

# Governing Board Resource for Lutheran Schools

A RESOURCE FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND BOARDS



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# INTRODUCTION

Lutheran elementary schools operate as a vital ministry of many congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Adding Lutheran high schools and early childhood centers, several thousand education agencies serve hundreds of thousands of children through education integrated with Scripture and faith. Most schools are subject to governance by a board that either is appointed or elected by the congregation or association of congregations. Governing boards may operate under a variety of titles; for the purpose of this publication, the group governing the school is called the board.

LCMS Office of National Mission–School Ministry neither approves nor endorses the policies included as samples throughout this resource. The policies are examples to illustrate ideas presented herein. In some cases, two policy models are provided to illustrate both a traditional and a Carver-style format.

## Using this Resource

This resource is for Lutheran school administrators and boards. It describes the board's roles, responsibilities and limitations in the school's governance. Boards and administrators are encouraged to work through this manual together, seeking to evaluate and grow in governance skills. Such growth will contribute to educational excellence and Lutheran distinctiveness.

Questions for reflection or discussion are included for many of the chapters. Consider replacing them or adding to them with your own board-generated questions. They may be used as part of your board development plan. Set aside fifteen minutes at each meeting or plan a retreat to cover several chapters in one session.

This resource assumes that the school board, administrator and pastor work together as partners, each helping the other to accomplish designated responsibilities. More important, it is assumed that all partners will work together in Christ. Working together in Christ contributes to forgiveness, strength and mutual effort to accomplish God's will through Lutheran schools.

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## An Overview

### The need:

- All schools need a policy (board) manual.
- Lutheran schools need policies consistent with Scripture and the teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- Administrators in Lutheran schools seek resources for developing policies.
- Good policy development and usage foster schools that are efficient, focused and supported.
- Good policy development allows an administrator to lead effectively.
- Good policy development establishes a clear line of authority.
- Clear and concise policies lead to a student-centered school focused on the educational process.
- Clearly stated policies help schools remain focused on their mission.
- Well-written policies will help boards avoid inappropriate involvement in the day-to-day operation of the school.

### What is a policy (board) manual?

- A policy manual is a key tool for the school administrator in the successful operation of the school.
- A policy manual is a collection of policies adopted by the appropriate governing body (bodies) of the congregation or association that governs and guides the operation of the school.
- A policy manual outlines procedures necessary to create, evaluate and revise existing policies.
- Manuals may contain a collection of procedures created by the administrator to carry out the mandates of policies. However, manuals will also clearly indicate the difference between policies and procedures.
- School accreditation standards require a board policy manual.

### What is a policy?

- A policy addresses anticipated needs for direction rather than a reaction to an immediate crisis.

- A policy states what is to be done or what is not to be done. (A procedure states how to meet the requirements of a policy; it is an administrator’s task—not the board’s.)

#### **Problems with policies**

- Finding time to develop policies
- Keeping policies up-to-date
- Developing ownership of policies
- Making transitions as board membership changes
- Accessing policies efficiently
- Confusing policies and procedures

#### **About the process in this resource**

- The process will help clarify the need for a particular policy.
- The process will demonstrate the gathering of information needed before a policy is crafted.
- The process will present a procedure to use to adopt and review policies.

#### **Caution**

- Policies need to be locally developed.
- School boards need to limit their responsibilities to setting policies.
- Administrators need to develop procedures to implement policies.

It is our prayer that the 2017 version of the *Governing Board Resource for Lutheran Schools* will uplift, support and assist schools in developing policy manuals that provide Lutheran school boards and administrators with important answers to the questions that fill every school day.

# CHAPTER 1: BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

## Board Members' Roles

1. Commitment to the Lord
2. Commitment to ministry
3. Commitment to the mission of the school
4. Commitment to work with the administrator and other board members
5. Commitment to serve actively and faithfully
6. Commitment to the congregation
7. Policy making
8. Advocates of the school
9. Strategic planning
10. General sample policies

## Board Self-Governance

1. Responsibilities
2. Confidentiality
3. Conflict of interest
4. Operations outside of board meetings
5. Role in school advocacy

## Qualities of Good Board Members

1. Background
2. Qualities

### Read chapter one before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. How will each board member demonstrate commitment to the mission and ministry of the school? The church?
2. Why were you willing to serve on the school board?
3. When will confidentiality be most difficult?

## Individual Board Member Responsibilities

Board members are elected/selected to lead. When agreeing to serve on a Lutheran school board as stewards of the Lord, board members have a privilege and responsibility. Each board member plays an important part in the mission of the school. As their work affects the souls and lives of children, board members will prayerfully, actively and faithfully serve to the best of their abilities. This chapter describes the important responsibilities of competent and faithful board members.

## Board Members' Roles

Board members have a number of roles:

### 1. Commitment to the Lord

Lutheran school board members wish to serve their Lord and Savior faithfully and well. They want to know the Lord's will and way, and so they study His Word often and worship regularly. Board members pray often, asking God to lead and help them in their work. They pray often for the students, teachers and admin-

istrator. Board members realize that the Lord has placed them in their position of responsibility and rely on the Lord to help them carry out their duties well. Board members also recognize that the operational style of the board and the lifestyle of board members provide significant witness to members of the school and congregation family. They recognize that their positive Christian witness contributes to the school's image and the accomplishment of its mission.

*Sample policy: Board members shall regularly participate in the adult Christian education program of their congregation, giving leadership wherever possible.*

### 2. Commitment to ministry

Board members see themselves as God's people who are always ready to minister to one another as they serve together. If ministry is to occur, board members, when assembled or in private, seek God's blessings and guidance. As ministry occurs among board members, the Christian life and faith of each member grows, with each finding joy in service. When the spirit of ministry exists, the board becomes the model of ministry to congregation members and school families. Then every member of the school family can sense that the school is in good hands—in God's hands.

Encouragement and support for the faculty is another key dimension of the school board's ministry. Board members should regularly greet the teachers, show interest in their activities, commend them for their accomplishments and thank them for their faithful service.

### 3. Commitment to the mission of the school

Board members know the mission of the school and affirm that mission and the values on which it is based. They are concerned about the souls and lives of students, parents and staff, and they are willing to do what they can to help. Board members are dedicated to ensuring that the school is strong and effective and will do nothing that will harm the school in carrying out its mission. To that end, they set aside any personal agendas to serve the best interests of the entire school community. If their own children attend the school, they realize that they do not represent their personal interests. Instead, they represent the best interests of all of the students. As the board considers policies, it will ask, "Will this policy be good for the students?"

The mission statement leads the focus on ministry, and it expedites consistency for all aspects of the board responsibility. Everything that happens in a school relates to the mission statement. A mission statement must be established before any work is done. The mission of the school must be compatible with the mission of the congregation. Review the mission statement annually and revise it as necessary.

In creating or evaluating the mission statement, these questions should be asked:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- For whom do we do it?
- Why do we do it?

Mission statements are not ...

- developed by outsiders
- lengthy philosophical statements
- engraved in stone forever
- developed and ignored
- unrelated to the function of the board
- incongruent with the mission statement of the congregation

Sample mission statement: Faith Lutheran School is the elementary level agency operated by Faith Lutheran Church to provide Gospel-oriented and Scripture-based education to children of the congregation and community so they become followers of Jesus.

Sample mission statement: Community Lutheran School provides an opportunity for growth in the Gospel of Jesus Christ by providing a Christ-centered education with academic excellence for the children of association congregations and the community to assist them to become disciples of Christ.

*Sample policy: Each member of the school board will know from memory the mission statement of the school.*

#### **4. Commitment to work with the administrator and other board members**

School board members realize that the school administrator is an essential component in an effective program. The board works hard to build strong, trusting relationships with the administrator based on a mutual understanding of the school's and congregation's missions. One specific responsibility of the board is to support, care for and help the personnel serving the church to the end that they might experience joy and achievement. This responsibility is carried out toward the administrator in a direct and intentional way because of the board's direct relationship with the administrator. The board normally carries out its responsibility toward other personnel through the administrator.

*Sample policy: The board shall exercise its governing authority and speak as a whole. No individual board member shall exercise such authority except as instructed by the board.*

School board members realize that they need to serve as a team, working toward common goals. Collegial caring and respect best describe the spirit and manner in which the board and its members, the administrator, the pastor and staff work together.

Collegial caring can best happen when all hold a common vision, purpose and plan for achieving the mission and when all have an understanding of the role and responsibility of each person. This does not mean that the board refuses to recognize differences, but that they agree to disagree respectfully. After a thorough discussion of an issue and the establishment of a policy approved by the majority of the board, members support that policy even though they may have voted against it. Board members treat each other and their administrator in a Christian manner, remembering the example of their Savior. They seek always to edify and uphold one another and all the members of the school family.

Board members will relate to other individuals with integrity, honesty and straightforwardness.

#### **5. Commitment to serve actively and faithfully**

Board members need to acquaint themselves with the policy manual so they are aware of the policies under which the school and the board operate.

Board members realize that the board meeting is the center of all board activity and the place where all board decisions are made. Therefore, they attend meetings faithfully. Board members take time to digest the materials for those meetings by reading all materials that have been provided before the meetings, so they are prepared to ask questions and discuss the issues.

Board members actively participate in discussions at the meetings and readily volunteer for assignments when needed. They recognize that responsible management and decision-making require gathering adequate information. Board members follow a specified procedure for placing items on the agenda.

To help them make sound decisions, board members take the time to become well-acquainted with their school by visiting when it is in session and by regularly attending special school activities.

*Sample policy: Board members are to be faithful in attending meetings. The board chairperson will meet with any member who misses two consecutive meetings. Based on the chair's report and recommendation, the board will determine whether that person will remain on the board.*

Boards may choose to allow alternative attendance (online) when personal attendance is not possible.

#### **6. Commitment to the congregation**

A unique feature of Lutheran schools is that they exist as a ministry of the congregation or congregations, in the case of an association school. Lutheran school board members set policy for the school on behalf of the congregation in light of its mission. To achieve this, boards will strive for open communication through the administrator or the board chair and involve the school's constituent groups in the life of the congregation. In doing this, board members will cultivate the skills of listening and interpreting. Sometimes, because of a heavy involvement in school issues, school board members protect the interest of the school, forget-



ting or ignoring the total needs and mission of the congregation. Board members must know the mission of the congregation and of the school to pass appropriate policies.

## 7. Policy making

The prime responsibility of a Lutheran school board is to lead through policies. The school administrator is then responsible for creating the procedures for carrying out those policies. (See Chapter 4.)

Most Lutheran schools exist within the structure of a congregation. Therefore, the school board must operate within limits set by the governing body of the congregation, and policies are to be consistent and within the limits set by that governing body.

*Sample policy: The board is responsible, in consultation with the administrator, to adopt school policies.*

**Important Note: The board will avoid making decisions that are the responsibility of the administrator. The board passes policy; the administrator creates procedures.**

Policies are to be active and dynamic. They are meant to be changed and refined regularly, based on the intent of each section, the values of the board and the changing context within which the school functions.

## 8. Advocates of the school

Board members love their school and the children it serves, and they show it by investing their time and energy on behalf of the school. They represent their school in a positive manner, focusing on progress, improvement, growth and accomplishments. This does not suggest that they will hide or ignore negative factors. Problems will be dealt with in confidentiality and, when necessary, with Christian confrontation. They publicly support staff and the programs of the school, absent allegations of wrongdoing. Board members set an example by contributing to the school's annual fund and fund raising activities.

## 9. Strategic planning

Board members, under the leadership of the administrator, set goals. In doing so, they determine needs, establish priorities, gather information, prepare goal statements, develop plans and strategies and implement those plans. They establish a three- to five-year plan. They determine what has been done well and what has not been done well, as informed by National Lutheran School Accreditation. They set goals to guide the administrator in the administration of the school.

Board members realize that it is important to be proactive rather than reactive. They know that planning will guide future success and help the school and congregation attain their missions.

## 10. General sample policies

*Reporting to members: The board chair, or other appointed spokesperson, shall keep congregation members informed of its decisions and activities, and regarding school programs and activities. A formal process shall be established to convey the state of the school to the congregation(s).*

*Serving students and families: The board shall provide high quality service for the parents and students with Christian care and concern for them without failing to represent the operating congregation(s).*

## Board Self-Governance

### 1. Responsibilities

Board members shall:

- Attend all board meetings unless excused in advance by the chairperson.
- Prepare for board meetings by reviewing the agenda and completing previously accepted tasks.
- Be familiar with the policy manual.
- Participate in discussions and voting.
- Require accurate information on which to base decisions.
- Support the board's final decisions once they have been fully discussed and resolved by the board.
- Maintain Christ-centered relationships with constituents of the board.
- Evaluate the administrator according to the job description.
- Keep board documents and discussions confidential.
- Abide by policies that govern the behavior and operations of the board.

### 2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important consideration for board members. All personal information shared during a meeting stays in the room. It is essential that the administrator, pastor, board members and anyone bringing business to the board know that what they say will not be repeated outside of that board meeting. If confidentiality is breached, trust erodes. Consequently, people fear speaking freely and openly, which is essential so that there is diversity of opinion for making effective and informed decisions. The board must establish an effective means to share board actions in appropriate ways.

*Sample policy: The administrator, upon board direction, will communicate board decisions and activity.*

*The board chairperson, or his designee, will communicate board decisions and activities to the church council and voters' assembly.*

*Board members shall keep confidential all documents and discussions so identified.*

### 3. Conflict of interest

Board members must not make financial gain or receive gifts-in-kind as a result of their school board participation.

Board members should not be directly related to school employees.

*Sample policy: Governing board members must avoid conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest.*

*Governing board membership is prohibited for spouses and other close family members of school staff.*

### 4. Operations outside of board meetings

Board members will remember that it makes decisions and adopts policies only while the board is in session. At the conclusion of the meeting, individual board members are often expected to report and interpret what the board has done. Board members should do this positively, always refraining from reporting private information or other matters that may be viewed as gossip. Individual members should not make decisions or take action outside of board meetings. The board and its members function as a decision-making group only when the board is in session in an official meeting.

*Sample policy: The business of the board shall be conducted only by the board during official meetings. Individual board members may not speak or act on behalf of the board or represent the board unless specifically authorized by the board to do so.*

Sometimes people will bring complaints about some aspect of the program to board members, expecting them to take action concerning their problems. Board members know that dealing with conflicts and misunderstandings that occur during the course of the school day is a staff function and will insist that the person works directly with the staff member most involved with the situation. While doing so, board members will express confidence in the staff and administrator to resolve such situations satisfactorily.

### 5. Role in school advocacy

Board members need to be aware that because they are members of the board, their words and actions carry significant influence with others. By virtue of board membership, they are put in the spotlight, and they need to weigh their words and actions carefully!

*Sample policy: Board members shall not reflect negatively to the general public on any ministry area of the school.*

The board should be constantly aware of its responsibility to inform, educate and encourage congregation members, parents and students to participate fully and joyfully in the Lutheran school ministry. This is a key responsibility for the board's

spokesperson. The board should at all times be sensitive to criticism and negativism that erode the commitment of people to the school. When criticism and negativism appear, the board needs to respond wisely, kindly and responsibly.

While most functions of the board are carried out when the board officially meets, the school advocacy role is fulfilled in the daily lives and activities of each board member. The commitment and devotion of members become obvious as they send their own children to the Lutheran school and speak in a positive way to other congregation members. In their day-to-day living among members of the congregation and in the community, board members have opportunity to speak supportively about their school and its effective ministry.

## Qualities of Good Board Members

### 1. Background

Board members give up their private interests and agendas as parents in the school, and should represent a diversity of perspectives, competencies and ages.

Board composition should reflect the following:

- A variety of abilities, interests and skills (lawyers, financial advisors, etc.)
- A diversity of perspectives (e.g., parents, non-parents, former parents, congregation, people representing various income ranges and ages)
- People willing to serve as one of its officers
- No teachers or staff members or their spouses

A prospective board member meets several or all of the following criteria:

- Possesses experience and demonstrates leadership in congregation and/or school.
- Expresses a vibrant interest and understanding of Christian education and Lutheran schools.
- Commits to attend meetings regularly and punctually.
- Expresses in daily living a readiness to live in harmony with the Word of God and the confessions of the church.
- Evidences spiritual maturity and involvement in worship and Bible study.

### 2. Qualities

**Spiritual** - Good board members worship and pray often and regularly set aside time for devotions and Bible study.

**Supportive** - Good board members are supportive of the school, its staff and its administrator, and seek ways to help them.

**Caring** - Good board members care about the students, their families and the staff, and exhibit that concern in their decisions in board meetings.



**Committed** - Good board members love the school and the children it serves. They enjoy investing time and energy in leadership of the school and its stakeholders.

**Willing to work** - Being a school board member necessitates using personal time and energy. It is not an easy task. Good board members are willing to give of themselves to do what is necessary to make their school the best possible within the boundaries of their role.

**Open** - Good board members are open to considering facts and the opinions of others in reaching decisions. They are willing to learn new ways and methods, and they are open to enlisting the help of consultants, such as the LCMS District education executive, to help them.

**Positive** - Good board members have a positive attitude toward their school, its staff and the work in which the board is involved.

**Involved** - Good board members are involved in the life of their congregation and their school, realizing that this involvement will be helpful in their service on the board.

**Interested** - Good board members have a vibrant interest in and understanding of Christian education. They are interested in all that is happening in and around their school and congregation, and take the time to visit their school occasionally when it is in session.

**Ethical** - Good board members understand that the board only acts as a whole and when in session. They support the decisions made by the board even when their personal opinion does not agree with the decision. Good board members set aside their personal agenda to serve the best interests of the school community. They keep board discussions confidential. Good board members will not take action that is contrary to the Scriptures or is unlawful.

**Relation builders** - Good board members work hard to build a strong and trusting relationship with the administrator. They also cultivate a good working relationship with each other.

**Ministry minded** - Good board members have a heart for school and other congregation ministries, and understand that they are part of a ministry team. They accept and support the doctrines and practices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**Mission minded** - Good board members agree with the school's and congregation's missions and the values on which they are based. They are dedicated to ensuring that the school continues to be strong and effective and is serving the Lord and His children in the best way possible.

**Outcome oriented** - Good school board members are concerned about the outcomes of the school program and work to establish policies that help define these outcomes. They refuse to "micromanage," leaving procedures and daily decisions to the administrator and staff within the boundaries established by board policy.

# CHAPTER 2: BOARD DEVELOPMENT

## Rationale for Board Development

### Board Development Policies and Procedures

1. Collegiality and support
2. Spiritual growth
3. Orientation
4. Self-evaluation
5. Learning about educational issues
6. Communications skills
7. Conflict resolution skills
8. Addressing change
9. Decision-making and management skills

### Resources

1. Organizations
2. Periodicals

### School Board Development Plan Template

#### Read chapter two before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. Why is it difficult to schedule time for board training/development? What can you do about it?
2. Under what circumstances will collegiality and support be most difficult? How will you handle it?
3. Of what spiritual growth opportunities will you take advantage? How can this help you to be a better board member?

## Rationale for Board Development

Members of the school board need to develop personally and as a group if they are to provide the leadership necessary to perform their tasks in a healthy and professional manner. Board members are a part of all the school's successes—and its problems.

St. Paul encourages in Eph. 4:16, “From him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” This section will address the ways the work can be accomplished as a school board member and as the Body of Christ—His Church. It will deal with the issues of board member morale and support, identify information and skills necessary for the board to function effectively, and suggest opportunities for training in those areas.

## Board Development Policies and Procedures

Board development is such a crucial issue that it needs to be planned and mandated by policy in a board manual. Several such policies are suggested below as they deal with various components of board development. A comprehensive introductory policy might read as follows:

*Sample policy: Members of the school board shall develop the appropriate skills necessary to fulfill their duties effectively as spiritual and educational leaders in the congregation and school.*

As each specific policy is stated below, it is followed by suggested procedures and strategies that relate to it.

### 1. Collegiality and support

*Sample policy: A spirit of collegiality and support is to be fostered in all circumstances as the board serves together with a common mission.*

It is important for each board member to know that he or she is not serving on the school board by accident. The reason board members were selected is that God chose them to be in this place at this time. Each board member brings to a board a component that only they can provide. Is it the voice of reason when others react irrationally? Is it the gentle spirit who calms excited hearts? Is it the visionary who sets the goals or the detail person who sees that the vision is carried out? Whatever the role, it should be fulfilled in the spirit of love and cooperation suggested in Ephesians 4. It is okay to disagree; it is not okay for board members to attack those with whom they disagree. Board members should learn to recognize and appreciate each member's strengths and contributions. The following are skills that contribute to a smoothly functioning board:

- Encourage one another as board members go about their tasks. Compliments and statements of affirmation are heartening and empowering.
- Speak and listen respectfully to one another's opinions. Board meetings should be a forum for the exchange of ideas—not an arena for power struggles. Name-calling, labeling and interruptions have no place. Each member of the board is a valued member of the family of God, a soul for which Christ died, and deserves to be treated with love and respect.
- Recognize the positive outcomes of each member's work. Sometimes so much attention is focused on the process of creating policy that the results are never considered. Evaluate the effects of the policies, and celebrate the successes! Realize that board members are the instrument God uses to establish order, resolve difficulties and prevent conflict. A board member is doing more than just attending meetings; he or she is a proactive implement for providing a quality education to children and forwarding the mission of the church.
- Provide opportunities to know one another socially. A retreat setting is one effective way to foster social relationships among board members. In addition, an occasional potluck or dinner out, time for coffee and refreshments at regular meetings, and even meeting in an informal setting rather than the typical classroom or conference room are helpful in promoting friendships and

comfortable relationships among board members. People who enjoy each other's company work well together as a team and accomplish far more than those who are in an impersonal or even antagonistic relationship. Board members will not always agree, but they will have many opportunities to practice living in forgiveness with each other.

## 2. Spiritual growth

*Sample policy: Each board member will be familiar with the mission statement of the congregation and school and make a commitment to accomplish that goal. Opportunities for spiritual growth shall be provided and utilized.*

- A Lutheran school is not a typical business to be managed exactly like any other commercial venture. It is primarily a workshop for spiritual growth and an arm of mission and ministry for the congregation. This spiritual dimension must be understood by all who have the responsibility to set policy for the school. Rightly applying Law and Gospel, articulating the school's philosophy, and working together with the congregation at large all require spiritual insight and the power of the Holy Spirit. As Lutheran school board members, there is a spiritual dimension to a board member's leadership. Each member individually, and the board collectively, model God-pleasing ways of showing support and making decisions. Therefore, it is vital that spiritual growth is ongoing and integral.
- Regular Bible studies are vital to the spiritual health and development of the board. God works through His Word. As board members become familiar with it and apply it to their tasks, His blessings will be abundant.
- Include a devotion and prayer time at each meeting. These devotions could be led by the pastor, administrator, board chairperson or individual board members. Each devotion should proclaim the message of the Gospel—not just an interesting moral or motivational statement regarding education.
- Board members should pray for and with each other as well as for the needs of the church and school. The board should pray for staff members and families. Prayer can be accomplished in pairs or in clusters of three or four. Prayer partners or a prayer chain can be established for special needs. Prayer is a powerful tool for spiritual growth.
- Schedule regular Bible studies and conduct board retreats. It is helpful to get away from familiar sites and concentrate on spiritual renewal. Go far enough so there are no interruptions. Bible studies on leadership and mission, discussions of common goals and time to delve more deeply into key issues are valuable agenda items. These events could be led by the pastor, administrator or another spiritual leader. Some LCMS Districts offer retreats and training for

school boards. Commit to be involved in such activities each year.

## 3. Orientation

*Sample policy: New members shall be informed of their specific responsibilities and supplied with information and education necessary and helpful to them in assuming their role on the board.*

Orient new members by clearly defining their role and purpose, supplying information about the congregation(s) and school as necessary. Joining the school board can be an overwhelming experience to new members—especially if they have had little or no experience on congregational committees in the past. If the policies permit the inclusion of non-church members on the board, their orientation must be even more thorough. Inform them of their specific responsibilities and limitations and the school's mission.

- Each new member of the board should be given a board policy manual before the first meeting and be made aware of the mission statement of the congregation and school or association.
- Establish who is to be the person responsible for providing basic information to those new to the board and set a deadline for orientation.
- The entire board should review annually the key functions and goals of the board and make any necessary changes or revisions.
- In larger boards, a mentor may be provided for new members or the board chairperson may ensure that each board member is clear on background and expectations.
- Include a schedule of meeting times, a sample agenda, a copy of the congregation's constitution and bylaws, other background information about the church and school and the names and phone numbers of all board members, the pastor and administrator.

## 4. Self-evaluation

*Sample policy: The board will systematically evaluate its performance in light of its roles and functions.*

- Determine characteristics that comprise a competent and effective board. A board is strong when it ...
  - ... systematically examines the school.
  - ... is more interested in the future than in the past.
  - ... is hospitable.
  - ... doesn't get bogged down in counterproductive procedures.
  - ... can criticize itself.
  - ... can solve problems.
  - ... objectively evaluates ideas.
  - ... is flexible together in many ways for diverse purposes.
  - ... has high levels of motivation and morale.

