

A Quick Start GUIDE

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER



Quick Start Guide for the School Board Member

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Introduction

Welcome to membership on the local Seventh-day Adventist school board. A board is an important key to operating an effective school program. It provides a platform for church employees, school faculty and staff, and church members to come together and make decisions to further the mission of Adventist education. Being a member of such a board is a weighty and honorable task.

With such an important responsibility, persons selected must individually portray in their consecration, financial judgment and ability, belief in and loyalty to the principles of Christian education, good judgment and tact, and experiences in school matters. Most importantly, board members are trustees whom the constituency holds responsible for operating in the school's best interest. You have been chosen because your church believes you exemplify these qualities.

School Board Membership

The school operating board is composed of members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who represent a cross section of the school constituency. This membership may include:

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Principal/head teacher
- Pastor(s)
- Parents of current students
- Home and School Association leader
- Union and conference officers and office of education personnel (ex officio)
- Other church members

The school board members (other than ex officio members) are to be elected by the constituent church or churches in accordance with school constitutions or working policies. Ex officio members are considered voting members of the board.

Board Member Job Description

The school board is responsible for the operation of the school within the guidelines and policies adopted by the union education code, conference board of education and the school constituency as stated in the school constitution. As you begin functioning as a member of the school board, you should know that your church assumes that you:

1. Are accepting this responsibility willingly. Only willing members can effectively perform the services that will be necessary.
2. Are a loyal and faithful member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
3. Are faithful in your stewardship responsibilities in terms of time, talent, and financial means.
4. Will seek the Lord for divine guidance and courage to make necessary decisions.
5. Will be both ethical and professional in handling the information and decisions you will confront. You should be loyal to God, the pastor, elected leaders, teachers, parents and students.
6. Will put the interests of the church school above any personal interest, for only thus can selfless service be rendered to the church and to Jesus, the Lord of the church.
7. Will always remember the mission of Adventist education when making decisions.

Basic Roles and Responsibilities of School Board Members

1. Represent the constituency of the school. This includes paying careful attention to the issues at hand and responding with feedback and votes at critical times of decision.
2. Attend all school board meetings, as far as possible.
3. Ensure the implementation of policies and plans of the conference board of education as administered by the office of education.
4. Be willing to help carry out the duties of the school board. Be aware that these are school board responsibilities rather than individual member responsibilities. These duties typically are:
 - a. To organize itself at its first meeting of the fiscal year.
 - b. Cooperate with the local conference office of education in recommending to the conference board of education the hiring of certificated staff and providing support personnel.

- c. To appoint subcommittees necessary to expedite the business and safe operation of the school. These may include an executive, finance, personnel, facilities management and marketing committee, and others.
 - d. To ensure that the majority of members on all committees are comprised of school board members.
 - e. To ensure that each new committee that is established has a clearly defined mission and terms of reference.
 - f. To carry out all of the plans and policies voted by the constituency and to provide for the general welfare of the school.
 - g. To authorize the expenditure of school funds.
 - h. To approve the annual operating budget.
 - i. To determine any needed capital improvements not provided for in the annual budget, and to recommend an equitable apportionment of funds needed to meet the needs.
 - j. To provide an agenda for constituency meetings.
 - k. To keep the constituency informed about the financial matters, needs and programs of the school. However, it is important to realize that an individual board member does not speak or act for the board unless authorized by the board.
5. Ensure that the school complies with all conference regulations concerning insurance and liability. It is the board's responsibility, in conjunction with the conference office of education, to ensure oversight of the facility and its programs.
 6. Recognize that the authority of the board is only expressed by its actions as a board. Individual members may act or speak on behalf of the board only when authorized to do so.
 7. Recognize that your responsibility is not to run the school, but, together with your fellow board members, to see that it is well run.
 8. Typically, a senior school board representative will be a member of the church board.

What a Board as a Whole Brings to the School

- Collective wisdom
- Continuity of policy
- Discerning questions
- Expertise
- Influence to attract resources
- Knowledge of the school and its mission

Suggestions to Enhance Your Contributions as a Board Member

When you join the school board, you are joining a group of people committed to the success of the church school. Your first task as a member is to review the list of every person on the board and identify their specific responsibility (i.e. why are they on the board). The next step is to cultivate relationships with your fellow members. Find ways to build relationships among board members so you can enhance your understanding of the issues facing the board.

Your next responsibility is to learn about every aspect of board function. Develop the reputation of being purposefully curious. As a board member, you owe it to yourself and the school to become familiar with all aspects of board membership. Review past board minutes and materials pertaining to your school board.

