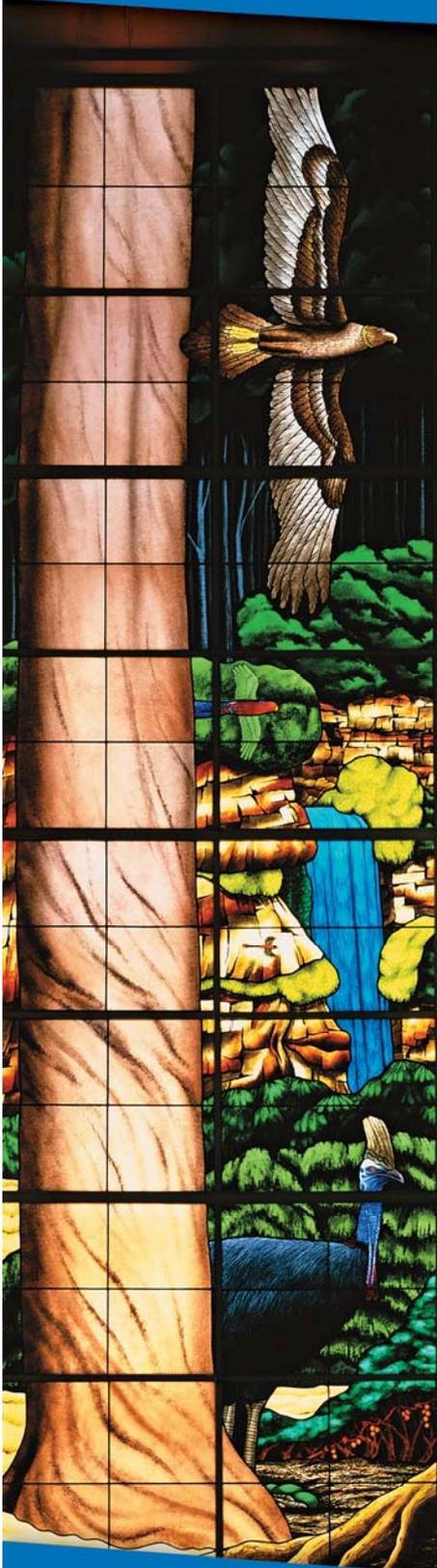




**Catholic Education Services - Diocese of Cairns**  
*Learning with Faith and Vision*



# **Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in the Diocese of Cairns**

**A Resource for Board  
Formation and Function**

**November 2007**



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The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns



## **Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in the Diocese of Cairns**

### **A Resource for Board Formation and Function**

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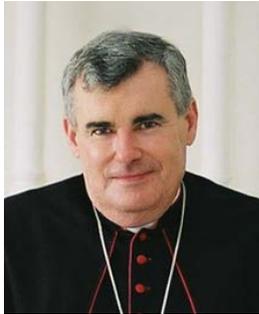
**Approved by the Bishop of Cairns for use in Parishes and Schools  
In the Diocese of Cairns**

**This is an adaptation of the Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education  
Boards in Queensland**

**Date November 2007**



Bishop's House  
183 Abbott Street  
Cairns Qld 4870



Boards of Catholic education in Queensland have grown in number and quality since their inception in the late 1970's. They were established primarily as a response to requests by parents to be more active participants in Catholic schooling. Today, they are available to each Catholic education community in Queensland and provide a structure and process for genuine partnership in planning and decision making.

Board membership enables opportunities for educational and pastoral leadership. Board members are called to a particular ministry which is both a privilege and an opportunity to serve all who seek a Catholic education. The experience of board members over the last twenty years reveals that, far from being an onerous task, service on a Catholic education board has been an occasion for personal and community growth in faith, spirituality and understanding of the vision and mission of Jesus.

All who serve, or are being served, through Board ministry are invited to consider these Constitutions as a source of guidance and support. It is through their application that Christ's vision and our mission are nurtured.

Catholic Education has and continues to be a vital and dynamic ministry within the Local Church. Board activities shape and give witness to this ministry so central to being and building the Kingdom vision of Christ.

With every blessing.

Yours in Christ.

+ James Foley  
Bishop of Cairns

November 2007

## Preface

(From Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Queensland)

Boards of Catholic education in Queensland have grown in number and quality since their inception in the late 1970s.<sup>1</sup> They were established primarily as a response to requests by parents to be more active participants in Catholic schooling. Today they are available to each Catholic education community in Queensland and provide a structure and process for genuine partnership in planning and decision making involving the key members of these communities.

*The existence of boards as components of the governance of Catholic schools is a good and desirable phenomenon, reflective of (among other things) the basic value of participation embedded in any real understanding of governance, and certainly in any Catholic comprehension of that concept.*

*In particular, the development and proliferation of school boards in Catholic schools in recent years is not to be understood as a necessity resulting from the inevitable decline in the numbers of teaching religious, but as an opportunity to engage more and more sectors of the Church (and especially the laity) in the evangelising work of Catholic education. The governance of Catholic schools should reflect the reality of Catholic education as a partnership between parishes and parish priests, dioceses and diocesan authorities, religious institutes, Catholic education authorities (Catholic Education Commissions, Catholic Education Offices / Catholic Schools Offices), schools and - crucially - parents and children.<sup>2</sup>*

Recent developments in education at state and national level in Australia have challenged Catholic schools to ensure that they develop and maintain forms of leadership which will support the educational mission of the Church well into the future. Within the Church the changing face of Catholic parishes and schools calls for courageous and visionary leadership.

Boards of Catholic education are communities of leaders who share in the educational and pastoral leadership responsibilities of pastors and principals of schools in ways that are clearly described in this Constitution. Thus, board members are called to a particular ministry in Catholic education which is both a privilege and an opportunity to serve the children, young people and adults who seek a Catholic education. The experience of board members over the last twenty years reveals that, far from being an onerous task, service on a Catholic education board has been an occasion for personal and community growth in faith, spirituality and understanding of the vision and mission of Jesus and of Catholic education.

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<sup>1</sup>. Project Catholic School, 1978

<sup>2</sup> Catholic School Governance, NCEC, 2002

# Introduction

(From Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Queensland)

Catholic Education Boards, where they exist, are part of the Governance Structure of schools and other Catholic education agencies. This Model Constitution and Commentary draws heavily upon the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) document "Catholic School Governance"<sup>1</sup> for its terminology and understanding of governance for Catholic schools and parish education agencies. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission gratefully acknowledges that this material is used with the permission of NCEC.

*The term 'governance' as used here has its usual English meaning in referring to the various authority structures, decision-making processes and lines of accountability and responsibility that pertain to any organisation or enterprise: in this case a Catholic school. Of course, in speaking of "Catholic governance", the document assumes and implies that there are certain principles of Catholic teaching and practice that should infuse the governance of any Catholic institution.*<sup>2</sup>

This document is designed to be viewed as a framework within which a Board is able to function authentically and effectively. It is more than a book of rules. It is a resource which transmits a vision for Christ's faithful to be empowered and to participate in a collaborative ministry. Thus it gives expression to the message of the Second Vatican Council *We Are The Church* and can be life-giving for a Board and its members.

Catholic education Boards in parishes and Catholic systemic schools in Queensland have their origins in the 1980 School Board Pilot Program where a number of volunteer Catholic schools and parishes established *pilot* Boards to explore what was then uncharted territory. The project concluded in 1983 and the first 'Interim Constitution and Commentary' emerged in 1984.

Later this document was further revised and the 'Approved Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Queensland' published in April 1990 has guided Boards until the introduction of this current Constitution. This document, like its predecessors, is grounded in the experience of Board members as they seek to contribute to the leadership of Catholic education through participation in Boards.

In that period Boards operating under these Constitutions developed a unique character, which led to their being described as Pastoral Model Boards of Catholic Education in Queensland. The philosophy and practice of *Collaborative Ministry*<sup>3</sup> and *Sharing Wisdom*<sup>4</sup> are the essence of decision making and ministry of these Boards.

*Collaborative Ministry* regards participation as a member of a Board as a ministry of decision making and action arising out of the identification and application of the complementary gifts of the members.

*The Philosophy and Practice of Sharing Wisdom can be summarised as follows:*

*"To each the Lord gives a piece of the wisdom.*

*To no one does He give all the wisdom of God.*

*We all get different pieces"*

*and, as a consequence,*

*"We must share our wisdom*

*We must hear, respect, and treasure one another's wisdom.*

*We must work for a climate that is open and respectful."*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sofield L. and Juliano C. *Collaborative Ministry – Skills and Guideline*, Ave Maria Press, Indiana, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> McKinney Mary Benet *Sharing Wisdom*, Tabor Publishing, Valencia CA, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> McKinney Mary Benet *Sharing Wisdom*, Tabor Publishing, Valencia CA, 1987, p 152

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic School Governance*, NCEC 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Catholic School Governance*, NCEC 2002 p.4

## Introduction (cont.)

(From Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Queensland)

The Constitution and Commentary is one of the four key factors by which a Board effects its ministry. Generally known as the 'Four Tools of Board Ministry', these factors are:

- The Constitution and Commentary
- Members' Formation
- Collaboration in Vision and Mission
- The Policy Process

Following widespread consultation and discussion, the NCEC has published a set of *General and binding principles which are fundamental for the governance of Catholic schools*.<sup>6</sup> These principles are of such importance that they have been included in full as part of the Responsibilities of the Board in Article III of this Constitution. Briefly summarised they are:

- The Love of Christ*
- The Role of Parents*
- Faithfulness to the Mission of the Church*
- Church Solidarity*
- Support for the common good*
- Embracing the poor*
- Educational Quality*
- Participation*
- Inclusiveness*
- Unity in Diversity*
- Stewardship of resources*
- Rule of Canon Law*

<sup>6</sup> *Catholic School Governance*, NCEC, 2002 pp. 10 – 11.

# Article I: Authority, Aims and Service of the Board

## SECTION I: NAME OF THE BOARD

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
<p>The <i>{insert the name of the school /college/ education Board}</i> is a body with consultative responsibilities and functions limited to those set out in following sections of this Constitution.</p>	<p>The name of the school which appears in the Board’s title should accord with the name which appears for that school in the Queensland Catholic Education Commission Directory of Schools. This is the name which is also listed in the records of State and Federal Governments.</p> <p>A consultative Board cooperates in the policy-making process by formulating and adopting policy.</p> <p>The jurisdictional authority also states those areas for which the Board shares responsibility.</p> <p>Implementation is enacted through the principal.</p>

## SECTION 2: AUTHORITY FOR AND APPROVAL OF THIS CONSTITUTION

<p>2.1 Ultimate authority for this Constitution is derived from Canon Law (Church Law) and relevant State Legislation (Civil Law). This Constitution is made under the authority of the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns which is the jurisdictional authority from whom the Board derives its powers.</p>	<p>It is of vital importance that the governance structures of Catholic schools conform to Canon Law. Otherwise, they are not authentically Catholic, and will be open to constant dispute.</p>
<p>2.2 This Constitution was approved in writing by the Bishop of Cairns in 2007.</p>	<p>The Bishop delegates authority to the person who is the Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese to facilitate approval. Boards will ensure that the Constitution in use has been approved and that members have ready access to a copy of this document.</p>
<p>2.3 This Constitution will be interpreted in accordance with the general and binding principles of governance of Catholic schools as set out in Article III Section 6.1 of this Constitution.</p>	

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article I**

**SECTION 3: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

3.1 A Board may prepare and recommend an amendment to its Constitution.

See Appendix VI of this Constitution for the Due Process for Amending the Constitution.

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Such designated areas will be clearly identified in the Commentary.

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3.2 A formal review of the Model Constitution will be conducted every six years or as determined by the jurisdictional authorities.

Given that this would have state-wide implications, such a review would normally be conducted by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

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**SECTION 4: AIMS OF THE BOARD**

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The Board will collaborate with the *{insert title of school/parish}* community to:

4.1 Identify, enunciate, nurture and celebrate the Special Religious Character of the school with major and particular emphasis on the Special Spirituality of the school.

The Statement of the Special Religious Character of the school including its Special Spirituality is to be inserted below in Section 5 of the Constitution.