- ... enables the school's mission and purpose.
  - ... understands authority, power and control.
  - ... strives to focus on progress, improvement, growth and accomplishment.
  - ... addresses negative factors in confidentiality.
  - ... links the school with the congregation.
  - ... models Christian faith and life.
- Determine the criteria for evaluating, at least annually, the effectiveness of the board. The suggestions given above may be included. Additional factors might be the board's working relationship with the administrator and the church council. A self-evaluation can begin with an independent rating by each board member. The performance of the board can be rated on a five-point scale for each item or other more specific rating systems could be used. After the ratings are summarized, the board should discuss its performance in each area. Specific goals for improvement can then be established.
  - Study the board manual periodically and systematically at meetings, analyzing and updating as necessary. The board manual should be a living document, pertinent to the day-by-day operations of the school, yet open to change and adaptability as necessary. Reviewing it regularly and systematically refreshes the memory of the board on its contents and provides the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies. The following suggestions could implement this practice:
    - Determine who is responsible to schedule and oversee such a review.
    - A special meeting may be called to accomplish this task. It could be scheduled as part of the agenda for a board retreat.
    - Determine the input from parents, the pastor, teachers or other staff and how to solicit such input.
    - Follow established procedures for changing or adapting policies.
    - Communicate changes and adaptations.

## 5. Learning about educational issues

*Sample policy: The board will provide and utilize opportunities for learning about educational issues.*

If the board is responsible for approval of curriculum, its members must be informed about the basics of curriculum evaluation. If the board is to evaluate the school administrator, it must have information about evaluation content and techniques. An uninformed opinion is worse than no opinion at all because decisions based on incomplete or incorrect data affect instruction

and staff effectiveness. The best school board members must be continual learners, keeping up with the latest administrative and educational research. The following procedures could implement this policy:

- The administrator is a valuable resource for articles and publications regarding current educational thought.
- Board members could be assigned topics to research and then present a summary for information and discussion at each meeting.
- Subscriptions to educational periodicals and journals could be provided to board members or made available in a central resource library.
- Articles relating to educational issues could be posted on a bulletin board or made available for members to read.
- The Internet is another source of current information and research. Some helpful sites are listed at the end of this chapter.
- Guest speakers on pertinent topics could be invited to speak at board meetings.

Professional consultants may be used as a source of expertise. As a rule, a consultant should be engaged when the board has a problem, a task or an assignment for which it does not possess the time, experience, skill or objectivity necessary to address the issue. Consultants work with people to help identify problems, help overcome problems, teach and train, suggest options, gather and interpret data, work for improvement and help develop a plan of action.

Board members must realize that rarely is there consensus among educators on an issue. After researching all sides of an issue, an informed conclusion must be drawn in light of the school's philosophy and mission.

## 6. Communication skills

*Sample policy: The board will provide and utilize opportunities to increase effective communication skills.*

The ability to communicate effectively is a valuable skill to develop as board members. It includes both the ability to speak clearly and persuasively and to listen for meaning and inference as well as content. These skills do not come naturally, but they can be learned and improved through attitude, training and practice.

Some general guidelines include:

- Choose appropriate timing when delivering a message. For example, an issue requiring creative thinking and time for discussion should not be introduced five minutes before the scheduled adjournment of the meeting.
- Speak clearly and present ideas in an organized manner. Don't jump from topic to topic without resolution. A written agenda helps keep communication orderly. It is helpful to include the specific amount of time needed to discuss a given topic in the agenda.

- Speak calmly and respectfully. Supporting evidence is helpful when convincing the board of a given position.
- Maintain eye contact instead of reading from a manuscript to be convincing and to receive feedback.
- Speak in “I-messages,” rather than telling people what they ought to do. For example, “I worry that children will get hurt falling from the bars on the playground. Let’s authorize the purchase of more cushioning material,” rather than, “That playground is a lawsuit ready to happen. You are so irresponsible; you never think about the safety factor!”
- Listen to what others are saying. Give the speaker your full attention.
- Reflect back to the speaker the message that was heard.
- Reflecting the feeling behind a speaker’s words often diffuses potentially angry confrontations. The administrator says, “We need to get tough about so many people being behind on their tuition.” You respond, “You are really frustrated that so many people don’t pay their tuition on time. It makes meeting payroll difficult. Sometimes you feel like just asking families that are so far behind to withdraw the enrollment of their children.” “Yes,” the administrator replies, “but I don’t want the students to withdraw. Perhaps I or a board member could contact families and help them spread their back payments out over the next few months.” The board is responsible to communicate the results of decisions to those they affect. Be sure to identify and task the spokesperson for communicating board policies and decisions.

## 7. Conflict resolution skills

*Sample policy: The board will provide and utilize opportunities to increase conflict resolution skills and solve problems.*

Working for improvement usually means overcoming obstacles. Problem solving is the process by which obstacles are overcome and improvement occurs. Sometimes problems involve conflict between individuals or groups. It is vital to actively identify and resolve quarrels and discord, because if left unchecked, it can cause severe and long-lasting damage.

The problem-solving steps listed below apply to many obstacles encountered by a board. Putting them into practice requires patience, persistence, and planning. These are skills that all board members must continue to develop.

### Step 1

Define the problem or conflict. If the school is dirty and unkempt, what are the specific areas that need to be fixed? Is it the bathroom floors? Do the walls need painting? If discipline is a problem, what behaviors are causing difficulties? Who is involved? If two staff members argue, ask them to explain their positions fully.

### Step 2

Determine what is to be accomplished and for what purpose. Focus on the reasons for solving the problem. If the problem is lack of school spirit, reasons for solving the problem may be to help students enjoy school more or to present a positive image to prospective students. Expected improvements could include improved participation in extracurricular events, improved attitudes toward school or improved relationships among students. The result of these changes would be to achieve the school goal of helping students grow and develop socially. In the case of a conflict between two personalities, the goal might be to have a staff room in which teachers can relax.

### Step 3

Identify the obstacles that must be overcome if improvement is to occur. There are usually a number of contributing factors, which must be identified as specifically as possible and addressed directly. If faculty morale is a problem, contributing factors might be lack of leadership by an inexperienced administrator, inadequate salaries and/or low-level recognition by congregational members. Boards must determine which factors are the most significant and which must be dealt with first. If the workroom is messy, the absence of adequate storage cabinets could be a significant contributing factor.

### Step 4

The key step to problem-solving is to make a plan for overcoming or eliminating each obstacle or factor. In addressing each factor, ask and answer the following questions:

- What action or activity can help solve the problem?
- When will the action or activity take place?
- Who will be responsible?
- What costs, if any, are involved and how will they be funded?

For example, if the problem is low faculty morale and the obstacle is low-level recognition by the congregation, a possible solution could be to conduct a teacher recognition Sunday service followed by a reception sponsored by the parent group or school board. The parent group could be asked to plan and fund the reception.

### Step 5

Summarize in writing the responses to the four questions in Step 4. A written summary provides a comprehensive statement of the problem, its importance and a plan for a solution. The summary can be shared with others in order to obtain their support and understanding. It can be used for communication purposes and will serve as a guide for those responsible for implementing the problem-solving plan.

### Step 6

Develop an evaluation plan. Develop a list, based on the previous steps, of the anticipated outcomes that provide evidence that improvement is occurring. The goal is to come up with a positive change. Determine who will do the evaluating and list the dates when the evaluation will be completed.



## Step 7

Develop policy statements where needed to assure that improvement will continue over time. If faculty morale has been dealt with according to steps 1–6, the following policy statements might be appropriate:

*Sample policies: A Faculty Recognition Sunday shall be observed annually by the congregation, whereby the congregational members have the opportunity to know their teachers and to praise God for their ministry to the children of the school.*

*Job descriptions for all teachers will be reviewed annually with teachers to assure that the talents of every teacher are being used fully, wisely and with responsibility.*

*A continuing education fund for teachers will be provided in the annual budget of the congregation that will enable all teachers to increase their knowledge and improve their skills for their ministry to the children of the school.*

Note that all these policies state what is to be done and for what purpose.

## 8. Addressing change

*Sample policy: The board will provide and utilize opportunities to bring about positive change to address changes that occur.*

If the school grows, the role of the board will change, and policies that have stood for years may become ineffective. Be ready to adapt to the current situation as necessary. “We’ve always done it that way,” doesn’t mean that it should be done that way forever. Know what core value goals must always remain in place, but be open to ways in which those goals can best be accomplished.

Change is synonymous with growth and development, but to some people, the idea of change poses a threat and is met with resistance. As board members, one task will be to propose and implement change when necessary to improve the educational environment. The manner in which the board approaches change influences people’s reaction to it. The board will need to continually seek to improve their skills as an agent of change and in communicating the rationale and details regarding the implementation of change to others.

Change that is carefully planned seldom creates problems. Poorly planned change, on the other hand, may create severe difficulties and upset people. When a board decides to initiate change, it must also provide positive leadership in guiding the change process.

Whether the change is the result of a quick decision or a long-range plan, a board will want to work toward a smooth transition, knowing that the lives of many people may be affected. Examples of disruptive changes are ...

- Opening a second site for a growing school and assigning students to the new campus.
- Adopting a dress code.
- Initiating or increasing tuition.
- Combining grades because of a decline in enrollment.
- Increasing class size.

Statistics suggest that a small proportion of the population will embrace any change openly, enjoying the prospect of new ideas. A majority will gradually come to accept the change but will need time to adjust to it, while a few will never adjust to the new ideas. They may leave the school or stay around to complain regardless of what is done. The following guidelines will assist boards in making the transition to a change as smooth as possible:

### 1. Get in touch with the vision.

If the board has done a good job of communicating the school’s purpose, it is likely that others share a common vision. The further the decision-makers are removed from the school community, the greater the risk of not having shared the school’s purpose with those affected. If a board senses a gap between it and any segment of persons interested in school decisions, it must immediately establish dialogue to close that gap. People will be receptive to change as they see it relating to the total vision and mission of the school.

### 2. Evaluate the climate for change.

Timing is important. If there have been many changes recently or if the magnitude of the changes is great, the board may consider letting the climate stabilize before initiating even more change. Individuals also vary in their tolerance for change. High levels of emotion usually accompany revolutionary changes. There is the possibility of hostility and anger. Sometimes people might already be upset for other reasons, just waiting for the opportunity to vent their anger over an issue that might seem minor to the board. The board may not be able to move on to new issues until other matters have been addressed.

### 3. Consider all the options.

Fast decisions often have limited choices. In fact, the pressure and emotion involved in making a quick decision tend to cloud opportunities for logic and careful reasoning. It is important for each board member to work toward a calm environment and ask, “Are there other ways to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion?”

### 4. Judge the magnitude of the change.

What will be the ripple effect of a board’s proposed change? What will it cost? How many individuals and groups will be affected? Will the change create new problems? The magnitude of the proposed change will determine how much effort is necessary in planning, how complex the plan must be and whether the change is desirable at this time.

### 5. Involve those who will be affected.

Planned change seeks to involve those who will be affected by



the change. For example, if it is necessary to combine two grades, it is imperative that the parents and faculty have information before and after the decision is made, involving them in understanding the need for such a change and allowing them to make the best of the situation. Such involvement increases the likelihood that those affected will be committed to the change and will respond with time, energy and positive attitudes.

6. Determine who will introduce the change.

People accept change better if those who present and support it are trusted and respected. Consider the administrator, pastor, board members and faculty or parent leaders. Also consider the best way to announce new changes and explain reasons for the change.

7. Phase the change in gradually, if possible.

Planning should be intentional and done in advance. Prepare letters, open forums, letters of support and careful explanations of the transition steps. Give time for feedback and the expression of feelings. Board members must be careful listeners.

8. Plan for evaluation.

A board may not always make the best decision. Even before a plan is put into effect, establish points at which it will be reviewed according to set criteria. If possible, leave the door open to alter the plan if it is not working.

9. Support the board's decision.

Board solidarity is essential. Talking privately or publicly against a board's decision is not beneficial to anyone involved. Every member on the board has the responsibility to support the board's actions after a vote has been taken—even when a member does not agree.

10. Anticipate emotional responses.

Change often brings grief, which may occur whenever a person loses something important or significant. Sometimes grieving persons may initially be angry and vocal about the loss they feel. They may even feel so strongly that they wage a campaign against the board and the decision that is upsetting them. A serious division in the school community could occur. Board members should be prepared for such reactions and learn how to mitigate them. Some suggestions for dealing with people who demonstrate adverse reactions to change are the following:

- Accept people's emotions as an honest reaction instead of telling them they should not feel that way.
- Listen—let them tell the board what they think and feel.
- Find ways to let them know that the board cares about them and understands what the loss means to them.
- Try not to take their anger personally.
- Continue to keep in touch so that they do not feel ignored and try to involve others in their protests.

## 9. Decision-making and management skills

*Sample policy: The board will provide and utilize opportunities to learn about decision-making and board management skills.*

Each congregation must decide, based on its philosophy and the mandate of its constitution and bylaws, exactly what the responsibilities of the school board are—and what they are not. In most cases, the board's role is to govern, not to act. It governs through developing policy and assuring executive performance. It does not do the job of the administrator. In fulfilling this role, the administrator must make decisions and manage his or her responsibilities effectively and with sensitivity. There are techniques that have proven helpful in such endeavors. Resources for reading and discussion are listed at the end of this chapter.

Remember that a Lutheran school is not a business venture. While it is necessary to be organized and efficient, it is dangerous to look at students as mere "products" of the educational process or to look at the financial "bottom line" as an indicator that the school is successful.

A Lutheran school is successful when the board has fulfilled its role. A Lutheran school is successful when children learn about Jesus, their Savior, and respond to His forgiving love by serving Him. A Lutheran school is successful when families are brought into church membership and children are baptized. A Lutheran school is successful when God's love in Christ is shared with people who have emotional, physical and spiritual needs. That is ministry and that is the "business" the board is in. It is the Father's business. Manage it carefully in alignment with His goals; He has placed it in the board's hands.

As a board, members shall constantly renew their commitment to faithful and spiritually sound school governance. The board member is also in a position to display educational leadership in the congregation at large. Promote the school and its staff in positive ways at meetings and in small groups. Support and encourage the administrator and be ready to explain the reasoning behind the policies the board created. The board's attitude of positive optimism builds confidence in the school and all it stands for.

As the board grows in its ability to manage board relationships and tasks, it will function even more efficiently. To do so, a board knows its job description, plans how to carry it out, evaluates its effectiveness and adapts as needed. The board is open to suggestions from the school administrator or others with expertise.

## Resources

*Sample policy: The board will provide resources on issues for which it is responsible.*

Listed below are a variety of resources available for the growth and development of board members. Note especially the publications of *LuthEd.org* and other websites suggested, as they are updated frequently. Of particular interest is *Growing in Governing*, published monthly by LCMS School Ministry. Each issue ad-

dresses a topic of timely concern and includes a Gospel-centered devotion for personal use or use at regular board meetings.

These resources should be accessible when needed. Try to find a place in the office or a shelf in the library where board members can find these materials. Publish the list of websites and give every board member a copy. Assign board members to read specific articles for group discussion to assure that they are being used. Update the information frequently and decide who is to be responsible for keeping resources available and current.

Living organisms grow. Whatever does not grow eventually dies. Stay healthy and fit for the task. Nurture board members with God's Word, supplement their diet with reliable information, support board members in the process, and carefully prune away all that is not helpful so that, by God's grace, the ministry continues to fulfill its purpose in a lively way, sustaining those who depend upon the board. Some suggested resources follow:

### 1. Organizations

- Lutheran Education Association  
*lea.org*
- National School Boards Association  
*nsba.org*
- Council for American Private Education  
*capenet.org*
- U.S. Department of Education  
*ed.gov*

*Most states have associations of school boards that sponsor conventions and workshops and provide a variety of publications and services. For information, contact the State Superintendent of Education or public instruction.*

### 2. Periodicals

- *Education Week*  
*edweek.org*
- *Educational Leadership*  
*ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx*
- *Issues in Christian Education*  
*cune/about/publications/issues-in-christian-education/*  
(Published by Concordia University, Nebraska)
- *Lutheran Education Journal*  
*lej.cuchicago.edu*  
Articles cover a broad range of subjects dealing with Lutheran schools, curriculum, programs, management, child development and teacher development. (Published by Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.)
- *Phi Delta Kappa*  
*pdkintl.org*

Additional resources are located at *LuthEd.org*.

## SCHOOL BOARD DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

The following is a template that Lutheran school boards may use to create a development plan for board members:

### A Board Development Plan

Write the church and school's mission statement here:

What is the board's plan this year for spiritual growth?

#### I. Retreat

- Who will attend?
- Where?
- When?
- Devotional/worship leader?
- Topics/issues to discuss?
- Who will lead?
- Will outside resource people be involved? Who? Who will contact them?
- Who will arrange for accommodations?

#### II. Monthly devotions

- Who will lead?
- Who will remind the person responsible for each devotion?

#### III. Plans for Bible study

- Course of study?
- When?
- Who will lead?

#### IV. Plans for prayer

- Issues and people to pray for specifically
- Who will lead the prayers?
- Will the board assign prayer partners? How? When can partners get together for prayer?
- Other plans for spiritual growth and development

#### V. How will the board orient new members to the board?

- A. Letter of welcome outlining responsibilities
- Who will write and send?
  - When?
- B. Distribution and overview of board manual
- Who will be responsible?
  - When?

#### C. Background information supplied

- Regarding Lutheran education
- Regarding the congregation
- Regarding the school

#### D. Other

- Who will be responsible?
- When?

#### E. Welcome reception, dedication or installation of board members at a church service

- Who will be responsible for the arrangements?
- When?
- What is the plan for reviewing and revising the board and policy manual?

#### VI. Discuss a section at every meeting

##### A. Schedule what is to be discussed when

- Who will lead the discussion?
- How much time will be allotted?

##### B. Special meeting(s)

- When?
- Who will lead the discussion?

##### C. Other

#### VII. What are the plans for growing in the understanding of topics related to educational issues?

- List topics or issues to study. Prioritize them in order of immediacy or importance (school climate, curricular trends, role of the administrator, funding ... ).
- Prioritize which will be studied in the current year, which the following year, and which the third year.
- Who will lead these sessions?
- When will the information be presented?
- Regular meeting? How much time devoted to topic?
- Special meeting? When?
- Retreat?

#### VIII. What are the plans for developing board skills?

- List skills to be developed. Prioritize them in order of immediacy or importance (communication, conflict resolution, strategic planning ... ). Indicate which the board will work on this year, which next year, and which the following year.
- Who will lead these sessions?
- When will the information be presented?
- Regular meeting? How much time devoted to topic?

- Special meeting? When?
- Retreat?
- How will success be evaluated?
- What is the plan for providing necessary resources?

**IX. Books, periodicals and on-line sources of information are available.**

- What resources are available now?
- Where are they?
- Which ones will be made available this year?
- Next year?
- Who will order them?
- Where will the money come from?
- Where will they be kept?
- How will they be distributed?
- What web sites provide pertinent information?

**X. What is the plan for providing social and team-building activities?**

**A. Social and team-building events are scheduled.**

- What activities are planned?
- When?
- Where?
- Who will attend? (Spouses, families?)
- Who is in charge of arrangements?
- What are the plans for ongoing evaluation of the board's effectiveness?

**XI. The board's role is clearly defined and expectations are clear.**

- Where is this information written?
- How are board members informed?

**XII. Input is solicited from a variety of sources.**

- From whom (self-study, administrator, teachers, parents, congregational members, pastor, students ...)?
- In what manner (written form, interview ...)?
- Who is responsible for gathering information?
- Who is responsible for interpreting information?
- When?
- How are results communicated?
- By whom?
- When?
- Other

# CHAPTER 3: BOARD SELF-GOVERNANCE

*Note: This chapter should be considered with Chapter 4—Policy Development and Implementation—as advisory to any action taken.*

## Size of the Board

### Term Limitations

### Board Officers

### Desirable Characteristics for Officers

1. Chair
2. Vice Chair
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer

### Committees, Subcommittees and Task Groups

### Board Meetings

1. Agenda
2. Guidelines for items needing board action
3. Guidelines for committee reports to the board
4. Skills for moving an idea forward
5. Skills for making decisions
6. Following the meeting

### Goal Setting

Steps for developing goals

1. Determine needs
2. Establish priorities
3. Gather information
4. Prepare goal statements
5. Develop plan and strategies
6. Implement the plan

### Problem Solving

Steps for solving problems

### Read chapter three before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. What did you discover in this chapter that was new to you?
2. Some schools have no policies—collected in a manual, at least—about how the board must operate. Why is this unacceptable?
3. Why might this chapter be the best one to activate as priority business?

## Size of the Board

The size of the board depends on several factors: school enrollment, congregation membership, number of congregations supporting the school and number of responsibilities given to the board.

A board with too many members may be difficult to manage; too few, and there is insufficient representation. A board with too many members may be slowed in discussion and policy making. This will have a negative effect on the overall performance of the board and the fulfillment of the mission of the board. For single congregation schools, a board should have no less than five and no more than nine members. As many as 13 will be sufficient for an association school—two or three members from each of the member congregations.

## Term Limitations

Members of the board should be elected with term limitations. Policies specifying the length of terms should be approved by the congregation or association and be consistent with term limits of other congregational boards and committees. Members who serve too long may become a hindrance to the board due to lack of creativity and ideas. In addition, there exists a potential for members to gain excessive power and influence. A term of two or three years is suggested to ensure continuity in governance of the school, with members being limited to two consecutive terms. To ensure additional continuity, terms should not expire simultaneously. In situations where a board member is serving on a special committee or task group, allowances should be made to extend their term until the completion of the assignment. This will ensure the completion of the task without disruption.

Association schools will give special consideration to term limits. All supporting congregations will need to coordinate the term limits of representatives in order to avoid a large turnover on the board.

*Sample policy: The term of office of all Board members shall be three (3) years, terminating on June 30, of the third year of their term.*

## Board Officers

Officers of the Board should include Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Titles of Director or President may be used in place of Chair. Leadership of the meetings and good record keeping are essential to the consistent functioning of the board. A school that exists as an association school, or a school that works with a budget separate from the congregation, should also have a treasurer of the board who works with the administrator, overseeing the budget of the school.

Officers should be elected or appointed from within the board by board members for one-year terms. Other board models may include a Chair-elect, who moves into the presidency the following

year. To ensure that officers understand their responsibilities and to aid in the training of new officers, it may be advisable to prepare a job description for each position.

## Desirable Characteristics for Officers

### 1. The Chair will ...

- Give adequate time for the tasks required.
- Work with the administrator.
- Be a pacesetter.
- Motivate people.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Have credibility within the congregation and school.
- Have leadership and organizational skills.
- Lead and chair meetings using accepted parliamentary procedures.
- Possess or be willing to develop board skills.

### 2. The Vice-Chair will ...

- Serve in the absence of the chair.
- Assume various assignments as directed by the chair or board.
- Represent the chairperson when called upon.

### 3. The Secretary will ...

- Record and prepare minutes.
- Handle correspondence as directed by the board.
- Have means to distribute minutes.
- Maintain essential files and records for the board.
- Have a working understanding of technology tools.

### 4. The Treasurer will ...

- Have experience in bookkeeping and be competent in fiscal matters.
- Assist in preparing detailed school budgets that adequately support educational, staff and facility needs.
- Prepare timely and understandable financial statements.
- Work effectively with the church finance committee, the church treasurer or other individuals related to the financial management of the school.

The **administrator** or **chief administrator** of the school is an ex-officio member of the board. The administrator is the on-site administrative officer of the board. The administrator's duty is to carry out the policies and directives of the board.

Occasionally the administrator is called upon to make decisions where no policy exists. Rather than ask the board to make the decision, the administrator should ask the board to establish a policy on which subsequent similar decisions can be made. The board carries the responsibility of supporting the decisions of the administrator. The reversal of decisions erodes the image and authority of the administrator and makes it difficult to work effectively.

The **pastor** or **pastors** of the congregation also act ex-officio to the board. The pastor should act as spiritual leader of the board. While the pastor should not act in any official capacity on the board, his involvement in the activity of the board will contribute to a positive relationship between the congregation and school.

## Committees, Subcommittees and Task Groups

The board must be concerned about doing the most effective and thorough job possible in the most efficient way. Special assignments and heavy workloads may precipitate the need for committees, subcommittees or task groups in order to do an effective job. All reports of committees will be directed to the board and decisions will be reserved for the board as a whole. Committees usually function best under the coordination or supervision of the administrator. The administrator may attend meetings, work through the committee chair, or delegate a representative to work with the committee.

It would be advisable for the board to consider the following options:

- Standing committees are given specific, long-term assignments. This is acceptable but should be used with caution, making sure they do not make decisions for the board.
- Special assignments are best handled by *ad hoc* committees that can function for the duration of an assignment and then be dissolved.
- Special committees or task groups may be used for budget planning, facility analysis, program evaluation or other similar assignments.

Some large boards designate the officers to serve as an executive committee. Executive committees can help plan agendas, serve as advisors to the administrator and expedite actions of the board. Executive committees are not empowered to make decisions for the board unless directed to do so by the board.