12 Keys to Effectiveness

1. **Commitment:** A deep, genuine commitment to the Lord Jesus is the most important part of your work on this board. Board members' minds are to be the link through which God communicates His will to this school. Please spend time in earnest prayer before coming to each board meeting so your mind and spirit are in tune with the Divine.
2. **Participation:** In his book *Guidelines for Committee and Board Members* (Review & Herald, 1973), Dr. Robert Firth states: "No doubt there are places where silence is golden, but not on a committee. A committee member who sits through a meeting without saying something to aid the discussion is a useless committee member. The committee meeting is a place to exchange ideas, to create new ones, to hammer ideas into solutions, or to set a course of action" (page 48).

Dr. Firth balances things, however, by cautioning against going to the other extreme: "There are those who talk a great deal at committee meetings and say virtually nothing. They might call such talking participation, but few others would. Participation assumes the making of a worthwhile contribution to the discussion."

Don't be afraid to speak your conviction or disagree with others. This involves disagreeing with anyone, including the pastor. You are only as strong as your willingness to express opinions and convictions. All school board members are equal. Every voice carries equal weight. Every vote has equal weight. Some have a wider range of knowledge, but that should not stop you from expressing your own conviction. Don't be afraid to reveal your ignorance. It is nothing to be

ashamed of. Don't hold back an idea or motion because you are afraid you will be voted down. Realize now that you will win some and lose some on this board. That's democracy. Don't let a loss in support of your idea discourage you.

3. **Information:** Decisions are only as good as the information on which they are based. Insist on adequate information before you vote. It is much better to postpone a decision than to rush into something with only partial, incomplete facts. The pastoral staff, teachers, and parents will do everything possible to give you all the information available. As a group, or personally, the teachers and board chairperson will make available anything you ask for – except confidential, personal information.

4. **Respect and Trust:** It is necessary to have an attitude of mutual respect and trust. Each member of this school board was chosen because he or she has become known in your church for certain traits of leadership and areas of expertise. Unless we respect and trust one another, there will not be the free and open exchange that is necessary for good decision-making. If you have doubts and questions about the integrity or sincerity of any member of the board, including the pastor, express them to the appropriate individual and follow biblical principles. Ask questions. Clear the air. This will make the board's work a joy as friendships develop. Board members are not adversaries, but teammates trying to win for God.

Disruptive Board Member Meeting Behavior

- Interrupting
- Cross talk
- Not listening
- Side conversations
- Rambling
- Tardiness
- Poor preparation
- Early departure
- Noisy distractions

5. **Honesty:** Please don't play games or seek to manipulate. Avoid hidden agendas. This can destroy trust. Be honest, straightforward, and direct.

6. **Decision Making:** Vote with your head, not your heart. Make decisions based on facts, needs, and careful thinking, rather than on emotional reactions or past experience. Avoid preconceived ideas or assumptions based on a bad experience or accumulated problems through the years. Above all, keep in mind the mission of the school in all your decisions.

7. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Filter all discussion and decisions through the viewpoint of diverse ethnic groups. Respect the historical background and special needs of others.

8. **Wounded Feelings:** Sometimes those who have never served on a board are surprised at the candor, openness, and willingness to disagree with a fellow board member. But that is one thing that makes boards effective. Effective members do not “wear their feelings on their sleeves.” They present ideas that they expect may be shot down rapidly. Each member tries not to become personally involved with his or her own ideas and opinions. They realize that the open discussion in the board meeting will expose weakness in arguments and ideas. This results in better decisions than those any member might develop alone. Another area of sensitivity comes from those who feel, “They never use my ideas.” That isn’t true! Your ideas will undoubtedly stimulate the ideas of others, and thrown into the mix of all the ideas, yours will be a part of the overall development even though your idea may not be the exact version of the finished product.

9. **Handling of Board Decisions:** When a decision is reached that involves constituents of the school, do not assume you are free to communicate that information. The person assigned by the board has the responsibility of disseminating that information. Example: Suppose the board votes to make a personnel change at the school. You tell a friend of yours, who tells a friend, who tells the person – and the board’s spokesperson has not yet made contact. You can imagine how the person will feel, getting the information through an unofficial channel instead of the proper channel. Holding your tongue may be difficult sometimes. Yet Proverbs 21:23 reminds us that he who guards his words keeps himself from calamity.

10. **Confidentiality of Discussions:** One way to ensure certain discussions remain confidential is to make all board meetings open and go into executive session for items requiring confidentiality. Executive session discussions should never be shared outside of the meeting because of legal ramifications and confidentiality requirements. No member of the school board should be placed in the unenviable position of having a confidential statement he or she made in the board room come back to him or her on the telephone, street, office or anywhere. The various viewpoints may be reported, but it is unethical to mention names. In fact, that person may have been persuaded by discussion, and ended up voting differently from ideas he or she expressed to the group earlier in the discussion.

11. **Representation:** Some people are members of the board because they represent a specific office or position in the church school. Such board members are expected to be fully informed about the office they represent and to make sure the board is fully informed of the way that office will be affected by any action or decision the board is considering. However, the members of the school board are expected to represent the best interests of the entire school, without making every decision based on the priority of what would be best for the specific group with which they might be identified. Try to see the big picture and make decisions on what is best for the school as a whole, rather than voting only the little picture. This will produce a stronger program.

