

ST. URSULA
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL HANDBOOK
DRAFT LAST UPDATED 8/14/08

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MISSION STATEMENTS

St. Ursula Parish Mission Statement

We, the parish community of St. Ursula, guided by the Holy Spirit, are called to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. We dedicate ourselves to the fulfillment of this mission by committing to use our varied and abundant gifts to serve the Lord and one another through worship, faith formation, and education. Centered in Christ, nurtured by the Eucharist, our covenant is to extend Christ's peace and compassion to all.

St. Ursula School Mission Statement

The vision of St. Ursula School is to promote and to sustain education of unparalleled quality, and integrate faith into every aspect of life and culture, producing graduates who continually strive for human and Christian perfection.

St. Ursula School is open to all and made as accessible as possible by seeking support from the total Catholic community, as well as from the community at large.

SAINT URSULA SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION/BY-LAWS

Preamble

The School Advisory Council of Saint Ursula Parish was created in August 2008 under the guidelines set forth by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. School Advisory Councils do not have the power to enact policy, but exist to offer advice, guidance, and support to the Pastor and Principal, in specific areas as requested by the Pastor and Principal. Such advice and assistance are especially encouraged in the areas of public relations, student retention and recruitment, fundraising and development, and the strengthening of parental and community support for the school. The Principal is responsible for the operation of the school and its programs and he or she is accountable solely to the Pastor.

SECTION ONE NAME

1.1 The name of this organization is the Saint Ursula School Advisory Council.

SECTION TWO PURPOSE

2.1 The School Advisory Council supports and contributes to the mission of the school by acting as a consultative and planning body in advising, assisting and supporting the Pastor and Principal in matters relating to the school.

SECTION THREE MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The local School Advisory Council shall consist of no fewer than nine (9) and no more than sixteen (16) members. Members of the Advisory Council are expected to be practicing Catholics; however, it is possible for qualified non-Catholic members of the community to be selected for the Advisory Council. Such non-Catholic membership, however, can never exceed one-quarter (1/4) of total membership.

3.2 The maximum term for any member shall be three (3) years.

3.3 To ensure consistency on the Council, one-third of the Council members' terms shall expire each year.

3.4 Council members who serve two (2) consecutive three (3) -year terms may not succeed themselves but are eligible for selection or election as determined by the Pastor or Principal after an interval of at least one (1) year.

3.5 Vacancies on the Council occurring during the term of office of a member due to resignation, illness, etc. shall be filled by a nomination and acceptance process.

3.6 The Advisory Council may be dissolved by the Principal or Pastor.

**SECTION FOUR
OFFICERS**

4.1 The officers of the Council shall be a President, Vice-President and Secretary.

4.2 The Council shall elect at the first meeting of the school year a President, Vice-President, and Secretary with the approval of the Principal and Pastor.

4.3 In an effort to maintain continuity, it is expected that the Vice-President will succeed the President upon his/her resignation.

**SECTION FIVE
TERM OF OFFICE**

5.1 The President, Vice-President, and Secretary will serve a one (1) year term in office.

**SECTION SIX
DUTIES OF OFFICERS (See Appendix for detailed job descriptions)**

6.1 The President shall preside at all meetings and perform such other duties that pertain to the leadership of the Council.

6.2 The Vice-President shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the President and shall perform such other duties as shall be designated by the Council.

6.3 The Secretary shall keep an accurate account of the proceedings of each meeting, send notices of all meetings, handle all the correspondence of the council, and perform such other duties as may be designated by the Council.

6.4 Each member of the Council, including the President, shall have one (1) vote. However, the Advisory Council should strive for the utmost cooperation and support among its members, reaching consensus as often as possible.