*Sample policy: Committees*

*The Chair may establish standing committees to address specific issues. These committees meet on a regular basis and present their reports at the regularly scheduled school board meetings.*



## Board Meetings

Effective board meetings convey to the congregation and staff that the school is in good hands. The board should be mindful that all of its activities have the potential for projecting a positive spirit and developing good will for the school.

The regular attendance of all board members is an important factor in assuring effective board function. Regular attendance gives evidence that board members view their work as important and that the needs of the school receive priority attention.

Board meetings involve several important components that must be considered in order to maintain the efficient and effective operation of the board: frequency of meetings, annual and monthly agendas, reports to the board, planning and implementing plans.

Most important, boards are reminded that the meeting is where work is planned and discussed. Time should not be used at meetings to write policy, tally statistics, etc. This should be done outside the meeting and presented to the board for discussion and action.

Most school boards meet monthly for regular meetings. Often, special meetings are required to handle special assignments or concerns. These may include securing staff, budgeting or writing policies. In addition, some members may attend committee meetings.

While most boards meet in the evening at school, there is no standard rule. As it works for the members of the board, meetings may be held at a breakfast or lunch or on a weekend. Consideration for all board members is necessary so as not to leave anyone out due to scheduling conflicts. When a meeting time and day is established, it should not be changed or adjusted unless the board's needs change.

In closing the meeting, allow a few minutes for members to express their feelings about the meeting and suggestions for improvement. The strictest rules for meetings will call for an adjournment time to be set at the beginning of the meeting. Attempts should be made to limit the length of the meeting to two hours.

### *Sample policy: Meetings*

*The school board meets the second Thursday of each month, beginning at 7:00 p.m. and ending at 9:00 p.m. in the conference room. Each member is expected to attend all meetings or notify the Chair of his or her absence. Beginning and ending times may be modified only upon consensus of the board members.*

On occasion, the Chair may call a special or additional board meeting and/or subcommittee meeting. Subcommittee meetings will be regularly held to carry out the business of the committee at a time agreed upon by the members of the subcommittee.

## 1. The agenda

Without careful planning, board meetings are often limited to addressing immediate matters only. In addition to the time required for monthly business, the board should have an annual plan that provides the following:

- Planning and goal setting that ensures the improvement of the school. Goals need to be set and evaluated for curriculum, facilities, enrollment, staff and other aspects of school life.
- Developing policy is one of the most important functions of the board.
- Evaluating the board's work towards goals. Evaluation needs to take place to determine whether goals are met.
- Operating the school by policy, as it is managed by the administrator. Good policies and procedure contribute to the most effective operation of the board and school.

The heart of a board meeting is the agenda. The agenda is a list of items to be dealt with by the board. A well-prepared agenda contributes to effective and efficient meetings that address all issues requiring attention. The absence of an agenda is unacceptable.

The administrator prepares the agenda in consultation with the board chair.

While monthly agendas include regular business of the board, they are based on the annual agenda. An annual agenda of the board normally includes the following:

- Curriculum evaluation and planning
- Administrator reports as per the job description
- Budget planning, salaries and benefits
- Review of insurance policies and contracts
- Evaluation of buildings, grounds and facilities
- Review of the school's purpose
- Evaluation and planning of the recruitment program
- Evaluation and planning of the communication program
- Evaluation of student life and discipline
- Evaluation of board performance
- Long-range planning
- Evaluation and planning of funding the school
- Calling and engaging teachers (within congregational policy)
- Policy review

The monthly agenda is developed from the annual agenda, the previous month's minutes and agenda, and items identified since the last meeting. Items from the agenda should be listed up to one week prior to the meeting. When members of the board are informed of the agenda and the meeting in advance, they have an opportunity to add any items they wish to include. Additions to the agenda at the meeting should be avoided, as this disrupts the

meeting and does not allow for advance planning. Components of a monthly agenda include the following:

- An opening devotion
- Introduction of any guests to the meeting
- Reading and approval of the previous month's minutes that were distributed to board members one week after the last meeting. Minutes may be presented in writing; however, the secretary should orally summarize the minutes for the sake of time.
- Staff reports such as administrator's report or development office report
- Open agenda items. Sometimes referred to as Old Business, these items may have required some board action since the last meeting. The "work" on these items should have been done outside of the meeting and reported at this time.
- New business requiring the attention of the board. This may precipitate assignments to be completed by committees or individuals for the next meeting.
- Upcoming dates of significance to the board

*Sample policy: Agendas*

*The school board shall meet monthly to conduct its business. The agenda is the responsibility of the administrator and board chair. The two will work closely together in consultation before each meeting. Printed copies of the agenda should be prepared for each member and distributed (1) week prior to the meeting and approved as the first item of business.*

## 2. Guidelines for items needing board attention

Concerning items that require board action, these guidelines apply:

- The administrator and board chair will review all items prior to listing them on the agenda.
- The board will avoid making decisions that are explicitly the responsibility of the administrator.
- The administrator may seek the advice of the board when making decisions.
- Actions of the board should be in keeping with the purpose of the school and school policies.
- No action shall be taken by the board that clearly belongs in the control of another church or school board or committee.

## 3. Guidelines for committee reports to the board

The following guidelines apply to the agenda reports:

- Not all committees are expected to report at each meeting. The administrator or board chair will schedule in advance only those who need to and are ready to report.

- Reports and recommendations normally will be in writing and sent to board members in advance, with the agenda.
- Recommendations shall be dealt with in this part of the meeting.
- Decisions of the board will be in keeping with the purpose of the school.

In closing the meeting, it is good to allow a few minutes for members to express their feelings about the meeting and suggestions for improvement. The strictest rules for meetings will call for an adjournment time to be set at the beginning of the meeting. This suggestion will keep the chair and board members on task and on schedule.

## 4. Skills for moving an idea forward

The following skills may be used throughout the meeting. Board members will sense the appropriate time for using any given skill. Developing a sense when a given skill is appropriate is another characteristic of a good board member. Some skills needed to move an idea forward include the following:

- Initiating or introducing a new idea, plan or solution. This is often accomplished through a recommendation. The idea or solution should be clearly stated, for it is the basis for the conversation that follows.
- Clarifying or rephrasing things that are not clear to all members. Generally, if an idea is not clear, facial expression will show it. When that occurs, it is important that someone in the group attempt to clarify the position or restate it.
- Giving information or an opinion about an idea is the task of every member. Once an idea has been presented, every member will seek to share information or give an opinion about the idea. Only then will the collective wisdom of the board be known. Every member of the board needs to know that his or her opinion, idea or feeling is important.
- Seeking information or the opinion of others is an important skill. Some board members need the encouragement of others to share their feelings and views.
- Summarizing what has been said during board discussion is particularly helpful prior to reaching a decision.
- Staying on the subject is every member's responsibility. Board members must limit themselves to the subject and gently encourage other members to do the same.

## 5. Skills for making decisions

Some decisions are mandated and guided by existing policies. Decisions not already directed by existing policies may progressively form throughout a meeting until the board is ready for concluding the matter by making a decision, which then should be under consideration as a potential policy. Do not proceed without carefully reading Chapter 4.

Following adequate discussion of the issue, a poll of the board by the chair may indicate consensus. By asking members to briefly state their opinion on the issue in question, consensus may be

reached. Should that be the case, the decision can be recorded as approved by consensus.

Roberts Rules of Order, or the majority-vote procedure, is the most common form for reaching a decision. As with the consensus poll, the chair may call for a motion, and second, to take action on the question. A majority vote in favor of the question means the motion has passed.

Major decisions should have the consensus of the board prior to calling the question. Decisions made by only a few dominant voices are generally poor practice, but a “majority rules” is acceptable.

## 6. Following the meeting

When the agenda is completed and the decisions are made, important activities following the meeting remain. These activities may include:

- The distribution of board minutes to all members
- Materials from the meeting distributed to absent members
- Action of the board communicated to parties directly affected by the action
- Reports made to the faculty and staff of the church and school
- Summary of board action reported to constituents of the church and school
- Follow-up correspondence and phone calls as needed
- Plan and schedule assignments made at the meeting
- Prepare for the next board meeting

Board members shall remember that the board in session makes decisions. Members are not to make decisions outside of the board meeting. Board members will report the action of the board with appropriate confidentiality as required. Matters that are particularly sensitive will require the board to decide how and by whom it will be communicated. Members are obligated to report the corporate decision of the board. Under no circumstance shall a member discuss the decision in a negative manner.

## Goal Setting

A goal states a direction and the steps needed to arrive at that goal, or a goal states what is intended to be accomplished and the intention to accomplish it.

Goals can be short range—up to one year, or long range—two, three, or more years. Short-term goals may include small facility improvements, policy updates or handbook revisions. For the most part, these can be accomplished as part of the regular annual agenda. Long-term goals may include adding staff, facility

expansion or addition of significant programs. These usually require more than just one year of planning and effort.

Goals usually emerge when a vision is projected. Developing and projecting a vision is the business of the administrator, acting alone or in consort with others, including board members. This vision is articulated to the school board, pastor, parents, teachers and students toward the fulfillment of the mission of the church and school. As the vision is developed and articulated, goals are set to bring the vision to fruition. Ultimately, the setting of goals leads to school improvement through the board’s guidance or governance.

## STEPS FOR DEVELOPING GOALS

### 1. Determine needs

The list of needs may be generated from large scale, formal surveys or simple observations by the staff and board. In identifying areas needing improvement, the list may get long. Some needs are closely related and can be coordinated into one goal. Remember, achieving even a single goal will build confidence and momentum for the board. National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) self-studies and accreditation reports will help in determining needs.

### 2. Establish priorities

All areas needing guidance or governance cannot be addressed at the same time. The board will have to consider which areas of improvement need attention first, which are most practical and possible and which can be scheduled for the next meeting or the following year. At times, board members may question which need should have top priority. By returning to the mission statement, conflicts of priority may be averted. Remember, several goals can be pursued at the same time; some goals will need several years to accomplish. The administrator’s guidance and recommendations will help the board establish priorities.

### 3. Gather information

Information often encompasses resources: materials, people and dollars. Information is needed that will help the board and others see needs clearly and support plans toward improvement. As the administrator or assigned board member gathers information, it is important to involve parents, students, teachers, congregation members and other stakeholders. They will not only provide useful information and insights, but may also become important resources in achieving the goal. Based on the information gathered, the board may find it necessary to shift or modify priorities.

### 4. Prepare goal statements

A written goal statement is needed. The written statement will help the board, administrator and others agree on exactly what the need is and what the plan is for achieving it. A written goal statement will become the case statement for convincing others to support the goal. Goal statements shall clearly state the need, the plan to meet the need and the resources (people, materials and money) needed to accomplish the goal.

## 5. Develop plans and strategies

This step is often accomplished in conjunction with developing a goal statement. The plan for reaching the goal needs to include the steps and schedule that will be followed; it needs to identify the persons responsible and resources needed. For many goals, the plan will be relatively simple; for others considerable detail is necessary.

## 6. Implement the plan

Once the goal has been approved, work on the goal begins according to the established schedule. People involved in the plan need to be informed and supervised. Momentum needs to be developed and maintained. Constituents should be informed, helping people feel excited about reaching the goal.

## Problem Solving

A basic goal of the school board is to work for improvement in all aspects of the school operation. Working for improvement usually means overcoming obstacles. Solving a single, significant school-related problem contributes to the improvement of related aspects of school life. Solving significant problems, one-by-one, over time is a certain way to work for improvement and achieve excellence. While some problems can be resolved easily and quickly, most problems require intentional planning, effort and time.

### STEPS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

These problem-solving steps apply to many issues and can be used by a board, committee or individual.

#### Step 1: Define the problem.

Before attempting to solve a problem, the problem needs to be clearly understood and accepted as a problem. While it may appear to be a move backwards, getting to the root of the problem will lead the board to a more thorough and appropriate solution that will prevent future problems.

#### Step 2: Determine what is to be accomplished and for what purpose.

This step will help to focus on the reason for solving the problem, determine what improvement is expected and decide how these improvements will help achieve the board's goals.

#### Step 3: Identify the obstacles or factors that must be overcome.

This is where obstacles and contributing factors are identified and addressed. When a number of factors exist, the board will want to determine which ones contribute most to the problem and which factors should be dealt with first.

#### Step 4: Develop a plan for overcoming or eliminating the obstacle.

This is the key step in working for improvement. Each obstacle or factor will be addressed. In developing a plan for each factor, the following questions should be answered:

- What action or activity is proposed? (Describe each action or activity).
- When will the action or activity take place?
- Who will be responsible for carrying out the plan?
- What costs, if any, are involved and how will they be funded?

#### Step 5: Summarize in writing the responses to steps 1–4.

A written summary or report provides a comprehensive statement of the problem, its importance and its solution. The summary can be shared with leaders, committees and boards in seeking their understanding and support. It can be used for communication purposes and will serve as a guide for those responsible for implementing the plan.

#### Step 6: Develop an evaluation plan.

Develop a list, based on previous steps, of the anticipated outcomes that will provide evidence of improvement. Determine who will participate in measuring improvement and also list the dates when that improvement will occur.

#### Step 7: Develop policy statements to assure that improvements will continue.

An important aspect of problem solving is to make sure a problem does not recur and that improvement continues. A good way to accomplish this is to establish a policy or policies that give direction and guidance to future action and activities.

*Note: Read Chapter four—Policy Development and Implementation to assist with this chapter.*

# CHAPTER 4: BOARD POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

## Confusing the Role of Board and Administrator

### Board Governance vs. Management

### Policy and Procedure

### Selecting Topics for Potential Policies

### Developing Written Policies

#### A Process for Revising/Establishing Policies

1. Clarifying the need: A checklist
2. Do your homework: Resource checklist
3. Prepare the initial draft
4. Present and discuss the draft: A checklist
5. Adopt
6. Document and file
7. Implement
8. Communicate to constituents
9. Schedule a review

#### Read chapter four before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. What must you do to protect the school, the administrator and yourself from the board's micromanaging the operation of the school?
2. Given the process suggested for establishing policies, how much meeting time do you anticipate needing each month for this task?
3. Briefly state the differences between policy and procedure. Be ready to remind yourself at each meeting, because the two are easily confused.

## Confusing the Role of Board and Administrator

Lutheran school principals once were selected by seniority, longevity and gender, as well as the demonstrated ability to organize and run a school. In the eyes of some, running a school might simply mean there were few problems and the students seemed to excel. Even today, many Lutheran school principals are teaching full-time. This workload, coupled with a board's desire to be helpful, has led to considerable confusion as to the appropriate and effective role of a school's governing board.

In other situations, Lutheran school boards have perceived a need to assume administration due to conflict with, or lack of confidence in, the administrator. Sometimes a power play ensues as board members seek authority and pursue a need to control day-to-day school operations. These are unhealthy situations that undermine a school's opportunity to conduct educational ministry.

A board makes one of two choices: it governs through direct management or it governs through policy. In short, to govern through direct management, a board would need to be present almost daily to make the decisions necessary to lead a school. In the eyes of the faculty, other staff and students, the authority of the principal would be confusing and often nonexistent. This is unacceptable.

The second choice available to a board is to govern by setting policy and monitoring the policy implementation. Here the board addresses questions such as these:

- "What do we want?"
- "What does the school need?"
- "What are the needs of the students?"
- "How does this fit into our mission and ministry?"

The board sets direction and course for the school by providing policies, and the administrator is responsible for implementing the policies.

Govern by management or govern by policy. The appropriate and effective choice seems clear. Define the role of the board, define the role of the administrator and work together to support each other.

## Board Governance vs. Management

When a board governs by policy ...

- The board more frequently discusses the mission and ministry of the school.
- The board more frequently asks, "What's best for the students?"
- The board approaches meetings positively and is anxious to cover the agenda.
- The faculty views the board as a supportive part of the team—not as a threat.
- The administrator's ability to lead becomes clear, allowing the administrator to grow professionally.

When a board governs by management ...

- Board meetings often are long and difficult.
- The board is not viewed as part of the team.
- Frequent dissent exists among board members.
- Decisions that affect day-to-day operations are made without input from those charged with responsibility for executing the decisions.
- It is difficult to see the big picture and address issues that are far reaching.



## Policy and Procedure

If a board is to be successful governing by policy, it is critical that members understand the difference between policy and procedure. In simple terms, a policy is a general concept of what should be done or not done; a procedure tells how it should be done. Here is an example:

A school needs a policy for overdue accounts. For the good of the school financially, and in fairness to all parents, all accounts need to be current. To provide support for the administrator and influence the parents, the board could adopt this policy:

*All accounts are to be current. Accounts that are not current, within a specified time limit, require student expulsion.*

If a board adopted such a policy (and clearly there are many issues to be addressed before such a statement could be made), it would be the administrator's responsibility to develop a procedure to carry it out. For example:

1. *All family account balances will be reported to parents monthly.*
2. *Accounts that are one month in arrears will receive a communication of concern from the school office. The message will include a request to contact the principal if unusual financial conditions are present.*
3. *Accounts that are two months in arrears will receive a telephone call from the school office requesting a meeting with the administrator and the family involved. During this meeting, a letter will be delivered that states that if the unpaid amount is not paid within 30 days, the child will not be allowed to continue at school.*
4. *One week before a potential expulsion, the principal and a designee shall contact the family to review the consequences of delayed payments and offer to extend the time limit for the debt to be paid if there is a documented financial need.*

The policy statement is adopted by the board. The procedures are prepared and implemented by the administrator. The wise administrator would review the procedure with the board and seek input while retaining final responsibility for the process.

## Selecting Topics for Potential Policies

Normally the administrator will present an issue to the board for potential policy development. As the chief operating officer of the school, the principal observes the day-to-day operations and can identify which policies are needed.

The second most common source of new policy issues is the board itself. Through the process of regular review, the board may identify an issue that is not addressed in the current policy manual and determines that a new policy is needed.

Note that the board is responsible to determine if a policy is needed and adopts needed policies. The administrator's role is to suggest policies that need to be developed, and if directed by the board, prepare a draft of a policy for the board to consider. Just as it is important to keep policy separate from procedure, it is important for the board to do the board's work and the administrator to do the administrator's work.

## Developing Written Policies

To be a policy—to be an answer to a question before it is asked—a policy must be in written form and passed by the board with the full knowledge that they are developing a policy statement. Precedent does not make a policy. While a record in a set of minutes may help to determine past practice (a precedent), it does not make binding policy.

Several steps are needed to develop written policies that assist a board with this important task of policy development. Each step helps the board crystallize its thinking and come closer to a clear and concise statement that provides direction for the school.

## A Process for Revising/Establishing Policies

An institution's constitution and bylaws may provide clear direction for the process of revising and adopting the governing document. A board policy manual also should clearly spell out the required steps. To develop and draft a policy for adoption, consider the following format:

1. Clarify the need (see a detailed checklist later in this chapter)
2. Do your homework (see a detailed checklist later in this chapter)
3. Prepare initial draft
4. Present and discuss the draft
  - First reading
  - Revisions (if needed)
  - Second reading
5. Adopt
6. Document and file
7. Implement
8. Communicate to constituents
9. Schedule a review

### 1. Clarify the need: A checklist

The first issue to be addressed is the need for the policy. The board must determine if there is a compelling need to draft a policy for the issue at hand. To make this determination, answer these questions:

1. What is the issue that needs to be addressed?
2. Can it be stated in a brief paragraph so that all board members understand the subject of discussion?



3. How will this proposed policy assist the administration in the decision-making process?
4. What incident, event or question triggered the need for the issue to come to the attention of the board?
5. Was this a one-time event, or can the board assume that it will recur?
6. Do existing policies already cover this issue?
7. Do other policies cover similar issues that will provide direction for this new policy or that can be revised to include this issue?
8. How will this new policy strengthen the school's commitment to students? to staff? to families?
9. How will this proposed policy promote or extend the mission and ministry of the school?
10. Do issues related to this new policy challenge who we are as Lutheran Christians?
11. What are the legal implications of the proposed policy?

In clarifying the need, the goal is to accomplish two things:

1. To be sure that all board members understand the issue—being able to state the need in a clear and brief statement that is understood by all board members
2. To reach consensus on the question, “Do we need a policy for this issue?”

Practical Application: Developing the need for a policy statement is vital. Consider this situation:

A board member was concerned about the number of days the principal was out of the building while school was in session. The principal was asked to serve on several district committees and to attend regional and district conferences. The board member convinced other board members that this was a policy issue and led the group to adopt the following policy:

The principal may not spend more than two days a month out of the building while school is in session.

Ask these questions:

- Is this a good policy?
- What happens if the principal exceeds this limit?
- Are there months when there could be no absence and then months when the absences might reach four or five days?
- What would happen if a serious injury or other administrative emergency occurred on the “third” day of an absence?

Determining if an issue warrants a policy and then developing a good policy are important work. The board must consider all implications. If such a policy was determined to be necessary, insertion of the word *normally* might put the entire policy into a new light.

## 2. Do your homework: Resource checklist

Once the board has determined the need for a policy related to a particular issue, begin the homework process. The board may direct the administrator to draft a policy. The administrator is encouraged to use the gifts and talents of individual board members, faculty and other staff and to use a variety of resources to gather information that can support the final policy. During this process, questions like these are answered:

1. What are the legal responsibilities related to this issue?
2. Should the school's attorney be consulted before developing a policy statement in this area?
3. Is this a policy that should be sent to the attorney following the board's initial work and prior to final approval?
4. What are the federal, state and local laws that provide direction for this issue? Do these laws apply to nonpublic schools?
5. Has the state board of education issued any directives that need to be considered? Do they apply to nonpublic schools?
6. Are there issues related to the rights of students, parents, staff or significant others that need to be considered?
7. Has the school addressed this issue before? Do board meeting minutes document any prior decisions that provide direction in this area? How did the board respond to similar issues?
8. Which other Lutheran schools are willing to share policies in this area?
9. How does the local public school address this issue in a policy format?
10. How can current research on the subject be summarized in a manner that would help the board?
11. What are the spiritual issues addressed by this policy? Are they consistent with the mission and ministry of our church? Are they consistent with Holy Scripture? Should the pastor be consulted about this proposed policy?
12. What implication does the policy have on other areas of congregational ministry?
13. Do synodical or district issues need to be considered? Should the District school executive be consulted?
14. Will the development of this policy help the administrator carry out day-to-day responsibilities?

Finding answers to these questions requires time and resources. The administrator needs to develop a resource network that can make this task of “homework” manageable. Here are some suggestions:

Develop a people network.

Every administrator needs a network for timely assistance. In the case of policy development, an administrator should have access to a local public school administrator responsible for policy development, an attorney that can review and respond to policy questions, colleagues in Lutheran schools that can provide insights to how the issues were addressed in their settings and someone who is good at editing. It may be good to have a team of past board chairpersons who can be contacted for historical information as well as serving as a good sounding board for new policies.

Special note: For Lutheran school administrators, a valuable resource is the LEA-LEAD Administrators Listserv (LEADnet). This resource allows a principal access to many administrators through email. The administrators on the listserv are often helpful and can offer good insights to the issue at hand. For additional information, contact the Lutheran Education Association (LEA).

Develop a mini-library.

Keeping a comprehensive library of resources helpful to policy development would be difficult. There are, however, some resources that should be on every administrator's shelf. Consider the following:

- Your current policy manual
- Your local public school policy manual
- Your state laws related to schools
- Nonpublic school association materials
- Resources available from the Lutheran School Portal
- Resources that support the philosophy of policy statement that you have adopted—an example would be resources that explain the Carver model of governance by policy. (See *carvergovernance.com*.)
- Government resources from the U.S. Department of Education (*ed.gov*) and your state department of education
- Resources from the National School Board Association (*nsba.org*)
- Other parts of this board manual
- The Internet also allows the administrator to do topical searches and access major libraries as many schools are posting their policy manuals on the Internet.

Seek input from the constituency.

The administrator should seek input from those who will be affected by the policy. Consider input from the faculty, pastor and staff. Also consider input from parents, students and other individuals within your school setting.

### 3. Prepare the initial draft

Normally, the administrator prepares a draft for presentation to the board. This process is important for two reasons:

1. The administrator is best equipped to process the research that has been transformed into a draft format.
2. Since the administrator is responsible to carry out the policy, direct involvement in the drafting process will help to assure harmony between written policy and implementation.

Several issues surface when it is time to draft a policy statement. The format of the policy book is significant on the list. Does the school use a traditional format for a policy, or does it use an alternative format such as the Carver model?

Traditional formats are similar to this example: *All accounts are to be current. Accounts that are not current, within a specified time limit, require student expulsion.*

The Carver format for the same issue might appear this way: *The principal may not allow accounts to fall into arrears.*

Generally, the Carver format allows more flexibility for the administrator while the traditional format is more specific. The format that you select should remain consistent throughout your board manual. While one may favor one philosophy over the other, having a consistent policy manual is more important than the style or format. Generally, the school and the congregation should use the same format.

One major concern when drafting a policy statement is to keep it devoid of procedure. The board is responsible to adopt policy. It is the administrator's responsibility to develop the procedure needed to implement and administer the policy. Keep procedure out of policy statements!