12. **Support of the Majority Vote:** Quoting again from Dr. Firth: “But once a committee has given its group judgment to a problem and decided on a solution by a democratic majority vote, the dissenting individuals no longer have the right of dissent. ...The person who cannot do that has no business serving on the committee and is lacking in ethical values.”

Dr. Firth is quite firm, and some even say he is being too hard. However, consider the problem should a board member tell others: “I’m sorry the board decided the way they did. I certainly don’t agree and didn’t vote that way.” Immediately the board member has set him or herself up against the board. Loyalty involves support even though it may not have been your first choice for the board to vote the way it did.

Attendance

Attendance is very important at all board meetings. At times there will be valid reasons why you cannot attend. If that is the case, please notify the secretary or board chairperson. It is essential to try your very best to be present at each meeting. The constitution generally includes a provision for dealing with excessive absenteeism.

Protocol

The watchwords of protocol in board meetings are “courtesy” and “respect” for the chairperson and the process. Request recognition before speaking, and do not raise items that are not on the agenda or of which the chairperson has no prior knowledge. Avoid calling “question” before the discussion has matured sufficiently. Usually it is best to defer to the chair to call for a motion before making one yourself.

Notice of Meetings

You will receive a notice of the next meeting one to four weeks in advance. The constitution may mandate when meetings happen. If not, at the first meeting, the board should establish a particular day of the month, such as the first Tuesday or second Thursday, when the board will meet – unless a different date is voted at one board meeting for the next board meeting.

Agendas

The agenda is a very important document for the effective operation of a board. The agenda is usually developed by the board chair in cooperation with the principal or head teacher, who usually acts as board secretary. Any member of the board should have the opportunity to submit items for the agenda as long as they are appropriate to the work of the board. The board meeting agenda should be circulated several days prior to the meeting so members can come prepared to speak to the substantive issues. Well-managed boards have a specific agenda and they stick to the items on the agenda.

Subcommittees

One model of board operation is that of the subcommittee. In this model all substantive issues are initially vetted through an appropriate subcommittee. The subcommittee then makes a report to the full board with recommendations for action or changes in policy. It is important to make sure the issue is fully discussed and studied in a smaller group setting so the full board can concentrate on the larger issues. Agenda items should be submitted to the subcommittee chairperson in advance.

Minutes

Minutes of each school board meeting will be sent to you by mail or email, or passed out at the next meeting. You should obtain a notebook for the purpose of keeping your own minutes. At times the minutes will contain privileged information, so keep this book of minutes for your eyes only. The board also needs to ensure that official minutes of each meeting or subcommittee are kept in a secure location and that one copy is filed with the conference office of education. Academy boards file copies with the union and conference offices of education.

Budgets

A part of the work of the school board involves money. The school board assumes responsibility for the planning and funding of an annual operating budget and

capital improvements budget, and appoints subcommittees as needed such as personnel, finance, etc. Each meeting normally includes a review of the financial statement, presented by the treasurer. At first the statement may seem strange and unfriendly unless you have an accounting background. In time, the statement will begin to make sense and you will be able to plot the financial course of the school. If you would like to learn more about the financial statement, you may request a separate meeting with the treasurer, outside of the regular board meeting.

Curriculum

Curriculum and instruction comprise the most important functions of any school. While curriculum decisions are made on the North American Division level and adopted by unions, the board should be aware of all new developments. The school board's curriculum functions include funding a commitment to learning, reviewing administrative reports, adopting curriculum and instruction policies, establishing educational goals, and providing for curriculum leadership.

Conflict of Interest

Even though most board members are not employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, every board member must avoid any conflict of interest that would result in personal favor or gain. An example of a conflict of interest would be encouraging and voting for the school to purchase a product or service from which you would profit, or voting for the school to discard or sell something below market value that you might acquire and use to your advantage. Board members are held to a higher standard of conduct. It's important that each board member sign a conflict of interest statement, in addition to reading the North American Division Policy Statement on conflict of interest.

See page 16 for the North American Division's Policy Statement on Conflict of Interest.

Policy

The school board is responsible for implementing policies and plans of the union education code and conference office of education. When specific questions on policy arise, the conference superintendent or union education code should be consulted.

The board is also responsible for developing policies in areas of local concern such as use of school property, bus routes and schedules, purchasing procedures, tuition and other methods of support, admission requirements, equipment and maintenance, textbook purchase, master planning, criteria for selection and use of media materials, and dress and social behavior. The board will prepare a school bulletin or handbook which outlines all matters of policy.

Program Evaluation

A major function of the school board is to evaluate the operation of the school. It is the role of the board to consider appeals and answer questions regarding the operating of the school. Programs that are proving ineffective will be reviewed by the board, and solutions will be sought. Programs that continue to be ineffective will be discarded, while those proving effective will be encouraged and expanded. It is also the responsibility of the school board to recognize areas of need and suggest and implement programs that will meet those needs.

