



## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM

APO018

### Faith Advisory Committee

**DATE OF ISSUE:** October 10, 2000  
*Revised:* August 2002; September 2004; December 2004; July 2006

**MEMO TO:** Principals; Vice-Principals; Planning and Priorities; Consultants; Spiritual Animator; OECTA

**FROM:** Director of Education

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#### PURPOSE

To establish a process to respond to the following:

1. Board Policy III 002, "Delegation to the Director of Education", parts 2 and 3, and,
2. Board Policy IV 001, "General Executive Limitations", and,
3. Statement from the Bishop of Hamilton regarding *sensus fidelium*.

#### REFERENCES

- Board Policy I 001, "Sharing Our Journey"
- Board Policy I 002, "Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations"
- Board Policy II 002, "Governing Style"
- Board Policy III 002, "Delegation to the Director of Education."
- Board Policy IV 001, "General Executive Limitation."
- Bishop Tonnos, Bishop of Hamilton, '*Sensus Fidelium*', (1997).
- Ministry of Education, Curriculum Expectations.
- Institute for Catholic Education, Curriculum Profiles.

#### COMMENTS

All aspects of education in Ontario have undergone dramatic change. The process of most recent change began with the release of the 'Common Curriculum' in the early 1990's followed by the establishment of provincial curriculum expectations and the resulting provincial testing regime, report card, a provincial funding model and various accountability frameworks. The impact of these changes has resulted in a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for the education sector. Briefly stated, these roles are:

- The Ministry of Education defines the curriculum outcomes and establishes accountability measures to ensure implementation.
- School board staff through the Director of Education is responsible for implementation and for taking whatever measures are necessary to meet provincial expectations.
- School Councils are responsible for providing advice to the school principal and, from time-to-time to the school board on matters as articulated in the Education Act and Regulations.

- The school board is responsible for monitoring implementation and for reporting to both the Ministry and public that provincial outcomes are being implemented and where there is a gap to report on those measures taken to ensure compliance with provincial outcomes.

Within the Catholic community there has been a shift at the provincial level to respond to the provincial expectations of the Ministry of Education. The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, through the Institute for Catholic Education, has brought together representatives of the Catholic community – trustees, senior administration, principals, teachers, parents and clergy – to develop a provincial Catholic curriculum for implementation by local school boards. Indeed, it is the first time in the history of education in Ontario that the Ministry of Education has provided the resources to both the Catholic and public school board communities for each to develop their own distinct curriculum based on the Ministry of Education provincial curriculum expectations.

The resulting change is that local school boards no longer approve curriculum but rather *monitor* and report to the Ministry and community on how staff is implementing curriculum to meet the provincial expectations. Within the Catholic community, these expectations are articulated as the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations [OCGE] and these expectations are used to develop all curriculum for Catholic schools. The result is consensus within the Catholic community across Ontario on what our students should value, know and be able to demonstrate throughout their lives. Indeed, the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations are *life role* statements. “As growth to full Christian maturity is a lifelong journey, we recognize that the attainment of these expectations will continue beyond graduation from secondary school. Because faith development is also an internal process, some expectations are beyond quantitative measurement.” [OCGE, “Using the Expectations”].

Faith is a lifelong journey carried out in the community, not a static state that ends upon the conclusion of one’s formal education or an act carried out once a week. In order for anyone to understand and use the expectations, their *life role* focus needs to be understood and internalized by all. One method of internalization is to ask the question, as adults: *How do I apply the expectations to my current faith life journey?*

The expectations and indeed our journey in faith are rooted in a Post-Vatican II Church. The challenge of our baptismal call – if we as parents, educators, trustees or members of the wider community are to have a significant impact on our students – is to continually grow in our own faith development. Therefore, ongoing adult faith development programs for staff, trustees, school councils and the wider community are critical if we are to engage our students and model faith as a lifelong journey.

Faith and one’s understanding of faith is not static. As we learned and have been taught as a Post-Vatican II people, we are a Church with rich diversity. A number of documents from Vatican II call us to celebrate diversity. One can also summarize diversity as gift as Cardinal Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles did in his April 2000 Holy Thursday Pastoral Letter: “As I Have Done For You: A Pastoral Letter on Ministry.”