During the drafting stage, this responsibility lies with the administrator. During a meeting to discuss a proposed policy, it is everyone's responsibility to discriminate between policy and procedure and to challenge any possible crossover. One way to test this is to ask, "Does the policy state what needs to be done rather than how it is to be done?"

### 4. Present and discuss the draft: A checklist

Once the administrator has completed the drafting process, the next step is to present the proposed policy to the board for the first reading. Here are some questions to ask when considering any policy draft:

1. Does the policy statement capture the desire of the board when the issue was presented?
2. Is the proposed policy within the authority of the board as granted by the congregation or association?
3. Is the proposed policy consistent with the mission and ministry of the congregation/school?
4. Is the proposed policy consistent with known local, state and federal law?

5. Is the proposed policy consistent with existing board policies?
6. Is the proposed policy in harmony with the constitution and bylaws of the congregation or association?
7. Does the policy state a decision that represents good educational practice?
8. Does the policy state a decision that represents good business practice?
9. Is the policy reasonable?
10. Is the policy enforceable?
11. What are the projected costs of implementing the policy?
12. Can the organization bear the cost of the decision?
13. Does the policy anticipate all elements of the issue?
14. Is the policy limited to a single issue or several directly related issues?
15. Should this policy be divided into separate policies?
16. What heading (title) would you place on this policy?

As board members work through questions like these, allow time for discussion to avoid a “rubber stamp.” Board members may have suggestions that require the policy to be reworked. The administrator should take the suggested changes as well as any editorial updates and prepare a final draft for the second reading and adoption. In some schools, a second reading will not be standard practice. The minutes of the meeting will need to accurately reflect the final version of the policy.

### 5. Adopt

When the policy is ready for adoption, either at the second reading (the meeting in which the policy is to be considered) or after final revision, the policy statement is again read orally. This time there is no discussion. The policy is presented for adoption and either passes with the required vote or consensus, or it is defeated. Common sense indicates that in the event of a minor typographical error, such a revision would be allowed.

### 6. Document and file

Following the adoption, the board should approve the policy’s insertion into the board’s policy manual and approve its location within the manual, with any key words that will be used for cross referencing.

### 7. Implement

The responsibility for implementation lies with the administrator. In the meeting following the adoption of a policy, the administrator should report a procedure to implement the policy. In some cases, this will be a brief statement. In others, it will require a detailed procedure for addressing the issue. Such procedures should be presented to the board as a report. The administrator should listen to comments and suggestions and then revise the procedure as needed. Special care must be taken in the agenda process to keep this step from becoming another policy adoption process. In some cases, the administrator may outline a procedure to implement the policy and report it at the time of introduction to the board.

### 8. Communicate to constituents

In most cases, board personnel change annually. Newly elected officers or board members may not have the background as that of the current members. Policy development orientation as well as an orientation to the actual policy manual is an important step in the efficient operation of the board and use of board meeting time.

A decision by the administrator related to the orientation of faculty members, parents and other members of the extended school family will also need to be made. Those affected by a policy should be informed with as much advance notice as possible.

### 9. Schedule a review

The board should have an established routine for reviewing approved policies. Consider the following options:

- At the time a policy is adopted, establish a sunset date. This implies that the policy is in force until a prescribed date. Prior to that date, the board would need to review the policy, establish a new sunset date or allow the policy to expire. This process would keep a policy manual from being cluttered with outdated policies.
- Establish a review date for each policy. This could be done at the time the policy is adopted or at any subsequent time. Establishing a date for review would be helpful to the board chairperson and the administrator in setting an agenda for the board.
- Form a subcommittee of the board to review each policy annually. Again, this would assure that the policies remain current. The board may request assistance from selected faculty, congregation members and school parents.
- Regardless of the procedure for policy review, the key to success is to create a plan and then work the plan. Outdated policies can be as much of a problem as the absence of a policy.

# CHAPTER 5: SCHOOLS WITHOUT TRADITIONAL BOARDS

Although it is commonly accepted that an effective school board is the backbone of efficient and visionary educational practice, a few dissenters might contend that a school without a board is like a fish without a bicycle—or at least like a highway without barricades. Is it possible for a school to function successfully—even preferably—without a traditional board?

This chapter will discuss alternative governance systems to the traditional board of education or policy-based management styles:

- Why would a school go to such a system?
- When should a school do so?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a plan?
- How could such a systemic change be implemented?

Schools consider alternative operating systems as the more traditional methods are becoming too cumbersome. In this age of instant access to information and real-time communication, waiting to make decisions regarding policy or practice until the next monthly board meeting—and then often until the next council meeting—seems unnecessarily sluggish. Also, education is no longer a low-tech, populist endeavor. Professional expertise is called for in curricular, managerial, legal and psychosocial areas. School board members change as terms expire and new volunteers arise, but the on-going needs and issues involved in a school must be consistent and current. They often call for immediate action based on professional judgment and experience. In addition, school board meetings are easily hampered by personality, control and personal agenda issues. Freeing a school administrator to make policy-setting as well as day-to-day decisions allows for the best practices in educational leadership to flourish.

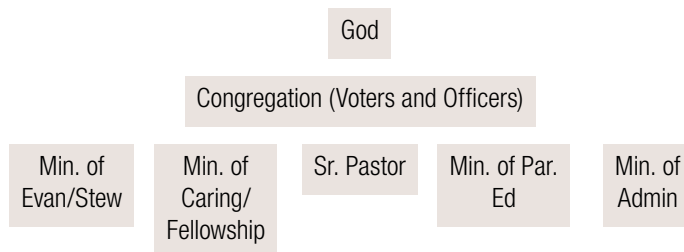
Schools that have successfully been able to move to a non-board model are typically part of a large congregation with many professional and business-oriented members. They find themselves hampered by the bureaucracy of too many boards and committees. They are frustrated by the time required to attend endless meetings and are comfortable with the concept of delegating authority and accountability to those capable of carrying out the tasks for which they are responsible.

Such a change of practice must be part of a systemic, congregation-wide constitutional revision. The school administrator may work with other congregational leaders to determine needs and possibilities, but the decision to do so must be supported by all in authority for the plan to work. There must also be a great deal of trust and ability to work together as a ministry team—among ministry leaders themselves as well as between members and leaders.

This is not a plan to try in desperation at a time of crisis management. Functioning without a traditional board is one means of managing growth in an exceptionally efficient manner. It is best implemented after years of analytical and critical planning and after enlisting support from pastors and congregational leaders.

How can a school and church function without official boards? With a great deal of prayer and planning in place! The following is one congregation's organizational chart. It is not the only way or even the best way; but it has functioned successfully with a few modifications over many years.

## Organizational Chart No-Board Model



These five ministers comprise a ministerial council, at which level policy-based decisions are made. The budget is ultimately approved by them upon the recommendation of the Minister of Administration, based on input from the other ministers and the directors they represent. Congregational meetings may be called at any time to conduct special business, but an annual meeting is required each May. At this annual meeting, a yearly report compiled by the ministry team is presented and the congregation approves the ministry plan for the following year, along with the budget required to implement it.

The ministers, with the exception of the Minister of Word and Worship, are not required to be ordained. The Minister of Administration is often a layperson with business expertise and experience. The Minister of Education is an LCMS commissioned educator. This ministerial team meets at least weekly for planning and program evaluation along with the principal, early childhood director, youth director and lead office staff. The ministerial team level may be organized as a Board of Directors, and some specific positions may be modified in title or accountability, but the responsibility of administrating the school ultimately rests in the principal, with no governing board of education attached.

In the above model, the responsibilities of the Minister of Parish Education include Vacation Bible School, Weekday School, Early Childhood Director, Principal, Sunday School and Adult Education.

The principal role oversees teachers, extended care director and staff, aides, student organizations and so forth.

The principal and early childhood director are both accountable to the Minister of Parish Education and follow the current policy



manual. Policies and procedures can be adjusted, however, as needed by the principal or early childhood director with the approval of the Minister of Parish Education. The administrators meet with the Minister of Parish Education weekly.

A parent advisory group or specific parent task forces may be appointed by the administrator for on-going or specific input and advice, but such groups are non-policy making.

A grievance procedure is also in place by which a parent or student may appeal the school administrator's action to the Minister of Parish Education and then to the Senior Pastor. By the time issues get that far, the parties have already discussed the matter and come to consensus.

Written policies continue to provide direction and boundaries. Administrators and the Minister of Parish Education must continually update and communicate current guidelines. It is important for school parents to know the system under which the school and congregation operate.

Despite the advantages of timeliness and autonomy for administrators, there are potential problems inherent in operating a school without an official board. Certain safeguards must be in place in order for the plan to work successfully.

- A clear line of authority must be delineated within the plan. It must be very clear who is accountable to whom and the parameters of each job description.
- Job descriptions of all positions must be clearly defined.
- A high level of trust is necessary in the people who hold the positions of authority and among those who work together.
- It is essential to have a complete, current and thorough policy manual in place.
- All staff must have unity of mission and purpose, which supersedes petty differences of opinion.
- Staff must be highly qualified in their area of expertise, be willing to assume responsibility and be able to work together collaboratively and cooperatively as a team.
- Internal and external communication must be systematic and ongoing. Channels for such communication must be in place and in use.
- New personnel must complement and fit in with the existing staff.
- Sufficient time and opportunity for discussion must be provided before such a systemic change is made. Allow for transition of thought and attitude, and then implement the plan.

It is important to provide opportunities for input from interested and qualified "stake-holders." Parents and congregational members must have a means of expressing their opinions and

concerns. This opportunity can be in the form of focus groups, advisory councils or informational meetings. While most people appreciate not being required to attend weekly or monthly meetings, they do want to be kept informed about what is going on and have the opportunity to make their opinions known.

The question has arisen as to whether or not accrediting agencies will look favorably upon schools that do not have functioning boards. Such issues must be discussed with each agency, but it has been the case that the agency looks at the effectiveness and reliability of whatever governing system is in place. It validates that the school is operating as planned, that grievance procedures are in place and that there is accountability and depth in the administrative process.

Advantages to operating under this type of system can be significant.

- Responsible individuals have the freedom and opportunity to make decisions quickly and on the basis of sound principles.
- There is little micromanaging on the part of those who are not directly accountable.
- Educational decisions are made by professional educators.
- Spiritual matters are addressed by those who are firmly rooted in Lutheran/Christian tradition and doctrine.
- In a congregation with an active and growing ministry, it is often difficult to find willing and qualified workers for all the tasks needing to be done. Board and committees compete for the same popular and skilled people. Hard-working volunteers often burn out. Under this plan, volunteers are enlisted in advisory capacities or for short-term projects. The stress is alleviated and better use is made of people's strengths.
- In active congregations, effective ministries need to be ongoing and uninterrupted as membership and lay leadership change over the years. Putting the daily operating functions in the hands of a responsible professional staff is conducive to consistency and efficiency. The ultimate authority continues to rest in the congregational voters' assembly, but tasks are delegated to those who are given responsible positions.

While functioning without a board may seem like a "dream come true," the reality of the situation is that in such a position the school administrator assumes tremendous responsibility. There is no board to blame for unpopular decisions. An administrator must be able to assess, initiate and make solid decisions; have the trust of students, parents and congregational members; and offer opportunities for input and advice. The administrator must also have a positive working relationship with the Minister of Parish Education and Senior Pastor as well as with the other ministers.

Before such a plan can be implemented in a congregation, people must evidence a willingness to try new and innovative strategies in order to accomplish their common mission. There must be



strong leadership in place—pastoral and congregational—and high confidence in that leadership. Qualified compatible workers must be found for each position. Everyone concerned must be ready and able to function effectively in a rapid-fire, ever-adapting mode.

Such a non-board model of governance is becoming more common in Lutheran schools. Comments from those involved are highly positive:

- It's not for everyone, but I love having the freedom to be an educational leader without having to deal with board conflict.
- I appreciate having the Minister of Parish Education as an ally and a resource.
- It is so helpful to be able to make decisions and deal with issues in a time-efficient manner!
- I was afraid parents would complain about not having a board to deal with policy and practice, but no one has ever even asked. They see that things are being run efficiently and that they have the recourse of bringing concerns to the Minister of Parish Education or pastor if necessary, but that seldom happens. We try to make our positions clear.
- I need to use parents more in advisory situations and set up task forces in certain areas.

- Building trust took awhile, but parents know they can talk to me at any time and I will listen. I will act on their concerns if I am convinced it is for the good of our students and our mission. They like seeing timely results.
- I feel like a trusted professional, not a questionable defendant.
- Not all parents understand the unique nature of a Lutheran school. I like being able to make decisions based on scriptural principles and spend my time and effort educating and motivating people rather than arguing about which principles to uphold.
- More ministry gets accomplished in the church and the school.
- There is great potential to run amok, but also great freedom to do what is needed in order to accomplish the goal.
- This is an exciting way to do ministry!

*Be sure to connect with your LCMS District office to identify Lutheran schools in your area that operate without a traditional board.*

# CHAPTER 6: BOARD/ADMINISTRATION RELATIONSHIPS AND STAFFING RESPONSIBILITIES

## Working Together

### The Role of Administrator

### The Relationship Between Board and Administrator

### Determining the Administrator's Responsibilities

### Five Responsibilities of the Administrator

### Directing the Administrator

### The Board's Role in Administrator Assessment

### Supporting the Administrator

### Conflict

### Job Descriptions

1. Sample job description and evaluation form
2. A Carver model job description

### Employment Procedures: Calls and Contracts

1. Legal agreements
2. Call rubrics and employment resources

### Personnel Priorities

### Conditions of Service: A Checklist

### Classification of Staff

### Caring for the Staff

### Terminating Staff

### Reduction in Force (RIF)

### Tenure

### Staff Grievance or Staff Conflict

### Board Role in Teacher Assessment/Evaluation

### Working Together as a Team

### Support Staff

### Provisions for Support Staff

1. Qualifications
2. Job description
3. Contract

### Volunteers

Steps for establishing and maintaining volunteer programs

Read chapter six before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. What are the best features of your administrator's job description? What could use revision?
2. What, if anything, confuses you about the differences between Calls and contracts? Why might Calls be preferable to contracts? Any legitimate disadvantages?
3. Do you require personnel to sign off on behavioral expectations, e.g., dress code (appearance), LGBT issues, church attendance, etc.? See [lcms.org/resources/churchadministration](http://lcms.org/resources/churchadministration) for help.

## Working Together

The Lutheran school board and its administrator must maintain a productive, Christ-centered relationship. Without it, dissension, disillusion, dissatisfaction and despair take hold. Ultimately, the winner is Satan and the losers are the students and parents for whom both have been entrusted to provide Gospel-centered instruction. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Cor. 12:12, 27, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with the body of Christ. ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

Christ is the focal point in our relationships with one another in a Lutheran school setting. It is because of the relationship He established through His Spirit in baptism that administrators and boards can go about their tasks in mutual love, support and respect.

## The Role of Administrator

The board recognizes the school administrator as the key person through whom the board carries out its responsibilities. Therefore, it is essential that the administrator's role is clearly defined in a job/ministry description. The role of administrators is to adhere to their job description and "be imitators of Christ."

*Sample policy (traditional model): The administrator shall act in a manner that is professional, ethical, legal, consistent with the philosophy and mission of the school, and within the boundaries of the administrator's job description and policies and by laws of the board.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The administrator shall not act in a manner that is unethical, immoral or inconsistent with the philosophy, mission and governing documents of the school and congregation.*

## The Relationship Between Board and Administrator

The administrator and board must have a thorough knowledge of and support for the other's role. Sometimes the administrator

views the board as an adversary instead of an ally. The administrator of the Lutheran school is the on-the-job administrative officer of the board, who drafts policies and carries out the board-adopted policies. The role of the board is to intentionally support and uphold the office of the administrator as they work together to support the Lutheran school.

*Sample policy (traditional model): The board supports the administrator as he/she administers the school.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The relationship between the board and administrator shall not negatively affect the operation of the school.*

## Determining the Administrator's Responsibilities

Who is it that determines the administrator's responsibilities at a Lutheran school? Is it the pastor, the school board or board of directors or an influential group of parents?

The administrator's responsibilities determine the leadership focus of the school. So who determines the administrator's responsibilities? The task rests with the school board.

## Five Responsibilities of the Administrator

Specific examples of enumerated responsibilities vary by congregation. Connect with the LCMS District office and neighboring Lutheran schools for appropriate examples. Writing a policy or policies for determining the responsibilities of an administrator should include statements related to five broad categories:

### Spiritual leader

- Maintain consistency between the school and congregation's mission statement and its practices and activities.
- Coordinate, conduct and/or participate in faculty devotions.
- Provide a model of participation in Bible study, church attendance, participation in Holy Communion and prayer.
- Consult regularly with the pastor(s) regarding the spiritual development of the school families and staff.

### Educational leader

- Coordinate, direct and supervise school curriculum development and evaluation.
- Develop and manage a program for the supervision of teachers and instruction.
- Provide a plan for development and use of educational resources for students, teachers and parents.
- Provide for planning and administration of in-service opportunities for professional and spiritual growth.

### Relationship builder/nurturer

- Coordinate, direct, supervise and evaluate a school environment where students, parents, teachers and support staff experience positive growth and learning that enables each child to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and academically.
- Manage behavior for the school so that students act in harmony with God's Word, in accord with insights and knowledge of child behavior and in accordance with board and state policy and laws.
- Initiate and maintain a program by which the personal and professional well-being of all teachers and support staff in the school is supported in accordance with policies and directives of the school board.

### Communicator

- Report to the board relevant information to help them do their job better.
- Prepare, present and carry out a written marketing plan.
- Publish and distribute notices, newsletters and press releases consistent with the school's mission statement.
- Develop and carry out a program of printed and personal communications for the constituent groups of the school and community to keep them informed about the school and to involve them in the work of the school to enhance their good will, support and confidence.

### Manager

- Maintain proper records of students, faculty and support staff.
- File minutes of the board, including official and legal transactions.
- File data and information appropriate for maintaining a school history file.
- Maintain correspondence with church and state offices and as otherwise appropriate for conducting the affairs of the school.
- Conduct the business affairs of the school as allowed or directed by policy.
- Recruit, enroll and maintain students in the school.
- Prepare and manage the budget and report the school's financial condition to the appropriate board.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures applicable to students, faculty and support staff, including but not limited to employment-related policies and procedures.
- Ensure appropriate background checks and clearance for child protection are performed on all employees, volunteers and any other personnel interacting with children.
- Ensure that facilities are adequately maintained to carry out the school's programs and meet all local, state and federal fire, safety and health requirements.

In addition, phrases such as visionary leadership, stewardship, leadership, planning leadership and development leadership are frequently used to describe other areas of an administrator's responsibilities.

*Sample Policy (traditional model): The administrator will ensure that the school facilities are maintained so they support the mission and ministry of the school and comply with all local, state and federal safety, fire and health requirements.*

## Directing the Administrator

The school board is responsible for directing the administrator. Their direction comes from the job/ministry description written for the administrator and are reviewed annually. The school board works with the administrator, monitoring performance in compliance with the policies of the board.

*Sample policy (traditional model): The authority of the administrator is to carry out the policies established by the board. Except as required by governing policies or law, decisions of the administrator do not need approval by the board.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The administrator will not act contrary to board policy.*

## The Board's Role in Administrator Assessment

Currently in Lutheran schools, administrator assessment covers a spectrum, from never having formal performance assessment to semi-annual reviews performed by a large committee of various school constituents.

What is the purpose and goal for a performance assessment of an administrator, how often should it occur and who is responsible for reviewing the performance?

The purpose for a performance review is to ensure that the administrator systematically complies with policies of the school. The goal is work toward improvement.

Ideally, the performance review should take place annually, initiated by the board chairperson and based on the administrator's job/ministry description. The method of assessing the administrator may take a variety of forms.

A job description/assessment tool appears in a later section of this chapter under the heading of Job Description. Whatever the tools used for assessment, it should evaluate only the performance of the principal relative to the job description.

The chairperson of the board or the executive committee (chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer) may seek the input of teachers, students, parents, pastoral staff, support

staff and other board members in compiling information for the performance assessment. Once the information has been gathered, the committee prepares an assessment to be reviewed and approved by the entire school board. The board chair then discusses and reviews the assessment with the administrator.

The main goal in administrative assessment is to assist the school's leader in maintaining a high level of performance in carrying out the policies and procedures of the school and to work for improvement. When this process is followed, most administrators do well and perform at their highest capacity. However, if the intent is viewed as an attempt to manipulate, control or dismiss the administrator, then it will be difficult for administrators to perform at their best capacity. When possible, if a board is in conflict with the administrator, the conflict should be reconciled before the annual assessment. The local LCMS District offices are resources should this situation occur.

## Supporting the Administrator

One responsibility of the board is to support, care for and help the personnel serving the church that they might experience joy and achievement. This responsibility is carried out toward the administrator in a direct and intentional way because of the board's direct relationship with the administrator. The administrator's effectiveness is enhanced considerably when the board intentionally upholds that office. Specific ways a board can support its administrator include the following:

- Affirm the administrator publicly and privately. This is achieved by sending personal notes of appreciation or celebrating a special day for the administrator.
- Recognize the administrator's personal and professional achievements. Such achievements can be included in the church's publication, school newsletter or a press release to the local newspaper, LCMS District supplement to the *Lutheran Witness* or other publications.
- Accept the administrator in the social structure of the congregation. Invite the administrator and spouse to attend congregational events.
- Encourage and support professional growth and service within congregation, community and educational circles. Allow the administrator time away to join a community organization, take college classes, attend Lutheran Education Association (LEA) conferences and participate in special projects for Lutheran schools sponsored by the Synod.
- Give the administrator the necessary time to be an administrator of the school.
- Help the administrator to be "the best administrator ever" by seeing to it that physical, emotional and spiritual needs are nurtured. Monitor the administrator's work activity. Be a good listener.
- Above all, keep the administrator and, if applicable, the administrator's family in daily prayer.

As this support is demonstrated between board and administrator, so it is modeled to staff, parents, students and congregation members. Unless board support for the administrator exists, the administrator can become a target for skeptics and critics who have issues with the policy of the board and the procedures implemented by the administrator. The credibility and effectiveness of the board and administrator increase as they speak with one voice. One excellent way members of the school board can support the administrator is to be an advocate for the Lutheran school, to be intensely loyal to its purpose and to live in caring and loving ways that glorify Jesus Christ as Lord over all.

## Conflict

At times, board members may not agree with the administrator. When disagreements occur, an attempt should be made to resolve these disagreements in private prior to the next board meeting. They should follow the guidelines of conflict resolution found in Matthew 18 and be carried out promptly, privately and confidentially. However, certain disagreements such as issues related to the welfare of the school, students or school employees should be addressed publicly at the board level.

If disagreements arise during a meeting, they should be handled in a spirit of respect and courtesy. The administrator and board member may end up agreeing to disagree with each other. Their differences should not affect the overall responsibility each party has in school leadership.



## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The following is a sample job description and assessment form. Assessments of the principal should be based on the expectations outlined by the congregation through its school board; therefore, the sample document below may be appropriate, especially if it is adapted by the local board, because it combines both job description and assessment into a single document.

### 1. School Administrator Job Description and Evaluation Form (SAMPLE)

Name:

Position:

Evaluator:

Date:

Since an administrator should be evaluated based on his or her job description, this document is both a job description (without numbers) and a rating scale to be completed by the board chair. It shall be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the administrator as the leader of a Lutheran school. It shall be completed each year by the chairperson of the school board or by the executive committee. Its purpose is to assist in maintaining a high level of performance by the school administrator.

Rating scale (*circle the appropriate number for each item*)

5 = *Excellent--Exceptional ability; exceeds expectations*

4 = *Commendable—Performs job expectations very well*

3 = *Acceptable—Meets job expectations*

2 = *Needs Improvement—Improvement is needed to meet expectations in all areas*

N = *Not Applicable—Not applicable to this administrator*

#### 1. The administrator as spiritual leader of the school:

Understands and is committed to the overall ministry of Christian Education in church and school.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Is a Christian role model for staff and students.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Is committed to personal growth in Word and Sacrament.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Exhibits leadership in the spiritual growth of faculty, staff and students.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Strives to maintain the confessional stance of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Strives to make the faith curriculum and chapel services effective, meaningful and applicable to the Christian life.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Plans and implements outreach to non-member families.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Works to improve the spiritual climate of the school.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates that the spiritual mission of the school is the highest priority for time, energy and service.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates servant leadership.

N 1 2 3 4 5

#### 2. As executive staff of the board:

Complies with statutes, applicable laws and government rules and regulations, including but not limited to background checks, mandatory reporting and child protection.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Appropriately delegates authority and responsibility.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Provides adequate information for effective board meetings.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Cooperates with the LCMS district and synod levels.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Works effectively with support staff.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Sets goals and plans to achieve them.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Manages time effectively.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Keeps the board informed of all school related activities, needs and successes.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Provides written reports to the board.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Responsibly carries out board policies.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Provides leadership in the review and development of school policy.

