting of the board. In any case, a simple expression of thanks and a committing of the REB's work to the guidance of the Spirit will start the board off well.

WHO SHOULD SERVE ON THE BOARD

The REB needs to have members who are concerned about the educational needs of the parish. This means that members must be willing to serve for a set length of time, including being present and participating in the board's meetings and doing any preparation that is necessary. It is important to be clear about the amount of time expected of the members.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

MEMBERSHIP, CONT'D

WHO SHOULD SERVE ON THE BOARD, CON'T

The REB is to be made up of members that reflect a wide range of concerns and interests in the parish. It might seem ideal at this point to say that the board should have a purely objective outlook about education in the parish and that there should not be any vested interests. However, it is probable that the only people who will wish to address the educational needs of the parish are those who have some specific interest in the first place.

Every board will also have ex-officio members. The REB will have the pastor and the religious education leader as ex-officio members. It is recommended that ex-officio members have no power to vote due to their administrative or ecclesial office. Of course the pastor does retain the power to not accept board recommendations.

It should also be noted that no parish employee should serve as a member of the board. Only parish administrators should serve on the board and only in the capacity of ex-officio members.

NUMBER OF BOARD MEMBERS

A REB needs to have enough members to be able to operate efficiently without over taxing the efforts of any member. Therefore the number of members in a given parish will depend on the size of the parish and the scope

of the educational efforts within the parish. In an average size parish, the number of members should remain between seven and thirteen. This will allow enough for a quorum to be present even though a member or two may be absent from the meeting. In very small parishes (less than 200 families) a smaller board may be in order, with perhaps only three or five members. It is recommended that the total number of voting members be an odd number.



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

MEMBERSHIP. CONT'D

ADDING NEW MEMBERS

The process of discernment is recommended for adding new members. This process gathers the REB to determine who would best be able to serve. This approach calls for significant time to be spent in prayer. Names of individuals, along with their ability to serve are prayed over and discussed until it becomes apparent which people are most suitable for service on the board.

The advantage to this approach is that members are chosen with their unique gifts thoroughly considered. Discernment offers the chance to consider the gifts of talented people who may be lesser known in the parish but who will bring rich gifts to share. The potential disadvantage to discernment is that the process can be manipulated so that a select group of like-minded people will make up the REB. At this point the list is submitted to the pastor for approval BEFORE anyone is asked directly.

It is recommended that the pastor exercise his role as chief teacher of the parish and directly appoint two members of the REB. The advantage to such appointments is that the pastor can see to it that a balance of viewpoints and interests will be maintained. Limiting direct appointment by the pastor to two members eliminates the potential perception that the pastor may be “stacking the deck.”

IF SOMEONE RESIGNS

Since the suggested term is 2-3 years, it is inevitable that someone will resign while in office. When such a resignation occurs the person should be replaced rather than allowing the vacancy to remain for any length of time. A good way to fill this vacancy is to save the results from the previous discernment. The person who received the next highest number of votes could be invited to serve. Another possibility is to ask the board as a whole to make a recommendation for a replacement who will then be appointed to the board by the pastor.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

MEMBER QUALITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD MEMBERS ARE:

people who will make wise decisions about the needs of the parish
people who are faith filled and dedicated to the church
willing to stay focused on the REB's mission statement
willing to focus on policy as a way to set a direction for the parish's
educational endeavors
willing not to intervene in the administration of the program
open to many points of view and be willing to assert their own
open to learning
willing to be responsible for the tasks that they undertake
able to maintain a high level of confidentiality.

The following acronym has been suggested as quickly reflecting the qualities of an ideal member of a REB,

I NTERESTED

D EDICATED

E DUCABLE

A CTIVE LISTENER

L EADER

M EMBER

E NTHUSIASTIC

M OTIVATED

B ROAD-MINDED

E NERGETIC

R ESPONSIBLE

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

BOARD MODELS

IMPORTANT ASSUMPTION

The Religious Education Board addresses the total educational needs of the parish. While other educational bodies may exist within the parish, the REB is the body from which policy recommendations come or the place where policy issues are reviewed. Therefore, it is assumed in each of the models below that the REB will be the primary body to develop and recommend policy and that the pastor will in some way ratify the policies of the REB

The organization and size of any particular parish will greatly influence the structure in which the REB will function. Listed below are several models. Of course, any model will need to be adjusted to fit the specific intricacies of the local parish. Diagrams for each model will show where the REB might fit into the variety of parish situations.

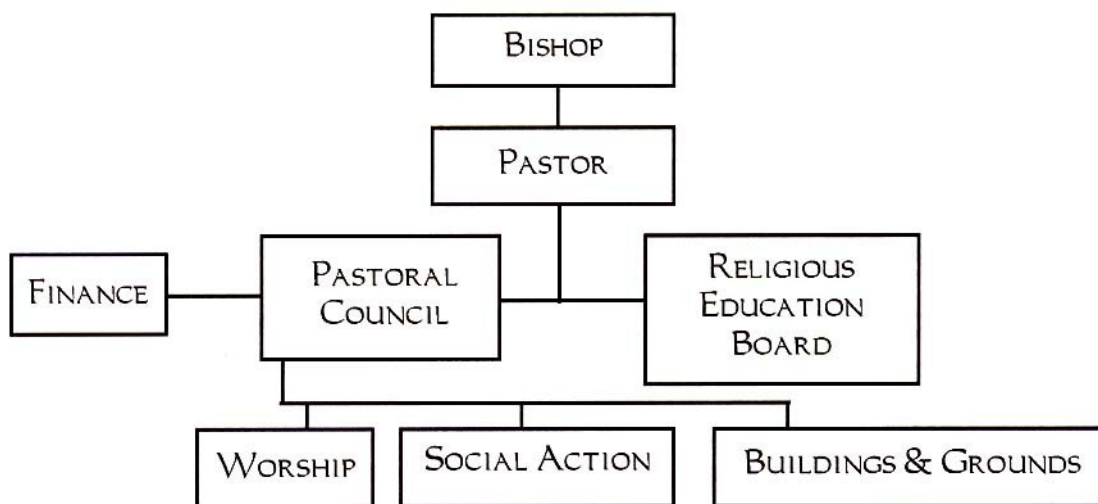
After educational policies have been established for the parish, the REB may need to meet less often - perhaps every other month or even quarterly. This will still enable the Board to address the needs of the parish, while avoiding the temptation to become involved in the regular administration of the educational programs in the parish.