4.2 Support processes developed by the school staff aimed at improving student learning outcomes in accordance with the educational vision and mission.

The Board nurtures the context of student learning which is the direct responsibility of the teachers and principal.

4.3 Promote Catholic education that  
4.3.1 lives out the Diocesan Church’s education mission;  
4.3.2 strives for educational excellence; and  
4.3.3 contributes to society.

Strategic Priorities:

- Enrich and promote our Catholic identify, tradition and ethos
- Enhance the quality of Religious Education and Faith Formation
- Maximise student learning through the provision of high quality teaching and curricula
- Address the diverse needs of students through a culture of inclusiveness
- Enhance the personal, professional, spiritual and technological development of staff
- Strengthen the capacity for effective, life-giving relationships and collaboration involving staff, parents, students, clergy, religious and the wider community
- Use existing and emerging information and communication technologies to enhance learning opportunities and administrative practices

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article I**

- Ensure the efficient and equitable distribution of available resources
- Implement rigorous renewal and planning practices at individual, school and system level
- Implement accountability practices at individual, school and system level to monitor quality and standards, and to achieve responsible stewardship

**SECTION 5: STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

The *{name of Board}* will promote and celebrate the Special Religious Character of *{name of school/s}* as enunciated in the following statement:  
*{insert a Statement of Special Religious Character which has been developed in consultation with the school community and the Catholic School Authority}*

The special religious character exists in all schools and includes three components:

- Aspects which are common to all Catholic schools;
- Elements which are linked to the foundation of the school; and
- Features of life in the local community.

At the heart of its Special Religious Character is the special spirituality of the school which emerges from the unique interaction of these components.

All Catholic schools, regardless of the recency or circumstances of their establishment, have a unique special spirituality.

Board members are urged to be thoroughly familiar with “Catholic School Governance” NCEC May 2002, Page 5 - ‘Special Spirituality of Catholic Schools’ and Page 11 - ‘Special Spirituality of a School’.

**SECTION 6: CONDUCT OF THE BOARD**

- 6.1 The Board and all its related operations will be conducted as a Consultative Board in accordance with:
- 6.1.1 The general and binding principles for the governance of Catholic schools.
  - 6.1.2 The Code of Ethics for Board Members.

See principles as set out in the Introduction to this Constitution.

See Appendix I of this Constitution “Code of Ethics”.

6.2 The Board will provide written annual reports of its conduct and related operations to its community.

This report may be incorporated into other reporting processes established by the school or Catholic Education Services (e.g. School Renewal reporting).

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**SECTION 7: BOARD DYSFUNCTION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE BOARD**

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**CONSTITUTION**

Where a Board fails to function satisfactorily within the provisions of this Constitution, the principal and/or the Chair of the Board will take action in accordance with Appendix V of this Constitution.

**COMMENTARY**

See Appendix V “Procedures for Dealing with Board Dysfunction “.

The principal will approach their Assistant to the Executive Director: School Development assigned by the Executive Director of Catholic Education Services for advice and assistance.

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## Article II: Definition of Terms Used in this Constitution

### SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

#### CONSTITUTION

#### COMMENTARY

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Additional definitions may be added but the existing definitions in this article may not be altered or removed from the Constitution

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Unless a contrary intention applies, the words and expressions used in this Constitution have the following meanings given to them:

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The term *Board* refers to the {insert the name of the Board}

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As described in Article I Section 3 of this Constitution.

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*Archdiocese* refers to a *Diocese* which is under the care and authority of an Archbishop.

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Also see *Diocese* below.  
For convenience in this document, the term *Diocese* is used to refer to all dioceses in Queensland including the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

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*Catholic education authorities* is used in this Constitution, it refers to the National [NCEC], State and Territory Catholic Education Commissions including the Queensland Catholic Education Commission [QCEC] together with the relevant diocesan Catholic school authorities unless otherwise specified.

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QCEC has a role in providing state-wide support for Catholic education boards and councils.  
  
In particular, QCEC has a role in co-ordinating the review of the Model Constitution.

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*Catholic School Authority* refers to Catholic Education Services which has responsibility for the establishment and ongoing operation of schools within the jurisdictional authority of a diocese or a religious institute.

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The jurisdictional authority of the diocese delegates responsibility for Catholic education in the diocese to the Catholic Education Services which is known by various titles, most commonly as 'the Catholic Education Office'.

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*Catholic School Renewal* refers to the intentional activity which focuses on the purposes and processes for Catholic schooling which fosters positive change and growth for students and others in school communities.

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This renewal activity occurs at diocesan (system) level and at school level.

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*Clause* refers to a clause of this Constitution.

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*Collaboration* is a clearly defined relationship entered into by the members of the Board to achieve common goals. It involves the identification, release and union of the gifts of the members.

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Collaboration also extends to the relationships within the school community, in particular the relationships between the Board and that community.  
[See also Collaborative Ministry]

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## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article II

### SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

#### CONSTITUTION

#### COMMENTARY

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*Collaborative ministry* refers to the co-operative, joint activity of Board members which acknowledges the God given variety and diversity of gifts, wisdom and expertise in the group, explores ways in which they complement each other and calls them forth in service of the educational mission of the church.

Refer to the publication *Collaborative Ministry – Skills and Guidelines* – Loughlan Sofield and Carole Juliano Ave Maria Press 1987.

This approach to Ministry is more in keeping with shared decision-making in the Catholic church than other bodies which exist outside the church community.

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*Diocese* refers to ‘a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a Bishop to be nurtured by him....’ (Code of Canon Law)

There are five dioceses in Queensland organised geographically around the cities of Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns. Within a diocese a Bishop exercises his authority in a variety of ways. In particular, he creates a number of diocesan structures to assist his administration.

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*Education of Board members* refers to the processes by which the members are regularly informed regarding matters which are relevant to their responsibilities as set out in this Constitution.

Members need to take some initiative in this matter but it is the principal as educational leader of the Board who is best placed to facilitate education of members.

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*Faith Development* refers to the growth which occurs within an individual towards a deeper appreciation, understanding and lived experience of faith in God.

Programs and activities associated with the board and its meetings will focus on faith which comes through Jesus Christ and the tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church while respecting those members whose experience of God comes through different church traditions.

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*Formation* refers to those processes in which Board members engage in order to equip themselves to conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfil their role on the Board.

Formation aims to enhance group cohesiveness and functioning based on religious principles and best practice drawn from both religious and secular organisations.

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*Goals* are the milestones which a group would hope to reach before too long when implementing its mission to achieve its vision.

Key criteria of goals are that they be measurable and achievable.

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## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article II

### SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

#### CONSTITUTION

*Governance* refers to the various authority structures, decision-making processes and lines of accountability and responsibility that pertain to any organisation or enterprise: in this case a Catholic. In speaking of “governance in a Catholic School” the document assumes and implies that there are certain principles of Catholic teaching and practice that should infuse the governance of any Catholic institution.<sup>1</sup>

*In-service* is any program of education and formation which is presented to persons following their election and/or appointment to the Board.

*Juridic Person* or *Public Juridic Person* refers to an entity which has status under Canon Law and is broadly equivalent to the term “Legal Entity” which pertains in Civil Law.

*Mission* is the purpose for which the group is established (i.e. what it is designed to do) and, in the case of a Catholic educational group, it would accord with the educational mission of the Catholic church.

*Parent* includes a guardian and every person who is liable to maintain or has the actual custody of a child who is a student.

#### COMMENTARY

It should be noted, however, that *governance* also is a term in Canon Law where it has a much more particular meaning, denoting the power existing in respect of the Church, its organs and instruments by those in Sacred Orders<sup>2</sup>. One important aspect of this power in the present context is its exercise by appropriate Church authorities to create and authorise the conduct of Catholic schools.

[See also *jurisdictional authority*]

A certificate acknowledging completion of such a program will be issued by Catholic Education Services.

[See also *pre-service*]

“*Juridic persons* are constituted either by prescription of law or by special concession of the competent authority given through a decree; they are aggregates of persons or of things ordered towards a purpose congruent with the mission of the Church and which transcends the purpose of the individuals that make them up.”<sup>3</sup>

Board members would have recourse to a statement of mission which refers primarily to the school but may also wish to consider framing a succinct statement of the mission of the Board.

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic School Governance*, NCEC 2002, p. 4, Section 1.2

<sup>2</sup> *Book 1 of the Code of Canon Law, Title VII, “Power of Governance”, Canon 129*

<sup>3</sup> *Code of Canon Law – Canon 114.1*

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article II

### SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

#### CONSTITUTION

#### COMMENTARY

*Parents and Friends Association* of a school is the official parent body in a school which operates in support of the school under its own Constitution.

Please refer to the documentation published by the Queensland Federation of Parents & Friends Associations in Catholic schools and its diocesan counterparts.

*Parish* is a community of Christ's faithful whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.

There are a number of instances where one priest is assigned more than one parish for administrative reasons. See 'Spiritual Leader' below.

*Participation* (Subsidiarity) is the principle that powers and functions in any community should be exercised, wherever possible, by the persons and bodies closest to and most accountable to those affected.

Subsidiarity was first defined by these words of Pope Pius XI: '.... it is unjust .... to turn over to a greater society of higher rank, functions and services which can be performed by lesser bodies on a lower plane.'<sup>4</sup>

Parish Priest

See *Parish* (above) and *Spiritual Leader* (below).

Pastor

See *Parish* (above) and *Spiritual Leader* (below).

*Policy* is a statement of a broad and general direction which provides a guide for discretionary action.

Policy is approved by the Board and given to the Principal to carry out or implement at his/her discretion. Such implementation must be within the spirit and intention of the policy's general direction.

A useful rule of thumb is: "A *Policy* states *WHAT* is to be done.

*The IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT OF THE POLICY* states *how, when and by whom the policy is to be enacted.*"

*Pre-service* is any program of education and formation which is presented to persons prior to their election and/or appointment to the Board.

A certificate acknowledging completion of such a program will be issued by Catholic Education Services.

*Principles of Governance* are those statements set out at Article III, Section 6.1 of this Constitution.

See also pp. 10-11 NCEC May 2002 document *Catholic School Governance*

*School* means the school for which the school Board is formed.

In some instances a single board may be formed for more than one school.

<sup>4</sup> (McLay A., Coghlan D., Corkeron P., and Druery A. "Report of 'Project Catholic School'", Queensland Catholic Education Office 1978, p.146.)

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article II

### SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

#### CONSTITUTION

#### COMMENTARY

*Shared Wisdom* is a term developed by Sr Mary Benet McKinney in her book *Sharing Wisdom* to describe a philosophy and practice of decision-making which is based on the tradition of discernment within the Catholic church.

For a clear understanding of this philosophy and practice, you are referred to the text of Sr Mary Benet's book. However, it may be summed up succinctly by this statement:

*Each person receives a piece of God's wisdom*

*No person receives all the Wisdom of God  
We all receive different pieces.*

*Spirituality* refers generally to the manner and style of expressing Catholic faith, not only through explicitly religious rituals and symbols, but also through the cultivation of Christian habits and virtues in everyday activities and practices.

While the essential focus is on Catholic spirituality, some members of boards who do not embrace the Catholic faith may express their spirituality differently. In the spirit of *Sharing Wisdom*, ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, this diversity will be respected by all members of the board.

*Spiritual Leader* of the Board is that ex-officio member of the Board who is appointed to that position by the jurisdictional authority. Where the school community is part of a parish, this position will normally be held by an ordained minister of the Church (Parish Priest / Pastor of the Parish).

Where the school community is part of a parish and this position is not held by a person who has authority as an ordained minister in the parish under Canon Law and Civil Law (e.g. Parish Priest / Pastor of the Parish), there needs to be a clearly documented statement about the way in which the ordained minister with such authority relates to the Board through the Spiritual Leader.

*Staff* means all the persons who are employed by the Catholic school authority and/or the parish and assigned to the school.

This term may include teachers, school officers and persons employed in other capacities in the school.

*Standing Committee* – a committee established by the Board to conduct research into, or to transact business concerning, specific matters on a continuing basis.