N 1 2 3 4 5

### 3. As manager of the school:

Effectively manages the school office.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Effectively plans and administers an annual budget.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Manages all funds with skill, integrity and responsibility.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Assures the safety of students, faculty and families.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Plans for efficient long-range and short-range operation of facilities and equipment.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Supervises appropriate use of the facilities and equipment.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Holds faculty and staff responsible for assigned tasks and procedures.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Uses appropriate technology tools.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Creates, implements and enforces appropriate school policies and procedures in compliance with applicable city, state and local laws and regulations.

N 1 2 3 4 5

### 4. As leader of curriculum and instruction:

Demonstrates knowledge of curriculum trends.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Is aware of student curriculum needs.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Motivates and assists staff as they set curriculum objectives.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates knowledge of effective teaching techniques.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Plans and implements staff development activities.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Assists staff in selecting and evaluating instructional materials.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Secures appropriate involvement of students, staff and community regarding curricular and/or instructional objectives.

N 1 2 3 4 5

### 5. As staff leader:

Provides appropriate praise and recognition for staff.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Uses discretion when discussing students, staff and families.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Determines staff assignments to insure a balance of classroom, school and church responsibilities.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Evaluates staff responsibilities and ministry effectiveness.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Provides clear and consistent direction for the staff.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates appropriate use of Matthew 18 in dealing with staff problems.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Promotes and supports staff initiative and innovation.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Orients and supports new staff.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Promotes goal-setting/self-improvement for staff members.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Uses a systematic program of teacher supervision.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates knowledge of professional literature/research.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Benefits from constructive criticism.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Maintains membership and participation in professional organizations.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Practices appropriate techniques of leadership.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Models professional growth through participation in workshops, conferences and graduate courses.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Maintains professional certifications.

N 1 2 3 4 5

### 6. As director of student relations:

Assists students to take responsibility for their conduct.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Promotes students' respect for the rights, property and opinions of others.

N 1 2 3 4 5

Understands and respects students' growth as individuals.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Maintains communication with students.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Is available before, during and after school hours for conferencing with students, parents and staff.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Familiar with students personally while maintaining a professional relationship.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Annually updates promotional materials and applications.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Personally interviews all families who apply.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Follows up on all potential students who are not registered.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Provides leadership in student retention.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Helps to secure financial aid for families experiencing financial stress.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Supports the philosophy that every child needs a Christ-centered education.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

#### **7. As director of community relations:**

Works effectively with groups.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Secures effective use of human and community resources.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Maintains effective communication with families.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Speaks and writes accurately and correctly.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Develops and uses effective procedures for reporting to school constituents.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates knowledge of community-based activities with educational value.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Represents the school effectively within the community.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates patience, empathy and respect for others.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Treats people in an unbiased and fair manner.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Works constructively to facilitate growth in others.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Is honest and consistent in work-related relationships.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

#### **8. As director of public relations and resource development:**

Practices and encourages Biblical principles of stewardship.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Tells the story of the school in terms of ministry and Christian education.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Challenges and tracks congregational financial support.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Actively seeks financial support from those who have a relationship with the school.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Identifies, trains and cultivates volunteers.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

Seeks third-source funds.  
N 1 2 3 4 5

## 2. A Carver Model Job Description

Traditional job descriptions have, in some cases, been adapted to fit John Carver’s suggested style of governance. (This resource was originally provided through the courtesy and permission of Joel Koerschen.)

The school administrator is responsible for coordinating, directing and overseeing all of the interrelationships and functions of the school, ensuring that all the parts of the school organization come together to achieve the school’s purpose.

This responsibility includes:

- His/her behavior, contributions, compliance and actions as well as the behavior, contributions, compliance and actions of the school staff and faculty.
- Helping to identify and solve student, parent, staff and board problems.
- Supplying the board with the information it needs to do its job.

Consequently, the administrator is authorized to establish all further policies, make all decisions, take all actions and develop all activities that are in agreement with the board’s policies. In doing so, the administrator may not:

- Make any decision or take any action that violates, in any way or manner, the school’s Statement of Purpose and its Statement of Faith.
- Perform, allow or cause to be performed any act which is unlawful and/or insufficient to meet commonly accepted Christian, business and professional ethics or the “prudent person” test.
- Jeopardize the school’s accreditation status.
- Operate without a board-approved operations manual that is known and available to school staff, faculty, parents and students as appropriate.
- Allow board, school, staff, faculty, parent or student problems to remain unsolved.
- Allow the board to operate without the information it needs to fulfill its responsibilities.
- Present information to the board in unnecessarily complex or lengthy form.
- Present information that does not include external points of view—faculty, staff, students, parents, congregational members, experts, etc. (that are appropriate and needed for fully informed board choices. The board expects an extensive and consistent use of surveys).
- Cause the board to be unaware of relevant trends, school events, changes of any substance or changes of assumptions upon which any board policy or action has previously been established.

- Fail to submit the required monitoring information in a timely, accurate and understandable fashion directly addressing provisions of the board’s policies being monitored.
- Violate any board or church policies.
- Violate any board-approved policies in the administrator’s operation manual.

*The board reserves the right to reassign areas of the administrator’s authority and responsibilities.*

### Policy on monitoring administrative performance

The board will track administrator performance by monitoring in such a way as to have systematic assurance of policy compliance, yet leave the board free to concentrate on the future rather than the present or past. In general, regular board meetings will not be used for monitoring.

On this topic, board’s role is limited to monitoring the school characteristics that it has addressed in explicit statements of policy or any issues the board is made aware of that require attention by federal, state or local law. The purpose of this monitoring is only to determine if board policies—its Statement of Purpose, Statement of Faith and limitation policies—are being met.

Monitoring will be done in one or a combination of the following three ways:

1. Internal Reports: Periodic reports from the administrator to the board.
2. External Information: Parent surveys, student surveys, faculty and staff surveys, achievement tests, staff evaluation forms, reports or notifications from parents, students, faculty and staff. District staff or other external assessors will be used to answer appropriate monitoring questions.
3. Direct Inspection: Board members, on a rotating basis established by the board chair and communicated to the administrator, will be given a policy for on-site monitoring. The administrator will “walk through” with the board member to determine the implementation of the policy. Only the board members have the authority to determine whether, in their opinion, the policy is being implemented. They do not have the authority to determine how it should be implemented nor to direct the administrator or staff.

Each policy of the board shall be classified by the board according to the frequency and method of monitoring.

Policy	Method	Frequency
Administrator Responsibilities	1 / 2 / 3	Annually
Facilities	2 / 3	Annually
Student Life	1 / 2 / 3	Semiannually
Personnel	1 / 2	Annually
Finances	1 / 2	Quarterly

Public Relations	1	Annually
Enrollment Management	1 / 3	Annually
Programming	1 / 2 / 3	Annually
Purpose Statement	1 / 2 / 3	Annually
Statement of Faith	1 / 2 / 3	Annually
Supervision of Staff	1 / 2	Semiannually

*Leading Schools in the 21st. Century—Board Leadership, pages B25-B34, Joel Koerschen, District education executive of the California, Nevada, Hawaii District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.*

## Employment Procedures: Calls and Contracts

### 1. Legal agreements

When a call document is used, the document is viewed as an official, legal agreement of the congregation with the worker. Whether or not a call document is used, some document that addresses the terms of employment needs to be prepared. This, too, is viewed as an official, legal agreement of the congregation with the worker.

Because of a variety of legal concerns, the school board is advised to seek the counsel of a competent attorney who can help to prepare and review official documents to protect the interests of the congregation, school and the worker.

*Sample policy: The board will recommend individuals for all calls and contracts according to the procedures outlined by the congregation or association. No school staff may be employed without the approval of the administrator.*

### 2. Call rubrics and employment resources

The board and/or calling/appointing body should consult LCMS resources. Two resources on the LCMS website are especially helpful:

1. The Handbook tab at [lcms.org/board](http://lcms.org/board). Use the latest version of the Handbook (2013 at this writing), see section 2.5 ff.
2. [lcms.org/resources/churchadministration](http://lcms.org/resources/churchadministration): See Employment Resources Manual for Congregations and Districts and also Constitution and Bylaws Guidelines.

## Personnel Priorities

School boards should have a policy related to their priority for calling or contracting teachers and support personnel. It is important for boards to attract the highest quality of teaching personnel while recognizing the distinctively Lutheran mission and purpose of the school. Thus, a procedure for securing staff should reflect this priority.

*Sample policy (traditional model): Faith Lutheran School maintains a uniform selection procedure related to the filling of a teacher vacancy. The qualifications of the teacher shall be determined by the need of the school and congregation.*

The priority for calling/contracting a teacher will be as follows:

- a. A Synod-trained teacher eligible for a call
- b. Teacher who is an active member of the operating congregation
- c. Teacher who is an active member of another LCMS congregation
- d. Teacher who successfully worked in another Lutheran school and is a member of another Christian congregation
- e. Teacher who is an active member in another Christian congregation

*Sample policy (Carver model A): Faith Lutheran School will not employ any staff unqualified to work in the designated position.*

*Sample policy (Carver model B): The principal will not recommend the employment of any educators unqualified to teach in a Lutheran school.*

*Sample policy (Carver model C): The school may not employ any teacher who is not certified to teach in a Lutheran school.*

## Conditions of Service: A Checklist

Conditions of service, or terms of employment, must be complete prior to affixing signatures to the agreement. Some policy-level questions must be answered in the document explaining the conditions of service. Throughout the process, ensure that there are clauses related to the fact that benefits, pay, policies and/or applicable Benefit Plan are subject to change

- If a call is extended, what is the congregation's policy regarding length of ministry? Is it limited in any way? Consult with the District education executive if limitations are considered.
- What is the teacher's salary? What is the schedule of payments? How often are salaries reviewed? Is housing allowance provided for called workers? If so, what are the provisions?
- What provisions are made for vacations? How long? When? Does it include school holidays?
- Is there a benefit package? Pension? Medical and hospital coverage?
- Are there sick days? Personal days? Other days for emergencies or unexpected incidents?
- What provisions are made for continuing education? Books? Tuition for workshops and courses? Professional organizations?
- Where travel is required, what provisions are there for reimbursement?
- Are moral/ethical expectations clearly outlined?



Most boards have answers to these questions. They serve as a good reminder for boards and congregations to review their current policies regarding the above matters. In most cases, when the board is answering these questions, it is developing policy, which should be recorded in the policy manual.

## Classification of Staff

*Sample Policy: The board shall classify school staff in order to provide correct compensation and benefit administration.*

A. Staff shall be classified in one of the following categories:

*Educators who are certified by the state, graduates of a synodical or non-synodical college and regularly employed to work the normally scheduled school week for a designated period of time.*

*Educators who may be, but are not required to be, certified by the state and/or an ordained or commissioned minister on the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, graduates of a synodical or non-synodical college, and occasionally employed to work less than the normally scheduled school week for a designated period of time.*

*Educators who are certified by the state and are occasionally employed on a per diem basis.*

*Individuals who are regularly employed less than the normally scheduled workweek for a designated period of time.*

1. Full-time called faculty

*Educators who are on the roster of the LCMS Classified as a “Minister of Religion” and self-employed by the Internal Revenue Service may be eligible for having a portion of their salary designated as Housing Allowance which is not subject to income tax.*

2. Full-time contract faculty

*B. Teacher contracts, for contracted teachers, are issued on or before May 1 of each year after evaluation by the school administrator with the approval of the school board.*

C. Benefit eligibility

- All full-time and part-time faculty and support personnel receive paid legal holidays.*
- All part-time faculty receive paid legal holidays.*
- All full-time personnel receive four weeks’ vacation annually.*
- All full-time personnel receive up to five days for a death in the immediate family or family illness in the immediate family.*
- All full-time personnel receive up to two days for personal business.*

- All full-time personnel receive up to ten days for sick leave.*
- Full-time faculty receive a stipend for professional growth.*
- Full-time, called faculty receive relocation expenses when moving in to the community.*
- All full-time personnel receive complete medical coverage for themselves and their family.*
- All full-time personnel are enrolled in the congregation’s retirement plan.*
- Any compensation, time off and benefits offered are subject to applicable Plan documents and may be subject to change without notice.*

## Caring for the Staff

The support and care of the staff is a direct responsibility of the school board. It is the job of the school administrator to keep the board informed of specific issues relating to the care and concern of the teachers and staff, although being mindful and obeying applicable state and federal law regarding privacy of health information. The administrator should report family illness, disability or a death in the family. The administrator reports personal issues that may affect the performance of the teacher in carrying out the school ministry. The administrator celebrates personal accomplishments of the teacher.

The school board may share the responsibility of caring for the staff with another congregational board or committee. Support and care for teachers and staff usually involves more than simply providing a salary and benefit package. Support and care of the staff includes the following:

- Security—food, shelter, income, living and working environments that promote productivity and a sense of well-being
- Involvement with other persons that are socially and professionally fulfilling
- Opportunities for growth, achievement and fulfillment
- Positive reinforcement when little or no support is felt for the hours of work
- Spiritual growth opportunities for personal faith development and Gospel renewal

School boards are to be proactive in their care for staff. A school board may assign a specific board member to serve as a shepherd to a teacher. They may develop a prayer partnership that serves to benefit both the board member and teacher. In this way, the needs of the individual and the school are served.

Despite the imperfect work of teachers, God’s purpose will be carried out. Imperfect teachers need to hear the words of assurance from administrators and board members that their sins are forgiven by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. Teachers need to hear that, in spite of their shortcomings, they have the power from the Spirit given at their baptism to serve Jesus.

## Terminating Staff

The Call rubrics clearly specify reasons for terminating staff who are called church workers.

A decision to dismiss a Lutheran school teacher from a Call or a contract is not to be made lightly. When a decision is made, the Lutheran school must proceed according to the policies in place. Therefore, congregations or school associations need to authorize and publish comprehensive personnel policies. Moreover, if a congregation issued a call to a teacher (commissioned minister), the congregation must vote to rescind the call in conformance with the Synod doctrine on rescinding calls. It must be noted that any dispute between the school and a commissioned minister (called teacher) is subject to the Christian Dispute Resolution procedure set forth in the LCMS Bylaws. Further, it is important to note that courts will not assume jurisdiction over any issue relating to hiring, retaining or terminating a commissioned minister (teacher on the Synod roster). School boards and administrators should review and understand the Opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Hosanna-Tabor case.

The Synod Handbook and school handbook and policy statements should be also be reviewed prior to the termination of a Call or contract.

It is helpful to be familiar with laws governing the dismissal of teachers in the public sector. They may be of assistance in policy development for Lutheran schools that would reflect fundamental fairness. At a minimum, these policies should ask for extensive and complete documentation of all evidence supporting a decision to dismiss a Lutheran school teacher from a Call or contract.

Note that employment relationships are governed by contract as opposed to federal and state constitutions. Consequently, constitutional standards such as due process are not required of Lutheran schools in their employment relationships. However, litigants may introduce them in seeking to enforce contractual terms. But courts have displayed a willingness to require a general sense of basic fairness, e.g., expecting that a Lutheran school teacher would be able to hear and answer “charges.”

## Reduction in Force

A reduction in staff occurs when a teacher’s (or teachers’) Call/contract cannot be renewed because of the conditions of the school or congregation. School boards must be future thinkers, so the issue of reduction in staff must have a policy developed prior to its actual need. Boards cannot act coldly, lightly or indifferently to those who daily minister to children and parents. Therefore, it is important for a board to have a clearly articulated basis for employment policies, including reduction in force. As an administrator develops procedures for reduction in staff, it is important to seek the advice of the teaching staff and pastoral staff.

*Sample policy: Reduction in staff - Recognizing its fiduciary obligation to be responsible to the congregation, the board is aware that financial resources and/or pupil enrollment may not always be capable of supporting the current school staff. Therefore, the board authorizes the administrator to develop, submit for approval and annually review a set of reduction in staff procedures.*

Since there is diversity in size and operation of Lutheran schools, sample procedures are not included. However, some schools have established the following elements of consideration for developing a Reduction in Force (RIF) procedure:

- Synodical membership (called versus contract)
- Membership in the sponsoring congregation
- Seniority
- State licensing/certification
- Performance

Note: Reduction in force is considered impersonal, that is, primarily attributable to the school’s conditions and well-being rather than the merits of individual teachers. In all cases, reduction in force must be handled with sensitivity and care for the future of the personnel subject to execution of the policy. Reduction in force may not be used as an excuse for dismissing incompetent teachers. Consult your LCMS District executive for education for additional guidance on RIF BEFORE experiencing a need to apply it.

## Tenure

*Sample policy: Showing Christian concern for all parties, a teacher’s Call or contract may be terminated by the calling/contracting entity under the following circumstances clearly documented by date and incident:*

- *The worker is incompetent, immoral or teaches false doctrine.*
- *The worker fails to follow established school policies, procedures or applicable laws or regulations.*
- *Irreconcilable, unhealthy worker/congregation relationships persist.*
- *The worker refuses the Synodical reconciliation process and/or refuses to abide by its results.*
- *Reduction in staff is necessary.*
- *The worker commits misconduct as determined by the administrator.*

## Staff Grievance or Staff Conflict

Grievances and conflicts inevitably occur. In some situations, the offended party may be quick to approach the school board without confronting the one from whom offense was taken. The board should have a clearly stated policy for addressing grievances.

*Sample policy: Employee grievances will be addressed in a fair and Christian manner in an attempt to gain reconciliation. Employees should report any grievances, including any harassing or discriminatory behavior by following the procedures established in the staff handbook.*

Note that the policy stops short of indicating specifically how the grievance is to be addressed. This is better managed in procedures designed and published by the principal. However, it should always be kept in mind that disputes between ministers of the LCMS and the school or congregation are subject to Christian Dispute Resolution under the Synod Bylaws and not subject to court review under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, including the “ministerial exception” doctrine affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Hosanna-Tabor*.

*Sample procedure:*

1. *Meet with the offended and discuss the issue privately or with one witness. Do not promise confidentiality to the offended. Indicate that any perceived retaliation for reporting the offense is inappropriate and should be reported.*
2. *The one offended will discuss in private with the offender the perceived offense. If the parties are reconciled, no further action is necessary.*
3. *If the first step is unsuccessful, the offended will take one witness along and attempt to repeat the first step.*
4. *If the second step is unsuccessful, the offended party and witness will ask their immediate supervisor to mediate. If the dispute is between teachers, the immediate supervisor is the principal. If the dispute is between a teacher and the principal, the immediate supervisor is the pastor.*
5. *If the third step is unsuccessful, or if the dispute is between the principal or a teacher and the pastor, the situation will be mediated by the school board with all parties present. The school board is the final authority in all grievances.*
6. *If the offense threatens the offended’s safety, comfort in the workplace or ability to perform his/her job, modify the steps as needed, including separating the offended and the alleged offender pending investigation.*

## Board Role in Teacher Assessment/Evaluation

The school administrator will develop and manage a program for the supervision of instruction to help teachers develop and improve their skills in teaching and helping students, thereby enabling the school to achieve its purpose and objectives. The school board is involved in supervision by establishing policies that guide and direct the purpose and program of supervision.

The school board also becomes involved in teacher assessment/evaluation when the school administrator, after having formally evaluated the teacher, places the teacher on probation for a specified period. During this period, a series of steps to work with the teacher to improve are initiated (regular visits, peer coaching, gathering data on the teacher’s attitude and willingness to improve). At the end of the probationary period, the administrator will make a recommendation based upon three options.

1. The improvement is satisfactory and the contract is recommended to be renewed.
2. The probationary period continues and the contract is recommended to be renewed.
3. Improvement is unsatisfactory and the contract is not recommended to be renewed.

The administrator will inform the teacher of the decision. If the teacher is a contract teacher, the decision of the board is final. If the teacher is called and the decision of the board is to remove the teacher, the LCMS District education executive will be notified immediately of the decision. The teacher may resign or appeal the decision to the appropriate governing board of the congregation. If the teacher loses this appeal, he/she may resign or contact the LCMS District education executive and district president for reconciliation procedures.

*Sample policy (traditional model): The administrator at Faith Lutheran School is responsible for the supervision of teachers, developing and managing a program for the supervision of instruction for the purpose of helping teachers improve their skills in teaching and enabling the school to achieve its purpose and objectives.*

*Sample policy (traditional model): The administrator at Faith Lutheran School will present a written report to the school board at the end of a teacher’s probationary period. The administrator will act according to one of three options:*

1. *The improvement is satisfactory and the contract is continued.*
2. *The probationary period continues and the contract is continued.*
3. *Improvement is unsatisfactory and the contract is not continued.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The administrator shall not allow incompetent or immoral teachers to remain on the staff.*

## Working Together as a Team

School board members, administrators and pastors compose the leadership team that helps one another accomplish the responsibilities assigned to them. This partnership is established in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Working together in the shadow of the cross and resurrection of Jesus gives the school leadership team assurance of forgiveness, hope and courage, and strength and blessings in service. School boards, administrators and pastors are urged to maintain an open line of commu-

nication with one another. They are also urged to maintain a relationship with the leadership in the LCMS District office and with synodical church and school leaders. Church leaders in the District and Synod provide counsel, resources and assistance to schools in helping to build and equip the team of leaders in Lutheran schools.

## Support Staff

Most schools utilize the services of one or several support staff members, full or part-time. Staff members may include the secretary, custodian, cafeteria personnel, teacher aides, bus drivers, librarians and other specialized workers. All have an important role in fulfilling the mission of the school and should be treated accordingly.

The school board's goal is to develop a positive relationship with the support staff. Through its policy statements, the board determines what is to be done and for what purpose. The school administrator, as the on-the-job administrative officer of the board, provides the documents and materials called for by the board's policy. Staff members work best when they know exactly what is expected of them and what, in turn, they can expect for their service.

## Provisions for Support Staff

### 1. Qualifications

Qualifications should be written. They can include personal qualifications, professional qualifications and skills required. Consideration should be given to personal and spiritual qualifications, since most support staff members work directly with children and other parents.

### 2. Job description

The same components used for the teacher's job description can apply:

- Position Summary
- Statement of Accountability
- Major Responsibilities, including especially the religious functions
- Other Duties

## 3. Contract

Contracts for staff members (though not required) should include stipulations about length of service or at-will employment, renewal of contract, terms of employment, evaluation of performance and provisions of termination. The contract will also stipulate salary, benefits, holidays and other benefits that might be provided.

## Volunteers

The use of volunteers is an often overlooked (or assumed) possibility and opportunity. Volunteers are used to increase the effectiveness of schools. They use their gifts to serve the Lord and His people.

### Steps for establishing and maintaining volunteer programs

1. List and describe the tasks that can be performed by volunteers, individually or in groups.
2. Select one or two people who are willing and able to serve as coordinator of volunteer services.
3. With the volunteer coordinator(s), identify the names of persons who potentially possess skills, time and interest for volunteer service.
4. With the help of coordinator(s), invite potential volunteers to have their names placed on a volunteer list. Solicit from them information regarding skills, interest and time availability.
5. Determine in advance the procedures by which volunteers will be evaluated, selected, introduced and helped in the new assignments given them.
6. Determine in advance a recognition procedure by which volunteer service will be acknowledged individually and publicly.

Note that a criminal background history check of volunteers ([protectmyministry.com/lcms](http://protectmyministry.com/lcms)) is an essential practice. With the unfortunate incidents of criminal activity in schools across the nation, Lutheran schools are not immune to such behavior.

If any employee seeks to volunteer, seek approval prior to allowing the employee to volunteer.

*Sample policy: The principal shall certify that volunteers are of such character as not to place students or staff at risk.*

*Sample procedure: Upon notifying the volunteer, the principal will authorize and receive a background check for criminal records of each volunteer.*



# CHAPTER 7: RELATIONSHIP OF THE BOARD TO ITS CONSTITUENTS

## Identifying Constituents

### Communicating with the Congregation/Association

1. General board reports and minutes
2. Board meetings
3. Board decisions

### Relationships with the Faculty and Staff

1. Encouragement and personal interest
2. Faculty/staff handbook

### Relationships with Parents and Students

1. Personal interest and concerns
2. Procedural conflicts
3. Establishing committees
4. Volunteers
5. Parent/student handbook

### Relationship with District and Synod

### Relationships with the Community

#### Read chapter seven before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. Why is it important to communicate your actions to the “right people”?
2. What are your specific plans for creating good relationships with the various constituent groups?
3. Community relationships may be more important now than in times in the past. What will be the substance of your efforts with various groups in your community? Who will manage this?

## Identifying Constituents

A Lutheran school board must identify its constituents. The policy manual must provide a plan whereby these constituents can contribute to and experience ownership in the school and benefit from their school. For many Lutheran schools, the constituents are ...

- Families with children enrolled in the school
- Members of the congregation(s) that support the school
- The school’s students, faculty and staff
- Families with children who are prospective enrollees
- The community in which the school is located

The school board is responsible for an extensive ministry, but the school must not operate as an isolated entity. It must be an integral part of the congregation’s ministry. This means that the board will work closely with committees or boards assigned responsibilities for the buildings and grounds, finances, missions, evangelism and personnel. The school board’s decisions and activities are subject to review by the congregation’s governing board (directors or voters); therefore, decisions and actions must be harmonized with the policies, procedures and wishes of the congregation. Association schools will find this more difficult because an association school works with more than one congregation. In the case of association schools, the board may need more autonomy to successfully carry out its purpose and mission.