**SECTION SEVEN
COMMITTEES**

7.1 The Officers of the Advisory Council shall include but not be limited to:

- A. Executive: President, Vice President, and Secretary
- B. The Pastor and Principal are considered ex-officio members.
- C. Other Standing Committees represented on the School Advisory Council by their Chairperson are:
 - 1. Budget and Finance
 - 2. Student Life
 - 3. Enrollment Management
 - 4. Fundraising
 - 5. Athletic Association

7.2 The School Advisory Council, with the approval of the Principal and the Pastor, shall prescribe the duties of the above standing committees. (See job descriptions page)

7.3 There shall be such other committees as the President with the approval of the Principal and Pastor may from time to time authorize.

7.4 The chairperson positions of all committees shall be filled by a nomination and volunteer acceptance process.

7.5 Also sitting on the Council will be as many as four Action Oriented Advisors (AOA) to any of the existing committees. The Advisors role is to use his/her expertise in any given area to assist an existing committee with setting priorities and managing major functions. (See job description page)

SECTION EIGHT QUORUM

8.1 A simple majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular or specially called meeting of Council.

SECTION NINE MEETINGS

9.1 The Council shall meet monthly throughout the calendar year and at such other times deemed necessary as called by the President, Principal, Pastor or by a majority of Council members.

9.2 A special meeting may be convened upon request, of a simple majority of members. The Secretary shall notify each member at least two (2) days prior to such meeting as to the time and place of said special meeting.

9.3 Parents of school children wishing to address the Council shall submit a written request to the President of the Council, outlining the subject to be discussed. This request is to be submitted one week prior to the date of meeting.

9.4 A portion of each meeting will be set aside and made open to any interested party wishing to bring relevant issues to the attention of the Advisory Council.

SECTION TEN AMENDMENTS

10.1 These by-laws may be amended by agreement of the SAC and with approval from the Principal and Pastor

ST. URSULA SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the School Advisory Council (SAC)?

A SAC is an advisory and consultative group that offers assistance and expertise to the pastor and principal on school matters. It also serves to improve communications among those involved in school issues. The purpose and functions of the SAC are detailed in the *Saint Ursula School Advisory Council Draft Handbook*.

2. Why is the SAC being created?

The Diocese of Pittsburgh advocates such advisory councils to support the pastor and school principal in carrying out the educational mission of the parish through the Catholic school. The increasing demands on Catholic parish pastors and Catholic school principals require the assistance from people with the needed talents and skills, who are committed to work for the good of the school and parish.

3. How is the SAC different from the Parent Teacher Guild (PTG)?

While all of these groups work to improve our parish school, each has a different focus and membership. Our former PTG's purpose was to promote parent involvement through work with teachers and other parents on activities that enhanced the community and life of the student.. The SAC will include chairpersons from our former PTG, now called Student Life, as well as representatives from the Budget and Finance, Enrollment Management, Athletic Association and Fundraising Committees. The SAC will be governed by diocesan approved guidelines to advise the pastor and principal on all areas of the schools development.

4. Is the SAC like a “school board” that exists for public schools and some privately run schools?

Not really. Unlike most “school boards” the SAC does not make decisions on the operation of the school—it studies issues and gives recommendations. Also, SAC members are not elected to the position, and decisions are not arrived at by majority vote. However, the SAC will have serious responsibility and give advice that bears considerable weight. Because SAC recommendations are to be arrived at through consensus after careful, thorough study, open communication with all interested members in the parish and school community, and prayerful deliberations, the pastor and principal will give them serious consideration but decisions are ultimately made by the Pastor and Principal.

5. How is the role of the principal affected by the SAC?

There is no change in the principal's role. The principal is responsible for the operation of the school and its programs, and is accountable solely to the pastor. The SAC should help the principal and pastor be better informed with easier access to ideas and recommendations on carefully studied issues by a dedicated group of people volunteering their talents to help improve Catholic school education.

6. How are the faculty and staff affected by the SAC?

There is no change in the faculty and staff roles. The SAC should help the faculty and staff, as well as the principal and pastor, be better informed with easier access to ideas and recommendations made by a dedicated group of people volunteering their talents to help improve Catholic school education.