From time to time it will be productive to review the terms of reference of a standing committee to ensure its ongoing relevance.

*Student* means a student of the school.

A student of the school is a person who has been officially enrolled in the school.

*Subsidiarity* – See *Participation*.

*Task Force* (or ad-hoc committee) – a temporary group established by the Board to handle projects or issues of a developmental nature.

The duties of a taskforce will be clearly defined by the Board, and a specific date will be set for the completion of the tasks assigned at which time the task force is dissolved.

"Vision" is an image of the desired future of a group such as a school, parish or a Board which is usually expressed in a succinct written statement.

The vision of the Board is essentially the vision of the school and other educational agencies which it serves.

## Article III: Roles, Functions, Responsibilities and Powers

### SECTION 1: AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD CONSTITUTION

### COMMENTARY

1.1 The Board exists by virtue of the jurisdictional authority (Canon Law) and legal entity (Civil Law) which has approved this Constitution namely the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation of the Diocese of Cairns in the person of the Bishop of Cairns.

Authority in Civil Law is distinct from Canon Law.

In Canon Law, Catholic schools operate under Catholic Education Services established by the jurisdictional authority of the diocese and, where applicable, under the jurisdictional authority of a Parish.

The relationship between the relevant jurisdictional authority and a school is the primary governance feature of that school, and a school Board derives its existence and role from that relationship.

Naturally, the manner in which the relationship between the jurisdictional authority and a school may be expressed or mediated in practice, is diverse and varies from diocese to diocese.

The relationship between a jurisdictional authority and a school is not one based simply upon property but is fundamentally spiritual in character.

1.2 In carrying out its role, the Board shares the canonical authority of the {insert Parish Priest and /or Director of Catholic Education - as appropriate} and the leadership authority of the principal within the designated areas of responsibility as set out in Article III Section 6.

This statement is not intended as a full explication of the canonical authority vested in the Parish Priest and the Director of Catholic Education. Neither is there any suggestion that either of these two persons abrogate their authority.

The emphasis here is upon the fact that the Board has been accorded a share in that authority.

1.3 The Board is neither a jurisdictional authority nor a legal entity.

Essentially this means that a Board cannot sue or be sued in its own right but relies on the legal authority under which it is established. See Article III, Section 1.1 above. See also Article II definitions of *Jurisdictional Authority* and *Juridic Person*.

1.4 Any recourse to civil law action on the part of the Board will be addressed by the jurisdictional authority and its legally appointed agents.

By acting within the authority and responsibilities given them by this Constitution, members are assured that the jurisdictional authority will manage any exposure of the Board to legal action. Experience has shown that this is a most unlikely event.

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III

### SECTION 2: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JURISDICTIONAL AUTHORITY

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
It is the right and the responsibility of the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation of the Diocese of Cairns to:	Members of the Board will need to be familiar with education policies published by the jurisdictional authority.
2.1 Ensure that Board members are appropriately educated and prepared for their role, particularly in relation to the special spirituality of the school;	Normally the Diocesan Board Liaison Officer will facilitate this.
2.2 Exercise stewardship over and protect the temporal goods of the Church as represented by the property and assets of the school in circumstances where the jurisdictional authority owns property used by the school;	Catholic Education Services can provide further clarification regarding these matters.
2.3 Promote freedom of action by the Board within the scope of its powers, subject to the rights, duties and responsibilities of the jurisdictional authority, the Diocese, and responsible Catholic education authorities;	As part of its education and formation program the Board may develop a clearer understanding of its relationship to the jurisdictional authority.
2.4 Develop strong partnerships with others of the Church, including bishops, leaders of religious institutes and Catholic education authorities, for the purpose of ensuring proper coordination and distribution of resources between Catholic schools; and	While these partnerships are of interest to the Board their development is outside the scope of the Board's activity.
2.5 Ensure that any disposal of property is carried out in accordance with both Civil and Canon Law.	Any matters related to the disposal of property should be immediately referred through the Principal to Catholic Education Services for action.

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III

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### SECTION 3: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICES

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Catholic Education – Diocese of Cairns has the responsibility to:

3.1 Develop school governance policies that encourage unity of purpose and solidarity between all Catholic schools, while recognising and protecting diversity in particular communities and spiritual traditions; and

The Bishop's Board of Governance, Education, has a similar role at diocesan level to that of the Board at school / parish level. Local policies will always be developed in the context of those developed by the Board of Governance.

3.2 Develop policies concerning the equitable distribution of resources among Catholic schools.

Regular dialogue between the Board of Governance and local boards is to be encouraged.

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### SECTION 4: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATEWIDE CATHOLIC EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) has responsibility for providing state-wide support for matters relating to educational governance which includes:

4.1 State-wide support for Catholic education boards and councils; and

4.2 Co-ordination of the periodic review of the Model Constitution at the request of jurisdictional authorities.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) has the responsibility for advancing and co-ordinating Catholic education in Queensland in accordance with its Delegations of Authority from the Bishops of Queensland and the Leaders of Religious Institutes operating schools in Queensland.

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### SECTION 5: SERVICE

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5.1 Members of the Board will render service by utilising the principles of Collaborative Ministry and Sharing Wisdom.

It is against the spirit of the Beatitudes and the pastoral emphasis of this Constitution to confuse "service" with "power".

Refer to the definitions of Collaborative Ministry and Sharing Wisdom in Article II of this Constitution.

True consensus decisions are reached by seeking a discernment of God's will through prayer, reflection and dialogue rather than simple discussion and debate. Thus sharing wisdom has as its goal a Sharing of the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III

### SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
In discharging its responsibilities the Board will:	<p>The functions in this Section may not be altered or removed, but the Board may elaborate on how it intends to carry out these responsibilities.</p> <p>Any elaboration must be approved by the jurisdictional authority and must be consistent with the intention of this Section of the Constitution</p>
6.1 Function in accordance with the general and binding <b>Principles of Governance</b> as follows:	
6.1.1 The Love of Christ	This is the fundamental recognition that Catholic education is animated by and based upon the love of Christ for all people.
6.1.2 The Role of Parents as the primary educators of their children	Catholic Schools fulfil their mission by working in place of parents (in loco parentis) and with their collaboration.
6.1.3 Faithfulness to the Mission of the Church	This is the mission of Christ, to preach the Good News, including fidelity to the teachings of the Church.
6.1.4 Church Solidarity	It is the obligation of members and agencies of the Church to support those other individuals and agencies of the Church in need, and to work for the good of the whole Church community.
6.1.5 Support for the common good	It is the general obligation on members of the Church not only to support the Church, its agencies and members, but also to ensure that the work of the Church and its agencies redounds to the benefit of society as a whole.
6.1.6 Embracing the poor	It is the obligation on the Church community to continually assess its actions and policies to ensure that they empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised.
6.1.7 Educational quality	It is the obligation upon all those involved in Catholic Education to strive to provide the highest possible quality of education to those attending Catholic Schools.
6.1.8 Participation (Subsidiarity)	It is the principle that powers and functions in any community are exercised wherever possible, by the persons and bodies closest to and most accountable to those affected.

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III

### SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

#### CONSTITUTION

#### COMMENTARY

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6.1.9	Inclusiveness	It is the principle that Catholic education should be open to all those who agree to respect and uphold the Catholic ethos and who wish to receive a Catholic education. It is also the principle that all those engaged in Catholic education in whatever capacity will be welcomed and valued in the pursuit of the educational mission of the Church, to the extent that they support that mission and/or truly uphold the Catholic ethos.
6.1.10	Unity in Diversity	It is the recognition that the Holy Spirit inspires different communities in different ways, bestowing upon them diverse charisms which provide inspiration for action, all for the same purpose of promoting the Kingdom.
6.1.11	Stewardship of resources	It is the obligation of all agencies of the Church to use financial and other resources responsibly, particularly with a view to ensuring the well being of future generations.
6.1.12	Rule of Canon Law	Every agency of the Church is constituted and operates in accordance with Canon Law.
6.2	Collaborate in nurturing the <b>Special Religious Character</b> of the School.	<p>As Catholic education moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is important that Boards develop and maintain the defining features of Catholic schools as articulated by the Bishops and the Catholic education authorities of each Diocese in each Diocesan report of “The Queensland Bishops Project – Catholic Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”</p> <p>‘Defining Features’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be places of authentic evangelisation where faith and life are one</li><li>• Celebrate God’s abundant and abiding presence in all creation</li><li>• Be communities sustained by life-giving relationships</li><li>• Be welcoming to all who seek to share their life</li><li>• Be centres of holistic learning</li><li>• Be places of self-renewal and agents of change</li><li>• Build constructive covenants with all partners</li></ul>

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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

6.3 Participate in the **planning** of the ongoing development of the Catholic school in accordance with diocesan guidelines, government requirements and school renewal planning.

This also involves promoting the school as a centre for evangelisation (in partnership, where appropriate, with a parish or other Church agency/agencies) in fidelity to the teachings of the Church, diocesan authority and the special spirituality that animates the school community.

6.3.1 Review the school's **statements of Vision, Mission and Special Religious Character** periodically, as part of the Catholic School Renewal Process.

Each Catholic School Authority has a School Renewal Process in place.

The Board's responsibility is to lead with the Principal and Staff in carrying out this School Renewal Process.

This process will enable the school community to evaluate and assess the school's performance in all areas including Faith Development.

6.4 **Develop, Review and Maintain Policies** on matters referred to it by the principal or by responsible Catholic education authorities.

Policies will be reviewed according to an agreed process and schedule of review.

A Policy Manual will be available for the perusal by all members of the school community.

A Catholic Policy-Making Resource has been developed at Appendix VII to ensure that a specific policy process is used at Board meetings.

A critical element of this resource is the distinction between policy and implementation:

- A Policy sets direction; it is a guide to action.
- Implementation (i.e. Rules, Regulations, Programs, Procedures, Budget and so on) is a specification of a Policy.
- Policies are best made by Boards with diverse membership.
- Implementation (rules etc.) is best managed by the principal and staff

6.5 Participate in the **selection process for the appointment of a principal** by Catholic Education Services.

Catholic Education Services reserves the power to appoint the principal. Board member/s will be invited to participate as members of a selection panel.

6.6 **Support staff**, especially the principal, who has the day-to-day responsibility for maintaining and promoting the Special Religious Character of the school.

The Principal has final responsibility for staff within the school. The Board should explore opportunities for social and other contacts with members of staff.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

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6.7 Provide advice, at the invitation of the principal, regarding the **staffing provision of the school** with due regard to educational excellence and particular emphasis on nurturing the Special Religious Character of the school.

All staffing appointments are made by Catholic Education Services. Appointments are made for and on behalf of the relevant jurisdictional authority.

An example of the Board's contribution in this area could be the collaborative development of some role and/or duty statements.

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6.8 Reflect on the **Curriculum** in accordance with any relevant requirements of Government authorities and Catholic Education – Diocese of Cairns and without trespassing upon areas of professional educational judgement.

The Board can best fulfil this role by developing a curriculum policy which articulates those aspects of the teaching/learning process which are valued by the community.

The Board's involvement with the general oversight of curriculum is consistent with its leadership with the Principal and Staff in the School Renewal Process.

The Board will be familiar with current curriculum developments. Relevant documents published by Catholic Education Services and the state-wide curriculum statutory authority will be of assistance.

