

ARTICLES OF UNDERSTANDING

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this body shall be the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Education Council

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The Council exists to maintain and promote the vision of the Parish School as defined in the Mission Statement and to serve as an advisory body to the Parish School Principal and the Pastor.

The Council may:

- Define the mission of the School,
- Discern the needs and concerns of the School community,
- Develop goals and priorities that address discerned needs and concerns and provide input on the effectiveness of programs and initiatives,
- Call all members of the Parish community to participate in the mission of the Parish School,
- Support and encourage the faculty and staff, committees and parish groups in carrying out their responsibilities in light of the School mission,
- Shall be prepared to take any action authorized under the ordinances of the Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing (“Bishop”) or any mandate from the Pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish (“Pastor”).

ARTICLE III – COMPETENCE

The Council is an advisory body to the Principal and the Pastor in the administration of the parish school. The Council acts as a consultative body pursuant to and is governed by the norms determined by the Bishop.

Recommendations of the Council take effect only when expressly ratified by the Principal and/or Pastor.

Such ratification cannot take place by silence alone. If the Principal or Pastor chooses not to follow the Council’s recommendations, they will communicate the reasons for that decision. The Principal or Pastor may table a recommendation of the Council when it is thought a particular question needs further consideration either by themselves, the faculty and staff of the school or the broader parish staff .

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP AND SELECTION

Anyone with an interest in or a relationship to St. Thomas Aquinas Parish School

is eligible to be a member of the Council. Council membership is chosen by the Pastor of the Parish in consultation with the Principal.

ARTICLE V – RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council members are expected to regularly attend Council meetings and to actively participate in its deliberations. It is the responsibility of each member to notify the Chair of his/her inability to attend.

Council members are expected to serve on one committee and to participate regularly in committee deliberations.

The Council will conduct business on a consensus basis, but a vote may be taken in order to expedite such business. Each Council member has one vote including ex-officio members.

Council members may seek the opinions of parishioners or other school parents whenever appropriate about matters to be discussed at the Council meetings. They shall also use every opportunity to be supportive of the Council's actions and decisions.

Council members shall assure that their actions and recommendations are consistent with the diocesan norms for parish school councils, these Articles of Understanding, and the stated mission of the parish school.

Council members are to take seriously the religious nature of the parish school and pray, especially for the health and well being of the parish school, faculty, staff, students and parents.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

The Council shall conduct a minimum of four (4) regular meetings per year and hold at least two (2) public meetings per academic year.

Notice of regular and public meetings shall be communicated to all parishioners through the school website. Minutes of Council meetings shall be posted on the school web site and noted in the Parish Bulletin.

Special meetings may be called by the Principal, Pastor, the Council Chair or three other members. Notice of Council meetings shall be given for special meetings at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.

Council meetings shall begin and end with a prayer.

The Council shall conduct its meetings in any manner that ensures that each Member is heard and that all votes of the Members are recorded. The Council may from time to time, review and alter its method of operation consistent with these Articles.

ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS

Chair - A member shall be elected annually by the Council by a majority of members appointed to the Council to, with the Executive Committee and the Principal prepare the agenda for and to preside over meetings of the Council.

Vice-Chair - A member shall be elected annually by the Council to fulfill the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence and any other duties believed necessary by the Chair, Principal or Pastor for the well being of the Council.

Vice-Chair – A second vice-chair shall be elected annually by the Council to fulfill such other duties as the Council may require.

The Chair, Vice-Chairs and Immediate Past Chair (if still serving as PEC member) shall constitute the Executive Committee.

The Principal or Pastor may appoint another member to the Executive Committee.

The Principal or Pastor may call the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the Council between meetings or in emergency situations when all members are not available.

ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES

The Council will work together with its various Committees to bring to fruition those commitments set forth as goals by the Council through a cooperative process of discernment and consensus.

The Committees establish action plans in their specific areas of competency to further the mission of the School. The Council may provide oversight of and coordination among the Committees. Each Committee is encouraged to establish goals for the year. Committees will report their achievements as requested by the Council. Actions taken by all committees are subject to review by the Council.

The Council may establish Committees as necessary.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENT TO THESE ARTICLES OF UNDERSTANDING

These Articles of Understanding shall become effective upon approval by the Council, the Principal and the Pastor. Proposed amendments to the Articles of Understanding shall be by written motion of any member upon at least fourteen (14) days notice.

ADOPTED: 12 November 2012