When developing policies, the board must make certain that the policies comply with laws that govern the school. Boards do this to protect the interests and welfare of students, teachers, parents and other school constituents.

*Sample policy (traditional model): Each year, Faith Lutheran School shall provide an instructional program of a minimum of X hours for the junior high. The instructional program for the elementary school shall consist of a minimum of X hours for grades 1-6 and X hours for kindergarten.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The administrator shall not allow the days of attendance or the school calendar to fall below the minimum required by state law for public schools.*

Once a policy is adopted by the school board, the administrator is responsible to develop procedures to administer it. In the case of the sample policy, the administrator will need to organize and schedule the school day to ensure the correct number of hours of instruction at each grade level. The administrator will need to record these hours and report to the board any changes in the established school year calendar required to comply with the policy and law.

## Communicating with the Congregation/Association

### 1. General board reports and minutes

Building good relationships begins with effective communication between the school board and its governing body, be it a single congregation or an association of congregations. The school board is responsible to ensure that regular school reports are prepared and presented to this governing body. Minutes of school board meetings need to be written in a manner that clearly describes the activities of the board and allows for easy reference. A school board secretary should complete and return to each board member, the school administrator and the pastor a written copy of the minutes of each board meeting. Copies of these minutes also should be on file in the school office.



## 2. Board meetings

School board meetings are usually public, in that all constituents are welcome to attend and observe the proceedings. However, there are occasions when the board must deal with confidential and sensitive issues that will need to be discussed in executive session. Therefore, individual members must refrain from reporting confidential information or talking about matters that may be viewed as gossip. In the case of very sensitive or important matters, the board must decide how, by whom and to whom these matters will be reported.

## 3. Board decisions

Decisions and actions of the school board should be communicated to those directly affected: the governing body, congregation(s), faculty, staff, parents, students and the community. This communication may take the form of written reports, oral reports, news releases and newsletters. Some school board actions will also require follow-up correspondence or phone calls. The person responsible for writing and/or presenting the reports and carrying out follow-up activities is usually the board chairperson or the school administrator.

*Sample policy (traditional model): The chairperson of the school board will give an oral report of the school's operation at all regularly scheduled voters and council meetings. The administrator will be responsible for all official written reports.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The administrator shall not allow the congregation's governing body to be uninformed about the school board's decisions.*

## Relationships with the Faculty and Staff

### 1. Encouragement and personal interest

Encouragement and support for the faculty and staff are another key dimension of the school board's ministry. Board members should regularly pray for the faculty and staff, show interest in their activities, commend them for their accomplishments and thank them for their faithful service.

Board members need to realize that ministry in a Lutheran school can be lonely and isolating. Often the teachers and staff hear criticisms and complaints but few accolades. Generally, teachers in Lutheran schools receive salaries below that of their public school counterparts, contributing to low self-esteem and possible financial difficulties. A board that outwardly expresses appreciation and concern publicly commends and actively works for the improvement and well-being of its faculty and staff. Their positive attitude fosters a positive school climate.

The administrator needs to remain continually aware of the ideas and concerns of the faculty and staff, and bring these ideas and

concerns to the attention of the school board when they involve policy. In so doing, the need for good communication between the board and the staff will become evident.

## 2. Faculty/staff handbook

A well-developed and maintained faculty/staff handbook is essential in communicating a school board's expectations.

*Sample policy (traditional model): A well-developed and maintained faculty/staff handbook will be produced, reviewed, distributed and acknowledged by faculty and staff annually.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The board shall not fail to publish and distribute its policies annually.*

The administrator administers this and all other policies with the help of the faculty and staff. The handbook should contain, but not limited to, all board policies that directly affect the faculty and staff, such as the school's goal and purpose, record keeping, teacher and staff vacations and absences, Family and Medical Leave Act, calling procedures, contracting procedures, salary guidelines and schedules, sexual harassment, discrimination, accommodating disabilities, reduction in force, drug and alcohol abuse, cause for dismissal, etc.

The handbook also should describe procedures developed by the administrator that affect the faculty and staff. Procedures may include how to report child abuse, professional growth requirements, extracurricular activities, field trip rules, rules for Internet use, how to handle parental complaints, etc.

## Relationship with Parents and Students

### 1. Personal interest and concerns

The relationship of the school board to the parents and students is similar to the relationship between the school board and the staff. Parents and students need to have the school board pray for them, show interest in their activities, commend them for their accomplishments and thank them for their faithful service to the school. The school board must inform, educate and encourage parents and students as they participate fully and joyfully in the school's ministry. For this to be accomplished, communication between the school board and parents and students needs to be two-way. Parents and students must feel that their ideas and concerns are appropriately brought to the attention of the school board.

*Sample policy: The board, through its administrator, will consider the ideas and concerns of parents, faculty and students as they address policy issues.*

This policy gives order to the communication process and places the gathering of concerns and ideas with one person. Board members must remember that they have no authority outside of an official board meeting. Therefore, when a concerned parent or student approaches a board member with an idea or an issue, the board member should tactfully inform the parent or student that

individual ideas and concerns are important, but that the proper channel for addressing those ideas and concerns must begin with the administrator.

## 2. Procedural conflicts

Some problems brought to the administrator involve conflicts with administrative procedures. In cases where the concern is procedural and the parent or student is directed to the administrator, the problem should be resolved without consideration by the school board.

*Example:* A concerned parent approaches the school board chairperson about the amount of homework her son brought home. The chairperson tactfully listens and informs her that the matter would first need to be discussed with the teacher, then the administrator. After visiting with the teacher, the parent visited the administrator. Together they reviewed the school's procedures for assigning homework.

In this case, both the school board chairperson and the administrator listened to the parent and successfully used the procedures outlined in Matthew 18 (Take your concerns directly to the person involved and work it out between the two of you.) In so doing, the school board member and the administrator followed a proper chain of command that is both biblical and necessary for unity within the school.

## 3. Establishing committees

Another excellent way of involving parents, students and other constituents in the ministry of the school is through committees or task forces.

*Sample policy:* The board chairperson, upon the advice and consent of the board, may appoint a task force or committee as needed. Committees and task forces shall be fact-finding, deliberative and advisory, but never legislative or administrative. When the specified work of all such committees or task forces has been completed, the group shall automatically dissolve. The administrator and the chairperson of the board shall be ex-officio members of all such groups.

*Example:* A Lutheran school received a \$25,000 donation for the development of a computer lab. A committee composed of a teacher, a parent, a school board member and a member of the congregation were appointed to determine how best to use this donation. The result of the committee's fact finding was presented to the board. The school board gratefully accepted their report, thanked them for their excellent work and officially disbanded the committee.

## 4. Volunteers

Programs that involve volunteers can be valuable resources for furthering the ministry of a school. These programs also give volunteers opportunities for service. The board may therefore direct the administrator to administer volunteer programs within the school.

*Sample policy:* All volunteer programs in the school are to be administered by the administrator.

The administrator should then enlist the help and services of those who can effectively operate the programs.

## 5. Parent/student handbook

A well-developed and maintained parent and student handbook is essential in communicating a school board's expectations to parents and students.

*Sample policy:* An up-to-date parent and student handbook will be produced and reviewed annually.

The administrator is to develop this handbook. It should contain, but not limited to, school board policies that directly affect parents and students. Content should include the school's goal, purpose and policies that govern admission and entrance requirements, drug and alcohol abuse, discipline, grievances, weapons, church attendance, nondiscrimination, harassment, etc.

The handbook should also describe administrative procedures that directly affect the parents and students: registration, excused absences, emergency closing information, tuition and fee collection, bus service, the lunch program, classroom visits, emergency dismissal, emergency care, etc.

Parents and students who feel a part of the process and are in good communication with teachers, administration and the school board foster a very positive school environment.

## Relationship with District and Synod

Churches and school associations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) operate more than 2,000 preschools, elementary and high schools. The synod operates LCMS School Ministry. Most regional districts of the LCMS have an executive working with the schools of that district. The administrator of the school should be aware of these valuable resources. The school board, at the request of the governing body, will generally work directly with the district or synodical offices only when calling a new administrator.

*Example:* The administrator at Faith Lutheran School accepted a call to another state after serving at Faith for fifteen years. The governing board of the congregation directed the school board to contact the LCMS District office for a list of potential candidates. The board obtained a list of candidates that the congregation evaluated before they extended a call.

## Relationships with the Community

Another constituent of the school is the community. It is important that the school board, through the administrator, effectively communicates with residents and organizations of their community. This communication is generally called public relations. The school board directs the administrator or, in the case of larger schools, a public relations officer, to incorporate the ministry of the school into the community as much as possible.

*Sample policy: The administrator is the public relations officer of the school.*

The Lutheran school does not operate in a vacuum. The school must actively carry out its mission and ministry. The Lutheran school mission must be heard by the people of the community if the school is truly serious about sharing the message of Jesus Christ.

*Sample procedure: As the administrator serves as the public relations officer of the school, he/she will be responsible for writing press releases, visiting and/or becoming a member of civic organizations, preparing advertising spots, working with the community's public schools, developing educational programs for the community (such as computer and parenting classes) and opening the school facilities for use by civic organizations.*

The school board recognizes that its operational style and the lifestyle of its members will communicate much to parents, students, faculty, staff and community. "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).

Board members will, through their positive witness, contribute to the school's image and the accomplishment of its ministry and purpose. Members must therefore seek to edify and uphold one another and all members of the school family in Christian love.

# CHAPTER 8: BOARD LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

## A Brief History

### Threatened Litigation: A Case History

#### The Board and Legal Matters

1. Types of law
2. Legal representation
3. Legal implications involving employment
4. Fairness
5. Negligence
6. Insurance

#### Summary

#### Read chapter eight before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. To what practical use or relationship will you engage a lawyer as a board consultant? (Does your congregation already have one?)
2. To what extent does your congregation or school contract insurance to protect board members? Is it adequate? (Do you know your liabilities?)
3. What protections are in place to reduce risks and liabilities? What else needs to be done?

## A Brief History

We live with a complex set of laws governing most aspects of modern life. Like all citizens and institutions in the country, Lutheran schools are subject to many laws. Boards of education in these schools have the responsibility to assure the congregation and the entire school community that the school is a law-abiding Christian institution. Its policies must promote conformity with the law and protection for the school, its administration, staff and the board itself.

Schools operate in a “law suit society.” Instead of following the tenets of Matthew 18, people often deal with problems, disappointments and challenges by filing a lawsuit. Not only has there been an almost exponential increase of litigation in the public school arena, Lutheran schools have also become the target of lawsuits in recent years. Even if a suit isn’t filed, administrators, teachers and boards often are faced with angry parents who threaten, “I’ll be calling my lawyer about this!” or “I’ll see you in court” or “The only way to settle this is to make you pay.” Board members will want to be proactive in making policies that protect from such legal action or threat.

## Threatened Litigation: A Case Study

*Two children in a Lutheran school were not re-enrolled because their parents had not paid the tuition from the previous year. The board had a policy that stated that all tuition from the previous year had to be paid in full prior to re-enrollment for the next year. The administrator had records that showed the numerous times she had contacted these parents, asking how the school might help them work out an arrangement for payment. To her knowledge and observation, there was no reason the parents could not pay the bill. Many times during conversations with the father, he promised to “come in the next day and take care of everything.”*

*As the beginning of the school year approached, the administrator made one last attempt to collect the tuition. She sent a “final notice” by registered mail to the parents, giving a specific deadline for payment. This was done to no avail. The deadline passed and the administrator, with deep regret for the two children involved, sent an official notice of withdrawal to the parents. Upon receipt of the notice, the father immediately contacted his attorney, who called the school. He stated that his client demanded his children’s enrollment be reinstated and that the action that had been taken was prejudicial, as one of the children had a diagnosed learning disability. Such an allegation, even though far from the truth, greatly concerned the administrator, as she knew special education issues receive much attention from the courts, especially as they relate to fairness and due process.*

*The administrator informed the board chairperson of the situation and the steps she planned to take. First, she called the school’s attorney. Together, they decided that the administrator would fax the ten pages of documentation, noting the contacts the school had made—or attempted to make—with the parents as well as the responses, or lack thereof, from the parents. The administrator also informed the parent, through the school attorney, that in no way was the refusal to enroll the children tied to any diagnosis of learning disability, but was simply based on the parents’ failure to meet their financial responsibilities toward the school. Upon receipt of the documentation, the attorney’s response was “Thank you very much.” Neither he nor the parents were heard from again.*

*While the school was well within its rights and acted in accordance with the law and board policy, dealing with the legal threat took time (and emotional energy) from the administrator and her staff. It also involved an expenditure for legal services. From time to time, this kind of litigious cloud hangs over more and more Lutheran schools and calls for measured, informed action on the part of the administration with solid support from the board.*

## The Board and Legal Matters

What then, is a board to do? What must it know? How does it become informed?

### 1. Types of law

First, board members must gain a general awareness of the legal framework in which Lutheran schools must operate. They need to understand that several sources of law influence the operation of Lutheran schools. Among the most significant are federal and state constitutions, federal and state statutes, common law, contract law and tort law. School board members are not expected to be familiar with all these laws. They need to rely on the administrator, in consultation with a lawyer, to know, understand and apply the laws that are relevant to Lutheran schools.

The law is constantly changing. Many legal aspects are anchored in state law, which differs state by state. Consequently, boards should expect administrators and other educational personnel to keep current on laws that affect the school operation. They should also be expected to consult with legal authorities at local and state levels regarding specific situations. Administrators can also receive training and assistance in this area from colleges and universities, professional development updates, assistance from their LCMS District education executives, LCMS School Ministry, the U.S. Department of Education and a variety of groups and agencies that take a concern for nonpublic schools.

### 2. Legal representation

The administrator needs a working relationship with an attorney. This attorney should have expertise in school and contract law and be familiar with its applications to nonpublic schools. As the administrator recommends policies, it is wise to check for the policies' compliance with related laws. In some cases, the administrator may request a review of a policy or procedure by the school's attorney.

Special attention should be paid when policies are made that address areas of the health and safety of students, the employment of staff, special education and due process. Courts will generally consider the existence of policy and "good faith" of a properly communicated policy rather than the policy's wisdom or rationale. Therefore, it is essential to have policies in writing, published and enacted for all school stakeholders.

### 3. Legal implications involving employment

The board must exercise care when dealing with areas of employment of school personnel. State statutes may speak to this employment. The board and congregation must attend to many legal aspects of employment and must be sure employees are treated in a fair and equitable manner. They can receive assistance in doing so from the District, the LCMS School Ministry, or from legal counsel.

### 4. Fairness

The issue of fairness is important to students and their parents. Board policy must assure that all children are treated fairly by the school. Therefore, much care should be taken when policies are formulated with regard to enrollment, dress codes, regulations, suspension and expulsion, search and seizure, classroom discipline and corporal punishment, harassment (sexual and otherwise) and student records and privacy rights. Courts will scrutinize for fundamental fairness in the relationship between a Lutheran school and/or parent and/or the educator when a breach is alleged.

### 5. Negligence

Negligence draws the most attention in schools. Negligence is doing something that a reasonable, prudent educator would not have done in like or similar circumstance or not doing something that a reasonable, prudent teacher would have done in like or similar circumstance, where the educator had a duty. A Lutheran school or teacher may be judged negligent either for an improper act or for not acting properly. In this case also, board members need to ask the school's administrator to assure them that the conduct of the school staff is reasonable, prudent and watchful. Policies should be made with this in mind and the procedures the administrator formulates and enforces should be explicit, in writing, published for all involved and reviewed frequently with the staff and others in the school community. The staff should receive preventive in-service training in this area and others that impact the school, its staff and students.

One blessing of American law is the presumption of innocence. People are considered innocent and must be proven guilty. In school law, the "burden of proof" is upon those bringing suit. They must, for example, prove the school, staff member or board guilty because the law presumes they are innocent.

### 6. Insurance

While the school staff has much legal exposure, so does the board as it is seen as the governing agency of the school and therefore often is held legally responsible for any school-sponsored programs and activities, as well as its policies and procedures (or lack thereof). Even if all members of the school community, including the board, have taken due care to see that everything is done in order and in accordance with the law, allegations can be made and lawsuits can be filed. It is therefore necessary that the board provide protection for itself and members of the staff. This is done through insurance.

Board members should insist that insurance policies be in place that financially protect the staff members of the school and themselves. Sometimes congregation members consider such expense frivolous and unnecessary. But such expenditure is reasonable and prudent and should be undertaken in all cases. Again, legal counsel might be sought as to the type and amount of insurance a school and its board will need.



## Summary

Every board member should realize that the operation of Lutheran schools today is both supported and limited by a wide variety of legal frameworks. These structures impact both those that serve and those that are enrolled in Lutheran schools as well as those that participate in their governance. Boards of Lutheran schools must conduct their business in ways that promote compliance with the laws and in ways that will avoid potential legal problems. The board should encourage the practice of preventive law and Christian principles. Most of all, boards need to trust the Lord. God may not deliver them from legal issues and problems, but He will bring good from every situation.

Lutheran school boards need to assure that easily understood and communicated policies are necessary to protect the interests of students, parents, staff, board and congregation. Furthermore, boards should by policy provide insurance to cover liability of the staff and themselves. (Sometimes this is provided in a congregation's or association's umbrella policy. However, the board needs to examine existing policies to determine if additional, specialized coverage is advisable.)

Courts are likely to uphold the action of schools if they act in accordance with their own duly processed policies, providing the policies themselves are legal.

*Sample policy (traditional model): The board shall protect itself, the faculty and the staff by providing liability insurance coverage at an amount determined in consultation with an attorney.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The board shall not operate the school without providing adequate liability coverage through a recognized insurer.*

*Sample policy (traditional model): The board shall annually review the school's operational procedures, or lack thereof, which may have legal implications.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The board shall not allow the school to be vulnerable to legitimate litigation.*

# CHAPTER 9: CURRICULUM RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

What is Curriculum?

Who Decides Curriculum: A Case Study

A Model for Curriculum Development

National Lutheran School Accreditation and Curriculum

Curriculum Development Plan Sample

Role of the Board

Read chapter nine before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. What policies are in place that require spiritual/scriptural/biblical worldview in the curriculum? Are there procedures aside from policies to make this happen? Should it be a policy?
2. Why is it essential to trust curricular planning to the teachers and administrator? What threatens this practice?
3. Why is it essential that the board take the action of approving the curriculum?

## What is Curriculum?

The curriculum is considered by many to be the heart and soul of a school. It outlines that which is to be the outcome of the educational process for the constituents of the school community. It is a statement of what will be taught by the school's professional educators and learned by its students.

Educators and the general public describe *curriculum* in different ways. The gamut of definition runs from everything a child does in school to the scope and sequence of the textbooks used in a school. For the purpose of this manual, curriculum is defined as the instructional content of a school program. A curriculum is based on the stated goals and mission of the school and enables students to grow spiritually, cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally.

As the Lutheran school holds Christ central in its mission, the spiritual growth of the student is preeminent as the Christian faith is integrated throughout the curriculum. The curriculum of a Lutheran school is set forth in the light of God's Word. This Word serves as a unifying and organizing force in the school program that is developed and shared to His glory. This view of the school's curriculum and its development is precisely what makes the curriculum of the Lutheran school unique.

## Who Decides Curriculum: A Case Study

Tom Smith began his service on the Board of the Lutheran School of his congregation with much enthusiasm and zeal, wanting to get many things accomplished. He wasn't quite sure what there was to accomplish, but his desire was to be an active, contributing member of the board. Soon after his service began, Andrew, a member who had served on the board during the past two years, approached him. Andrew welcomed Tom, stating that he was available to help get him started in the right direction as a board participant. In fact, Andrew suggested they meet soon to discuss some pressing matters, which were before the board—especially one concerning curriculum.

Tom was excited to hear that there appeared to be work that needed his attention and agreed to meet Andrew for lunch. During their lunch, Andrew spoke with Tom about the workings of the board, talking with him about the other members, the agenda format, present issues before the board and the upcoming meeting on salaries. Then Andrew began to express his dissatisfaction about how the math curriculum was being studied. He told Tom that Principal Barker had insisted that he had responsibility for the math curriculum review and that the teachers would be an integral part of the review. Barker told the board to expect the review to take about a year and he would report the progress made in the study to them on a regular basis.

Andrew told Tom he thought this approach was unfair and wrong. He said that the board was in charge of running the school, and therefore, should be in charge of the curriculum. In fact, he had done some investigation on his own and had talked with the local Parents for Change group who recommended a math program that focused on drill, memorization and more drill. "After all," he said, "isn't that why other countries are beating us in teaching kids about math? Our kids in the U.S. just work in groups and talk about problems. They don't learn to compute; they don't learn their basic tables and facts."

Andrew went on to say that he wanted the board to take over the curriculum review so good old-fashioned education could be returned to the school. He asked Tom to help him convince Mr. Barker and the board to see things his way.

While Tom wanted to jump right in to board business, his discussion with Andrew left him a little confused and unsettled. He wasn't sure the board should tell the administrator and teachers how and what to teach. Weren't they trained in education? Didn't their training and experience put them in a much better position than most board members? He and Andrew didn't have an educator's background. So why should they dictate to professional educators? He didn't know what to do or just what his role as a board member should be in regard to curriculum.

## A Model for Curriculum Development

An appropriate model for curriculum development directs the professional educational staff, led by the administrator, to develop and plan the curriculum. This responsibility belongs to professional educators, as they are knowledgeable in the field of education by virtue of their training, experience and continued professional growth. Their decisions are made subject to the standards, guidelines (laws), needs and environment of the congregation, the state and the community. Their decisions are based on research and data developed with appropriate deliberation. Lutheran schools should continue to use this model as it promotes the best in curricular decision-making.

Lutheran school boards must make a conscious effort to ensure that the professional Christian educators of their schools maintain responsibility for the development and implementation of curriculum. This is not to say that input from parents and other constituents should be ignored. But such input must not be the only information considered when making curricular decisions.

The school board holds before the congregation or association the responsibility of assuring a quality program of Christian education. Therefore, the policies it develops concerning curriculum should enable and support professional educators on the staff to develop, maintain, continuously evaluate and improve the school's curriculum.

## National Lutheran School Accreditation and Curriculum

Excellence has always been a goal maintained by Lutheran schools in the United States. To that end, the LCMS School Ministry maintains its own accrediting agency, which is governed by the National Lutheran Accreditation Commission (consisting of one commissioner from each LCMS District). National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) sets standards toward excellence for Lutheran schools. These standards are based on sound educational research and other criteria set forth by well-recognized accrediting agencies throughout the United States. They also speak to the issues of faith in Christ Jesus, which makes Him central to the mission of the Lutheran school.

Included in the policies of Lutheran school boards should be the directive that the school becomes accredited by NLSA. Some boards may also ask the school to hold accreditation from other agencies, states and boards. Such requests should always be based on the goal of promoting excellence.

*Sample policy (traditional model): The administrator is responsible for developing and implementing a Christ-centered curriculum that meets or exceeds standards established by the state and by National Lutheran School Accreditation.*

*Sample policy (Carver model): The administrator may not allow curriculum to fall below state and National Lutheran School Accreditation standards.*

To implement the policies stated above, the administrator might create the following procedures:

1. Develop and implement a schedule for curriculum review and adoption.
2. Evaluate the curriculum for its support of the goals of the school and its owners—especially in light of the school's mission/purpose statement and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Check to assure that the curriculum complies with the laws of the state in which the school is located and the teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
4. Compare the curriculum to the standards set forth by the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission.
5. Provide adequate time for curriculum development when developing school calendars and teacher job/ministry descriptions.
6. Supply adequate resources and materials, as identified by professional staff, for curriculum development and implementation.
7. Use legitimate testing programs and media to measure student progress and school achievement toward its curricular goals.

The curriculum of the school is such a vital part of the school's mission and operation that the school board should expect the administrator to keep them regularly informed about its development, implementation and evaluation. Some boards list the curriculum as a regular item on their monthly meeting agenda.

Administrators might report to the board on the faculty's activities as they review various parts of the curriculum. They might apprise the board of how well the school is meeting the instructional goals set forth in the curriculum and how these are being monitored and measured. The board should expect the administrator to be aware of the current standards of the state in which the school is located and to report to them as to how the school is aligning its curriculum to those standards unless they go against the school's mission. The board should expect the administrator to lead the faculty in aligning the school's curriculum to the standards established by the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission. These areas, as well as those set forth above, should comprise the agenda items concerned with curriculum.

## Curriculum Development Plan Sample

Curricular areas for study/revision will be selected on a rotational/as needed basis—determined by the faculty and the administration. A committee composed of relevant faculty members under the leadership of the administration will undertake the process. The following steps are included in the development process:

### **General information/input gathering**

Information/input will be solicited from the faculty as a whole, board members, parents and congregational members. The following process will be used with the latter:

An open forum will be held during which parents/congregation members may express opinions about the curricular area to be reviewed. Participants may present their views to the department/faculty. Oral presentations will be accompanied by written copy. During this forum, board/faculty members will be able to ask clarifying questions.