7. Who are the members?

The first SAC members were appointed during the summer of 2008. A group of interested parents met regularly to discuss how the school could best be organized to improve communication between committees, develop volunteerism within the school and operate in a most efficient and fiscally responsible manner. In June of 2009, the SAC will have open positions advertised and interested parishioners and parents/guardians of students can nominate themselves or another eligible person. New members' terms will begin in August 2009. Current SAC members and their roles are listed on page #

8. How many members are there?

There will be a minimum of ten and maximum of 16 members on the SAC.

9. Who is eligible to be a member?

All registered parishioners and all non-parishioners who are parents or legal guardians of a child attending the School, and who are at least 18 years old, are eligible to be members of the SAC. Parents of St. Ursula School Alumni and active St. Ursula parishioners interested in helping the school may also be considered.

10. How can I find out more?

You can see a more detailed description of the SAC in *the Saint. Ursula School Advisory Council Draft Handbook*. Get a copy of the handbook by contacting the school office at 412-486-5511 or view the handbook at www.stursulaschool.org. Contact any member of the SAC with questions.

**ST. URSULA
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEMBERS AND OFFICERS
2008/2009**

Susan McKee, President

Rick Behring, Vice-President

Ginny Szafranski, Secretary

Jim Davis and Susan Michel, Co-Chairpersons, Fundraising

Colleen Ruefle, Jada Donato, Amy Valenty, Co-Chairpersons, Student Life

Ginny Szafranski and Susan McKee, Co-Chairpersons, Enrollment Management

Tim Whelan and Linda Stauffer, Co-Chairpersons, Vision Committee

Rick Behring, Chairperson, Athletic Association

Nicole Saldamarco and Jeff Shaffer, Co-Chairpersons, Budget and Finance

Gary Regan, AOA, Budget and Finance

Stephanie Lamperski, AOA, Enrollment Management and Fundraising

Jeryl Benson, AOA, Vision and Student Life

Lynn Ramser, AOA, Student Life and Athletic Association

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

In an effort to ensure that the School Advisory Council is a dynamic body, who continually strives to improve their effectiveness as a committee and influential body within the school community, the following assessment tools will be used at the end of each school year.

Internal Assessment Tool

The internal assessment tool is to be completed by each member of the SAC, including the Principal and Pastor at the close of each school year. Assessments can be completed anonymously and turned into the school office, directed to the attention of current SAC President.

External Assessment Tool

The external assessment tool will be sent home with each school family prior to the end of the school year. Parents will be asked to return completed forms, anonymously if they wish, to the school office. The SAC will spend at least one summer meeting reviewing comments and devising plans to make changes based on the feedback.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Internal Council Effectiveness Evaluation

CRITERIA	CRITERIA MET?	CRITERIA NOT MET? COMMENTS
Were the annual goals and objectives accomplished?		
Are there areas that need to be addressed in the future?		
Is there anything that could have been done differently?		
Did all the members actively participate in discussion?		
Were members adequately prepared for meetings?		
Was meeting time used efficiently?		
Did members stay on task during meetings?		
Were members comfortable in offering suggestions and in critiquing the work of the council?		
Were constituents apprised of decisions in a timely manner and through appropriate channels?		
Did the committees accomplish their tasks in a timely and complete manner?		
Did the committees reflect the expertise and skills of the membership?		
Were the committees an effective means of accomplishing the goals of the council?		

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

External Council Effectiveness Evaluation

CRITERIA	CRITERIA MET?	CRITERIA NOT MET? COMMENTS
Constituents are aware that the council works with the Pastor and Principal in an advisory capacity? Constituents know the council's goals for the upcoming school year?		
Constituents feel that their views and concerns are represented?		
The council communicates with its constituents throughout the school year?		
Constituents are invited to attend or submit topics for council meetings?		
Council members participate in school and parish activities?		
The council understands the purpose of Catholic education and the mission of St. Ursula School?		
The council is a positive influence for continual quality improvement within our school?		
Constituents were apprised of decisions in a timely manner and through appropriate channels?		