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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
<p>6.9 Oversee the prudent <b>Financial Management</b> of the school particularly with a view to ensuring access to quality education for future generations.</p>	<p>Catholic Education Services provides directions and guidelines for the administration of the school's finances.</p> <p>Diocesan expertise through Diocesan Education personnel is available to assist each school.</p>
<p>6.9.1 Recommend the annual school budget for approval under jurisdictional authority and Catholic Education Services guidelines ensuring that the budget is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a valid response to the school's renewal plan (or equivalent);</li> <li>(ii) responsible within the resources available and the policies and guidelines of government and jurisdictional authorities;</li> <li>(iii) focussed on the delivery of Catholic education consistent with the education vision and mission of the diocese/parish; and</li> <li>(iv) prepared in consultation with the Board Finance Committee under the guidance of the Board Financial Advisor.</li> </ul>	<p>Where a school is under the authority of a parish, the Parish Finance Board/Committee will approve the budget.</p> <p>Where a school is directly under the authority of Catholic Education Services the budget will be approved by that Authority.</p> <p>See Article IV Section 8.3 for details of the role of the Board Financial Advisor.</p>
<p>6.10 Oversee the prudent <b>maintenance of school buildings and plant</b> and also plan for the <b>provision of future facilities</b> in accordance with the guidelines of Catholic Education Services.</p>	<p>A key feature is the requirement that each school will have a master facilities plan and a maintenance plan.</p> <p>Diocesan expertise through Diocesan Education personnel is available to assist each school.</p>
<p>6.11 Seek to ensure that the school fulfils its potential as an <b>option for the disadvantaged</b>, including the poor.</p>	<p>This would be an important consideration in the development of policy and the advice which the Board offers the principal.</p>
<p>6.12 Provide <b>advice</b> on any matters referred to the Board by the principal.</p>	<p>In order to seek advice or reassurance from the Board, the Principal may share information on the understanding that its confidentiality will be maintained.</p>
<p>6.13 Facilitate the <b>preparation and induction of Board members</b> so that they understand the scope and extent of their role.</p>	<p>The Board structure is a Church model based on prayer, reflection and dialogue. The formation of Board members' understanding of this model is essential.</p>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

6.14 Appoint **standing committees** which will assist it in carrying out its responsibilities and establish temporary task forces for the handling of short-term projects of a developmental nature.

A standing committee is one established to conduct investigations into, or to transact business concerning, specific matters on a continuing basis which will normally be chaired by a member of the Board.

Members of a task force work together in an atmosphere of co-operation on an equal basis.

The leader of the task force acts as the co-ordinator of activities within the group and as the link between the group and the Board.

The duties of standing committees and taskforces will be clearly defined by the Board.

Task forces are a valuable way of increasing community participation

6.14.1 Establish a Committee, where appropriate, as a Standing Committee of the Board, which reports to the Board in such a way as to enable the Board to discharge its responsibilities under Article III Section 6.9 of this Constitution.

This committee would be established only within the context of procedures laid down by Catholic Education Services in respect of the financial management of the school.

The Board forms sub-committees to undertake the detailed work required for specific tasks. There are currently four sub-committees. They are Facilities; Community and Faith; Curriculum and the Finance sub-committee. Membership of the sub-committees is open to as wide a cross-section of the community as possible and includes parents, staff and community representatives. The Board appoints all members of these sub-committees. At least one member of the Board is required to sit on each sub-committee. The sub-committees are required to report to the full Board, which makes decisions on recommendations forwarded by the sub-committees.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
<p>6.15 Develop <b>an awareness of the roles of all levels of government</b> and how these impact on the conduct of Catholic schools</p>	<p>Catholic education authorities will provide Boards and school communities with information regarding sources and purposes of funding for Catholic schools.</p>
<p>6.15.1 Develop and support strategies designed to influence government members and other political representatives for the betterment of the school.</p>	<p>This information can be used to make representation to local members of both State and Federal governments regarding capital and recurrent needs.</p>
<p>6.16 Establish and maintain networks and processes for <b>formal/informal communication</b> between the Board and the school and parish communities.</p>	<p>Regular communication is necessary for the success of the Board’s operation and this requires the dissemination of information about Board meetings and decisions. This is particularly relevant in the development of policy and planning.</p> <p>Much good work that is done by a Board can be negated by insufficient attention to practical ways of involving and informing others. For schools and colleges, the Board is meant to be a vital link between Catholic Education Services and the whole school community.</p>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 7: RESERVED POWERS OF THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICES RELATING TO THE BOARD**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
<p>Catholic Education – Diocese of Cairns reserves unto itself the following powers over the school and the Board:</p>	
7.1 To appoint the principal of the school	Catholic Education Services has sole responsibility for the appointment of the Principal of the school. A Board member is normally appointed to the panel which interviews candidates for this position. It is through this member that the aspirations of the Board can be stated.
7.2 To dismiss the school principal according to law	
7.3 To appoint members of the Board	The instrument of appointment is a letter to a Board member signed by the Chief Executive Officer (usually Director of Catholic Education) for and on behalf of the jurisdictional authority.
7.4 To dismiss members of the Board	The Director of Catholic Education is empowered to act for and on behalf of the jurisdictional authority.
7.5 To appoint and dismiss staff	<p>Catholic Education – Diocese of Cairns has sole responsibility for the appointment of staff in schools.</p> <p>The Principal usually has a consultative role in these appointments.</p> <p>Appointments are made in the light of Diocesan needs.</p>
7.6 To appoint the Assistant to Executive Director; School Development	This Officer provides a ready source of assistance and guidance to the Board and, from school authority to school authority, may operate in different ways.
7.7 To approve amendments to this Constitution.	

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 8: RESERVED POWERS OF THE PRINCIPAL**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

The principal reserves the power to:

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8.1	Manage the day to day operations of the school including the implementation of its curriculum;	Board members who are approached by people within the school community with comments or complaints about the day-to-day operations of the school will advise these persons to approach the principal personally about such matters. A Board member can assist them by offering suggestions about the method of such an approach.
8.2	Make operational decisions about the use of teaching or learning resources in the school;	
8.3	Allocate duties to all members of staff;	
8.4	Act separately from the Board on those rare occasions where circumstances and serious responsibility for the leadership of the school demand such action.	It would be prudent for the principal to advise Catholic Education Services when taking such action.

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**SECTION 9: RESERVED POWERS OF THE PARISH PRIEST**

Where the Board serves one or more Catholic schools which come under the authority of a Parish, the Parish Priest reserves the power of the jurisdictional authority of his office to:

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9.1	Exercise the pastoral care of the parish community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop by carrying out the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling;	The Parish Priest thus shares in the ministry of Christ and does so with the assistance of lay members of Christ’s faithful. Board members share in this ministry by discharging their Constitutional responsibilities.
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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article III**

**SECTION 9: RESERVED POWERS OF THE PARISH PRIEST**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

9.2 Act separately from the Board on those rare occasions where circumstances and his serious responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the faithful demand it, as long as such action is not in conflict with the jurisdictional authority of the diocese;

As a member of the Board, the Parish Priest shares in the decisions of the Board just as any other member would. However, his pastoral ministry is often a source of privileged information which must be held in confidence. When such information would seriously impact on a Board decision, the Parish Priest may be bound to act separately and may ask the Board to change its decision without revealing his specific reason for doing so.

9.3 Ensure that parish goods are administered in accordance with Canon Law.

The Parish Priest’s particular responsibilities in the area of finance and administration and his obligations to consult with the Parish Finance Committee have significance for the Board.

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**SECTION 10: POWERS NOT AVAILABLE TO THE BOARD**

The Board may not -

- 10.1 Have control of funds;
- 10.2 Enter into contracts;
- 10.3 Acquire, hold, dispose of or deal with, property; or
- 10.4 Sue or be sued.
- 10.5 Directly interfere with the operation of the school

The Board may not open bank accounts

See Article III Section 8 of this Constitution (above).  
 See also Article III Section 9 (above).  
 See also Article III Section 7 (above)

# Article IV: Membership

## SECTION 1: GENERAL

### CONSTITUTION

### COMMENTARY

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#### 1.1 Definition

A member of the Board is a person who ministers collaboratively to the community which the Board serves by fulfilling the duties outlined in this Constitution. Such ministry demands that the needs and interests of all the community’s members are taken into account.

Members do not represent sectional groups in the community. In the context of this Constitution, the term *represent* is avoided since this term is often taken to mean that a sectional group would determine how the member would deal with an issue or reach a decision. The concept and function of membership as defined here transcends individual and sectional group interests.

With due regard to the spirit and practice of *Sharing Wisdom*, each member is called to engage in discussions by listening to all the information about an issue, weighing the implications carefully and discerning a decision which would most benefit the entire community.

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#### 1.2 Eligibility and Suitability

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1.2.1  
Membership is open to all members of the parish and/or school community who have completed a prescribed formation program and have a commitment to uphold the Catholic ethos.

Please refer to Article I Section 5 and Article III Section 6.2 to further clarify this provision.

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## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV

### CONSTITUTION

### COMMENTARY

#### 1.2.2

A person who has been **found guilty or convicted of a serious offence or an offence relating to dishonesty** is ineligible to be a member of the Board.

Members who are 18 years of age or older must be holders of a current positive notice (blue) card issued by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG).

However, a member who is eighteen years of age or older who is a volunteer parent of a child attending the school, or a registered teacher under the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* does not require a blue card

Persons requiring verification of their suitability for membership who are elected to the Board may not attend meetings until their positive notice (blue) card or other form of verification is issued.

The term 'serious offences' covers those offences identified as serious offences by the CCYPCG from time to time which is accessible on the website of the CCYPCG. Catholic Education Services may exercise some discretion when presented with details of offences against dishonesty.

Catholic Education Services will develop and implement procedures which will ensure that ineligible persons are not appointed to the Board.

As at March 2005, a person who has been selected as a member of the Board and is not included in the exemption for volunteer parents and registered teachers will apply to the CCYPCG by completing and submitting the "Volunteer Blue Card Application Form" (Form V). **In Section 6 of that form, the applicant will select the "schools – other than teachers and parents" category and tick that item.**

Current legislative regulations governing authorization of persons to access non-state school property and personnel (including students) will apply also in this instance.

A parent is a person as defined at Section 158 of the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, This definition is inclusive of other terminology such as 'carer' and "legal guardian".

Forms of verification may include statutory declarations or police checks voluntarily obtained and provided by the intending member to Catholic Education Services.

A form of declaration for the use of Catholic Education Services is provided as Appendix X of this Model Constitution and Commentary.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 1: GENERAL**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

1.2.3  
Members of the Board will identify strongly with the Special Religious Character of the school

Since the school community is inclusive of Catholics and people of other faiths who have agreed to values and goals espoused by the community’s Statement of Special Religious Character, all members of that community are eligible for Board membership.

It is critical that all members participate in regular education and formation activities to ensure that the Special Religious Character of the school pervades all Board activities.

1.2.4  
A significant number of members will be parents of current, prospective or recent students of the school.

The primary reason for establishing a Board is to include the broader community perspective in leadership decision making. The genesis of Boards established under this Constitution was a clear recommendation of *Project Catholic School* that ‘parents have a greater say in decision-making in the Catholic school’.

**1.3 Appointment and Dismissal**

1.3.1.  
Members of the Board will commence service on the Board when they are officially appointed by Catholic Education Services

In the interests of practicality, people newly elected or co-opted for Board membership may attend meetings in anticipation of a letter of appointment.

1.3.2.  
The instrument of authority for elected and co-opted Board members will be an official Letter of Appointment, duly signed by the Director of Catholic Education Services “for and on behalf of” the jurisdictional authority.

The letter of appointment serves to protect the interests of the Board member, Catholic Education Services and the jurisdictional authority.

1.3.3.  
Where a member of the Board is in serious breach of or fails in his/her obligations under the provisions of this Constitution, that member may be dismissed by Catholic Education Services responsible for appointing that member.

Board members are referred to Article 1 Section 7 and Appendix V. The process for dealing with a dysfunctional member will be similar to that described for dealing with a dysfunctional Board in Appendix V.

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV

### SECTION 1: GENERAL

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
<b>1.4 Legal Responsibility</b>	
1.4.1 The legal responsibility of Board members is set out in the provisions of Article III of this Constitution.	A Board of Catholic Education approved under this Constitution is not a jurisdictional authority. It operates by the general and binding principles of governance set out earlier in Article III of this Constitution. (Please refer to Article III Section 10.1)
1.4.2 By approving of and participating in the {insert the name of Board}, the Parish Priest or Executive Director of Catholic Education Services will share their responsibility for leadership decision making and policy development. This sharing is limited by the reserved powers set out in Article III of this Constitution.	Sharing responsibility by no means absolves the lawful authority from final responsibility.
<b>1.5 Ministry and Service</b>	
Board members will participate in Board meetings with the understanding that they are participating in the broad ministry of governance and that their particular service to the Board and its community is undertaken as a collaborative ministry in and for the Church.	Board ministry is essentially ‘collaborative ministry’ with shared decision making as its essence.  The principle of participation (subsidiarity) is vital for authentic collaboration.  Refer to definitions of Collaborative Ministry and Participation in Article II of this Constitution.
<b>1.6 Relational Dimensions of Membership</b>	
In general, Board members will relate to each other and all other individuals and groups in the school (or educational agency) on the basis of their understanding of and commitment to the principles which underpin Sharing Wisdom and Collaborative Ministry.	