### **Literature search (research)**

A review of relevant research, as it pertains to the curricular area at the elementary-middle school levels, will be undertaken. An attempt to gain a balanced view of current research/practice will be made.

### **Present curriculum survey**

A general survey of the present curriculum of the school, the local public school district and other Lutheran schools will be made. The state standards, those of NLSA, Concordia Publishing House Curriculum Guides and other relevant publications, will be reviewed and considered. Some LCMS Districts also maintain a suggested District-wide curriculum.

### **Curriculum plan writing**

A curriculum plan, based on the above information, will be written.

### **Curriculum plan approval**

The new/revised plan will be approved by the faculty and presented to the school board for confirmation. The study committee and the administrator will make the presentation. The approved and confirmed plan will be shared with any interested member of the school community at a meeting convened for that purpose.

## **Role of the Board**

The board must allow for the appropriate tools, time and resources for the staff to do its work under the direction of the administrator. In its governance of the Lutheran school, the board has several important roles. Where the curriculum of the school is concerned, its role is vital as the school board holds before the congregation the responsibility of assuring a quality program of Christian education. It is also one of oversight and policy making. The board oversees the professional educational staff as they develop, implement and continuously evaluate a Christ-centered curriculum. The board's policy-making must undergird and encourage the staff in their work.

Ultimately, the board's goal for curriculum is one of excellence. Good curriculum is foundational to excellence in a school.

Christian education—applying God's Law and Gospel to all aspects of life and learning—is what the Lutheran school is about. Excellence in Lutheran schools brings glory to God and encouragement to students, parents and congregational members as faith is planted, nurtured and preserved by the work of the Holy Spirit. The care for the curriculum of the school must promote such excellence. This care and oversight is the responsibility of the school board. When done well, the whole curriculum enriches the lives of all members of the school community and points to Christ and His message of salvation.

# CHAPTER 10: BOARD FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

## Introduction

### Successfully Funded Schools: Characteristics

#### Definitions

- Budget
- Business plan
- Case statement
- Cash flow chart
- Current assets
- Current liabilities
- Endowment fund
- FASB standards
- Fourth source income
- Funding formula
- Hard income
- Soft income
- Planned-giving gifts guidelines
- Resource development
- Third source income

### Funding the Lutheran School

#### The Need for a Financial Plan

#### Sources of Income

1. Historical perspective on funding
2. Basic sources of income
3. Congregational support
4. Tuition income and fees
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6. Fundraising income
7. Government funded programs

#### Components of a Financial Plan

1. Enrollment projections
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7. Why a funding formula?
  - a. Who is responsible?
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8. Expenses
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#### Guidelines for Developing Support and Income

1. Understanding Christian stewardship
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#### Guidelines for Developing Congregational Support

#### Guidelines for Developing Tuition Support

#### Guidelines for Developing Gift Income

#### Suggestions for Gift Income Programs

1. A case statement
2. Development schedule
3. Prospect lists
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#### Guidelines for Developing Income Through Fundraising

#### Sample Policies

1. Fiscal responsibility (traditional model)
2. Administrator limitations—financial management (Carver model)
3. Compensation (Carver model)
4. Gifts and bequests (Carver model)
5. Actions requiring board approval (traditional model)
6. Direct monitoring (traditional model)

#### Administrative Procedures for Budget Preparation

#### Outline of Sample Procedures for Budget Planning

#### Chapter Appendix

1. Sample case statement
2. Sample line items for school operations

#### Read chapter ten before the meeting and discuss the following:

1. What complexities or elements of school funding are new to you?
2. How much time will you set aside at each meeting to work on long-range funding?
3. What cautions must you take as you project total income and expenditures?

#### Introduction

God has called us to be good stewards of His gifts. The school board is charged with the stewardship of the financial affairs of a Lutheran school. Boards do that best when they establish and follow clear policies on financial responsibilities. Boards practice faithful stewardship by engaging an administrator who develops and implements procedures that follow these policies.

The school board is responsible for assuring that an annual budget and an annual update of the three- to five-year financial plan



are prepared. The board is responsible for ensuring that adequate funding is available to accomplish the objectives of the school. The budget and financial plan must take into account the strategic plan of the congregation and the strategic plan of the school, assuming such plans exist.

Board financial policies must address board self-governance issues, administrator limitations, actions requiring board approval and direct monitoring requirements.

Because of the variations in the structure of congregations, the final responsibilities for these activities may rest with the school board, the church finance committee or the church council. In any case, the school budget must be carefully coordinated with the church budget and its financial affairs. In some instances, past practice may be that the school budget is the full responsibility of congregational financial officers. The school board should play a strong role in the development of a complete school budget so that it can fulfill its responsibilities for providing an adequate educational program.

The administrator usually has major responsibility for preparation of the school budget along with a committee or a representative of the board. In any case, the recommendations of the administrator are important as the budget is formulated and decisions are made.

## Successfully Funded Schools: Characteristics

Successfully funded schools are marked by ten characteristics. They are:

### 1. A shared ministry

- The congregation and school jointly promote and support their ministries.
- The administrator and school staff are available and visible in the church program.
- The pastor is available and visible in the school program.

### 2. A united congregational leadership

- The congregation understands and accepts the school and its mission.
- Consistently strong role models support church and school.

### 3. A personal mission statement

- The mission statement clearly explains why the school needs financial support.
- The mission statement gives direction.
- Stakeholders know the mission statement.
- The mission statement describes the ministry.

### 4. A distinctive education program

- The education program fulfills the goals of the congregation and community.
- The education program offers the community the program it needs.
- The education program provides quality Christian education.

### 5. A trained school board

- The board understands school funding is a primary responsibility.
- The board seeks ways to strengthen the funding base.
- The board communicates the financial situation with the congregation and community.

### 6. A driven development team

- The development team shows leadership in school funding.
- The development team takes action.
- The development team takes reasonable risks in providing school funding.
- The development team removes burdens from the administrator.

### 7. An aggressive marketing plan

- The marketing plan seeks ways to retain current students.
- The marketing plan provides methods for student recruitment.

### 8. A strategic financial plan

- The financial plan has a strategy to secure annual cash flow.
- The financial plan is designed for future financial security.

### 9. An enlightened administrator

- The administrator realizes financial changes are happening and will continue to happen.
- The administrator prepares personally for change.
- The administrator gathers a funding team to direct the school's financial plan.
- The administrator leads the staff and board through change.

### 10. An up front pastor

- The pastor accepts the school as a ministry.
- The pastor shows a partnership in implementing the mission statement of the school.
- The pastor promotes new ideas in the changing financial times.

## Definitions

The following words or phrases are used in this chapter. Please note their operational definitions.

**Budget:** the annual financial plan for the school year. It includes all expected income and expenses for the school year.

**Business plan:** the financial plan for the next three to five years. It includes all projected income and expenses for each year and is adjusted annually.

**Case statement:** tells why a school deserves support. It includes the mission statement, record of service and achievement to the church and community. Also, it includes the method the school wishes to use to improve its service and mission, the new resources required to carry out the plan and the invitation to participate in giving.

**Cash flow chart:** shows a month-by-month accounting/projection of the monthly beginning balance, each income source, each expense category and monthly net operating income /loss.

**Current assets:** assets that can easily be converted to cash or used in place of cash within one year.

**Current liabilities:** liabilities that are due and payable within one year.

**Endowment fund:** a special reserve set aside to take care of emergencies and/or provide for the continuation of certain projects. Endowments may be restricted or unrestricted.

**FASB standards:** the official accounting standards adopted by certified public accountants for use by not-for-profit organizations.

**Fourth source income:** an indirect way of taxing the staff to cover the cost of operation. It often involves low wages and insufficient salary increases in order to keep the tuition, fees and congregational commitment at a lower level. It is also used when a congregation enters a building program, when salaries are frozen in order to balance the budget and/or pay the mortgage. Fourth source income is inappropriate for Lutheran schools.

**Funding formula:** establishes the sources of income and how those sources are determined.

**Hard income:** all income that is relatively sure of coming in to the school. Examples include tuition, fees, interest designated from an endowment and congregational support.

**Soft income:** all income that may or may not be received by the school. It is unpredictable in amount. Examples include fundraising activities, an annual fund drive, gifts and memorials.

**Planned-giving gifts guidelines:** outlines in what manner gifts are to be solicited, received and utilized. These gifts may be an outright gift, a deferred gift or a bequest.

**Resource development:** involves expanding the funding base to increase annual cash flow and to secure a strong financial future. It requires the cultivation of friends for your school in order to raise funds to assure its financial operations.

**Third source income:** all soft money income. It is fundraising, annual fund, gifts, memorials and grants.

## Funding the Lutheran School

This section is designed to assist the board and administrator in understanding school funding issues. It begins with a rationale for a financial plan and the components of that plan. It includes a look at various sources of income and guidelines for developing support and income for school operations.

### The Need for a Financial Plan<sup>1</sup>

An important component of the school/congregation long range and strategic plans is the financial plan for the school. Without a financial plan, the school and congregation invite problems.

The annual setting of tuition and fees may be nothing more than a painful, and often counterproductive debate concerning “How much more can parents stand?” (The debate is often conducted by parents who will be affected by an increase in fees.) The answer to the question is invariably, “Not much.”

The staff salary and benefits increase becomes uncoupled from tuition and hard income increases. Discussions on salaries and benefits are consequently shaped via another debate framed in language such as “How much does the faculty need?” The answer, because most teachers are underpaid, is invariably, “A lot.”

The difficulty of managing and predicting enrollment and enrollment revenue is frequently obscured by wishful “predictions” of enrollment increase, and thus, by a projected “balanced budget” whose enrollment-and-revenue assumptions are appropriately not conservative.

The crucial issue of building and maintaining adequate levels of unrestricted and building reserves, and of continuous attention to their full funding, often becomes lost in the confusion of asking the wrong questions in the wrong contexts of financially stretched parents, undercompensated faculty, expanding congregational ministries and wishful thinking about enrollment.

Those involved with the annual budget-building process must ask, “Where are we taking the school long-term and how will the school arrive at its desired place without a strategic solvency framework?”

Without a financial plan designed in part to help the school “charge what it costs” to operate, the school may drift toward an ever-increasing dependence upon annual giving and other non-capital soft income sources to balance its operations budget.

<sup>1</sup> This section is based on *The Strategic Board of Trustees: A Compendium of Ideas and Perspectives Articles, Independent School Management*, 1998.

## Sources of Income

The first step toward developing an improved funding program is to know and understand the various sources of available income. The next step is to analyze these sources of income, test their practicality for the school and ensure they are in harmony with principles of Christian stewardship. The following information addresses knowledge and understanding of the sources of income; subsequent pages will address the testing of the availability of the sources for the school and the ways to develop the income sources.

### 1. Historical perspective on funding

A historical perspective is helpful in understanding how Lutheran schools are funded. When Lutheran schools were first established in America, congregations usually assumed the full responsibility for all costs. School costs were usually included in the congregational budget. It should be noted, however, that Lutheran schools usually were maintained by congregations to provide a Christian education for the children of the congregation. Some Lutheran schools still receive full support, or nearly so, from the congregation(s) which owns and operates it. In these schools, it is common practice to charge fees for books and materials and to charge tuition for nonmember students.

As member enrollment declined and Lutheran schools began to serve children of the neighborhood, the practice of charging tuition became more common. Even in these cases, tuition rarely covered the full cost of education and congregations were still providing considerable subsidy.

Beginning in the late 1930s and early 1940s, several trends in the Lutheran school movement developed that affected funding practices. Many older, urban congregations became less able to fully support their schools. These congregations, however, recognized their schools as important ministries to the community and therefore were reluctant to close them. Rather than closing the schools, these congregations looked for new sources of income.

Also in the early 1940s, many urban congregations that previously had no school were experiencing membership declines as communities and neighborhoods were changing. Some of these congregations saw the Lutheran school as an excellent agency for outreach for caring for children and for helping the congregation through a membership transition. Even though these congregations had few funds to support a school, they opened a Lutheran school and began looking for new funding sources.

Within the context of this brief historical perspective, school boards need to look at the funding of their Lutheran school for future decades.

### 2. Basic sources of income

The following are the basic sources of income for Lutheran schools:

- Congregational support
- Tuition and fees
- Gift income
- Fundraising
- Government-funded programs

For each source of income, a series of statements will serve as guidelines for the board as it evaluates the use of each source in the school's funding program.

### 3. Congregational support

Discuss the following statements as the current practice of funding the school is evaluated. Consider whether the current practices could be improved. If so, how?

1. Congregational support is desirable in every Lutheran school. The Lutheran school is viewed as a ministry of the whole congregation, not parents only.
2. Congregation members are urged to support the Lutheran school and to claim ownership of it as a ministry of the congregation, even as members claim ownership and support the other ministries of the congregation.
3. When planning school budgets, income from the congregation should be considered first.
4. Congregational financial support of the school gives evidence that the congregation views the school as an authentic and valuable ministry.
5. Congregations that provide, or seek to provide, 100 percent support, or nearly so, should:
  - Provide adequate funds to maintain excellence in education.
  - Provide adequate salaries and other funds for the other important ministries of the church and congregation.
6. Congregations providing less than full support of the school should:
  - Provide sufficient support to reflect true "ownership" and a commitment of the congregation that says, "We value this school."
  - Provide in addition to, or in lieu of, budget support, other "in kind" services such as utilities, insurance, building maintenance and other ways that assist the school and give evidence of congregational ownership.
  - Avoid viewing the school as a source of income for the congregation.
7. Congregations will annually foster vigorous stewardship programs for all congregational ministries including the ministry of the school and will thereby seek to maintain or increase congregational support for the school.

#### 4. Tuition income and fees

Discuss the following statements as the current practice of funding the school is evaluated. Consider also whether current practices could be improved. If so, how?

1. Tuition is an appropriate source of income for Lutheran schools. Through tuition, parents share in the responsibility of providing a Christian education for their children.
2. Tuition rates should be established fairly, based on actual cost-per-student data.
3. The tuition collection system should be well organized and maintained in an efficient manner.
4. Provision should be made for financial assistance to those who are unable to meet their financial responsibility.
5. Practices that violate IRS rulings should be avoided.
  - Tuition may not in any manner be deducted as a contribution to the congregation or school.
  - Tuition may not be stated or implied as a required donation.
  - Contact your LCMS District education executive for additional rulings.
6. Guidelines for setting tuition that are fair and appropriately reflect the ministry of the congregation and school should be established.
7. A cost-per-student should be set for all students, members and nonmembers alike.
8. When a single tuition rate has been established, the sponsoring congregations may:
  - Provide a full or partial subsidy for its member children who attend the Lutheran school.
  - Provide a tuition subsidy for unchurched children (not members of a Christian congregation). Congregations may choose to provide such support from its mission budget.
9. All nonmember church families should be expected to pay the full cost of their child's education.
10. Other Christian congregations in the community should be encouraged to provide a tuition subsidy for their member children who attend the Lutheran school.
11. The sponsoring congregation should have a program of financial aid for needy families in addition to its tuition subsidy.
12. No child will be denied enrollment from the school for financial reasons.

#### 5. Gift income

Discuss the following statements as the current practice of funding the school is evaluated. Consider whether current practices could be improved. If so, how?

1. Gift income is a desirable form of revenue particularly when it enables the school to provide special programs and services that are not ordinarily funded by income from congregations, tuition and fees. Such programs include tuition assistance, equipment and materials, renovation programs, library resources, continuing education of teachers, special equipment, etc.
2. Gift income solicitation programs are to be coordinated through the congregation's stewardship board or finance committee.
  - Programs of solicitation are to be well-planned and administered, maintaining Christian integrity and avoiding exploitation of any manner.
  - Members of the school family (parents, former parents, alumni, friends and relatives of students and members of the congregation) can be encouraged and invited to support the ministry of the school with regular and special gifts.
3. Members of the school community (neighbors, businesses, foundations) can be invited to be friends of the school and to provide financial support for it.
4. Income from gifts should be estimated and projected conservatively, thereby not distorting the annual budget.
5. Gift income, if cultivated carefully and with integrity, can become an important source of income over time.
6. Gift income programs should support the principles of Christian stewardship.

#### 6. Fundraising income

Discuss the following statements as the current practices of funding the school are evaluated. Consider whether current practices could be improved. If so, how?

1. Fundraising is a legitimate source of income when other sources of income have been fully explored and developed.
2. Fundraising is viewed as another way that friends of the school can provide additional support.
3. Fundraising activities are viewed positively when they are accompanied by Christian fellowship and goodwill, foster educational programs, provide opportunity for sharing and provide adults another opportunity for demonstrating ownership of the school's ministry.
4. Fundraising is never viewed as a substitute for sound Christian stewardship.
5. Fundraising activities avoid the exploitation of students, parents and friends.
6. Fundraising groups work through the established procedures of the congregation and are coordinated by the appropriate congregational committee.

7. Fundraising activities are well-planned, scheduled in advance and retain Christian dignity throughout.
8. Fundraising programs are cost effective and produce income commensurate with the investment of the time and effort of workers.
9. Children involved in fundraising will not be exploited or exposed to risk or danger.

### 7. Government funded programs

Certain states provide funding for services and programs on behalf of children attending public and nonpublic schools. Ordinarily, these programs do not interfere with the distinctive purpose of Lutheran schools. It is important that the board and the administrator are aware of state and federal programs where funds are available for the children attending the school, including voucher programs.

Government programs usually require application, record keeping, supervision and accountability. By participating in the programs provided by the state and federal government, schools are agents in helping to carry out those services and programs that the state deems important for all children.

Discuss the following statements as the current practices of funding the school are evaluated. Consider whether current practices could be improved. If so, how?

1. Government funding is a legitimate way of supporting the operations of a Lutheran school so long as it does not interfere with the mission of the school.
2. Government funding is never viewed as a substitute for sound Christian stewardship.
3. Income from government funding should be estimated and projected conservatively, thereby not distorting the annual budget.

## Components of a Financial Plan

A financial plan (business plan) has 10 components. Typically, the plan covers a three- to five-year time frame. The components are the following:

### 1. Enrollment projections:

It is essential that the administrator project enrollment for each grade level included in the school program. The number of students expected establishes staffing needs and identifies potential capital needs when space is needed to add a class. Past enrollment trends, births in the congregation and a Lutheran Church Extension Fund demographic study ([lcef.org/demographics](http://lcef.org/demographics)) for the area of the school will provide data to calculate projections for the school's future.

### 2. Staffing projections

The enrollment projections will help determine staffing needs. Also consider special needs for music, technology, art, physical education and science. Include the need for support staff—secretarial, maintenance, and in large schools, a business manager.

The staffing projection is the most important part of the financial plan because it will account for 75 –80 percent of an annual budget. The number of staff will impact expenses in several ways. It impacts the salary line item, the benefits line item and the continuing education/staff development line item.

### 3. Program/curriculum plans

Curriculum changes will affect the financial plan. Be sure to plan for media and material adoptions and new programs. Most schools have implemented a cycle for curriculum review and media adoption. Note these plans in the financial plan.

### 4. Accreditation improvement goals

National Lutheran School Accreditation requires renewal fees. The result of an accreditation process will be a school improvement plan. The financial plan must take into account any costs related to this school improvement plan. The improvement plan is an important part of the financial plan.

### 5. Strategic plan

The strategic plan for the congregation and school sets a vision for the future. The financial plan must include any costs related to implementing this plan. The strategic plan enables the congregation and board of education to plan for expenditures.

### 6. Funding formula

A funding formula is the plan by which a congregation intends to provide the annual funds needed to operate its school in the coming year. The formula identifies the sources of income and the percent of the school's total budget each income source will provide. See the illustration below.

#### FUNDING FORMULA: CHRIST LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Income Source	Amount	Percent of Total
Total income	\$675,800	100%
Congregational income	\$270,320	40%
Tuition and fees	\$371,690	55%
Gift income	\$20,271	3%
Fundraising income	\$4,800	0.7%
Government programs	\$0	0%
Other	\$8,719	1.3%



## 7. Why a funding formula?

If a congregation determines to operate a school as an integral program of its mission, the congregation must also determine how the school is to be funded.

Historically, when a congregation established a school it also determined, or assumed, that the school would be funded by the congregation from the receipts of members' regular contributions. That was the congregation's funding formula. It was a simple formula and it worked for many. For a few congregations, that formula still works.

Many congregations have discovered that a formula of exclusive congregational support no longer works. The congregations could not maintain the quality of education they would like. It may also mean that other ministries of the congregation are not funded or poorly funded. It may mean that teachers' salaries are dreadfully low. This is a critical time for the congregation and its school. For these congregations, it is a time to appoint a board or a committee, or representatives from several boards and committees, to develop a funding formula for the school.

Some schools, particularly those established in recent decades, began operation with the assumption that tuition would be the primary source of income. In some cases, schools began with little or no congregational support or ownership. These schools, too, should develop a funding formula. Working for greater congregational support and gift income would not only increase revenues, but would also increase a congregational feeling of ownership and allow for greater linkage between the congregation and school mission.

### A. Who is responsible?

Boards of education frequently report that they are not sure who is responsible for the funding of the Lutheran school. This may be a major reason for the funding problems some Lutheran schools experience. In many cases, according to the reports of board members, a congregation's finance committee, working with the school board, is responsible for the budget preparation of the school. In these instances, no one is designated to be responsible for planning the funding of the school. When adequate funds are not received, what usually happens is that budgets are cut and programs or services are eliminated or reduced.

Regardless of the practice in the congregation and school, a board, committee or individual must have responsibility for establishing a formula by which the school will be funded. Establishing a funding formula is always the essential first step in developing a successful financial plan for the school.

### B. Who is to be involved?

Because the school is an integral part of the congregation's mission, then obviously the congregation must be involved.

Additionally, the school board must be involved. Neither congregation nor school board should work independently; both must work together if a funding formula and plan is to be developed and supported.

The composition of funding committees should contain the following members: two members of the finance committee, two members of the stewardship committee and three members of the school board, one of whom is the administrator. The responsibilities of the committee are:

1. To establish a funding formula and to review it annually, and
2. To plan and approve programs of funding for the school.

The positive benefit, in addition to the funding formula, is the strengthened relationship between the congregation and the school. In some congregations, the administrator is given the responsibility to "ensure that the school has adequate funds."

If the school has no one appointed or designated to accomplish the above two tasks, this chapter can serve as the assignment and resource for a newly established committee.

### C. Steps for developing a funding formula

Note: This section, as well as the entire chapter, assumes that congregations and schools have a reasonably good financial record-keeping system. If this is not so, congregations would do well to develop a system that serves the congregation and school responsibly and with accuracy. The Congregation Treasurer's Manual is available at [lcms.org/ctm](http://lcms.org/ctm) to help congregations.

Consider inviting people from the stewardship committee and the finance committee to participate in the process. Review the five steps suggested below. Please note that the first three steps require the gathering of information. Perhaps one person can be assigned in advance to gather this information and have it ready when the board or study committee meets to carry out the five steps.

Many boards report difficulty when congregations and schools do not have the same fiscal years. Many congregations report the advantage of having both congregation and school on the same fiscal year, usually beginning July 1 and ending June 30. The advantage for congregation and for school is that congregational and school programs follow the school year cycle more than the calendar-year cycle. This is an advantage for budget planning, record keeping and comparing financial data from previous years. Board members may want to consider this as they carry out the assignments outlined in the next five steps.

The steps will help the school determine its sources of income during recent years, the percent of total income each source provided, identify the sources of income and then to determine whether changes are desirable and practical to help the school maintain a strong funding program.

#### Step One

Determine, for the past school year, the amount of actual income from each income source; then determine the percent of total income for each income source. Use the chart below. If needed,

add additional income sources, if any, to reflect the school's total income sources.

### FUNDING FORMULA

Income Source	Amount	Percent of Total
Total income	\$X.XX	100%
Congregational income		
Tuition and fees		
Gift income		
Fundraising income		
Government programs		
Foundation/Interest		
Other		

#### Step Two

Develop a chart similar to the one above and repeat the above step for the three prior years.

#### Step Three

When information has been gathered for steps one and two, draw a line or bar graph that shows the income pattern for the school for each income source. The graph will show income sources and their growth or decline pattern for the past four years of operation. The graph will show the funding pattern (formula) for the designated years.

#### Step Four

On the basis of the information above; evaluate the funding performance by doing the following:

- The administrator shares information he/she has gathered with the committees. Note patterns or trends.
- Review the income sources identified. For each income source, the administrators assesses whether the income source should be increased or decreased. List reasons for increasing or decreasing. Individuals of the study committee or board should also complete this exercise. Then the group should discuss their responses and reasons. Strive to reach consensus for each income source. If consensus is difficult at this point, continue with the following step. (Consensus may emerge later.)

#### Step Five

Prepare a tentative funding formula. Ask, "In what ways can the formula be adjusted to enhance the financial support of the school?" With a tentative formula, no doubt the tentative formula will be revised several times before completion.

Study the illustrations reported in the following pages.