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

JOB DESCRIPTION

President, School Advisory Council

1. **Position Title** President, School Advisory Council
2. **Work Location** Some work can be done at home through email and home computer. Attendance at monthly School Advisory Council meetings and SAC sponsored events is required. May be requested to attend parish or diocesan events by Principal and/or Pastor.
3. **Purpose of the Position** The President of the School Advisory Council represents interests of all school parents to the Pastor and Principal. The President provides leadership for the SAC across all committees and serves as the unified contact point for the school.
4. **Responsibilities and Duties** The SAC President chairs the regular/special meetings of SAC. The President is expected to attend all SAC meetings, providing leadership and direction in conjunction with the Committee Chairs. The President and Vice President will work together to establish clear agendas for monthly meetings and ensure appropriate follow up is completed. The SAC President will meet on a regular basis with the Principal, and will be visible in the school community to promote parental participation and open communication between the school community and the SAC. The President is also the responsible for delegating tasks/assignments that do not fall under an established committee. In addition, the President may be required to speak for the school with the media and the greater local community.
5. **Qualifications** Excellent communication and organizational skills are a must. This individual will be expected to lead the SAC and will be an integral part of the SAC planning process. A working knowledge of word processing and basic computer skills is helpful. This person must espouse a strong belief in the value of Catholic education and a commitment to the continued viability of St. Ursula School. No specific educational requirements are necessary.
6. **Commitment Expected** The President serves a term of one year in office and a maximum term of three years on the SAC. The President will spend 2 hours per month, typically, in formal SAC meetings and another 15-20 hours per month in preparation and follow up. Additional time may be required to attend events at the request of the Principal or Pastor.
7. **Training** It is expected that the former President will forward all necessary documentation and electronic files to the incoming President and spend a minimum of 2-4 hours working on transitioning this critical role.
8. **Other** Last updated 8/8/08. This position works in conjunction with the SAC Executive Committee and the Standing Committee Chairs, reporting directly to the school Principal.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Vice President, School Advisory Council

1. **Position Title** Vice President, School Advisory Council
2. **Work Location** Most work can be done at home through email and home computer. Attendance at monthly School Advisory Council meetings and SAC sponsored events is required.
3. **Purpose of the Position** The Vice President of the School Advisory Council works closely with the President to set SAC goals and objectives, steer committee meetings and provide feedback to the Pastor and Principal. This position also provides essential continuity in leadership by stepping into the President office at term end.
4. **Responsibilities and Duties** The SAC Vice President is responsible for attending all SAC meetings, providing leadership and direction in conjunction with the President and offering his or her expertise in areas of specific need. The VP is responsible for ensuring that SAC actions and activities are clearly in line with the Mission Statement of the school, the parish and the SAC, as well as adhering to guidelines from the Diocese. The President and Vice President will work together to establish clear agendas for monthly meetings and ensure appropriate follow up is completed. The SAC VP will be visible in the school community to promote parental participation and open communication between the school community and the SAC.
5. **Qualifications** Excellent communication and organizational skills is a must as this individual will, at times, be expected to lead the SAC and will be an integral part of the SAC planning process. A working knowledge of word processing and basic computer skills is helpful. No specific educational requirements are necessary.
6. **Commitment Expected** The Vice President serves a term of one year in the VP office and a maximum term of three years on the SAC. It is expected that the VP notify the SAC by the end of the school year if they do not intend to assume the President's Office during the next school year. The Vice President will spend 2 hours per month, typically, in formal SAC meetings and another 8-10 hours per month in preparation and follow up.
7. **Training** It is expected that the former Vice President will forward all necessary documentation and electronic files to the incoming VP and spend a minimum of 2-4 hours working on transitioning this critical role.
8. **Other** Last updated 8/8/08. This position works in conjunction with the SAC President, reporting directly to the school Principal.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Secretary, School Advisory Council