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

BOARD MODELS CONT'D

MODEL A



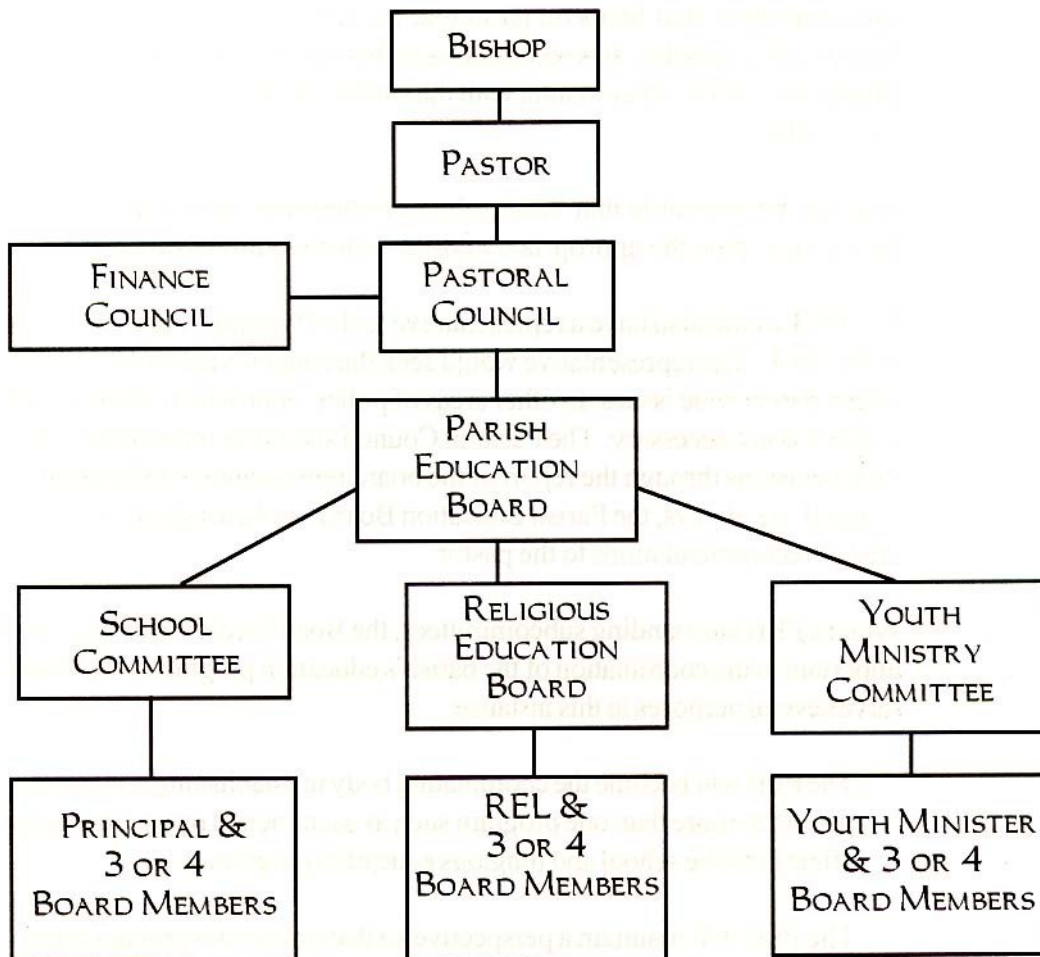
In this structure, the Pastoral Council calls for the REB to be established. The Pastoral Council approves the structure, constitution, and yearly budget of the Religious Education Board. However, the REB retains a certain independence without the Council's approval on most issues. The Pastoral Council's approval would only be sought for policies and programs that effect the parish at large. For example, the REB would need the formal approval of the Pastoral Council for its annual budget, to begin a parish renewal program, or to add/drop grades from the program. In other areas of policy, such as textbook selection, decisions about dress codes, scheduling of class dates, etc., approval by the Pastoral Council is not necessary. Of course the Pastoral Council should be informed of all of the REB's decisions. The pastor retains the right to the approval of all policies.

Practically speaking, a REB operating under this model would meet independently of the Pastoral Council. The board would have a representative to the Pastoral Council. The representative would only seek the council's approval for those larger issues of the kind described above. The representative would simply report the other policies being developed by the REB to the pastoral council.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

BOARD MODELS, CONT'D

MODEL B



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

BOARD MODELS, CONT'D

MODEL B

In some parishes, particularly larger ones, the sheer scope of the educational efforts are so broad that it becomes necessary to have standing subcommittees that focus on particular aspects of the program. See the diagram for examples. It is recommended that the PEB (Parish Education Board) meet every other month, with the subcommittees meeting on the opposite months.

It would be advisable that these subcommittees not be too large. Three or four people plus the appropriate administrator would be sufficient.

The PEB would also have a representative to the Pastoral Council as described in Model A. The representative would seek the council's approval only for larger, parish wide issues. In other areas of policy, approval by the Pastoral Council is not necessary. The Pastoral Council should be informed of other PEB decisions through the report of the board representative to Pastoral Council. As always, the Parish Education Board's policies should be considered as recommendations to the pastor.

When a PEB has standing subcommittees, the Board's role becomes even more important in the coordination of the parish's education programs. The Board will serve several purposes in this instance:

The PEB will become the coordinating body in establishing policies that pertain to more than one program such as sacramental preparation which affect both the school and religious education program.