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 2: PREPARATION AND FORMATION**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**2.1 Preparation Program**

When a Board is being established for the first time, all members of the school or parish communities will be invited to participate in a comprehensive preparation program.

Preparation and formation of Board members are essential because Board membership is a ministry. Formation programmes are required to develop in members and potential members:-

1. An understanding of the mission and philosophy of the Catholic Church.
2. A means by which that mission and philosophy will become a natural feature of the discussions and deliberations of Board members.
3. An understanding of Collaborative Ministry and Sharing Wisdom.
4. Leadership in the School Renewal Plan.
5. Good meeting procedures and skills.
6. Techniques for forums and consultations.
7. Conflict management skills.
8. Evaluation skills.
9. Public Relations skills.

The first twelve months for a new Board should be spent establishing its mode of operation. Policy making ought to come slowly during this time. Emphasis should be placed on formation and in-service in spirituality, group process, establishing good relationships between members and between the Board and other groups and clarifying the roles of various members and the Board as a whole.

**2.2 Intending Members**

Intending members of an existing Board will participate in an abbreviated preparatory educative program.

It is highly desirable that existing Board members share in the presentation of this program.

**2.3 Major Themes**

Programs of education and formation will draw upon the provisions of this Constitution and focus on the major themes of:-

- Collaborative Ministry and Sharing Wisdom
- Role and Responsibilities of the Board
- Board Relationships - Internal and External
- Board Membership.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 2: PREPARATION AND FORMATION**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
<p><b>2.4 Ongoing Programs</b> It is a condition of membership that all members of a Board participate in ongoing programs of formation and education.</p>	<p>Please refer to Article III Section 6.13 and Article VI Section 2, Item 2 and Item 3.</p>
<p><b>2.5 Assistant to Executive Director; School Development</b> Programs of formation and education will be made available through the Assistant to Executive Director; School Development for use at each Board meeting.</p>	<p>As people involved in Ministry, Board members have a right to ongoing formation in faith and a need to spend time reflecting on their own lives and faith development.</p> <p>As part of the Agenda of each meeting of the Board, members will participate in a short session designed for their ongoing education and formation in areas which will support their service on the Board in addition to those possible topics listed Article VI, Section 2, Item 3.</p>
<p><b>2.6 Local Resources</b> At their own initiative, Board members will also access suitable resources for formation.</p>	<p>Locally significant issues of culture, tradition and history would provide additional material.</p>

**SECTION 3: CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP**

<p><b>3.1 Ex-Officio</b> The ex-officio positions on the Board are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual Leader Member</li> <li>• Principal Member</li> </ul>	<p>Appointed by the jurisdictional authority.</p> <p>Appointed by Catholic Education Services.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Elected / Appointed</b> The elected/appointed positions on the Board are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Members</li> <li>• Community Members</li> <li>• Parish Member [for Primary School Boards]</li> </ul>	<p>Parent members bring the perspective of parents within the school community.</p> <p>Community members bring expertise in areas of business, local government, the law, planning, accounting, building, the church, education.</p> <p>The parish member brings the perspective of the wider faith community.</p>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 3: CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**3.3 Appointed**

The optional appointed positions on the Board are:

- Catholic Member	Education Services	This position would apply to-direct funded schools.
- Special Member	Religious Character	A person who is well qualified to promote the Special Religious Character of the school would take up this position.
- Indigenous/Ethnic Community Members		The presence of an Indigenous/Ethnic Community Member has the potential to enrich the Sharing of Wisdom on the Board. It should be noted that it may be more culturally acceptable to appoint two such members.

**3.4 Co-Opted**

3.4.1  
A Co-opted Member of the Board may be appointed following a decision and recommendation by the ex-officio and elected members of the Board to Catholic Education Services.

3.4.2  
Co-opted Members will be appointed for the particular expertise they might contribute to the Board.

**SECTION 4: MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**

**4.1 Approval**

With due regard to the Special Religious Character and needs of the school or parish, each Board / school community will propose its membership structure for approval by Catholic Education Services.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 4: MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**4.2 Numerical Size**

4.2.1  
In most instances, the number of Board members will be not less than seven (7) and will not exceed twelve (12).

4.2.2  
The Board/School community will provide a rationale for its membership structure if the number of members proposed is less than seven (7) or more than (12)

**4.3 Balance**

Members will bring to the Board a broad spectrum of skills, talents and personal attributes.

In particular, the membership structure of the Board should preserve a balance between those members who have formal teaching qualifications and others.

**SECTION 5: TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP**

**5.1 All Positions**

The term of membership for each position on the Board is as follows:

It is sometimes difficult to find sufficient interested and eligible people to replace retiring elected and co-opted members. In such cases the term of office may be extended.

Approval from the relevant Catholic Education Services personnel should be sought in these instances.

5.1.1  
Spiritual Leader Member –  
For period of office

As determined by the jurisdictional authority from time to time.

5.1.2  
Principal Member –  
For period of office

5.1.3  
Catholic Education Services Member  
– To be determined by Catholic Education Services.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 4: MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
5.1.4 Parent Members – Three years	
5.1.5 Community members – Three years	
5.1.6 Faith Community (parish) member – Three Years	
5.1.7 Co-opted Members – Minimum of One year and maximum of three years	
<b>5.2 Casual Vacancy</b>	
The term of office for a member, elected or co-opted, to fill a casual vacancy on the Board will not extend beyond the next election. Such a member may be nominated and elected at that time or subsequently co-opted.	<p>This allows each newly elected Board to re-examine its needs and available personnel and their contribution to the Board.</p> <p>Please also refer to Article VII Section 3.2.</p> <p>Frequently the reappointment of a person filling a casual vacancy on the Board provides continuity which is of benefit to the Board.</p>
<b>5.3 Consecutive Terms</b>	
An elected member of the Board will serve no more than two consecutive terms of office.	<p>Boards are urged to adopt a flexible approach to reflect the Special Religious Character and the needs of the school community especially those with small enrolments.</p> <p>In special circumstances elected members might serve more than two consecutive terms of office following consultation with Catholic Education Services and with its written approval..</p>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 6:**  
**Following reflection on Article IV, Sections 1 to 5 and Appendix IV of this Constitution, the local Catholic school community or Catholic educational agency may use this section to design and propose its membership structure**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
Membership Structure of the {insert name of Board}	Experience has shown that the particular situation of each Catholic school/parish community is a significant determinant of the size and composition of membership of a Catholic Education Board.
The members of the {insert name of Board} are:	At the time of establishment of the Board and approval of each Board’s Constitution, Catholic Education Services will consider for approval a membership structure proposed by the school community or the existing Board.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual Leader Member; and</li> </ul>	Wherever possible, the Spiritual Leader Member of the Board will be an ordained minister of the Catholic Church. However, the particular situation of each Board will determine the person who will occupy this position.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• {insert number} Principal Member/s; and</li> </ul>	The principal of the school will occupy this position. In those instances where there is one Board for more than one school, the Board may propose a case for having more than one principal on the Board.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic Education Services Member appointed by Catholic Education Services [optional]; and</li> </ul>	In normal circumstances, this position would remain vacant because the principal of the school would bring the perspective of Catholic Education Services to Board discussions. However, in some instances, particularly secondary schools, there may be an advantage in having a Catholic Education Services member on the Board.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 6:**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

- **{insert number here}** Parent Members elected in the way set out in Article VII of this Constitution; and

Normally up to four (4) parent members may be appointed to the Board. Local circumstances may suggest that this number be increased. The Board would seek approval for such an increase. The official parent body in Queensland Catholic schools is the Parents and Friends' Association. Expressions of interest for parent members should be canvassed widely, including information on what the School Board is. Interested parents should attend a pre-service program with a certificate acknowledging such attendance issued by Catholic Education Services. Nominations should be received by the School Board with a selection by prayerful discernment. A letter of appointment will be issued by Catholic Education Services. Appointment will be for 3 years with each member eligible to be re-appointed for a further 3 years.

- Community Members

Advertisements for Community representatives will be posted on websites, in newspapers, parish bulletins and school bulletins calling for nominations. Nominees will attend a pre-service program acknowledged by certificates issued by Catholic Education Services. Formal application, including a CV outline, will be followed by reference checking. Discernment and selection will be undertaken by Catholic Education Services, the Principal, and the School Board. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of Governance Education. A letter of appointment will be issued by Catholic Education Services on behalf of the Board of Governance Education. Appointment will be for 3 years with each member eligible to be re-appointed for a further 3 years.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 6:**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

- One Faith Community (parish) member; and

This position will always exist on a Board which serves a Parish School and/or a Parish Education Board. The position is optional for Boards in other situations. It is strongly recommended that the Parish Member be a member of the Parish Pastoral Council or its equivalent (where such a body exists) or, failing this, that regular reports of Board meetings be provided to the Parish Council. Knowledge and experience of aspects of the school would need to be weighed carefully when choosing the Parish Member as would knowledge and experience of the Parish and its Pastoral Council or its equivalent. Appointment will be for 3 years with each member eligible to be re-appointed for a further 3 years. A letter of appointment will be issued by Catholic Education Services.

- {insert number} Co-opted Members determined by a consensus decision of the ex-officio and elected members of the Board.

The specific reason for co-option should be recorded in the Minutes of the first meeting attended by the co-opted member particularly if the position is ongoing e.g. Financial Advisor. Normally there will be no more than two co-opted members on a Board. Co-opted members are not elected using the same process for the election of Parent Members but are chosen by the ex-officio and elected members and invited to take their equal place on the Board. Co-opted members will be appointed for a maximum of 3 years. If serving for more than 6 months, a letter of appointment will be issued by Catholic Education Services.

**SECTION 7: RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE**

The membership structure proposed by the school community or the existing Board will be based on a consideration of each of the Optional Membership Structures listed at Appendix IV of this Constitution.

Catholic Education Services may take the view that some options listed are available only to those communities which have unique circumstances. At its discretion, an authority may reduce the available options to a very limited range which it believes will meet the needs of schools and parishes within its jurisdiction.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 8: OFFICE BEARERS AND DUTIES**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**8.1 Chairperson**

8.1.1  
Each year the members of the Board will elect a Chairperson from the membership of the Board.

8.1.2  
Ex-officio members, employees and students of the school will not be the elected Chairperson.

Provision exists for any member to take the chair if the Chairperson is unavailable for a meeting. See Article VI Meetings.

8.1.3  
The Chairperson presides at all regular and special meetings of the Board.

8.1.4  
A retiring Chairperson may offer for re-appointment, but a continuous term of office should not exceed 6 years (2 terms of office).

It is desirable that the term of office not exceed three years but this decision should be taken in the light of local circumstances and the need to offer the experience of this position to persons with particular contributions to make.

8.1.5  
The Chairperson will prepare the Agenda for the Board meeting in consultation with the Principal.

The Chairperson's main duty is to be the centre of the co-ordination and unity of the Board. He/she does this by facilitating and regulating discussion, deliberately and steadily moving the members towards consensus and decision. The Chairperson must draw out any members who are not participating and restrain those who might be dominating the discussion. A Chairperson needs to have a good knowledge of the Board's Constitution and Commentary. Meeting Agendas develop with experience. Initial Board meetings will focus mainly on in-service and information sharing, while in time, Agendas will move to policy-making and evaluation of policies.