It is not the role of board members to evaluate the teaching staff. In fact, it is very important to never discuss personnel issues unless the conference or union superintendent is present.

Minimizing Governance Risks

Prepared by Arthur F. Blinci, ARM, eMBA, a vice president of Adventist Risk Management, Inc.

Whenever a person accepts the responsibility to serve on a denominational governing board there are certain fiduciary duties that they assume as a board member. It is important for all board members to understand the importance of these duties and that board leadership adheres to maintaining these principles in all board relationships and transactions. Clearly understanding these fiduciary duties will help the board minimize its governance risks:

- **Duty of Knowledge** – Board members need to have a clear understanding of the organization’s mission, strategic goals, legal structure, by-laws and operating policies.
- **Duty of Care** – The board must hold corporate officers and staff responsible to act within professional standards and legal requirements that govern the operation of the enterprise.
- **Duty of Skill & Prudence** – The board must use its expertise to act in a prudent manner; it should be aware of the circumstances that could result from the decisions being made and anticipate both the positive and negative aspects of the actions voted.
- **Duty to Manage** – It is the board’s responsibility to elect personnel, establish policies for the organization and assure compliance with all legal requirements to which the organization may be subject.
- **Duty of Obedience** – The board must act within the precepts of its corporate charter and by-laws. Board members must be on guard for unauthorized acts and report such acts when they are discovered.

- **Duty of Loyalty** – Being a board member requires allegiance to the organization you are serving. All board members must avoid conflicts of interest or taking actions based on inside information that may lead to personal gain or advantage. Board members need to come to board meetings prepared to engage in the discussion and act in an ethical manner at all times.
- **Duty of Confidentiality** – Maintaining confidentiality is an essential characteristic of an ethical board member. All boards should stress the importance of being able to openly discuss items of business without fear that their words will be repeated outside of the boardroom.

Professionalism in denominational board membership can best be summed up in the term “servant leadership.” As a board member we must subordinate our personal interest for the good of the organization we are serving. We must always act with integrity and in good faith for the best interest of others and to protect the organization’s reputation and the good will it has in the community. Board members need to avoid conflicts of interest that may jeopardize or compromise the decisions made and practice the highest standards of care and ethical behavior at all times.

Minimizing Conflicts of Interests

Within the denominational setting it is impossible to eliminate all potential conflicts of interest. Just because an individual may serve on more than one denominational board does not in itself constitute a conflict of interest. However, a conflict of interest may arise when: “any circumstance under which an officer, board member, employee or volunteer by virtue of financial or other personal interest, present or potential, directly or indirectly, may be influenced or appear to be influenced by any motive or desire for personal advantage, tangible or intangible, other than the success and well-being of the denomination.” (NAD Working Policy S47 05&10)

What should a board do when there is perceived conflict of interest? Manage it! All boards should require board members to sign an annual disclosure statement of any potential personal conflicts of interest they may have. There is nothing wrong for a board member to make known their potential conflicts of interest before the board engages in the consideration of a specific item of business. In fact it is unethical for a board member to remain silent concerning potential conflicts of interest they may have while serving the organization.

Once the disclosure has been made it should be documented in writing and the board should consider how they wish to proceed with the item of business in question. The board member having the conflict should voluntarily physically excuse him or herself from the meeting until the board has finished consideration of that specific business item. This means the board member will not participate in the

discussion, will not vote on the matter or be present or in other ways to influence the decision making process of other board members. When the final action has been taken, it should be noted in the official records that the person with the conflict of interest was not present at the time said action was taken by the board.

Maintaining Confidential Information

Serving as a board member you will receive reports that require strict confidentiality once the decision has been made. Once an action is taken, all board members must maintain the confidentiality of the discussion or information upon which the board made its decision. The Adventist grapevine is ripe with all the juicy details of conference committee meetings, school board and church board meetings. Often times the details are circulating even before the board meeting has been adjourned. This breach of confidentiality can and has led to denominational organizations being held liable for defamation lawsuits caused by the loose lips of board members.

If you find this is a problem within your organization, the board chairperson should address it. It is inappropriate for the board to exclude members who breach confidential information from the meetings or to meet without properly notifying them of duly called board meetings. However, the board can take measures through the appropriate channels to remove an individual from board membership for continued disregard of confidentiality issues. This is a critical area of board governance that must be carefully monitored and managed in order to protect the board's integrity and effectiveness.

Other Safeguards

Protecting organizational integrity is an essential governance function. It is critical for all board members, employees and volunteers to understand that it is inappropriate for them to associate the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or the denominational entity with their external activities whether it is their own personal business or another business organization. This may include the use of organizational stationery for personal correspondence or other non-denominational related business purpose. The use of your organization's name, stationery or business forms by others can imply an endorsement that may create the potential for unexpected or unintended liability or financial responsibility. When such practices are discovered the individual involved should be asked to immediately cease using your organization's name.