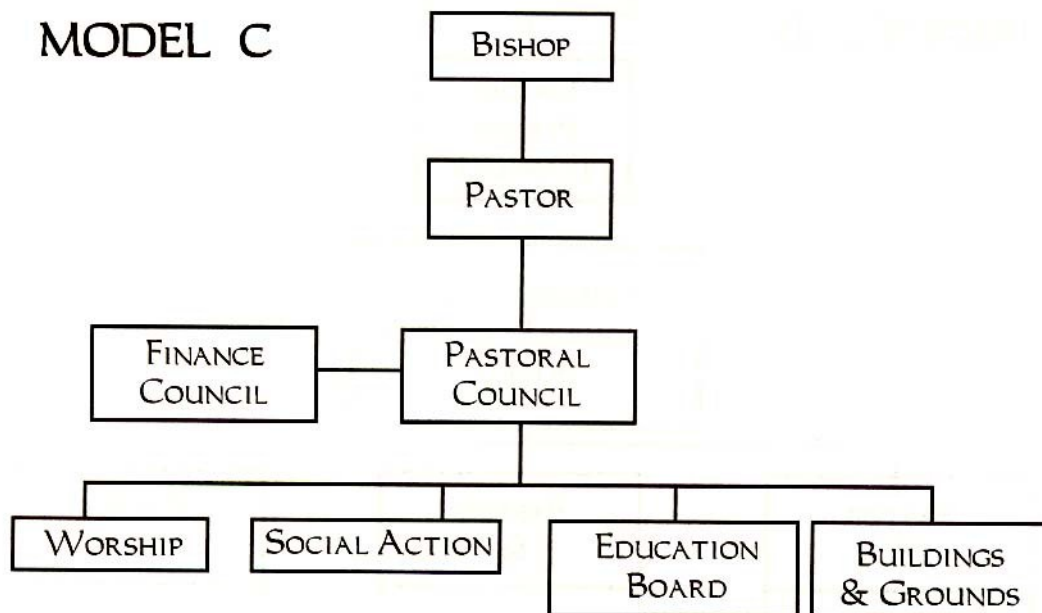
The PEB will maintain a perspective so that one or two groups do not dominate all of the parish's resources, both financial and human. It is often easy for one parish program to become so large that other programs are barely able to maintain what they have been doing with no chance for growth. The REB must assure that all education programs in the parish have adequate resources.

The PEB must see to it that new areas of concern are addressed by already existing programs, or that new efforts are made by the parish to meet these needs.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

BOARD MODELS, CONT'D

MODEL C

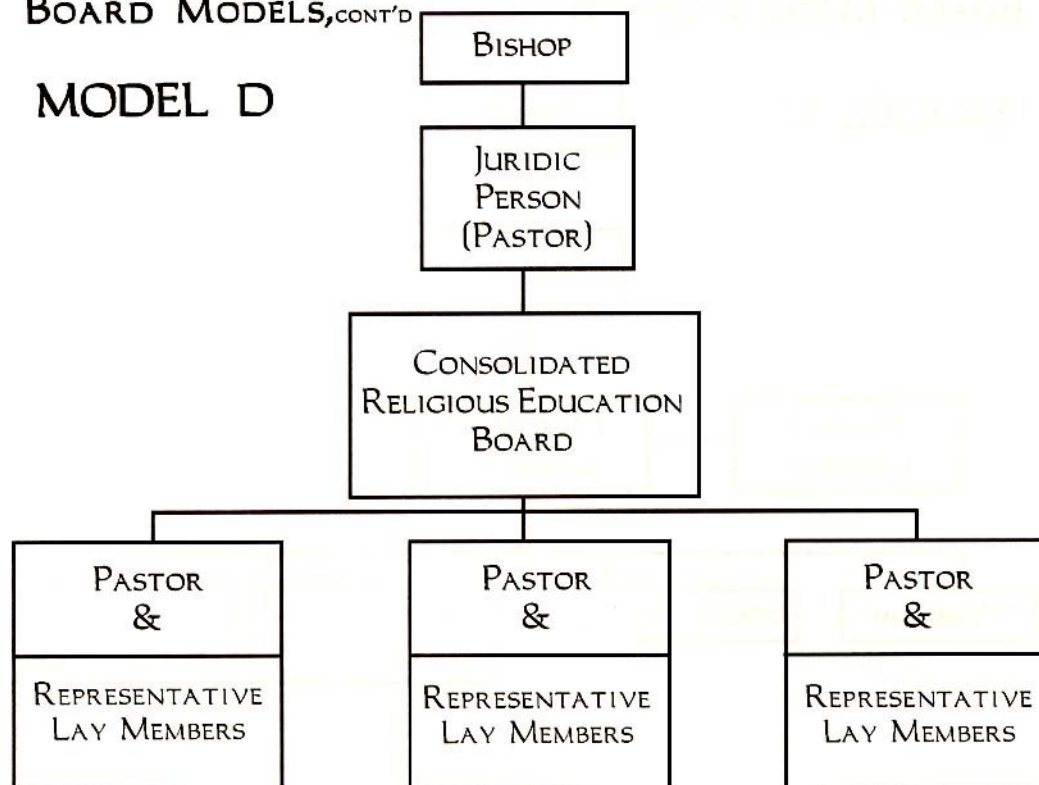


In this model, the Pastoral Council calls for the REB to be established as one of the standing committees of the council. The REB in this model is subject to the constitution of the Pastoral Council. The REB meets regularly to determine what policies it will recommend to the Council. The Education Board chairperson participates, along with the chairpersons of the other committees, in the Pastoral Council meetings and brings all policy recommendations of the REB to the council for approval before they are submitted to the pastor.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

BOARD MODELS, CONT'D

MODEL D



CONSOLIDATED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD (CREB)

In some smaller parishes, it may be advisable for parish religious education programs to be consolidated into one larger program. This may occur when there are too few students or teachers in the parish to sustain good religious education.

A Consolidated Religious Education Program calls for a CREB. The CREB must have a juridic person chosen from the pastors of the parishes participating in the consolidation. (See the Code of Canon Law, Canons 113-123.) It is this juridic person who has the final authority over the policies established for the Consolidated Religious Education Program.

The CREB develops and defines policies that govern the operation of the consolidated program. The Consolidated Religious Education Program is accountable to the CREB and to the pastor(s) chosen as juridic person.

The CREB chooses the person to be hired as Religious Education Leader. The pastor (s) who is/are designated as the juridic person serves as the hiring agent. Administrative duties such as selection of texts, the recruitment of teachers and the development of the curriculum are the responsibility of the REL.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

INTRODUCTION TO CONSTITUTIONS

A constitution is a written instrument which establishes the structure, makeup, or nature of something, in this case the parish's Religious Education Board. As personnel changes, both administrative staff and board members, a constitution is valuable for continuity. A constitution organizes routine matters such as composition of the membership, elections, role of officers, and the order of business, which all, enhance efficiency.