**Ours is a rich inheritance, a plentiful endowment. But this is not a treasure of silver or gold. Rather, our inheritance is an abundance of gift – a flourishing of gifts more plentiful than we had ever imagined.”**

Diversity also can bring about differences of opinion in areas like theology, faith, and morals. This is natural and healthy for a living, dynamic Church. As Bishop Tonnos so aptly phrased it in his 1997 letter on *Sensus Fidelium*:

**“apart from matters of doctrine and dogma, no single group or viewpoint in the Church has a complete monopoly on the truth. There has always been wide room for legitimate debate, discussion and diversity with primacy always being accorded to the virtue of charity...Accountability demands ‘serious engagement with the tradition and its authoritative representatives’.”**

Through Board Policy II 002, “*Governing Style*”, the Board of Trustees are committed to “govern with a style that emphasizes outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation, encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, strategic leadership more than administrative detail, clear distinction of Board and Director of Education roles, collective rather than individual decisions, future rather than past or present, and being proactive rather than reactive.”

Through Board Policy III 002, “*Delegation to the Director of Education*”, the Board of Trustees delegates the day-to-day operations of the school system to the Director of Education. “As long as the Director of Education uses any

*reasonable interpretation* of the Board's Aims/Ends and Executive Limitation policies, the Director of Education is authorized to establish all further policies, make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices and develop all activities." Thus, the Director of Education is empowered by the Board of Trustees to empower staff to fulfil our primary role as a Catholic school system – improvement of student learning within the context of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and *Sharing Our Journey*.

The Board of Trustees, through Executive Limitation policies, may establish boundaries within which the Director of Education and hence staff operate. The overriding General Executive Limitation states that "The Director of Education shall not cause or allow in the organization any practice, activity, decision or circumstance which is either imprudent, unethical, or contrary to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, or fails to apply the guiding principles of *Sharing Our Journey*."

From time-to-time matters – whether Board policy or operational practices or procedures will come before the Director of Education for *reasonable interpretation*. It is prudent, therefore, to have a process in place that can assist the Director of Education and hence staff in decision-making that ensures the best possible policies, practices and procedures are in place to permit our students the opportunity to fulfil the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and the mission of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. The Director of Education shall establish a Faith Advisory Committee that will serve as an Ad Hoc Committee.
2. The Faith Advisory Committee will be called to meet at the discretion of the Director of Education.
5. The Faith Advisory Committee may be requested to provide advice to the Director of Education on implementation of any Board Policy, suggested Board Policy, Administrative Procedure and any other practice or circumstance that impacts on the Faith, morals and values of the Waterloo Catholic District School system.
6. The Faith Advisory Committee may determine whether the Board Policy, suggested Board Policy, Administrative Procedure, practice or circumstance - impacting on Faith, morals or values - assists staff in accomplishing the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and various outcomes that may from time-to-time be articulated as part of the provincial Catholic curriculum.
7. The Faith Advisory Committee may make recommendations to the Director of Education concerning any inquiry related to the Religious Education and Family Life Program or any programs and services offered by the school system.
8. Membership on the Faith Advisory Committee shall be:
  - a) The Superintendent of Leadership and Faith Development (chair)
  - b) The Chair of the Board of Trustees
  - c) The Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees
  - d) The Director of Education
  - e) The Spiritual Animator of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board
  - f) The President of OECTA Waterloo Unit (or designate)
  - g) Representation from the Secondary School Administrators
  - h) Representation from the Elementary School Administrators
  - i) The Chair of the Parent Involvement Committee
  - j) The Religious Education and Family Life Consultant for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board
  - k) The Head of the Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Hamilton
  - l) The Dean of the Waterloo Deanery of Priests
  - m) One local priest appointed by the Director in consultation with the Dean.
  - n) The President of St. Jerome's University (or designate)
  - o) The Executive Director for the Institute for Catholic Education (or designate).