**8.2 The Secretary**

8.2.1  
The Secretary will be appointed annually by the Board.

8.2.2  
The Secretary will cause the Minutes of all Board meetings to be recorded.

It is acceptable to have a Minutes secretary. The Minutes secretary works under the direction of the appointed Secretary of the Board but does not otherwise participate in Board deliberations. The school secretary may be the most suitable person to act as Minutes Secretary.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article IV**

**SECTION 8: OFFICE BEARERS AND DUTIES**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

8.2.3  
The Secretary will forward the Minutes of the previous meeting and the Agenda for the next meeting to members one week prior to the forthcoming meeting.

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**8.3 Accountant/Financial Adviser**

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8.3.1  
The Board Financial Adviser will be appointed annually by the Board.

The Board Financial Adviser’s role is essentially that of a guide for the Board in financial matters which the Board is asked to consider.

This appointment would normally be from the elected membership of the Board.

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8.3.2  
Where a suitably qualified person is not a member of the Board, the Board Financial Adviser will be co-opted as a member of the Board.

While the best available financial expertise would be an asset to the Board, the qualifications and skills required for this position need not be considerable given that schools have access to significant financial support services from Catholic Education Services.

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8.3.3  
The Board Financial Adviser will play a key consultative role pursuant to the provisions of Article III Section 6.9 of this Constitution particularly the preparation of the annual budget.

This involvement assumes that the preparation process begins before the conclusion of the previous school year.

In some situations, the Financial Adviser will act as the chair of the Board’s Finance Committee.

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8.3.4  
The Board Financial Adviser will maintain an ongoing appreciation of the performance of the school/college budget in accordance with its stated intentions and will report to the Board at least quarterly.

The specific role and function of the Financial Adviser will be determined within the context of procedures laid down by Catholic Education Services in respect of the financial management of the school.

The Board Financial Adviser’s role may include regular communication with fund-raising bodies associated with the school/college/parish faith education Board, who generate income for the budget.

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# Article V: Relationships

## SECTION 1: RELATIONSHIPS INTERNAL

### CONSTITUTION

### COMMENTARY

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	Good internal relationships are more likely to be experienced when Board members understand the philosophy and practice of Collaborative Ministry and Sharing Wisdom.
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#### 1.1 Spiritual Leader

1.1.1  
 The Spiritual Leader will ensure that regular formation for members occurs at Board meetings including opportunities for faith sharing.

Opportunities for faith sharing will include scripture reading and shared reflection which will relate to the Gospel values that the Board aims to promote and develop within its educational mission. This will aim at being meaningful to all present.

The Spiritual Leader is not required to conduct every formation session. Other members are invited to share in this responsibility.

The shared reflection should be seen as an opportunity for members to share aspects of their faith prompted by the message of the reading rather than merely commenting on the text.

It is essential that a Spiritual Leader is appointed who is supportive of the Board and clear on its aims.

1.1.2  
 Where the school community is part of a parish which has a Parish Priest, the priest will be the Spiritual Leader of the Board. He will share pastoral responsibility for the educational community with the members of the Board. This will centre on:

- spiritual formation
  - shared ministry
  - sharing wisdom of the Spirit
  - shared responsibility for decision-making, and
  - shared responsibility for the religious education policies and programs of the school.
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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article V**

**SECTION 1: RELATIONSHIPS INTERNAL**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
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<p>1.1.3 Where the school community is part of a parish and the Parish Priest is not available to be an active Board member, he will nominate a person to be Spiritual Leader of the Board.</p>	<p>It is desirable that the person nominated as Spiritual Leader of the Board have a clear understanding of his/her limits of authority and communicate regularly with the Parish Priest before / after Board meetings.</p>
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<p>1.1.4 In all other circumstances, Catholic Education Services will appoint the Spiritual Leader of the Board.</p>	
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**1.2 Principal as Educational Leader**

<p>1.2.1 It is the essential function of the Principal as Educational Leader of the Board to provide educational leadership to the whole school community; not only to staff and students but also to parents and to the Board.</p>	<p>The Church calls on the Principal for an integrated approach to the task of educational leadership which means not acting in isolation in the school, but co-operating and collaborating as a team member on a Board.</p>
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<p>1.2.2 The Principal is a member of the Board and the Executive Officer of the Board.</p>	<p>This means that the Principal has a dual role on the Board, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a leader in terms of policy development (Board Member), and</li> <li>• a servant in terms of policy implementation (Executive Officer).</li> </ul> <p>He/she serves the Board by providing reports, recommendations and information regarding the administration of the school. It is also important that the principal is confident in the POLICY PROCESS.</p>
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<p>1.2.3 The Principal is the official channel of communication between the Board and the community it serves.</p>	<p>This communication may occur through a range of forums and processes. e.g. School Renewal reporting.</p>
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**1.3 Staff Member**

<p>Employees from a school are not eligible for membership to that particular Schools Board but can be appointed as co-opted members.</p>	<p>The Staff Member is called to be like any other member of the Board and act in the best interests of the school.</p> <p>While the Staff Member is well placed to voice the views of staff; in no way should this be seen as an advocacy role.</p>
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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article V**

**SECTION 1: RELATIONSHIPS INTERNAL**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**1.4 Other Members**

In the same way that the Staff Member brings a perspective to the Board through his/her particular expertise, other members do so from the perspective of their own expertise and life journey.

**SECTION 2: RELATIONSHIPS EXTERNAL**

**2.1 General**

The Board will clarify its relationships with all external bodies which have the potential to impact significantly on the educational community it serves.

Such clarification should respect the history of groups which predate the Board and acknowledge that it is a sensitive ongoing process to build and maintain these relationships.

It would be helpful if short statements of the relationship between the Board and these organisations were developed collaboratively.

Meaningful communication with these bodies will enhance the effectiveness of the Board.

**2.2 Local Faith Community (Parish/s)**

The Board will clarify its relationship to the Parish Pastoral Council (if one exists), to the Parish Finance Committee and to any other relevant parish groups.

In the local context there will be some variation in the roles and relationships between significant parish bodies. Dialogue needs to occur to enable all parties to understand the local setting.

**2.3 Parents and Friends Association**

**2.3.1**  
The Board will clarify its relationship to the Parents and Friends' Association.

The relationship between the Board and the Parents and Friends' Association is based on the different but complementary roles they exercise in the school. The presence of both is to be valued.

Members of the Parents and Friends' Association tend to be *active leaders* identifying needs and opportunities and implementing specific initiatives within the school.

Board members are *trustee leaders* who support the planning and setting of direction for the school by working with the *big picture*.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article V**

**SECTION 2: RELATIONSHIPS EXTERNAL**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

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<p>2.3.2 The Board will acknowledge and respect the role and functions of the Parents and Friends' Association as set out in the Association's Constitution.</p>	<p>The Parents and Friends' Association is the official parent body of the school which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a forum where the views of parents may be heard;</li> <li>• establishes communication networks;</li> <li>• promotes parent education;</li> <li>• promotes community through social activities; and</li> <li>• assists the school with many practical initiatives including fund raising.</li> </ul>
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**2.4 Catholic Education Services**

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<p>2.4.1 It is the duty of the Board to know the essential nature of the relationship of the Board to the Catholic Education Services and it is the duty of both Board and Catholic Education Services to ensure there is mutual understanding.</p>	<p>The jurisdictional authority of the diocese delegates responsibility for Catholic education in the diocese to Catholic Education Services.</p>
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<p>2.4.2 Minutes of meetings are to be made available on request to the Director of Catholic Education Services.</p>	
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<p>2.4.3 The Director of Catholic Education Services or representative of the Chief Executive Officer, has the right to attend Board meetings.</p>	<p>This allows for those instances where the membership of the Board does not include a Catholic Education Services Member.</p>
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<p>2.4.4 The Board Liaison Officer appointed by Catholic Education Services will assist Boards to function effectively and efficiently within the provisions of this Constitution.</p>	<p>Board Liaison Officers may operate at a diocesan level or at a regional or cluster level to support Boards.</p>
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<p>2.4.5 From time to time the Board may invite other Catholic Education Services personnel to meetings to assist the Board.</p>	<p>The presence of Catholic Education Services personnel is one which Boards have welcomed in the past. It is frequently an occasion of education, formation and information.</p>
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**2.5 Staff**

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<p>The Board will normally relate to the Staff of the school through the Principal.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Board create opportunities for social interaction between Board and Staff members.</p>
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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article V**

**SECTION 2: RELATIONSHIPS EXTERNAL**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**2.6 Civic Leaders**

In collaboration with the Principal, the Board will develop sound relationships with representatives of local, state and federal government.

Good communication with local representatives will provide the Board with information essential for its planning processes. It also affords public officials an opportunity to apprise themselves of the contribution made by Catholic schools in the electorate.

# Article VI: Meetings and Decision Making

## SECTION 1: MEETINGS

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
<b>1.1 General</b>	
<p>1.1.1 Board meetings will be held at the times and places the Board decides.</p>	
<p>1.1.2 The Board will meet monthly during the year with a minimum of nine (9) meetings per year including the Annual General Meeting.</p>	<p>Meeting dates should be set for the coming year at the last meeting of the current year, or at the first meeting of the Board following elections.</p> <p>Where Boards experience difficulties with the frequency of meetings or quorums for meetings they are advised to consult the Diocesan Board Liaison Officer for advice and guidance.</p>
<p>1.1.3 The Chairperson will meet with the Principal to compile the Agenda of the coming meeting. This will occur with sufficient time to distribute the Agenda and Minutes of the previous meeting at least 7 days before the day of the meeting.</p>	<p>The Agenda will provide a clear statement of the items of business to be transacted together with sufficient information to prepare members to engage in meaningful dialogue about those items at the meeting.</p> <p>Agenda planning should include some estimation and an allocation of the time required for each stage of the meeting.</p> <p>The Agenda should be accompanied by print and / or other resources to assist members to develop their contribution to the meeting discussion and decisions.</p>
<b>1.2 Quorum</b>	
<p>1.2.1 A quorum for meetings is to be a simple majority of the members provided both ex-officio and elected members are present.</p>	<p>The presence of parent members is important.</p>
<p>1.2.2 If the quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the advertised starting time of a Board meeting, the Chairperson will adjourn the meeting to a time and place decided by the Chairperson in consultation with Board members.</p>	<p>Even though a quorum is not present, it may be advantageous for those members present to have a general discussion about items on the Agenda but no decisions should be made until the next properly constituted meeting of the Board.</p>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 1: MEETINGS**

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
<b>1.3 Special Meetings</b>	
A special meeting may be called at any time to deal with urgent business after consultation between the Chairperson and the Principal.	This would be a rare occurrence prompted by extraordinary circumstances.

<b>1.4 Meeting Mode</b>	
While Board meetings are best conducted 'face to face', the Board may hold meetings or permit members to take part in meetings by telephone, video link, or other form of communication that allows reasonably contemporaneous and continuous communication between the members taking part in the meeting.	Since <i>Sharing Wisdom</i> is the basis of Board decision making and depends to a large extent on non-verbal communication, it is desirable that the majority of meetings be conducted with members physically present to one another.

**SECTION 2: AGENDA**

The <b>Agenda at Meetings</b> will be:	<i>Sharing Wisdom</i> implies that a distinct methodology is required in relation to the preparation and implementation of meetings of a Catholic Education Board.
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Item 1 Welcome	An acknowledgement of significant events in the lives of members since the previous meeting and other comments aimed at building unity would be appropriate at this point of the meeting.
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Item 2 Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scripture</li><li>• Faith Sharing</li><li>• Prayer and Reflection</li></ul>	It is a fundamental principle of the Pastoral Model of Boards that the Holy Spirit is always invited to be present in the deliberations at Board meetings. This presence is to be acknowledged, treasured and respected.  The commitment to formation should be reflected in quality time and content for this section of the meeting.
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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 2: AGENDA**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

Item 3 Board Education (Knowledge and Skills development)

The time allocated for this section of the Agenda should be limited to 15-20 minutes. Topics for Board Education might include:

- A section of the Constitution
- Special Religious Character, Vision and Mission statements
- Philosophy and practice of Collaborative Ministry and Sharing Wisdom
- School Renewal Process
- Meetings process
- Policy process
- Processes for evaluating policy
- Self evaluation of the Board
- Group process – listening
- Annual General Meeting and Election Process
- Preparation of the Budget

Item 4 Minutes Approval

Minutes may be recorded in a variety of formats but the simpler the format the better. Each member should receive a written copy of the Minutes. It is not necessary for the Minutes to be read aloud at the meeting.