- For each income source, estimate the percent of increase or decrease that is desirable, possible and practical over the next three or five-year period.
- Develop a three- or five-year chart that shows the percent of annual increase or decrease necessary to achieve the goal for the school.
- On the basis of the chart, project a funding formula for the next school year indicating for each income source the percent of the total and the dollar amount. (If next year's budget is not complete, assume a 3 percent increase in the budget unless there are evident reasons for increasing or decreasing the budget for the next school year.)
- Study the subsequent section, *Guidelines for Developing Support and Income*. Following a study, repeat the steps above and finalize the funding formula and plan the budget for the next and subsequent school years.

### iv. Illustrations of congregations establishing funding formulas

The following illustrations are provided to help the board or study committee consider ways of establishing, maintaining or revising its funding formula. The illustrations reflect rather accurately what several congregations report as completed or planned actions of their congregations.

#### *Illustration one: Faith Lutheran Church and School*

Faith Lutheran Church and School were established over 100 years ago. Until recently, the congregational budget fully supported the school. Ten years ago an annual student fee of \$400 was assessed in the school. Faith's congregation also supports other ministries and programs of the church.

After a yearlong study, Faith congregation resolved the following regarding school support:

1. To continue support of the school and to continue the practice of student fees,
2. To charge its nonmember students full tuition based on actual per student costs; and to request the congregations of nonmember students to provide financial support for their students attending Faith Lutheran School,
3. To intensify the congregation's stewardship efforts in the next three years to increase teacher salaries to a level that is equal to public school salary schedules, and
4. To conduct an annual every-member-appeal for the purpose of establishing a student assistance endowment and a continuing education fund for teachers.

#### *Illustration two: Northwest Lutheran School*

Northwest Lutheran School, established 32 years ago, is operated by three congregations in a racially mixed urban community. Recent evaluations indicate that more funds are needed for improving the quality of education. Enrollment during recent years: 51% from members of the three supporting congregations,

19% from other Lutheran churches, and 30% from unchurched member families. Income in recent years:

- Support from three congregations: 17%
- Tuition and fees: 75%
- Gift income: 3%
- Fundraising income: 5%

The three congregations that operate Northwest Lutheran School are currently considering the recommendation of a study committee made up of representatives of all three congregations:

1. Set the same tuition for all students based on per student costs.
2. Provide a tuition subsidy for member children and unchurched member children.
3. Work toward a funding formula over the next five years as follows:
  - Congregational support: 25%
  - Tuition income (from members and unchurched members): 65%
  - Gift income: 10%
  - Fundraising: 0%
4. Conduct one major fund appeal annually within the three congregations, the business community and the school community through which the gift income goal of 10 percent can be reached.

#### *Illustration three: St. Stephen's Lutheran School*

St. Stephen's was established primarily by a parent group 12 years ago. It serves mostly children of the community, 192 of them. Recently the congregation has become more involved in the school, working with families of the children enrolled. Income sources:

1. Congregational support provides free use of facilities, utilities and custodial service.
2. Tuition and fees provide 100% of other costs.
3. Gift income has been minimal and has been used solely for non-budgeted items.
4. Fundraising projects, 10–12 per year, are used to raise money for needs beyond the budget.
5. Some government support has been received but not included in the budget.

The school budget is managed by the school administrator, separate from the congregation's budget.

Beginning with the next school term, the following plan will be followed:

1. The congregation will continue to provide facilities, utilities and custodial services.
2. Tuition, based on per pupil cost, will cover 100% of the budget.
3. A vigorous gift income program will be initiated to reduce the number of funding activities to one or two major, well-planned fundraising activities per year. The gift income program will seek funds from foundations, businesses, Lutherans in the community and other available sources.
4. As soon as possible, the school budget will be incorporated into the congregational budget for purposes of ownership and uniformity.

#### *Illustration four: Trinity Lutheran Church and School*

Until five years ago, Trinity congregation included virtually all school costs in its budget. The school had few other sources of income. While the school was well taken care of, other ministries of the congregation were diminishing—particularly mission outreach.

After intensive study, the congregation approved the shared support plan. The plan, over a five-year period, called for the congregation budget to provide 50% of the school support with tuition and fees to provide the remaining 50%. All school costs were to be included in the budget. No gift solicitation or fundraisers were to be conducted. The plan was implemented and is now in its fifth year. Congregation members, school board, staff and parents feel good about their school and the shared support plan.

In its fifth year of this plan, Trinity congregation resolved to continue the plan. In its resolution, Trinity stressed the importance of enrolling children from unchurched homes and resolved that the tuition for them would be the same as for congregation members. The congregation's mission budget will pick up the congregation's 50% shared responsibility. At the suggestion of the stewardship committee, the congregation also resolved to annually publish a congregation gift list that would include major items, over budget, for congregation and school.

## **8. Expenses**

All expense categories and line items should be recorded and projected for the three to five year period. In addition to the program and staffing changes identified, an inflation factor should be built into each category and line item. Accurate records from past years will enable tracking of projected increases.

## **9. Capital projects**

While the capital expenditures are generally not considered a part of the operations budget, they do impact it. A major increase in fees and tuition during a year in which a major capital campaign is launched could prove fatal for the campaign and support for the school. Some schools include a part of their tuition income as a source for debt retirement for a capital project. This needs to be considered in the financial plan.

## 10. Technology

Ongoing costs include upgrades to software and hardware. Maintenance of sophisticated equipment can be costly. Training staff to effectively use the technology must be considered in overall costs. Depreciate computers over four years, and build in replacement costs on an annual basis.

## 11. Assumptions

The financial plan concludes with a listing of assumptions upon which the plan was built. It summarizes key information was involved in the development of the plan. Some examples of assumptions:

- The congregation will continue to cover the costs of utilities and building maintenance of the school.
- The expenses for years two through five assume a rate of inflation of 3%.
- The enrollment of nonmembers will increase at the rate of 4% per year.
- The cost of health benefits will increase at a rate greater than inflation.
- The salary schedule will be increased to reach the public school schedule within five years.
- All computers will be replaced over a four-year period.

## Guidelines for Developing Support and Income

The next sections provide some general principles followed by specific help for developing funds in each income source.

### 1. Understanding Christian stewardship

Invitations to make a contribution to one cause or another are not uncommon. When asked to describe the fundraising events, a stakeholder shared, “Sometimes they thrust a jar or canister in front of us; other times they appeal to a sense of friendship, knowing that we’ll have a hard time declining the invitation. On some occasions we feel trapped, too embarrassed to decline, so we give to one cause or another—sometimes with resentment toward the person who asked us as well as bitterness toward the cause.” Understanding Christian stewardship can enable the administrator and others to give joyfully of time, talent and treasure to the ministry of the Lutheran school.

The focus of Scripture is on the self-giving and redemptive act of a loving God. What is the response to that action? God’s righteousness and self-disclosure always precede our response. The crown jewel of God’s gifts is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the church’s responsibility to assist those it serves to be aware of and respond to the loving gifts that have been given.

No one can enumerate fully all the gifts of God. Life is a gift that is celebrated daily. Another important gift that is acknowledged is the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, through which we are brought into a new relationship with God and the Christian community. To all this, God offers Jesus Christ—the ultimate gift. Through His life, death and resurrection, we the unrighteous become righteous, justified and liberated from sin, death and the devil.

So how does this apply to those who want to raise money for their school? First, it speaks to individuals about their own response to God’s goodness and grace. It means that whatever is given—time, talent, money—can be offered from a sense of gratitude. Giving is the external evidence of internal priorities and a personal commitment to God. Circumstances may vary, income and possessions differ, but each is expected to respond to God in love and faith.

The second implication addresses the approach of those who are asked for funds or services for the school program. They, too, can respond joyfully to God’s goodness in their lives. It is, therefore, a privilege to invite others with the opportunity to respond positively to the Gospel.

Implicit in Christian stewardship is that a part of the response to God’s goodness will be in the form of money. Money is an extension of ourselves; how it is used is reflected in what is valued. This applies to both the personal and collective use of money.

A congregation with a clearly focused sense of mission is most likely a congregation that is faithfully giving its life and energy as led by the Spirit. The congregation should have a purpose statement that reflects its understanding of God’s love, His call and purpose.

### 2. Principles of income development

1. Gathering funds for the Lord’s work is a ministry in itself, as it enables the work of the Lord and enriches the lives of donors.
2. Gathering funds for the Lord always requires prayer, hard work, good planning, careful communication of purpose and need, ongoing follow-up and the Lord’s blessing.
3. Gathering funds for the Lord always focuses on God’s love for people in Christ and the peoples’ need of His forgiveness.
4. Gathering funds for the Lord happens best when the institution is always hard at work achieving its purpose and when prospective donors own, embrace and support that purpose.
5. Gathering funds for the Lord happens best when donors and prospective donors are treated at all times as partners and friends.
6. Gathering funds for the Lord happens best when donors and prospective donors have confidence that the resources of the institution are well managed and that evaluation and long-range planning are ongoing activities.
7. Consultants, when the need arises, should be invited to assist in assessing need and developing programs to help assure adequate funding.



## Guidelines for Developing Congregational Support

The guidelines below apply generally to most congregations with schools. Boards and study committees are urged to add or modify guidelines to fit their needs. Consider each guideline carefully. Then prepare guidelines for the congregation and, as appropriate, seek approval for them.

Congregational support is enriched when:

1. The congregation plans and conducts a continuous comprehensive, Christ-centered stewardship ministry that seeks to involve all congregation members.
2. The congregation assumes, through appropriate boards and committees, the primary responsibility for raising funds to meet its share of the school funding formula.
3. The board of education and staff throughout the year communicate the school's story and purpose to congregation members by ...
  - Providing regular printed communications that are informative, attractive, winsome and Gospel-centered.
  - Providing oral communication to congregation boards, committees, auxiliary groups and congregation members.
  - Planning for the participation of school children in worship services and by winsomely encouraging children and their parents to attend worship services regularly.
  - Conducting events at school or church of special interest to congregation members.
  - Involving board members, staff, school parents and children (particularly member children and parents) in the life and support of the congregation.
4. Members who may not feel strongly in favor of the school are treated respectfully and with understanding.
5. Congregational leaders, boards, committees and pastors are advocates for the school and work for its successful ministry.
4. Registration and first tuition payments are due six weeks prior to the opening of school:
  - To help determine the opening enrollment.
  - To help avoid summer financial slumps.
  - To help defray costs connected with the opening of the school term.
5. Final payments are due four weeks prior to the close of school to help assure completion of tuition payments prior to the close of school unless payments are expected every month of the calendar year.
6. Tuition payment schedules are administered punctually and in accord with approved guidelines.
7. Tuition aid or assistance is provided with integrity to those parents who can demonstrate need and when the congregation and/or its members provide funds for such assistance.
8. Board, administration and staff seek intentionally and win-  
somerly to:
  - maintain good relationships with parents
  - partner with parents in the education of their children.
  - seek parents' opinions and suggestions regularly throughout the school year
  - provide a comprehensive orientation for new parents/guardians prior to the opening of school and during the school year
  - communicate personally and in print with parents/guardians to keep them informed about school life and to interpret the school and its ministry
  - provide help and ministry to parents/guardians particularly as it relates to living in the Gospel and with parenting skills
  - involve parents in the life of the school according to parents' interest, skills and available time
  - provide regular financial reports and information

## Guidelines for Developing Tuition Support

Tuition support is enhanced when ...

1. Tuition and fees are set fairly, based on accurate financial data and good judgment and when parents are given opportunity to express their views and feelings prior to final decisions.
2. Parents are notified well in advance about increases or changes in tuition and fees and reasons for changes. Parents are informed about other sources of income that provide support for their children's education at the same time.
3. Several reasonable payment schedules are offered to parents along with clear instructions and information regarding provisions, if any, for delinquent payments.

## Guidelines for Developing Gift Income

Gift income will increase when:

1. Donors and prospective donors know about the school, its purpose, its achievement and its future.
2. Friends and prospective donors are recognized for their particular relationship with the school, including parents, former parents, former students, relatives of students and former students, special friends of the congregation, special friends of the school, friends and relatives of staff and others who may have a special relationship with the school.
3. Prospective donors are recognized first and foremost as friends or potential friends of the school and that the friendships are cultivated.
4. Seeking gifts for the school is viewed as an important ministry to donors and prospective donors and an important ministry for the Lord.



5. Adequate time and energy, in relation to need, are invested in the stewardship and development ministry.
6. Programs for soliciting gifts are coordinated with the congregation and gifts to the school are viewed as gifts to the congregation on behalf of the school's ministry.

## Suggestions for Gift Income Programs

The following suggestions apply generally to congregations or schools seeking to develop gift income programs. Many suggestions also apply when considering congregational giving programs.

Information is available for persons who are responsible for planning gift income programs. It is important to study and learn before initiating local programs. Consider attending workshops that focus on various aspects of resource development. In many communities, colleges, high schools or other nonprofit institutions engage development directors. Some schools and congregations also engage a development director. Consider consulting a development director for advice or assistance.

Consider the following:

### 1. A case statement

A case statement is an important tool in carrying out a strategy for increasing support. It presents the school as a successful program. The statement must be written from the donor's perspective and based on institutional strengths. The uniqueness of this approach is that it allows potential donors to understand how they can contribute and add to the strength of the program that is already in place. It's exactly the opposite of the usual "begging plea" to help save a weak or dying program.

### 2. Development schedule

Gift income programs, or development programs, need to be planned a full year in advance to be effective. Avoid last minute programs that respond to crises. All components of a development program (mailings, solicitations, telephone solicitation, etc.) should be scheduled for the entire year. Then, for each component, a schedule should be developed that allows time for planning, preparing material, training workers, sponsoring the event and follow-through.

### 3. Prospect lists

Usually, the first task in any gift income program is to develop the list of prospects to whom solicitations can be made. Perhaps a number of these lists are already prepared. In developing prospect lists, consider the following: current parents, former parents, grandparents, former students and their parents, board members and former board members, congregation leaders, rela-

tives of students and former students, vendors and businesses in the area and foundations or other fund granting institutions. In developing lists, keep in mind the ease of developing mail solicitations. When gifts are received, be sure to develop donor cards or records so that the gifts of individual donors can be recorded. Computer software programs are available to maintain and use the prospect list.

### 4. Prospect donor files

Developing and maintaining a prospect donor file is an important task that requires ongoing effort and supervision. A prospect donor file identifies the name of a person or family who may have a special reason for giving or a special gift to give. Every board member can help develop this prospect file. Using the existing development lists, names should be studied and evaluated and prospects recorded. A donor's file should contain information such as name, address and phone number; also occupation, special interests, special relationships with church or school and any other information that may be helpful when asking for a gift. When a prospective donor gives a gift, regardless of size, that gift should be noted on a donor card. Donors and prospective donors should be maintained in a database.

### 5. Types of solicitation

A variety of methods are used for soliciting gifts, commitments or pledges. Often several types of solicitation are used in a single gift income program:

**Gift solicitation mailings:** Letters, with or without enclosures, are used frequently to stay in contact with all names on the prospect lists. Return envelopes are essential. Mail solicitations can be used two or three times per year. Mailings often reveal major prospects. See criteria for materials below.

**E-blasts:** an email version of the above to a list of prospective donors.

**One-on-one:** The one-on-one visit is rated by research as the most effective method of gift solicitation. These visits are usually preceded by a mailing of some type. One-on-one solicitations are preceded by the training of visitors (the individuals who will visit the donors). Advance preparation of materials (for the trainer and for the donor's response) is required.

**Small-group sessions:** These are rated second in effectiveness. Four to five persons are gathered at a luncheon or some other appropriate place. The trainer presents materials, motivates and seeks a gift response.

**Large-group sessions:** These can be effective if well planned. A presenter is needed. Well-prepared materials are essential when large groups are used; several solicitors or visitors (one visitor per five prospective donors) are needed for one-on-one contact and follow-up.

**Telephone:** Telephone calls and phone-a-thons can be effective solicitation methods. Used alone or in conjunction with other methods, telephone solicitations need to be well-planned, callers

need to be trained, advance materials need to be brief and to the point and follow-up material should be well-organized.

## 6. Criteria for materials

Use the following checklist for every communication piece:

1. Is it accurate and honest?
2. Does it have accurate language, grammar and spelling?
3. Is it well written and interesting?
4. Is its layout and design attractive?
5. Is it positive, informative and winsome?
6. Does it reflect the school's distinctive image?
7. If printed, is the quality of printing or duplicating neat and clear?
8. Does it proclaim the Gospel?

## Guidelines for Developing Income through Fundraising

1. Fundraising programs should be planned, coordinated and scheduled for the entire year prior to the opening of the school year.
2. All fundraising programs should be approved by the school board and/or a designated committee or board of the congregation prior to the beginning of the school year unless responsibility for such programs has been given by the board to the administrator.
3. Fundraising events and programs should be limited in number to help assure the success of each program and to avoid the development of a negative fundraising image for the school.
4. Fundraising programs should not be viewed as a substitute for giving in accord with principles of Christian stewardship but should rather seek to enhance those principles.
5. Fundraising programs should seek significant income in relation to the time and effort invested.
6. Fundraising programs should provide opportunity to enhance the school's image and to promote its purpose.
7. Fundraising programs should provide a hospitable environment for workers, participants and guests.
8. Fundraising programs should seek to involve a host of people as workers, contributors and participants.
9. Financial records of all fundraising events or programs should be maintained and reported to the school board or some other designated group. Proceeds from fundraising events must be used solely for their designated purpose.

A host of events and programs are suitable for fundraisers including dinners, sales, auctions, bazaars, marathons, contests, special events and many others. Each of these can be planned and managed in such a way to gather funds for the school and also to enhance the school's image.

When considering the sponsorship of a fundraising event, recruit several persons from the school to gather information, observe and evaluate fundraising programs that are sponsored by groups within the church or community or by other Lutheran schools. When this information has been gathered, the board, some committee of the board, or the administrator can select a program or event that best meets the fundraising guidelines established by the board and one that seems most practical and feasible for the school.

Once the school has conducted a successful fundraising program or event, consider making it an annual event. If the event is well planned and managed and is viewed as successful, the event can become a tradition for the school.

Each year provides the opportunity to build on the success of prior years. When this happens, the school will have established a reliable source of income and achieve many of the positive goals a fundraising event or program can achieve.

## Sample Policies

### 1. Fiscal responsibility (traditional model)

*The Board's fiscal responsibility shall be discharged by:*

1. *Approving (or recommending to the appropriate congregation governance group) the annual budget.*
2. *Incurring short-term (one year or less) debt as needed, not to exceed \$10,000.*
3. *Establishing policies limiting the administrator's financial authority, budget development and control of assets.*
4. *Monitoring the fiscal soundness of the school.*
5. *Systematically monitoring compliance with these policies.*
6. *Establishing annual tuition and fees.*
7. *Receiving and reviewing financial audits of all school related accounts.*
8. *Approving emergency, non-budget capital expenditures (defined as being over \$1,000). Capital expenditures over \$25,000 require Voters Assembly approval.*

### 2. Administrator limitations – Financial management (Carver model)

*The administrator will ensure that the school will not have inadequate funds to operate as a high quality Christian school.*

### 3. Compensation (Carver model)

*The administrator may not operate without a board-approved (congregation-approved) salary scale.*

#### 4. Gifts and bequests (Carver model)

1. *The administrator shall not fail to develop a plan to promote and receive gifts and bequests.*
2. *The administrator shall not permit the school to accept gifts and bequests that run counter to the congregation's values and policies and that have a neutral or negative effect on the Strategic Plan.*
3. *The administrator shall not permit the school to accept gifts and bequests that are too restrictive or violate or endanger the congregation's not-for-profit status.*
4. *The administrator may not use the earnings on any endowment fund for any purpose other than that stipulated by the endowment.*

#### 5. Actions requiring board approval (traditional model)

*Certain decisions require specific board approval because of their unique nature or a specific requirement of the board. (In some instances, these might be responsibilities of the congregation's governance board(s).)*

- Selection of the auditor
- Receipt and review of financial audits
- Sale of stock
- Budget

#### 6. Direct monitoring (traditional model)

*These are the actions used to confirm compliance with the board's policies in all policy areas. All written reports shall be sent to the board not less than five days prior to the meeting.*

*The administrator shall:*

1. *Provide to the board monthly financial statements organized and presented around the financial conditions policy.*
2. *Provide to the board financial plans as they are developed or modified.*
3. *Provide to the board current criteria established for the financial conditions and projections.*

### Administrative Procedures for Budget Preparation

The following topics should be covered in an administrative operations/procedures manual. The procedures should indicate how the financial policies of the board are to be accomplished. The procedures must identify in what manner something is done, when it should be done and by whom. These procedures should be decided by the administrator and reported to the board. Staff and parent handbooks should be used to communicate these procedures with school constituents.

- When to begin the process
- Who to involve in the process—staff, congregation financial officers, treasurer
- How to project income
- How to project expenses
- How to project fund balances

### Outline of Sample Procedures for Budget Planning

1. Budget planning will begin with the start of each new fiscal year by updating the three-year projection prepared the previous year.
2. Preparation of the annual budget.
  - a. Review all expenditure accounts.
    - i. Name all expenditure accounts (janitor supplies, utilities, rent, etc.).
    - ii. Prepare back-up sheets for compiling details.
    - iii. Determine staffing needs.
    - iv. Seek approval for any changes to the salary and benefit guidelines.
    - v. Calculate staff salary and benefits costs.
    - vi. Add accounts for new projects or programs.
  - b. Review all income accounts.
    - i. Record all data used to determine budget income.
    - ii. Determine the projected enrollment.
    - iii. Show formulas, calculations and exact figures used to make projections.
    - iv. Review and adjust the funding formula.
    - v. Final tuition and fees will be determined after budget expenditures have been finalized so that rates reflect the total budget needs.
  - c. Balance the budget.
    - i. Prioritize the expense items.
    - ii. Adjust tuition and fees to reflect projected expenditures.
3. Present proposed budget to the board for approval
  - a. The proposed budget will be supported with all pertinent information (salary schedule, tuition and fee rates, additional income projections, etc.).
  - b. Make revisions in the proposed budget according to board policy.

Additional procedures should be developed for the following topics:

1. Delinquent accounts
2. Donor recognition
3. Establishing tuition and fees
4. Financial aid
5. Handling receipts and disbursements
  - a. Tuition income
  - b. Fees (book, computer, equipment, field trip, lunch, music, registration, testing, uniform, etc.)

6. Inventory records
7. Purchase orders
8. School checking accounts

## Chapter Appendix

### 1. Sample case statement: Our Redeemer Lutheran School

*Our Redeemer Lutheran School has built a solid foundation of Christian education for elementary students during its 45-year history. The school is recognized for the quality of education provided by its highly skilled faculty. The purpose of the school is to:*

- *Provide quality education and Christian nurture for students in grades PK–8.*
- *Offer the spiritual resources of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church to the school families.*

*The graduates of Our Redeemer Lutheran School represent a distinguished honor roll of achievement in both high school and college. They also participate in both high school and the church's youth activities.*

*The school has chosen two priorities for the year's annual fund appeal:*

1. *Increase teacher salaries. The current starting salary is \$6,000 less than the local public school district. An increase in the base salary will enhance the school's ability to retain its qualified staff and recruit new teachers.*
2. *Give the administrator more administrative time. A part-time teacher will allow the administrator more management time.*

*These two priorities represent an appeal of raising an additional income of \$25,000 this next school year above and beyond congregational support and tuition income.*

*The alumni, grandparents, members of the congregation and other friends of the school are invited to participate with an annual gift.*

### 2. Sample Line Items for School Operations

*Expenditures:*

- *New materials*
- *Replacements & expendables*
- *Marketing*
- *Operational support*
- *Equipment and facility*
- *Professional development*
- *Salaries and benefits*
- *Tuition assistance*
- *Reserve fund*

*Income:*

- *Tuition*
- *Fees (registration and books)*
- *Gifts for tuition assistance*
- *Congregation budget*

*When placing actual dollar amounts in each line item, also indicate the percent of the total. This provides analysis of changes that will take place over the years. For planning purposes, figures in these line items can be projected three to five years; however, supporting data for any significant change should also be presented, e.g., enrollment, expansion plans, etc.*

# CHAPTER 11: SCHOOL BOARD MANUAL SAMPLES

The following board manual samples are readily online. Do not copy and adopt policies without subjecting them to the checklists in Chapter four after contacting the ministries below for copies of their most recent board manual. You may wish to search online as well for additional Lutheran school board policy manuals and be sure to check local public school district board manuals to determine the issues and policies faced locally for your specific ministry. Finally, the local LCMS District office may have access to additional resources for use by Lutheran schools.

- *LCMS Michigan District Board of Christian Education Policy Manual Guidelines*
- *Redeemer Lutheran School, Kokomo, Ind., School Board Policy Manual*
- *St. Peter's Lutheran School, Columbus, Ind., School Board Policy Manual*
- *Lincoln Lutheran School Association, Lincoln, Neb., Board of Directors Policy Manual*
- *St. John's Lutheran School, Napa, Calif., Board of Day School Ministry Policy Manual*