The following pages contain a constitution corresponding to most of the Parish Education Board Models described. They are offered here as samples so that each parish will not need to "reinvent the wheel" when writing or revising its constitution.

Even though each constitution corresponds to a particular model, we encourage parishes to pick and choose from the various constitutions what would best fit their particular needs.

Some larger parishes may choose to have only one constitution for the Pastoral Council while other Boards will have their own by-laws. There is no one perfect constitution or "right" way to organize the Church's educational mission. Choose those parts of the following constitutions which best meet parish needs.



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL A

PREAMBLE/MISSION STATEMENT

This board shall have as its primary concern the intellectual and spiritual development of members of the parish community. It shall be its purpose to assist the parish community toward wholesome, worthwhile changes to their respective cultural, social, and economic environments with a Gospel perspective. It shall also be its purpose to aid in the individual development of talents, opportunities and personal changes relating both to other persons and to themselves.

Working in close collaboration with the parish administrator(s) and hearing its many constituents, this board shall recommend policies that will enable the parish community to reach its agreed-upon educational goals.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The organization shall be known as _____ Parish Religious Education Board, hereinafter referred to as the board.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the board shall be to develop and define policies which shall govern the operation of _____ educational program, and to promote the implementation of said policies. It shall also provide counsel and advice in the operation of the educational programs.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The board shall consist of (number) members who are members of _____ Parish. The pastor and administrator(s) shall be ex-officio members of the board.

A nominating committee shall interview all potential nominees and develop a slate providing two nominees for each vacancy to be filled. Resumes of the nominees shall be distributed to board members. The Board shall make recommendations to the pastor for appointments.

Each member shall serve a term of three years with the exception of the original members. They shall serve terms varying from one of three years.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

CONSTITUTION—MODEL A, CONT'D

Approximately one-third of the members serve a two-year term with another one-third serving a three-year term. No member shall serve more than six consecutive years.

In the event a member of the board has been absent from four consecutive regular meetings, the remaining members may, at their discretion, determine and declare that a vacancy exists. Upon such a declaration such member shall be deemed to have resigned.

Whenever a vacancy occurs on the board, the remaining members shall recommend a replacement to the pastor to fill the vacancy. The remaining un-expired term will determine the term of the office for the replacement.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

The officers and duties of the officers shall be as follows:

The **chairperson** shall chair all regular and special meetings of the board. With the administrator(s), the chairperson shall determine the agenda, providing ample opportunity for consideration by the board before final action. With board approval, the chairperson shall have the authority to assign additional duties and responsibilities to individual board members.

The **vice-chairperson**, in the absence of the chairperson, shall perform all the duties of the chairperson.

The **secretary** shall maintain a written record of all acts of the board; conduct, receive and dispose of all correspondence as directed; preserve all reports and documents committed to his/her care; and notify members of the date and time of meetings and distribute the agenda to the board at least a week in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

The board shall meet regularly on the _____ of each month at _____. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson as needed. All regular meetings of the board shall be open to all interested parties. The rule of parliamentary procedure as contained in Robert's "Rules of Order" shall govern meetings of the board. The ordinary order of business shall be:

1. Call to order
2. Prayer
3. Agenda Review

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL A, CONT'D

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Decision Items
3. Discussion Items
4. Reports (Administrator(s) and General)

(The agenda may be changed, altered or modified at any meeting by a vote of the members present at such meetings.)

Non-members who wish to speak at a board meeting shall submit their request in writing to the chairperson no less than ten days before the scheduled meeting. Such person shall be limited to three minutes of speaking time.

ARTICLE VI - QUORUM

A simple majority of the full membership of the board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise provided, when a vote is taken upon any measure before the board, a quorum being present, a majority of the members voting on the measure shall determine the outcome. The chairperson votes only in the case of a tie. The ex-officio members of the board never cast a vote.

ARTICLE VII - RESPONSIBILITIES

All policies developed and defined by the board and this constitution as established or amended, shall be consistent with the policies of the Diocese of Erie Office of Religious Education and approved by the pastor.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

The board acts as a committee of the whole in its consideration and recommendation of educational policies.

The chairperson is empowered to appoint special committees of the board to assist the board. Membership on any committee shall not be limited to members of the board. Such committees shall operate until the duty assigned to them is completed and will be dissolved at that time, or at any earlier date, at the discretion of the chairperson.

The function of all committees shall be fact finding, deliberative, and advisory but never legislative or administrative. Recommendations by any committee shall be subject to ratification and approval by the board.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the total membership. All members of the board shall be presented with a written proposal of the amendment at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the voting will take place.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL B

PREAMBLE/MISSION STATEMENT

This board shall have as its primary concern the intellectual and spiritual development of members of the parish community. It shall be its purpose to assist the parish community toward a wholesome Gospel perspective. It shall also be its purpose to aid in the personal development of people's individual gifts and talents.

Working in close collaboration with the parish administrator(s) and hearing its many constituents, this board shall recommend policies that will enable the parish community to reach its agreed-upon educational goals.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The organization shall be known as _____ Parish Education Board, hereinafter referred to as the board.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the board shall be to develop and define policies which shall govern the operation of educational and youth ministry programs, and to promote the implementation of said policies. It shall also provide counsel and advice in the operation of the educational programs.

The board will become the coordinating body in establishing policies that pertain to more than one program.

The board will maintain a perspective so that one or two groups do not dominate all of the parish's resources, both financial and human. The board will assure that all education and youth ministry programs in the parish have adequate resources.

The board will see to it that new areas of concern are addressed by already existing programs, or that new efforts are made by the parish to meet these needs.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL B, CONT'D

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The board shall consist of _____ members who are members of _____ Parish. There shall be ____ representatives from each of sub-committee (religious education and youth ministry). The pastor and administrator (s) shall be ex-officio members of the board.

A nominating committee shall interview all potential nominees and develop a slate providing two nominees for each vacancy to be filled. Resumes of the nominees shall be provided to the pastor.

Each member shall serve a term of three years with the exception of the original members. They shall serve terms varying from one to three years with approximately one-third serving a two-year term and one-third serving a three-year term. No member shall serve more than six consecutive years.

In the event a member of the board has been absent from four consecutive regular meetings, the remaining members of the board may, at their discretion, determine and declare that a vacancy exists. Upon such a declaration such member shall be deemed to have resigned.