“The Genesis of Many Accidents”

It is a privilege to serve as a board member of a denominational organization. This is a privilege that requires a commitment of service based on loyalty not only to an organization but to Jesus, our Savior, as well. “The genesis of many accidents takes place in the boardroom,” reports Marvin Rienke, retired past president of the

YMCA Services Corporation. This is a sobering truism that the decisions made or the actions that a board fails to make in a prudent or timely manner may and can lead to a tragic accident or other financial failure. It is for this reason that all board members must place a high priority in maintaining the highest level of integrity at all times. Governing boards should review their fiduciary duties on a regular basis and monitor the results and consequences of their actions. To do less, is a breach of the sacred trust that has been committed to your care – safeguarding the ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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Final Responsibility

It is your responsibility as a board member to review all operations of the local Seventh-day Adventist Church school and to act on behalf of all constituents. Given such an important assignment, your dedication to the school and this position is extremely important. As you vote on issues that affect the school and outreach, please do so knowing that the Holy Spirit is beside you, ready to guide you.

Recommended Resources

Local Union Education Code. Copies should be available at the church school. Contact your union office's education department for additional copies.

Local Union School Board Member Handbook. This handbook is available from your conference or union office of education.

S 47 Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment

S 47 05 Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment Defined—

Conflict of interest shall mean any circumstance under which an employee or volunteer by virtue of financial or other personal interest, present or potential, directly or indirectly, may be influenced or appear to be influenced by any motive or desire for personal advantage, tangible or intangible, other than the success and well-being of the denomination.

Because of the common objectives embraced by the various organizational units and institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, membership held concurrently on more than one denominational committee or board does not of itself constitute a conflict of interest provided that all the other requirements of the policy are met.

A conflict of commitment shall mean any situation which interferes with an employee's ability to carry out his/her duties effectively. Elected, appointed, or salaried employees on full-time assignment are compensated for full-time employment; therefore, outside or dual employment or other activity, whether compensated or not, that in any way interferes with the performance of an employee's duties and responsibilities is a conflict of commitment. A conflict of commitment also exists in situations where an employee functions contrary to the values and ethical conduct outlined in the organization's statement of ethical foundations and conduct (see model Statement of Ethical Foundations recommended by the 1999 Annual Council as guidelines for divisions) or when an employee functions contrary to established codes of ethical conduct for employees in particular professions (e.g. legal, investments).

S 47 10 Individuals Included Under This Policy—

All trustees, officers, executive committee/board members, employees, and volunteers of denominational organizations shall be subject to this policy.

S 47 15 Conditions Constituting Conflict—

A trustee, officer, executive committee/board member, employee, or volunteer has a duty to be free from the influence of any conflicting interest or commitment when serving the organization or representing it in negotiations or dealings with third parties. Both while on and off the job an employee is expected to protect the best interests of the employing organization. The following list, though not exhaustive, describes circumstances and conditions that illustrate conflict of interest or commitment:

1. Engaging in outside business or employment that encroaches on the denominational organization's call for the full services of its employees even though there may be no other conflict.
2. Engaging in business or employment that is in any way competitive or in conflict with any transaction, activity, policy, or objective of the organization.
3. Engaging in any business with or employment by an employer who is a supplier of goods or services to any denominational organization.
4. Making use of the fact of employment by the denominational organization to further outside business or employment, associating the denominational organization or its prestige with an outside business or employment, or using one's connection to the denomination to further personal or partisan political interests.

5. Owning or leasing any property with knowledge that the denominational organization has an active or potential interest therein.
6. Lending money to or borrowing money from any third party, excluding financial institutions, who is a supplier of goods or services or lending to/borrowing from a trustor or anyone who is in any fiduciary relationship to the denominational organization or is otherwise regularly involved in business transactions with the denominational organization.
7. Accepting or offering of any gratuity, favor, benefit, or gift or of any commission or payment, monetary or non-monetary, of greater than nominal value, in connection with work for the denominational organization other than the compensation agreed upon between the denominational organization and/or the employer and the employee.
8. Making use of or disseminating, including by electronic means, any confidential information acquired through employment by the denominational organization for personal profit or advantage, directly or indirectly.
9. Using denominational personnel, property, equipment, supplies, or goodwill for other than approved activities, programs, and purposes.
10. Expending unreasonable time, during normal business hours, for personal affairs or for other organizations, to the detriment of work performance for the denomination.
11. Using one's connections within the organization to secure favors for one's family or relatives.