1. **Position Title** Secretary, School Advisory Council
2. **Work Location** Some work can be done at home through email and home computer. Attendance at monthly School Advisory Council meetings and SAC sponsored events is required. May be requested to attend parish or diocesan events by Principal and/or Pastor.
3. **Purpose of the Position** The Secretary of the School Advisory Council maintains the meeting minutes and handles all correspondence on behalf of the SAC. The Secretary is a member of Executive Committee.
4. **Responsibilities and Duties** The SAC President chairs the regular/special meetings of SAC. The Secretary is expected to attend all SAC meetings and to record the minutes of the meeting. The Secretary distributes meeting minutes to SAC members in a prompt manner. The secretary maintains a list of action items and responsibilities as a result of SAC meeting activities. Working with the other Executive Committee members (President and VP), the Secretary will develop meeting agendas and distribute the agenda prior to each SAC meeting. The Secretary is also responsible for correspondence on behalf of the SAC, both in the school family and general public.
5. **Qualifications** Excellent communication and organizational skills are a must. This individual will be an integral part of the SAC planning process. A working knowledge of word processing and basic computer skills is helpful. This person must espouse a strong belief in the value of Catholic education and a commitment to the continued viability of St. Ursula School. No specific educational requirements are necessary.
6. **Commitment Expected** The Secretary serves a term of one year in office and a maximum term of three years on the SAC. The Secretary will spend 2 hours per month, typically, in formal SAC meetings and another 10-15 hours per month in preparation and follow up. Additional time may be required to attend events at the request of the Principal or Pastor.
7. **Training** It is expected that the former Secretary will forward all necessary documentation and electronic files to the incoming Secretary and spend a minimum of 2-4 hours working on transitioning this critical role.
8. **Other** Last updated 8/8/08. This position works in conjunction with the SAC Executive Committee and the Standing Committee Chairs, reporting directly to the school Principal.

**SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE CHAIRS
JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

JOB DESCRIPTION

Chairperson(s), Student Life

1. Position Title Chairperson(s), Student Life.

2. Work Location Fifty percent or more of this position requires the chairperson to be onsite at the school at some point during school events and requires the Chair to maintain a regular presence in the school community, however, portions of this job can be done from home such as phone calls, and emails to coordinate volunteers and specifics of an event. When the Chairperson position is shared among 2 or 3 individuals it is not necessary for all Chairs to be at all functions.

3. Purpose of the Position The Chair(s) of Student Life build the school community through social functions enjoyed by both students and families. The educational experience is enhanced by the Chair(s) development efforts. School family retention is improved as families grow to feel their educational experience becoming a critical part of their spiritual and social community.

4. Responsibilities and Duties Chair(s) are responsible for identifying critical activities sponsored yearly by the Student Life Committee and soliciting volunteers to chair and assist with each program. Examples of traditional Student Life activities are teaming new school families with “buddy” families, establishing a home room parent network, hosting open houses, hosting Santa’s Workshop and Cookies with Santa, coordinating activities for Catholic School’s Week and arranging teacher appreciation functions. Each Chair may choose to add or omit activities with approval from the Principal.

5. Qualifications Chairpersons of Student Life should possess good organizational skills, a high degree of creativity and above all excellent communication and interpersonal skills. This position requires the Chair to work with and recruit a large number of volunteers for a wide variety of functions. The ability to identify and appreciate those qualities in individuals is critical. No specific educational requirements are necessary.

6. Commitment Expected Chairperson(s) serve a minimum term of one year and maximum term of three years. It is expected that the Chair(s) notify the SAC by the end of the school year if they do not intend to continue their position for the following year. Chairperson(s) hours of work per week or month vary greatly by time of year and planned events.

7. Training It is expected that the former Chairperson will forward all necessary documentation and electronic files to the incoming Chair and spend a minimum of 6-8 hours working on transitioning this critical role.