Wherever possible, names of members should not appear in the body of the Minutes unless it is necessary for the sake of clarity in recording decisions and actions to be taken.

Normally the Chairperson will ask members, “Are these Minutes a true and correct record of the meeting and can I now endorse them?” If there are no dissenting voices the Chairperson will proceed to sign and date the minutes.

Item 5 Confirm the Written Report of Action taken following last meeting

A Written Report of Action reduces the need for extensive discussion. Normally consideration of this report allows members the opportunity to seek clarification only.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 2: AGENDA**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

<p>Item 6 Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Spiritual Leader</li> <li>• Committees</li> </ul>	<p>These reports allow for a two way process.</p> <p>The Principal shares his/her aims, hopes and challenges in the administration of the school with particular emphasis on the School Renewal Process and those other areas in which the Board shares responsibility.</p> <p>The Spiritual Leader shares issues of concern related to parish matters that impact, or may impact, on the school.</p> <p>Through their listening and response, Board members develop an awareness of the complexities of the administration of a Catholic school. This places them in a better position to offer and share their wisdom.</p>
<p>Item 7 Policy Development, Review and Monitoring</p>	<p>Policy focus is a major function of the Board. New policies need to be developed in response to the evolving educational, political and social environment.</p> <p>Monitoring of policies occurs as an ongoing “touchstone” exercise to maintain their currency.</p> <p>Review of policies occurs when sufficient time has elapsed since a policy was written or when circumstances challenge the ongoing relevance of a policy. (See Appendix VII)</p>
<p>Item 8 Other Business Items</p>	<p>Specific issues requiring consideration will be listed here.</p> <p>This Agenda item would also include discussion and/or decision on issues raised by the Spiritual Leader or Principal.</p> <p>Reports may also be tabled at this point of the meeting but unless the report has a recommendation which requires discussion and/or decision it is provided for information only.</p>
<p>Item 9 Closure &amp; Confirmation of the Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p>This is an opportunity for members to note items which may be on the Agenda for the next meeting.</p>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 3: MINUTES**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**3.1 Record of Proceedings**

A brief record of meeting details will be maintained on behalf of the Board. These will include:

- The names of the members present at each meeting of the Board;
- The names of any persons who are not members but are present at a meeting of the Board;
- The decisions taken and the actions required to implement those decisions.

A useful format for recording proceedings is to note points under the headings:

- Discussion
- Decisions
- Action to be taken

**3.2 Minutes Confirmation**

The minutes of each Board meeting will be submitted for confirmation at the next Board meeting.

To ensure good use of meeting time, members should receive a copy of the Minutes with the Agenda of the next meeting.

**SECTION 4: BOARD RECORDS**

The records of the Board will include all documents that the Board has created or acquired in the course of carrying out its functions.

This material should be retained as school records and should be stored accordingly.

This will include but is not limited to:

- Minutes of Board meetings;
- All records that come into existence in connection with Board meetings;
- A manual of policies approved by the Board including the date of publication and the anticipated/actual date of review.

This manual contains all policies developed by the Board.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 5: ACTING CHAIRPERSON**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**5.1 Election**

Section 8.1 [below] may apply here.

In the absence of the Chairperson, members will elect an acting Chairperson to preside over the meeting.

**5.2 Eligibility**

Any member other than the Student Member is eligible for election to the position of Acting Chairperson.

**SECTION 6: DECISION MAKING**

**6.1 Process**

Decisions will be reached by dialogue, Sharing Wisdom and consensus.

Decision-making through a process of prayerful discernment is ordinarily used.

A topic should be sufficiently discussed and clarified so that consensus is reached.

A consensus decision is reached after members have thoroughly examined all the information available about an issue thus enabling them to discern the wisest position to adopt. This will often demand a change from their original point of view. Even when some members may disagree with the final decision, the process of consensus requires that they commit themselves to supporting it.

Commitment to consensus means that all members are prepared to act as though the decision was the preferred decision of each member.

**SECTION 5: ACTING CHAIRPERSON**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

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**6.2 Outcome**

When the consensus process fails to produce an outcome within a sufficient period of time, the Spiritual Leader or Principal will note the concerns of the Board and if necessary will make the decision independently of the Board in accordance with the usual authority provisions for the Spiritual Leader who is the Pastor and the Principal.

This is consistent with the reserved powers of the Spiritual Leader and the Principal as set out in Article III.

In general, the Principal has authority over all educational aspects of the school while the Spiritual Leader who is a Pastor has particular responsibilities in relation to facilities and property.

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**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 7: ATTENDANCE OF NON MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**7.1 Invitation**

The Board may from time to time invite non-members to attend meetings.

**7.2 Requests**

The Board will consider any requests from non-members to attend Board meetings to address the Board.

Requests will normally be directed to the Chairperson and Principal who will incorporate these into the meeting Agenda.

**SECTION 8: ABSENTEE MEMBERS**

**8.1 Reason for Absence**

In the event that an elected or co-opted member of the Board shall have been absent without reasonable cause from two consecutive regular meetings, the Chairperson or the Principal will approach that member to seek clarification of the member's position.

Every effort should be made to discuss absences with the member concerned to ascertain the member's intentions regarding future membership of the Board.

**8.2 Continued Absence**

If, following an approach from the Chairperson or Principal, an elected or co-opted member of the Board shall be absent without reasonable cause from the next regular meeting, that membership will be declared vacant. Upon such a declaration, that member is deemed to have resigned.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VI**

**SECTION 9: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
<hr/>	
<b>9.1 Timing and Participation</b>	
An Annual General Meeting of the Board will be held in {Insert month} each year to which members of the Board's school /education community will be invited to attend and take part in proceedings.	The AGM provides an opportunity for the Board to communicate in person with the community it serves.
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<b>9.2 Order of Business</b>	
The order of business of this meeting will include:	
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9.2.1 A presentation of a modified education and formation program based on the four themes of the preparatory education program (see Article VII Section 2 of this Constitution);	This annual presentation is designed to assist the Board's working relationship with the community by creating an understanding of how the Board contributes to Catholic education in the local context. In an election year, the presentation will precede the election of members.
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9.2.2 A report of the Board's operations for the past year; and	This is an opportunity for co-ordinating community reporting from other school and parish organisations and/or committees.
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9.2.3 The presentation by the principal of the school budget for the school year.	This presentation would focus on broad directions of the budget.
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# Article VII: Elections

## SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATES AND ELECTORS

CONSTITUTION	COMMENTARY
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**1.1 Eligibility of Candidates**

Persons eligible for election to the Board are those described in Article IV Section 1.2 of this Constitution.

While some initial consideration of suitability for Board membership is necessary, each Board will need to complement this by the provision of regular sessions of member education and formation.

**1.2 Eligibility of Electors**

Persons eligible to elect members of the Board are those who have participated in the Board formation program.

See Section 2 which follows.

## SECTION 2: PREPARATION OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS

**2.1 Board Formation Program**

Before the establishment of a new Board and any election of members, electors and candidates will participate in a comprehensive Board formation program.

The comprehensive preparatory educative program is titled the BOARD COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM. It is designed to provide the essential information which will allow prospective candidates to discern their capacity to serve on the Board and assist members of the community to make choices about the candidates.

The program will focus on the following major themes and topics:

Theme 1:

*BOARDS AS SHARED MINISTRY* deals with:

- History and Nature of Boards
- Why School Boards? - Church and Ministry Service
- Collaborative Ministry
- The Function of Boards - Catholic Education - Vision, Goals, Values
- Shared Wisdom Model
- Shared Decision Making

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VII**

**SECTION 2: PREPARATION OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
	<p>Theme 2:</p> <p><i>RESPONSIBILITIES PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING</i> with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principles of governance in Catholic education</li> <li>▪ Special Religious Character of the School.</li> <li>▪ Planning and development and School Renewal</li> <li>▪ Developing, Reviewing and Maintaining Policies [major theme of this session]</li> <li>▪ Selection process for the appointment of a principal</li> <li>▪ Supporting staff</li> <li>▪ Staffing provision of the school</li> <li>▪ Curriculum                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial Management and the Budgeting process</li> <li>- Provision and Maintenance of School Buildings</li> <li>- Option for the disadvantaged</li> <li>- Advice to the Educational Leader</li> <li>- Preparation and induction of members</li> <li>- Canon Law and Civil Law Issues</li> <li>- Preparation and formation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Theme 3:</p> <p><i>RELATIONSHIPS</i> deals with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Nature of Membership (cf 'Representation')</li> <li>▪ Spiritual Leader</li> <li>▪ Principal</li> <li>▪ Board Committees</li> <li>▪ Other Elected Members</li> <li>▪ Local Faith Community (Parishes - Parish Pastoral Council)</li> <li>▪ P&amp;F Association</li> <li>▪ Catholic School Authority</li> <li>▪ Staff and the Board</li> <li>▪ Civic Leaders</li> <li>▪ Board Members and Code of Ethics</li> <li>▪ Discernment Process - for Policy, Elections and General Decision-Making.</li> </ul>

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VII**

**SECTION 2: PREPARATION OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS**

<b>CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMMENTARY</b>
	<p>Theme 4:</p> <p><i>MEMBERSHIP</i> examines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Board Member - General</li> <li>▪ Ex-Officio members</li> <li>▪ Elected members</li> <li>▪ Appointed members</li> <li>▪ Co-Opted Members</li> <li>▪ Term of membership</li> <li>▪ Membership structure of the Board</li> <li>▪ Chairperson/Board Leader</li> <li>▪ Secretary</li> <li>▪ Accountant/Financial Adviser</li> <li>▪ Elections</li> <li>▪ Meetings - Frequency, Agenda</li> <li>▪ Committees and Task Forces</li> <li>▪ Recap Themes 1-3</li> <li>▪ Final Questions Resolved</li> <li>▪ Discernment and Decision - To Proceed to a Board or not!</li> <li>▪ Discernment of Candidates</li> <li>▪ Process for the election of Members</li> <li>▪ Process for the appointment of Members</li> <li>▪ Process for commissioning Board Members</li> </ul>

**2.2 Modified Program**

A modified program based on the four themes of the preparatory education program will be presented prior to the elections of members to an established Board.

**SECTION 3: TIMING**

**3.1 Newly Established Board**

Election of the members of a newly established Board ordinarily will be conducted at the conclusion of the initial Board formation program.

When a new Board is established, the initial Board formation program will be presented over a minimum of four sessions. This will be the full version of this program.

**Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards – Article VII**

**SECTION 3: TIMING**

**CONSTITUTION**

**COMMENTARY**

**3.2 Established Board**

Elections for an established Board will be held at least every three years or as required by casual vacancies.

Where a member resigns from the Board before twelve months have elapsed from the date of the member’s appointment, it is desirable that an election for that position be held. Prior to elections, a modified version of the Board formation program will be conducted in a single session.

The delivery of the Board formation program will include strategies designed to overcome situations where physical attendance of candidates at the pre-service is difficult or impossible.

**SECTION 4: ELECTION PROCEDURES**

**4.1 Prayerful Discernment**

Wherever possible, the process of election by prayerful discernment should be the means by which members are elected to the Board.

The process of prayerful discernment allows sufficient time for electors to:-

- identify the gifts and talents of the candidates offering themselves as Board members
- share their insights into the particular gifts and talents required at a given stage in the Board's and the school's development
- affirm the worth of all candidates, and
- celebrate the choices made.

Board Liaison Officers are available to advise on or facilitate the process of election by prayerful discernment.

**4.2 Multiple Vacancies**

Where more than one position on the Board is vacant, the election for each position will be conducted separately so that electors may choose members who will make complementary contributions to the Board according to their diverse qualities, knowledge and skills.

Very often this final step in the election process may be conducted by the usual method of secret ballot.

**SECTION 5: CASUAL VACANCIES**

In the event of a vacancy/resignation, the Board may appoint a replacement to hold the position until the period for which the retiring member was appointed expires.