Whenever a vacancy occurs on the board, the remaining members shall appoint a replacement to fill the vacancy until the next regular appointments are scheduled. The time remaining of the term will determine the length of time for the replacement.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

The officers of the board shall consist of chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary, all of whom shall be elected annually by the board membership at the first regular meeting following the appointment of new members. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

The **chairperson** shall chair all regular and special meetings of the board. With the administrator(s), the chairperson shall determine the agenda, providing ample opportunity for consideration by the board before final action. With board approval, the chairperson shall have the authority to assign additional duties and responsibilities to individual board members.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL B, CONT'D

The vice-chairperson, in the absence of the chairperson, shall perform all the duties of the chairperson.

The secretary shall maintain a written record of all acts of the board; conduct, receive and dispose of all correspondence as directed. They shall preserve all reports and documents committed to his/her care, notify members of the date and time of meetings and distribute the agenda to the board at least a week in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

The board shall meet regularly on the _____ every other month at _____ (time and location). The sub-committees for religious education and youth ministry shall meet on the opposite months. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson as deemed necessary. All regular meetings of the board shall be open to all interested parties. The rule of parliamentary procedure as contained in Robert's "Rules of Order" shall govern meetings of the board.

The ordinary order of business shall be:

1. Call to order
2. Prayer
3. Agenda Review
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Decision Items
6. Discussion Items
7. Reports from each of the sub-committees

(The agenda may be changed, altered or modified at any meeting by a vote of the members present at such meetings.)

Non-members who wish to speak at a board meeting shall submit their request in writing to the chairperson no less than ten days before the scheduled meeting. Such person shall be limited to three minutes of speaking time.

ARTICLE VI - QUORUM

A majority of the full membership of the board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise provided, when a vote is taken upon any measure before the board, a quorum being present, a majority of the members voting on the measure shall determine the outcome thereof. The chairperson votes only in the case of a tie. The ex-officio members of the board never cast a vote.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL B, CONT'D

ARTICLE VII - RESPONSIBILITIES

All policies developed and defined by the board and this constitution as established or amended, shall be consistent with the policies of the Diocese of Erie Office of Religious Education and approved by the pastor.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

The board acts as a committee of the whole in its consideration and recommendation of educational policies.

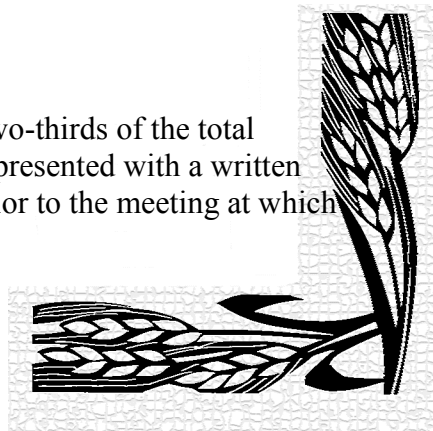
There shall be two standing sub-committees, one each for religious education and youth ministry. Each of these sub-committees shall have three persons (one should not be a member of the board) plus the administrator of the program as members.

The chairperson is empowered to appoint special committees of the board to assist the board. Membership on any committee shall not be limited to members of the board. Such committees shall operate until the duty assigned to them is completed and will be dissolved at that time, or at any earlier date, at the discretion of the chairperson.

The function of all committees shall be fact finding, deliberative, and advisory but never legislative or administrative. Recommendations by any committee shall be subject to ratification and approval by the board.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the total membership. All members of the board shall be presented with a written proposal of the amendment at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the voting will take place.



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL C

PREAMBLE

This board shall have as its primary concern the educational development of the members of _____ Parish. Its programs shall incorporate and encompass the philosophy of _____ Parish as it appears in the Parish Religious Education Mission Statement.

ARTICLE I - TITLE

The name of this body shall be the _____ Religious Education Board.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the board shall be to develop and define the policies which shall govern the operation of the parish's educational programs, and to promote the implementation of said policies. It shall also provide counsel and advice in the operation of the educational programs.

ARTICLE III - DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

This board is a coordinating body of all educational programs for _____ Parish, subject to such policies that proceed from the Diocesan Office of Religious Education, and _____ Pastoral Council. The activities, programs and established policies sponsored or enacted by this board are ultimately under the authority and regulation of the Pastoral Council and Pastor of _____ Parish.

The Religious Education Board shall be responsible for all aspects of the formal educational program(s) of the parish - schooling, children's religious education and adult education. In the development of its own policies, it must insure that these follow the intent and spirit of the policies laid down by the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.

SPECIFIC DUTIES INCLUDE

1. Overseeing educational activities for the parish
2. Acting as the liaison body with appropriate public authorities
3. Seeking a better understanding and wider support for Catholic Education within the local community

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL C, CONT'D

4. Interpreting policies of the Diocese concerning staff (paid and volunteer) and in matters wherein the Diocese has not promulgated policies, recommending such policies under which administration shall operate
5. Having responsibility for determining whether policies are being carried out according to the will of the Diocese and _____ Pastoral Council
6. Having responsibility for evaluating the adequacy of its policies and the effectiveness of their implementation
7. Being responsible for the preparation of an annual budget and for securing adherence to the budget
8. Studying and implementing all directives given to the committee by the Pastoral Council

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Religious Education Board shall be the pastor (ex-officio), REL (ex-officio), and representatives of the various components of the educational programs in the parish as deemed necessary and approved by the pastor and pastoral council.

Each representative shall serve a term in accordance with the established guidelines for parish boards, as stated in the Pastoral Council Constitution/By-Laws. The chairperson, vice-chairperson and the secretary serve one year terms.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS AND DUTIES

New members may not hold office, except that of secretary, for their first year.

The officers and duties of the board shall be as follows:

CHAIRPERSON

- to convene all meetings of the board
- to act as facilitator for all meetings
- to consult with the pastor, staff members and board members to plan the agenda
- to follow through on all decisions made by the board
- to be responsible for seeing that minutes for each meeting are recorded and filed
- other responsibilities and duties deemed necessary by the board, pastoral council or pastor

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL C, CONT'D

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

to assist the Chairperson and in the Chair's absence, to assume his/her duties

RECORDING SECRETARY

to keep an up to date list of names and addresses of all board members
to record the date of each meeting and the attendance of each member
to take minutes of every meeting, recording action(s) taken by the board
to mail copies of minutes to each member, or see that they are read at the next meeting
to see that a complete set of minutes is kept in the office of the Parish besides being kept in the minute book
to mail out notices of the time, place and agenda for the next board meeting

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS/AGENDA

MEETINGS

The board shall meet a minimum of four times a year at a publicly designated room. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson and/or pastor, as needed or by a majority of the members.