8. Other Last updated 8/8/08. This position reports to the school principal but provides monthly reports on progress to the School Advisory Council.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Chairperson(s), Enrollment Management

1. **Position Title** Chairperson(s), Enrollment Management.
 2. **Work Location** More than 50% of this position can be done from home. Chairpersons attendance is required at major public relations or media events and at open houses held throughout the school year.
 3. **Purpose of the Position** The Chair(s) of Enrollment Management ensure the viability of the school by recruiting new students and helping to retain the current student population. The school's financial well being is largely contingent on maintaining a sufficient student population.
 4. **Responsibilities and Duties** Chair(s) are responsible for maximizing the schools exposure in the community through media releases, paid advertising, participation in community activities, and interaction with local parishes.
 5. **Qualifications** The Chairperson(s) of Enrollment Management should possess a working knowledge of marketing, good organizational skills, a high degree of creativity and excellent communication skills. A basic knowledge of word processing and spreadsheet management is needed. This position requires the Chair to purchase advertising on a limited budget so the ability to evaluate mediums and place appropriate advertising is essential. Because the Chair of Enrollment Management is often the first representative of the school a new recruit may encounter, strong interpersonal skills and an ability to relate to a wide variety of individuals is essential.
 6. **Commitment Expected** Chairperson(s) serve a minimum term of one year and maximum term of three years. It is expected that the Chair(s) notify the SAC by the end of the school year if they do not intend to continue their position for the following year. Chairperson(s) hours of work per week or month vary greatly by time of year and planned events.
 7. **Training** It is expected that the former Chairperson will forward all necessary documentation and electronic files to the incoming Chair and spend a minimum of 6-8 hours working on transitioning this critical role.
 8. **Other** Last updated 8/8/08. This position reports to the school principal but provides monthly reports on progress to the School Advisory Council.
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JOB DESCRIPTION

Chairperson, Budget and Finance

1. **Position Title** Budget and Finance Committee Chair (s)
 2. **Work Location** Work can be done at home and at the school
 3. **Purpose of the Position** This individual has the critical position of ensuring the schools operational budget is set and maintained throughout the school year. Monthly financial review of school statements and budgets will allow this Chair to report any variances or concerns to the SAC, Principal and Pastor, giving ample time to make adjustments as needed. The Chair(s) of the Budget and Finance Committee ensure the school operates in a fiscally responsible manner.
 4. **Responsibilities and Duties** Monthly, review and report on the school's financial statements. Yearly, prepare school budget by working with Principal, parish finance contact, the diocese and the applicable school committees. Work with the church Finance Council to report school results
 5. **Qualifications** Should have a finance or accounting background.
 6. **Commitment Expected** Volunteer should expect to work 2-4 hours per month and about 20 hours for budget preparation and information gathering.
 7. **Training** Volunteer should receive training or assistance from outgoing volunteer or current Chair but must have an educational or career background in accounting or finance.
 8. **Other** Prepared 8/18/08. Reports to Pastor and Principal but works within the School Advisory Council framework. Also reports to the parish Finance Council.
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SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL ACTION ORIENTED ADVISORS JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB DESCRIPTION

Action Oriented Advisor

- 1. Position Title** Action Oriented Advisor
- 2. Work Location** Depending on assigned committee, a large portion of the responsibilities for this position can be done from home. Attendance is required at monthly School Advisory Council meetings.
- 3. Purpose of the Position** The Action Oriented Advisor serves as a check and balance to committee chairs, provides additional resources for major committee projects and provides invaluable experience and input into the planning and execution of committee objectives.
- 4. Responsibilities and Duties** AOAs are responsible for attending all SAC meetings, keeping abreast of their committees' progress and challenges and offering support where needed.
- 5. Qualifications** AOAs have experience chairing a major school committee or specific interest in the development of the school in one or two areas. An AOA should have some educational, work or volunteer experience in the area they are assigned.
- 6. Commitment Expected** AOAs serve a minimum term of one year and maximum term of three years. It is expected that the AOA will notify the SAC by the end of the school year if they do not intend to continue their position for the following year. AOAs' hours of work per week or month vary greatly by time of year, supported committee and planned events.
- 7. Training** It is expected that the AOA comes to his or her position with sufficient knowledge to provide guidance and assistance to their assigned committee(s). Any previously prepared documentation or electronic files will be forwarded to the AOA by appropriate Chairperson.
- 8. Other** Last updated 8/8/08. This position reports to the school principal but provides monthly reports on progress to the School Advisory Council.