Note the special provision of Article VII Section 3.2 where a member resigns within twelve months of appointment.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **CODE OF ETHICS FOR BOARD MEMBERS**

1. A Board member's role, first and foremost, will be to serve people in a Christ-like way not seeking power or prestige. In this way it is a ministry in the church.
2. A Board member's life will reflect Christian values and be consistent with the values, teaching and lifestyle of Jesus. (N.B. "The Sermon on the Mount" - Matt 5)
3. Board members will invest the necessary time, thought and study into the Board's work between (as well as during) meetings.
4. Decisions will be based on all available facts, will normally be reached by consensus and be free of personal bias.
5. A Board member will accept the final decision of the Board regardless of his or her personal position on any issue.
6. Members will form themselves as a faith community which respects opposing points of view, strives for co-operation and harmony and manages conflict constructively.
7. An elected or co-opted member of the Board will refer day to day administrative problems to a person with the authority to deal with those problems. e.g. Parish Priest or School Principal.
8. While having due regard for the responsibilities accorded by the Constitution and Commentary, each elected or co-opted member shares authority equally with other members. Only when the Board clearly delegates an individual member to act on its behalf will that person be empowered to speak or act on behalf of the Board.
9. Board members will keep confidences when the Board agrees that information is so confidential that it should not be shared outside a meeting.
10. The welfare of people comes before material things.
11. A Board member will work for the good of all members of the community, rejecting bias or the conflicting interests of self or any other group.
12. All Board members will be familiar with the provisions of the Constitution and Commentary of the Board and the current statements of Special Religious Character, vision, mission, goals and policies of the community they serve.
13. All Board members will participate as fully as possible in prayer, reflection and the sharing activities at each meeting.
14. All Board members will be committed to regular spiritual formation and self-education programs offered at each meeting and at regular intervals by the Diocesan Catholic Education Services.
15. Members will co-operate with the leadership of the local pastor and the Bishop of the local diocese.

# Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Cairns, Queensland

## APPENDIX II

### SAMPLE LETTER OF APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER

(Letterhead of Catholic Education Services)

Date:

Addressee:

Address:

Dear .....

Having met all the requirements of membership as outlined in the Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Cairns, Queensland, you are HEREBY APPOINTED to the .....{insert Board title} as ..... {an elected / a co-opted} member for a period of .....year/s.

Boards of Catholic Education are established by and for The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns and it is under the authority of the Corporation represented by the Director of Catholic Education that you are called to give service.

You are to be congratulated on the important step you have taken. By accepting this position you have agreed to commit your gifts and industry to shared decision making in the educational ministry of the church. As such, you have undertaken to act as a member of the Board within the terms of the Board's Constitution which draws its authority from both Canon Law and Civil Law. You are urged to maintain your familiarity with this document.

This Constitution will be both a reference and a guide to you as you grow and develop as a Board member. For your frequent reference, your attention is drawn to the Code of Ethics for Board Members at Appendix I of the document. You will note the importance of confidentiality, integrity and the necessary commitment to your ongoing personal formation and education in your responsibilities as a Board member.

Undoubtedly you are approaching this role with a degree of optimism and enthusiasm which, you may be assured, will reap their own rewards in the satisfaction of faithfully serving others.

May you, your Board and the community you serve, receive all God's richest blessings and always be guided by the wisdom which comes from the Holy Spirit.

Yours sincerely

.....

Executive Director of Catholic Education

For and on behalf of The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns

## **APPENDIX III**

**(TO BE INSERTED BY THE BOARD)**

Local Statements of :

Special Religious Character

Vision

Mission

## APPENDIX IV

### RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURES

#### 1. Small Parish Primary School Board [less than 150 students]

MEMBERSHIP SHOULD NOT EXCEED 12

- One Spiritual Leader Member; and
- One Principal Member; and
- Two P & F Executive Members; and
- One other parent member; and
- One Faith Community (parish) member; and
- Up to two Indigenous/Ethnic Community Members if this category is reflected in the composition of the school community; and
- Up to two co-opted Members determined by a consensus decision of the ex-officio and elected members of the Board

#### 2. Parish Primary School Board [more than 150 students]

MEMBERSHIP SHOULD NOT EXCEED 12

- Spiritual Leader Member; and
- One Principal Member; and
- Four-Six Parent Members; and
- One Faith Community (parish) member; and
- Up to two Indigenous/Ethnic Community Members if this category is reflected in the composition of the school community ; and
- Up to two co-opted Members determined by a consensus decision of the ex-officio and elected members of the Board

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Cairns, Queensland

### RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURES

#### 3. Direct Funded School Board

MEMBERSHIP SHOULD NOT EXCEED 12

- Spiritual Leader Member; and
- One Principal Member; and
- Four-Six Parent Members; and
- Three-Four Community Members; and
- One Special Religious Character Member [optional] up to two Indigenous/Ethnic Community Members if this category is reflected in the composition of the school community; and
- Catholic Education Services Member appointed by Catholic Education Services (optional)
- Direct Funded School Board Committees that report to the Board are Community & Faith, Finance, Facilities and Curriculum
- Employees from a school are not eligible for membership to that particular schools Board.

## **APPENDIX V**

### **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BOARD DYSFUNCTION**

1. Following discussions with the Chair and the Spiritual Leader, the School Principal will approach the Board Liaison Officer assigned by the Director of Catholic Education Services for advice and assistance. It would be highly desirable that such discussions include the Chair and the Spiritual Leader.

The success of this process relies heavily upon the expertise of a fully committed Board liaison officer who is at the service of the Board.
  
2. If the Principal, Parish Priest (where appropriate) and the Board Liaison Officer judge that the Board is dysfunctional, the Board will undertake a program of special assistance designed to restore it to a state of effective functioning.

Such a program may include some adjustment to the membership of the Board.

The Program of Special Assistance will:

  - Identify and clarify issues of concern;
  - Develop strategies to address the issues;
  - Monitor implementation of strategies;

Principal, Parish Priest and Board Liaison Officer will review the effectiveness of the program and, if appropriate, develop a recommendation for the Director.
  
3. If at the conclusion of the program of special assistance the Board is still dysfunctional, the Board Liaison Officer will convey to the Director the recommendations resulting from the review of the program which may include dissolution of the Board.
  
4. The Director of Catholic Education will exercise his/her authority to dissolve a Board when all available evidence confirms that the Board is not capable of functioning within the provisions of this Constitution and Commentary.

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **DUE PROCESS FOR APPROVING AND AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

The approval of the initial proposed Constitution and any amendment to the Constitution may be approved in writing when the Director of Catholic Education is satisfied that:

- (a) the proposal/amendment has been recommended by a duly constituted meeting of the Board according to the provisions of Article VI of this Constitution;
- (b) At least 30 days before the meeting of the Board at which this matter was discussed, written notice of the proposed constitution / amendment was given to the following:
  - the members of the Board;
  - the parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school;
  - the school's staff;
  - the school's students (where there is a student member of the Board);
- (c) the proposed Constitution / amendment provides for a membership that –
  - is sufficiently inclusive of parents, staff, students and other members of the school /local faith community; and
  - takes into account the Special Religious Character of the school;
- (d) the proposed Constitution/amendment provides for the Board to carry out its functions in an effective and fair way;
- (e) provisions of the proposed Constitution/amended Constitution are otherwise sufficient, clear and appropriate; and
- (f) the proposed Constitution/amended Constitution is consistent with the provisions of the model Constitution, of Canon Law and is otherwise lawful.

It is recommended that the amendment be discussed by the Board at a minimum of two Board meetings.

## **APPENDIX VII**

### **POLICY PROCESS OF THE BOARD**

1. Identify the Issues and define the policy topic.
2. Clarify the Issues through reflection on key Gospel values and a range of authoritative documents including Catholic Education Services policies and Church documents.
3. Identify Options for Policy Direction. Identify particular consequences for implementing each option.
4. Select Preferred Policy Direction and list the likely and intended consequences of implementing this Preferred Policy Direction.
5. Draft the Policy Text and the likely and intended consequences of implementing this policy.
6. Distribute the Draft Policy for Consultation.
7. Review Feedback from the consultation. (Further consultation may be necessary.)
8. Redraft the Policy in the light of feedback.
9. The Board will Approve the Policy.
10. Set a month and year for the Review of the Policy and indicate this on the policy document.
11. Celebrate and Launch the Policy in a creative and appropriate way.
12. The Principal and Staff will Implement the Policy.
13. The Board will Review and Evaluate the effectiveness of the Policy on or after the due date.
14. Go to Step 1 and follow the above procedure or, preferably, a modified process which is similar.

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Cairns, Queensland

# APPENDIX VIII

## ROLE OF PARENTS AND THE PARENT BODY IN RELATION TO THE SCHOOL AND THE BOARD

Within a Catholic school, parents/caregivers can exercise roles at any given time which see them as *Staffs, learners, supporters and advocates*.

As stated in Article V Section 2.3 of this Model Constitution and Commentary, the Board and the Parents and Friends' Association (P & F) have a relationship which is based on the different but complementary roles they exercise in the school. The essential difference is that the P & F is the official parent body in the school while the Board is part of the official governance structure of the school.

Parents/caregivers are engaged in both forums and do so within the scope and limitations of the constitutions for each group.

Members of the Board do not represent any individuals or groups when engaged in their deliberations but draw upon their experience and *shared wisdom* to discharge the responsibilities of the Board. Quite clearly, members of the P & F can represent the views of parents in their meetings and the P & F Association has an advocacy role in representing the views and interests of parents within the school and beyond. Individual parents/caregivers will undertake such a role with the approval of the P & F.

Beyond these groups, parents/caregivers engage with the school in a variety of ways for the benefit of their own children, the children of others, the staff and the school community generally. Such participation is primarily an opportunity for parents/caregivers to exercise their rights and responsibilities as the *first educators* to be partners with the school staff in the ongoing education and formation of their children.

This activity will be governed by a range of policies and procedures which are established by the school's lawful authorities in the context of Church and Civil Law.

For further reflection on the role of parents and the Parents and Friends Association, the reader is referred to the website of the *Federation of Parents and Friends Associations Queensland* [www.pandf.org.au](http://www.pandf.org.au)

Of particular interest will be the Parent Manual, P & F Constitution and the Information Sheet *Parents in Partnership*.

**[The above text is provided as essential information with which every Board member should be conversant. There is great value in producing an amended version of this statement which will be particularly relevant to a specific school or school authority.]**

## Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Cairns, Queensland

# APPENDIX IX

## THE MODEL CONSTITUTION AND COMMENTARY AND THE GOVERNANCE OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE SCHOOLS

The *Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in* is primarily a basic resource for the use of any Catholic Education authority wishing to produce a constitution and commentary which will serve the particular needs of a school or other education agency operating under that authority.

The essence of the *Model Constitution and Commentary* can be reproduced as a major component of the constitution of any type of Catholic board of education regardless of whether it is a governance body which is a consultative/advisory board, a management group or a governing body in its own right.

In particular the philosophy and practice of *Sharing Wisdom* and *Collaborative Ministry*, the *Fundamental principles of the Governance of Catholic Schools*, the *Definition of Membership* and key elements of other sections of this document would have universal application to any type of body which is part of the governance of a Catholic school or education agency.

One document is not capable of setting out all possible options for every type of body. Instead, one version of the *Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic Education Boards in Queensland* which is applicable to consultative Catholic school and college boards under the authority of a Diocese has been published. This action has been taken because such boards are the most numerous in Queensland and there is a need to provide a replacement for the 1990 Constitution and Commentary.

It is acknowledged that the majority of Religious Institute schools in Queensland have established governance structures which are, for the most part, management bodies or governing bodies in their own right with explicit and different civil law responsibilities. At the same time, the changing circumstances of Religious Institutes have led to a consideration of the governance structures required to continue the schools which have been their apostolic works for many years. Several options for restructuring the governance of these schools are being considered.

In this climate of change, there is a real value in examining the *Model Constitution and Commentary for Catholic education Boards in Queensland* to see what contribution it might make to the development of constitutions for governance bodies of Religious Institute schools in the future.