For the purpose of transacting official business, it shall be necessary that a two thirds majority of the total members be present and voting.

For routine matters, a simple majority vote shall suffice though consensus is desirable whenever possible.

All meetings of the board are to be open meetings unless designated otherwise by the pastor.

A written record of board meetings, maintained by the secretary, shall be kept in the parish office.

AGENDA

The agenda shall be set at least one week prior to board meetings by the chairperson, the pastor and the educational staff.

Matters for the agenda shall be submitted to the chair by the members of the board. Parishioners who wish to have matters taken up by the board may contact any member of the board.

In the event that an item is not on the agenda, the committee may, by majority vote, take up the matter at a time designated by the chairperson.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD CONSTITUTION—MODEL C, CONT'D

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Agenda Review
5. Decision Items
6. Discussion Items
7. Reports (Administrator(s) and General)

The agenda may be changed, altered or modified at any meeting by a vote of the majority of members at such meetings.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

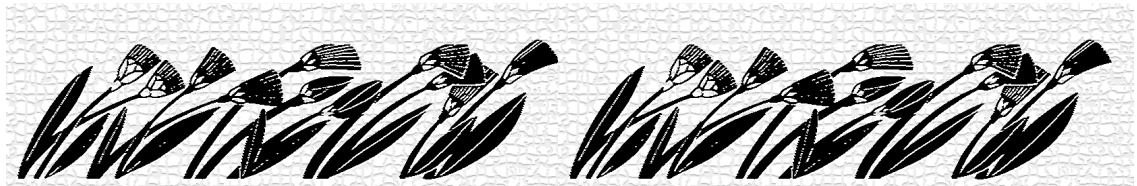
This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the total membership subject only to the regulations of the Diocese of Erie, the _____ Pastoral Council and the pastor.

Amendments must be presented to the board at least two weeks prior to voting on them.

ARTICLE VIII - VACANCIES

Vacancies of a representative shall be filled by appointment by the board membership with approval of pastoral council and the pastor.

Selection of new members shall adhere to the guidelines as set forth in the Pastoral Council Constitution and by-laws.



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

CONSTITUTION FOR A CONSOLIDATED BOARD—MODEL D

ARTICLE I - NAME

This organization shall be known as the _____ Religious Education Board (REB).

ARTICLE II - DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

The Religious Education Board shall be responsible for formulating and recommending to the pastor and REL policies regarding the formal religious education programs of the participating Catholic parishes.

The policies of the REB must follow the intent and spirit of the policies of the Diocesan Office of Religious Education, and the policies of the pastoral councils of each participating Catholic parish.

The operation of the consolidated religious education program is dependent on moneys collected from the parishes involved in the consolidation. Operating costs of the consolidated religious education program shall be apportioned to the member parishes according to the total number of students attending the program. Periodic payments shall be made to _____. The Consolidated Board will confirm/determine payment dates and amounts of payments. The REL submits a budget to the REB at the April meeting. A majority vote is necessary for the approval of the budget.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The pastors of the participating Catholic parishes and the REL shall be ex-officio members of the REB. The pastors shall choose one among their number to act as the pastor representative for the consolidated religious education program.

The REB shall consist of three adult lay members from each participating Catholic parish. Each parish shall determine how its representatives are to be selected.

Each lay member shall serve a term of three years, with the exception that the original members shall serve terms varying from one to three years with approximately one-third serving a one-year term, one-third a two-year term, and one-third a three-year term, to be determined by lot or other appropriate means.

Any lay member may be removed from the Board by their respective pastor. The remaining term shall be served by a duly selected member of the same parish. No member shall serve more than six consecutive years.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

CONSTITUTION FOR A CONSOLIDATED BOARD—MODEL D

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

The officers of the REB shall be as follows:

CHAIRPERSON

- shall set the agenda for board meetings
- preside at all regular and special meetings of the board.
- shall have the authority to assign additional duties and responsibilities to individual board members

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

- in the absence of the chairperson, shall perform the duties of the chairperson

SECRETARY

- shall maintain a written record of all actions of the board
- conduct, receive and dispose of all correspondence as directed
- preserve all reports and documents committed to his/her care
- notify members of the date and time of meetings and distribute the agenda to board members at least one week in advance of the meeting

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

The board shall meet regularly at a publicly designated meeting place, on a date agreed upon at the previous meeting. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson as needed or by a majority of the members.

For the purpose of transacting official business, it shall be necessary that a majority of the total voting members be present.

A simple majority of those present and voting shall carry the motion unless otherwise specified.

All meetings of the REB shall be open meetings. Notice of each meeting shall be published in the church bulletins of each participating Catholic parish at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

The right of non-members to address the Board shall be limited to those whose written petition has been approved for the agenda, or whose petition has been approved by a majority of voting members present at the meeting.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

CONSTITUTION FOR A CONSOLIDATED BOARD—MODEL D

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS, CON'T

A written record of all actions of the REB, maintained by the secretary and the treasurer, shall be preserved in the archives.

The rule of parliamentary procedure as contained in Robert's *Rules of Order* shall govern meetings of the Board.

ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES

The chairperson may authorize and designate any long or short term committee for a specific function that he/she deems necessary to fulfill board responsibilities.

Membership on any committee shall not be limited to board members. Such committees shall operate until the duty assigned to them is completed and will be dissolved at that time, or at any earlier date, at the discretion of the board.

The function of all committees shall be fact finding, deliberative and advisory, but never legislative or administrative. Recommendations of any committee shall be subject to ratification and approval by the board.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the total voting membership. All members of the Board shall be presented with a written proposal of the amendment at least one meeting in advance of the meeting at which the voting is to take place.

ARTICLE VIII - RATIFICATION

This constitution shall be considered ratified and in effect when it is approved by the participating pastors of the Catholic parishes.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DO SMALL PARISHES NEED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARDS?

