

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ST. MARY EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE (SMEC)

*Be it known to all who enter here that
CHRIST
is the reason for this school.
He is the unseen but ever present teacher in
its classes. He is the model of its faculty
and the inspiration of its students.*

Author unknown

Mission Statement

St. Mary, a Christ-centered community rooted in Catholic tradition, empowers students academically, encourages selfless sacrifice, and nurtures learners to become a positive influence on others.

- ❖ The Committee is composed of twelve (12) **voting members**, including four (4) active lay members from St. Thomas More Parish, Paducah, three (3) from St. Francis de Sales Parish, Paducah, two (2) from St. John the Evangelist Parish, Paducah, and one (1) each from Rosary Chapel, Paducah, and St. Mary Parish, LaCenter, as well as one (1) non-Catholic member. These parishes make up the Paducah Deanery.
- ❖ There are several **associate members** of the Committee who are non-voting, including the Administrators of the St. Mary School System (the Episcopal Vicar, the Director, the HS/MS Principal, and the ES Principal), the Diocesan Superintendent, the Advancement Director, one Teacher Representative from each building, and each Pastor of the above supporting parishes.
- ❖ The **Episcopal Vicar** reports directly to the Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro. He has local jurisdiction and authority over the School System and is responsible for the hiring of the Director, the appointing of the non-Catholic voting member, the granting of exceptions to SMEC policy, and the representing of the School System before the Paducah Deanery and the Bishop.
- ❖ The voting members of the Committee are lay nominees who are appointed by their respective pastors with the exception of the non-Catholic member. To be eligible for membership, a person will:
 - be a registered active member of a participating parish,
 - be supportive of Catholic school education,
 - be at least 21 years of age,
 - have been an active member of his/her parish for at least one year,

- not be a staff member of any school in the School System,
 - not be a spouse or close relative of a teacher in the School System (i.e., mother, father, brother, sister), unless granted an exception by the Episcopal Vicar, and
 - be willing and able to consistently attend monthly meetings.
- ❖ Newly appointed members serve a three (3) year term beginning on July 1st. Upon the expiration of this term, members may choose to serve a successive three (3) year term with the continued approval of their pastors. Any unexpired terms due to member resignation, change of parish, or other reasons are to be filled by the appointment of the out-going member's parish pastor. The newly appointed member will complete the remainder of the unexpired term and will then be eligible for a successive term him/herself.
 - ❖ The four offices of the Committee are held by voting members who have been nominated then elected by a majority vote of the Committee. These officers include the Chairperson (Chair), Vice-Chairperson (Vice-Chair), Secretary, and Treasurer, who also serves as the chair of the Finance Sub-Committee. Each officer of the Committee must have been a member of the Committee for at least one year. Elected officers serve a one (1) year term, which begins on July 1st, and they may be re-elected to an office if their member terms allow.
 - ❖ Currently there are five (5) Standing Sub-Committees, which were established to address specific aspects and functions of the School System. These include the Executive, Finance, Advancement, Building and Grounds, and the Benefit Fund Sub-Committees. The Executive Committee is made up of the four officers along with the Episcopal Vicar and the Director. The Finance Sub-Committee is chaired by the Treasurer and includes two other voting members, representing St. Thomas More, St. Francis de Sales, and St. John the Evangelist Parishes. All voting members of the Committee are appointed by the Chair to serve on one or more of the Standing Sub-Committees, although not necessarily as the chair of those sub-committees.
 - ❖ As a Catholic School Council (Educational Committee) of the Diocese of Owensboro, the Committee's role is to be "consultative and not jurisdictional" to the School System's Administration. This is to say that the Committee "cooperates in the policy-making process by formulating and adapting, but never enacting policy." As was stated earlier, "the Episcopal Vicar has the final authority over the School System to approve policy developed by the 'consultative Council' before it can be promulgated and implemented by the Administration." The members cannot act apart from the Episcopal Vicar and the Director, nor can they make decisions regarding the operation of the School System without the approval of the Episcopal Vicar and the Director.
 - ❖ In keeping with diocesan guidelines, the Committee employs consensus-building as the appropriate mode of decision-making. According to those same

guidelines, “Consensus means that all Council members agree to support the decision which appears to be the best, under the present circumstances, for the greatest number of people. Consensus does not necessarily mean that everyone agrees that a certain action is the best possible or one’s own personal preference; rather, consensus means that all members have agreed to support the decision for the sake of the school.”

“It may not be my first choice, but I can support it.”

❖ In the end, the ultimate goal of the St. Mary Educational Committee is to:

- Participate in the Church’s educational ministry
- Foster the school’s mission
- Provide unity, direction, and stability
- Represent the stakeholders
- Support the administration

It also recognizes that many school issues and concerns are best handled as close to the source as possible, and so it supports the following ‘chain of command’ with regard to problem-solving:

- Classroom teacher
- Principal
- Director
- Episcopal Vicar
- Superintendent

Sources: **Diocese of Owensboro Education Committee Training, dated September 18, 2014** and **St. Mary School System Educational Committee (SMEC) Constitution/By-Laws, revised and approved December 2014.**

CODE OF ETHICS FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

As a member of a Catholic school council, I

- ❖ acknowledge that schools are a significant expression of the teaching mission of the Catholic Church and function within its structure;
- ❖ will become more knowledgeable about the mission of Catholic education, as expressed in this school, and sincerely promote it to the various publics with whom I have influence;
- ❖ recognize the need for continuing education about my responsibilities and know that I do not represent the school council officially unless explicitly authorized to do so;
- ❖ will be fully and carefully prepared for each meeting by doing the required readings and completing necessary tasks for committee work and reports;
- ❖ support the director and the principals in their authorized functions and avoid intruding in administrative details unless requested to do so;
- ❖ will be loyal to school council decisions even though I may be personally opposed to the final recommendations and decisions at times;
- ❖ will be alert to alternate solutions to problems by keeping an open mind;
- ❖ will disqualify myself from discussion and NOT vote on an issue where there is a conflict of interest with my family or business interests, or if the outcome will grant me any pecuniary or material benefits; and
- ❖ pray often for other members of the school council, this Catholic school, and the community it serves.

Source: **National Association of Boards, Commissions and Councils of Education, National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, DC.**