S 47 20 Statement of Acceptance—

1. **By employees**—At the time of initial employment an employee shall sign a statement indicating acceptance of the conditions of employment as outlined in the organization's employee handbook. This acceptance shall constitute the employee's declaration of compliance and resolve to remain in compliance with the conflict of interest and/or commitment policy. On an annual basis the employer shall provide employees with a copy of the Statement of Ethical Foundations, plus a copy of the conflict of interest and/or commitment policy, and shall inform employees regarding the duty to disclose potential conflicts of interest and/or commitment.
2. **By administrators, department directors and trustees**—The chief administrator, or designee, of the organization concerned shall receive annually a statement of acceptance and compliance with the policy on conflict of interest and/or commitment from each administrator, department director, member of the board/executive committee, and any other person authorized to handle resources of the organization. (The employing organization may determine that other individuals shall also be required to submit annually a statement of acceptance and compliance.) Submission of the statement by persons identified above shall constitute a declaration of compliance with the policy and shall place the individual under obligation to disclose potential conflicts of interest and/or commitment that may arise during the ensuing year.

S 47 25 Reporting Potential or Actual Conflicts of Interest or Commitment—

All present and potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed:

1. If known, in advance of any meeting, business transaction, or other activity at which the issue may be discussed or on which the issue may have a bearing on the person's approach to the issue, whether directly or indirectly; or
2. If not known in advance, when the actual, possible, or potential conflict becomes apparent. Disclosure must be made to the person in charge of the meeting or activity and to the full meeting, or to the person's supervisor, as appropriate. The person should remove himself/

herself from the room or situation to avoid participation in all discussion or deliberation on the issue, and voting. All such actions should be recorded in any minutes or records kept. Following full disclosure of the present or potential conflict, the board or equivalent group may decide that no conflict of interest exists and invite the participation of the person. This policy establishes a process which is self-identifying. However, third parties may report alleged conflicts in writing with supporting documentation, to an officer of the organization concerned if the employee fails to disclose a conflict or does so inadequately. The source of third party reports shall be held in confidence by the recipient unless it is required to divulge the information pursuant to a court order or if there is indication that the report is fraudulent or made with malicious intent.

S 47 30 Review Process for Conflicts of Interest and/or Commitment--

The officer or human resource/personnel office that receives the report of potential conflict shall inform the employee's supervisor and shall have the matter reviewed by the appropriate employing authority or by the committee assigned to review such matters. If the disclosure has come from a third party, the officer or human resource/personnel office shall inform the employee concerned and shall give the employee an opportunity to submit any information which may help in the review of the reported conflict. The decision of the employing authority or review committee as to whether or not a conflict exists shall be communicated to the employee in writing.

S 47 35 Sanctions for Noncompliance--

Noncompliance includes failure to:

1. Comply with this policy;
2. Report accurately on the disclosure form;
3. Comply with decisions made by the employing authority or review committee as a result of reported potential or actual conflicts of interest and/or commitment.

Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment. Termination from employment shall be processed in harmony with existing policies.

S 47 40 Model Statement of Acceptance--

The following model statement of acceptance may be modified in a manner appropriate to the organization concerned.

Conflict of Interest Statement of Acceptance

This declaration applies, to the best of my knowledge, to all members of my immediate family (spouse, children, parents) and its provisions shall protect any organization affiliated with or subsidiary to _____. In the event facts change in the future that may create a potential conflict of interest, I agree to notify _____ in writing.

1. I have read the policy on Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment.
2. I am in compliance with the policy on Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment as printed above.
3. Except as disclosed below:
 - a. Neither I nor my family has a financial interest or business relationship, which competes with or conflicts with the interests of _____
 - b. Neither I nor my family have a financial interest in nor am or have been an employee, officer, director or trustee of, nor receive/have received financial benefits either directly or indirectly from any enterprise (excluding less than five percent (5%) ownership in any entity with publicly traded securities) which is or has been doing business with or is a competitor of _____
 - c. Neither I nor my family receive/received any payments or gifts (other than of token value) from other denominational entities, suppliers or agencies doing business with _____
 - d. Neither I nor my family serve/have served as an officer, director, trustee or agent of any organization affiliated with or subsidiary to _____ in any decision making process involving financial or legal interest adverse to _____

I am in compliance with the policy on Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment except as disclosed below:

Disclosures:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Name

Position/Title

Date

Permission to copy for local church use.

FEA 30 35 School Operating Board—Functions—

The functions of the school board are to:

1. Ensure the implementation of policies and plans of the conference office of education.
2. Develop a clear, practical set of objectives in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education.
3. Develop policies in areas of local concern such as:
 - a. Use of school property
 - b. Bus schedules and routes
 - c. Purchasing procedures
 - d. Tuition and/or other methods of support
 - e. Admission requirements (in accordance with state, provincial or conference guidelines)
 - f. Equipment and maintenance of school plant
 - g. Textbook purchases (pupil or school-owned)
 - h. Master planning
 - i. Criteria for selection and use of films and media materials
 - j. Dress and social behavior.
4. Support the principal (or head teacher) in the administration of the school program.
5. Employ classified personnel as needed.
6. Support the Home and School Association.
7. Ensure that official minutes of each meeting of the school board or subcommittees are kept and one copy filed with the conference office of education. Academy boards are to file copies with the union and conference offices of education.
8. Consider appeals and answer questions regarding the operation of the school.
9. Participate in the process of school evaluation.
10. Cooperate with and support the conference office of education in-service education program.
11. Consider a proposed plan of school organization including a constitution and bylaws.
12. Adopt the recommended conference-wide school calendar.
13. Authorize the preparation of a school bulletin.
14. Assume responsibility for the planning and funding of an annual operating budget.
15. Assume responsibility for planning and funding a capital improvements budget.
16. Consult the conference guidelines for construction procedures.
17. Cooperate with the union and conference offices of education in matters of curriculum development.
18. Appoint subcommittees as needed such as personnel, finance, etc.

School Board Member Ministry Description

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has operated a system of elementary, secondary and higher education since 1872. These church schools are based on scripture.

The mission of Adventist schools is to provide opportunity for students to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, to allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives, and to fulfill the commission of preaching the gospel to the world. The education program is based on the belief that each student is unique and of inestimable value, and on the importance of the development of the whole person. Students are educated to accept service as a way of life, to be sensitive to the needs of people in the home and society, and to become active church members.

The church operates a school system to provide children and youth with a balanced physical, mental, spiritual, social, and vocational education, with God as the source of all moral value and truth. The stated interest of the church is the restoration of man in the image of his Maker, resulting in the optimum development of the whole person for both this life and the life hereafter.

The church conducts its own schools, kindergarten through university, for the purpose of transmitting to children and youth its own ideals, beliefs, attitudes, values, habits, and customs. Secular schools seek to prepare patriotic and law-abiding citizens, and teach certain values; Adventist schools, in addition, aim at developing loyal, conscientious Seventh-day Adventist Christians. A true knowledge of God, fellowship and companionship with Him in study and service, likeness to Him in character development, are the source, the means, and the aim of Seventh-day Adventist education.

Adventist schools emphasize the upholding of health and temperance principles, the command of fundamental learning processes, vocational skills, civic education, worthy use of leisure, and ethical maturity. Adventist schools aim to reach objectives of spiritual dedication, self-realization, social adjustment, civic responsibility, world mission and service, and economic sufficiency through high quality, Christ-centered teaching.

Duties of the School Board

The school board has authority only when it functions as a group in official meetings. Individual members do not speak for the board. The following functions of the school board outline the duties of a school board member:

1. The board has a duty to implement the policies and plans of the union and local conference offices of education.
2. The board may develop policies in areas of local concern, such as: use of school property, bus schedules and routes, purchasing procedures, tuition and other methods of funding, admission requirements (in accordance with conference and state or provincial guidelines), equipment and maintenance of the school physical plant, textbook purchases, master planning, and curriculum development (beyond what is required by union and local conference policies).
3. The board advises and supports the principal or head teacher in the administration of the school program, including the implementation of school board decisions.
4. The local school board cooperates with the conference board of education, in counsel with the superintendent of schools, in the employment of certificated teaching and administrative personnel. The local conference board of education, K-12 is the employer of administrative and instructional personnel. The local school board employs outright "classified" personnel, such as secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers, and appoints with conference approval substitute teachers, teacher aides and part-time teachers.
5. In elementary schools and junior academies the board considers recommendations of the principal or head teacher in serious disciplinary cases. The school board determines the dismissal of students in consultation with the principal.
6. The board supports a Home and School Association.
7. Official minutes must be kept of each meeting of the school board and its subcommittees, and a copy filed with the local conference office of education.
8. Consider appeals and answer questions regarding the operation of the school.
9. Participate in the process of school evaluation as scheduled by the conference office of education or regional accrediting agencies.
10. Cooperate with the conference office of education in providing release time for in-service education and teachers' conventions.
11. Consider, in counsel with the superintendent of schools, a proposed plan of school organization including a constitution and bylaws.
12. Implement the recommended conference-wide school calendar. Any modification or contemplated change must receive prior approval from the conference office of education.

13. Authorize the preparation of a school bulletin and/or handbook which shall include the following items:
 - a. Philosophy and objectives of school.
 - b. Financial information.
 - c. School regulations.
 - d. School calendar.
 - e. Course offerings.
 - f. Code for student conduct.
 - g. Statement of non-discriminatory policies for admission.
14. Assume responsibility for the planning and funding of an annual operating budget which will include:
 - a. Capital expenditures.
 - b. Operating expenses.
 - c. Curriculum materials.
 - d. Play equipment.
 - e. Media center materials and equipment.
 - f. School supplies.
 - g. Insurance.
 - h. Indebtedness.
 - i. Other items at the option of the school board.
15. Assume responsibility for collecting and forwarding to the conference office of education the conference assessment for the support of the school.
16. Assume responsibility for planning and funding a capital budget.
17. Cooperate with the union and conference offices of education in matters of curriculum development.
18. See that meetings are conducted in accordance with generally accepted parliamentary procedures as specified in the school constitution.
19. Support the teaching staff. It is the responsibility of the school board to support and uphold the teaching staff in the organization and administration of the school. The board shall make clear to all patrons of the school that no one has the prerogative of visiting the school for the purpose of questioning teacher professionalism either before the students or otherwise. The board shall stand ready to hear legitimate school concerns of patrons, after counseling with the superintendent of schools, if calm, personal discussion of the problem between the teacher(s) and the patron fail to clear up the matter in question.
20. Plan the opening of school. It is the responsibility of the school board to see that the school building and grounds are adequately prepared and equipped for the beginning of school, including making adequate provision for janitorial services.
21. Visit the school in session. It is desirable for the members of the school board to visit the school occasionally to encourage the teachers. It is not a time for