There is a temptation in small parishes, especially those without a Catholic school to think that a REB is too much structure to be imposed on a few people. However, even the smallest parish still needs to provide religious education for the members of the parish community, whether they be students in the religious education program, a youth program, or opportunities for adult religious education. Although the participants may be few in number, someone still must administer the programs, establish a budget, and see to it that appropriate policies exist.

A REB can fulfill this role in these parishes. A small parish REB may have only a few members. The board will, especially after it has been established for awhile, need to meet less often, and perhaps only three or four times per year. The number of policies developed may be fewer in number. However, being small does not mean that these responsibilities can be abrogated.

IS THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE DECISIONS EXCEPT BY VOTING?

Honest people can legitimately disagree with each other. The REB will be confronted by a variety of choices, even though its role is advisory, and people may disagree. However, a simple vote is not necessarily the best way to resolve such a disagreement. If a policy recommendation passes the board by one vote, it is hardly reflective of the desire of the whole board.

It is ideal of course when everyone can agree outright. However, another possibility exists for deciding upon a recommendation. A REB would do well to try to reach a decision using "consensus." A consensus is a general agreement. It means that every member of the board "can live with the proposed decision." It does not mean that every member of the board is in complete agreement with every detail of the decision. A consensus exists when the decision being made does not conflict with the basic values or overall needs of the group.

Rather than taking a simple vote, a REB can reach a consensus by having the chairperson poll each member of the board at the time of decision to determine if he or she is in agreement with the proposal being made. This assumes of course that adequate information about and review of the proposal has occurred previously. If all are in general agreement, consensus exists, and the board can accept the decision being made. Consensus decision-making is often more complicated than can be outlined in this space; more information is available through the Department of Religious Education.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, CONT'D

HOW DOES THE PARISH EDUCATION BOARD FORMULATE POLICY?

It is the role of the Parish Education Board to formulate or develop policies. These policies, however, are not created in isolation from the rest of the parish. The Parish Education Board has the responsibility to call for evaluation of the parish's programs and to hear the concerns of the parish community. The administrators, i.e., the Principal and the R.E.L., will also often bring a need for a policy in a particular area to the board. In turn, the board's policies are developed based on these needs.

The formulation or development of policy does not mean that the board is the final determiner or arbiter of the policy. While the Parish Education Board does in fact formulate the educational policies for the parish, these policies are always considered to be a recommendation to the pastor and subject to his approval.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION?

It is also not the responsibility of the Parish Education Board to take on the administration of the programs and structures that come into being through the policies that the board develops. In every parish there is at least one, and often more than one, person responsible in some way for the administration of the parish's educational programs. In the smallest parishes, this might be the pastor alone. In larger parishes this might be the Pastor, Associate Pastor, REL, School Principal and others as well. Regardless of the structure or number of administrators in a parish, it is these persons' responsibility to oversee the day-to-day running of these programs.

These administrators' responsibilities call for them to create the specific rules or regulations that will govern the operation of the parish's educational programs. Rules and regulations are the means by which the Parish Education Board's policies are carried out. It is the Parish Education Board's responsibility to develop policy; it is the parish's appointed administrators' responsibility to create the rules and see to it that the rules are kept.

WHAT IS A POLICY BOOK AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

As the Parish Education Board proceeds with the business of developing policies, it becomes important to keep track of these policies so that they might be referred to when necessary. The policies can become "lost" too easily in the regular minutes of the board. A useful idea for keeping track of policies is the establishment of a policy book. As policies are approved or amended they can be added to the policy book. Such a book makes it simpler for administrators and parishioners to know what is expected of them.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A few simple suggestions about the policy book:

- Use a loose-leaf binder for the policy book so that it is easy to add or replace policies.
- When a particular policy is amended, replace the old policy with the new. If amended policies are simply added to the back, as the number of amended policies grows, it will take longer to find the current policy. Dating each policy as it is added will also make it easier to determine which is the most recent.
- Group the policies by area of concern. Obviously policies will be easier to find if organized by the programs of the parish.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLICIES AND RULES?

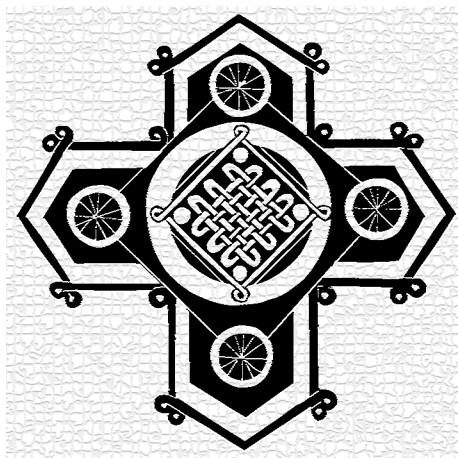
Policies are distinguished from rules in that policies may be implemented in a variety of ways. Policies set a direction or “vision” for the educational programs in a parish. Yet, they do not set the specific standards by which one must abide. Some examples will illustrate this concept:

EXAMPLE #1:

- Policy: An Adult Catechetical Team will be established in the parish.
- Rule or Regulation: The Adult Education Coordinator will establish an Adult Catechetical Team by September of _____. The team will consist of 6 members.

EXAMPLE #2:

- Policy: Regular catechist evaluations will be conducted.
- Rule or Regulation: The REL will evaluate every catechist’s performance in the spring semester of each year.



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLICIES AND RULES?, CONT'D

It is unfortunately easy for Parish Education Boards to slide over into the making of rules and regulations, and into the administration of the parish's education programs. If the Parish Education Board begins setting rules and tending to the administration of the parish's educational programs, it is overstepping its bounds. Some possible results are conflicts regarding the administration of the parish programs, rules that are too cumbersome to be kept, alienation of groups within the parish, and unduly long meetings.

Parish Education Boards serve the parish best by formulating policies that respond to both the perceived and the unconscious needs of the people who belong to the parish community. By staying focused on the development of policies, the Parish Education Board will give definite direction to the parish and a clear vision of where the educational programs in the parish are to go. The board should leave the administration of the parish's educational programs to those who are designated by the parish to be present on an ongoing basis. This will ensure that programs will run smoothly.

