

Glossary of Catholic Education Governance Terms

Ad hoc committee: A temporary committee or task force established to address a specific issue.

Advisory Board: A body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and recommending policy to the person with authority to enact it. The authority is not bound by the board's advice.

Agenda: An outline of what will be discussed at a meeting; provides structure and focus for a meeting.

Articles of Incorporation: A legal document that creates a corporation, normally filed with an appropriate state agency.

Board: A governing body (sometimes called council or commission) whose members are selected or elected to participate in decision-making. A Catholic education board, commission, or council may be called to participate in decision making at the diocesan, regional, or local level. Its responsibilities and authority are stipulated in its founding documents, such as a constitution or bylaws.

Board development: A process of building effective boards through the education and training of board members.

Board member: A person selected or elected to serve a defined term on the governing body of an organization.

Bylaws: Rules adopted by an organization to govern its operation.

Canon law: The official body of laws of the Roman Catholic Church. All organizations in the Roman Catholic Church must function in accordance with this code. A systematic arrangement of the laws of the church occurred under Pope Pius X, resulting in the Code of Canon Law. Pope John Paul II promulgated a new code in 1983.

Catholic Identity: The quality that identifies the religious dimension of the school as distinctively Roman Catholic, reflected in the curriculum, environment, traditions, and relationships of the school.

Catholic School: "That school is considered to be Catholic which ecclesiastical authority or a public ecclesiastical juridic person supervises or which ecclesiastical authority recognizes as such by means of a written document." (Canon 803.1)

Commission: A governing body (sometimes called board or council) whose members are selected or elected to participate in decision-making. A Catholic education board, commission, or council may be called to participate in decision making at the diocesan, regional, or local level. Its responsibilities and authority are stipulated in its founding documents.

Committee: A subgroup organized and delegated to consider, investigate, take action, report on, or otherwise assist with specific tasks or aspects of the work. In relation to a board of Catholic education, committees may be either permanent (standing) or called together for a limited time for a specific task (ad hoc).

Consensus: A model of decision-making in which a board seeks to arrive at a conclusion that all members can agree to or support.

Constitution: founding document of an organization that establishes and defines mission, structure, and process.

Consultative Board: A body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and recommending policy to the person with authority to enact it. The person with authority is required to consult the board before making decisions in designated areas, but is not bound by the board's advice.

Council: a governing body (sometimes called board or commission) whose members are selected or elected to participate in decision-making. A Catholic education board, commission, or council may be called to participate in decision making at the diocesan, regional, or local level. Its responsibilities and authority are stipulated in its founding documents.

Diocese: A portion of the people of God that is entrusted by the Roman Catholic Church for pastoral care to a bishop with the cooperation of the priests.

Diocesan School: A school owned and financed in some manner by the diocese.

Ex officio: "By reason of the office." A person serving on a board due to his or her position rather than through election or selection.

Executive Committee: A committee that has specific powers, outlined in the bylaws, which allow it to act on the board's behalf when a full board meeting is not possible or when the full board delegates a task.

Executive Session: A closed meeting which only members of the board may attend.

Governance: A process to exert authoritative direction or control. A school may be controlled by state and federal law, board policy, and administrative procedures.

Limited Jurisdiction Board: Also called a policy making board. A body that participates in the policy making process by formulating, adapting, and enacting policy. The board has been delegated final authority to enact policy regarding certain areas of institutional operation, although its jurisdiction is limited to those areas of operation that have been delegated to it by the constitution and/or bylaws, and approved by the delegating church authority.

Mission Effectiveness: An assessment of an organization's ability to live out its mission through its planning and programming.

NABCCCE: The National Association of Boards, Commissions, and Councils of Catholic Education; a commission of the National Catholic Educational Association whose mission is to provide leadership, support services, resources, and advocacy for boards, commissions, and councils that participate in the governance of Catholic elementary and secondary schools and education programs on the arch/diocesan, regional, and local levels.

NCEA: The National Catholic Educational Association is a membership-based association which has been providing leadership and services to Catholic educators since 1904. It has the largest membership of any national private school association.

Orientation: The education and preparation of board/committee members regarding the mission, organizational structure, how the group functions, and the members' roles and responsibilities.

Parish: "A definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop." (Canon 515.1)

Parish School: A school operated and financed by a particular parish.

Pastor: "The proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful." (Canon 519)

Policy: A written plan used to guide discretionary administrative action.

Private School: A school owned, operated, and financed by a religious community or by a board of trustees.

Promulgate: To put into action or force; to publicly declare or officially make known.

Quorum: A minimum number of people required at a meeting in order for business to be conducted.

Regulatory Board: A governing body which enacts or uses existing rules and regulations to govern the operation of its institution. This type of board is considered administrative rather than policy-making or consultative.

Robert's Rules of Order: A parliamentary procedure used to conduct meetings that allows everyone to be heard and decisions to be made in an orderly way.

Strategic Planning: A process by which an organization analyzes its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; envisions a desired future; and lays out the necessary steps to attain that future.

Subsidiarity: A principle of the Catholic Church that calls for decisions generally to be made at the lowest appropriate level.

Superintendent of Catholic Schools: The person delegated by the bishop to exercise executive power over the schools in a territory or arch/diocese. The extent of the power is determined by the mandate of the bishop.

Information obtained from the *Glossary of Catholic Education Governance Terms*, by Timothy W. Dwyer, National Association of Boards, Commissions and Councils of Catholic Education of the National Catholic Educational Association, 2003.