Policy language should be simple. It should be non-technical and easily understood by all. The test of a good policy is not how important or grand it sounds but how much sense it makes. To sum up then:

A policy is the board's way of expressing the basic values and vision underlying the parish's programs.

A rule is the administrator's way of implementing the board's policy.

Policy is a response to need.

Any board member can recommend policy but most often it will be the administrators who prepare policy recommendations.

The effects of a proposed policy decision should be "tested" on the constituents.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW ARE EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS HANDLED?

Under no circumstances should the Parish Education Board become a body for grievances.

In this area, as in all others, the role of the Parish Education Board is to formulate and recommend policy. It is the task of the board to assist in the development of personnel policies, which promote equitable treatment of all employees (paid and volunteer.) Clearly defined just policies will keep employee claims of unjust or inequitable treatment at a minimum. The Parish Education Board should also advocate the adoption of a local problem resolution process.

Complaints may also come to the Parish Education Board from parishioners pertaining to policies, staff or administrative actions. The task of the board is to differentiate between the reasons for these complaints, then to act on them based on the nature of the complaint.

It is appropriate to bring concerns about an existing policy or the need for a particular policy before the Parish Education Board for consideration. The board should have in its constitution a procedure for parishioners/parents to be heard in matters pertaining to policy decisions.

Dissatisfaction with an individual staff member (e.g., volunteer catechist, Catholic school teacher, religious education leader, principal) and/or administrative action (e.g. student suspension, school/program dismissal procedures) are **not** a matter to be addressed by the Parish Education Board. Such issues need to be handled by the staff member in question or the appropriate administrator.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW ARE EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS HANDLED?, CONT'D

It is the role of the Parish Education Board to have a procedure in place that parishioners/parents can follow when there is a complaint. The steps in the procedure should include:

1. Communication with the person with whom there is a problem.
2. Communication with the person's most immediate supervisor.
3. Seeking the help of a third party to facilitate discussion. The pastor (if he is not already involved) and the staff of the Office of Religious Education may be helpful in this regard.
4. Referral of the matter to the Diocesan due process procedure.
5. Providing information concerning Diocesan Mediation & Conciliation Office.

Administrators should have sound policies to guide administrative actions. Such policies will minimize complaints and be supportive when complaints are forthcoming. It is also important to remember that the administrator is the final decision-maker in matters of administration (rules and regulations, the day-to-day running of the programs).



PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

EDUCATION BUDGETS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It has been said that to know a person's priorities, find out how they spend their money. The same is true of a parish. The budget for each of the parish's programs reveals the priorities of the parish, or at least the priorities of those who create the budgets.

In most parishes, the largest budgets are those for programs for elementary age children. Obviously, this kind of expenditure is necessary in that elementary age children are at a point in their lives when they are going through dramatic development in their personal growth, are capable of learning much, and are being introduced to Church doctrine for the first time. It takes considerable resources to operate the types of programs that parishes traditionally need, namely the parish school and the parish religious education program, and the Parish Education Board must see to it that these programs receive adequate funds.

However, the Parish Education Board must see to it that other areas of the parish's educational endeavors are also well financed. Educational efforts such as adult education, adolescent religious education/youth ministry and early childhood education must also have significant budgets in order to provide all members of the parish with opportunities to grow in faith and understanding.

ROLE OF THE PARISH EDUCATION BOARD IN BUDGETING

It is not the role of the Parish Education Board to create budgets. The parish's administrators are to create a budget for each of the parish's educational programs for which they are responsible and propose it to the Parish Education Board.

It is the role of the Parish Education Board to review the budgets and recommend them to the Finance Council or the Pastoral Council. This review however, is not simply perfunctory or a "rubber stamp." The Board's review is vitally necessary so that no educational endeavor of the parish will receive an inadequate or disproportionate share of the parish's educational funding. The Parish Education Board, through the process of reviewing the budgets, guarantees that every educational effort in the parish receives sufficient funds.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

EDUCATION BUDGETS, CONT'D

Following are some questions that may be asked about the parish's educational budgets. These questions are intended to serve as a general guide for reviewing the parish's education budgets. Every question should be asked of the parish's educational efforts for each of these areas:

- Adult and multi-generation programs
- Junior and senior high youth programs
- Early childhood programs
- Programs for persons with disabilities
- The parish school
- The parish religious education program

PROGRAM RESOURCES:

Are there adequate materials to conduct this program? (This includes everything from art supplies to texts.)

Are adequate print and audio/visual media and equipment available for the program?

Are funds provided to publicize this program?

Has hospitality (refreshments and other means of making people feel welcome) been considered as part of the budget for this program?

Are there adequate facilities for this program?

Has funding for a process of evaluation been included as part of the budget?

PROGRAM LEADERS:

Is the leader of this program justly compensated?

Are the parish's educational leaders given the opportunity to update their competency, and does the parish provide the funds to do this?

PROGRAM PERSONNEL:

Do employed personnel receive a just wage?

Do catechists, aides and other program personnel receive any remuneration?

Are funds provided for program personnel to participate in courses for certification, workshops, and other training experiences?

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

EDUCATION BUDGETS, CONT'D

At times, financing all of the parish's educational efforts will be a difficult task. All too often in these circumstances the first response is to look for places to cut expenses. Although wasteful practices can easily creep into any program, it is more often the case that the Church's educational efforts are minimally underwritten. And, even if a parish has been able to support its educational programs beyond the minimum level, should it ever be the first alternative to spend the minimum on this part of the Church's mission?

Rather than immediately cutting expenses, the Parish Education Board would do well to encourage the parish's administrators and the Pastoral Council to consider ways to generate new revenue. The parish might need to launch a stewardship program or a capital fund campaign. The role of the Parish Education Board then becomes prophetic, in other words, calls upon other leaders in the parish to take up such a task.

At times, the Parish Education Board may have to advise the parish administrators regarding cuts in the expenses in budgets. This is never easy to address. Cuts should always be equitable. Simple proportionate cuts however - e.g., a 15% cut across the board - may not be the wisest way to proceed. Such a practice might shortchange one program to the point of making it unable to operate. Perhaps a better way to approach these cuts would be to make them in light of the parish's mission statement and prioritizing in light of the values inherent therein.



This entire section on religious education boards is adapted from *Parish Education Commission Handbook*, Archdiocese of Cincinnati.