evaluation of the teacher(s) or the teaching process. Teacher evaluation is the responsibility of the superintendent and principal of schools. The relationship between the school board and the teachers should be friendly and on a basis of mutual confidence and respect.

22. Plan for additions or new buildings. When a new school building or extensive additions or alterations are being planned, the chairperson of the school board should early seek the counsel of the conference superintendent of schools, who will acquaint the board with the approved specifications for such buildings and rooms, as well as with conference policies affecting such projects.
23. Act on pupil application. All applications are to be made through the principal's office and acted upon by the school board or by an admissions committee authorized by the school board. Following registration day, the school board or admissions committee should meet to consider all applications for admission to the school. No pupil's registration is final until the school board or admissions committee has approved it.
24. Develop and implement a marketing/recruitment plan for the school.
25. Provide an open policy of admission in the school. It is the official policy of the North American Division Office of Education that all schools be open to Seventh-day Adventist children and youth without regard to race, color, gender, or national origin, and that integration should take place on all levels.
26. Implement conference board of education guidelines for the admission of non-Seventh-day Adventist pupils.
27. Appoint subcommittees as needed such as personnel and finance.

It shall be the duty of the personnel committee:

- a. To review and prepare recommendations for the full board concerning the employment of classified (non-teaching) staff.
- b. The superintendent/or designee is the chair of school personnel committees.

It shall be the duty of the finance committee:

- a. To conduct preliminary preparations of the annual budget.
- b. To monitor the monthly financial operation of the school.
- c. To recommend tuition and subsidy rates for the year.
- d. To make recommendations regarding delinquent accounts.

28. Promote Christian education.

School Board Chairperson Ministry Description

Introduction

It has always been God's purpose to educate His children in a climate consistent with His will. He designed that we should be educated in a setting that would bring about a harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers. Early in the Old Testament He gives instruction that His followers are to be taught in all significant areas of life; healthful living, civic order, justice, purposeful work and the deeper meaning of His divine character and law (Deuteronomy 6:1-25). This is the continuing mission of the Seventh-day Adventist school system.

Adventist churches operate schools to bring about the salvation of children and youth through acceptance of and faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and following that, to help them achieve growth in character so that they will become God-fearing, honest, stable, and productive members of society. The curricula in Adventist schools are designed to instruct students in a biblical view of the origin of life, of human duty and destiny.

Paul compares the church to a body in which all of the parts "should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (I Corinthians 12:25-27). The church school represents some of the most important parts of the church body. The school board chairperson has the vital job of helping the entire congregation minister more effectively through the church school.

Jesus says in Mark 10:42-43 that the "rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them . . . Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your servant . . ." A Christian leader must learn how to build a strong ministry through servant leadership.

The Bible highlights why servant leadership is so important for a church school board chairperson. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). Following this Bible principle, as school board chairperson, you will work diligently with all the members of your school constituency to help make it more effective through broad counsel and "ownership."

Duties of the School Board Chairperson

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a church school board chairperson can best be described in the following ways:

1. **Chair meetings.** The chairperson presides over the meetings of the board, encouraging and facilitating discussion and making sure that each member has opportunity to express his or her viewpoint in an appropriate manner. As chairperson, you are also responsible for scheduling and calling the meetings, and for overseeing the preparation of the agenda by the secretary of the board, who is usually the principal or head teacher of the school.
2. **A source of information.** It is essential that the chairperson become acquainted with and follow denominational policies and guidelines related to church schools, as well as parliamentary procedure as it applies to board meetings and the decision-making process. You will be expected to keep yourself informed and read the relevant policy books and updated documents as they are released by the education department at the local and union conferences and the North American Division.
3. **Administrative advisor.** The support and awareness of the chairperson is needed by the principal or head teacher. You should become acquainted with the school program and confer with the principal on the daily operation of the school, but respect the role of the principal as manager or administrator. There will be times when individuals will attempt to "go over the head" of the principal and appeal directly to you to make administrative decisions. You should feel free to share your honest opinion with the principal, but outside of those private conversations you owe him or her your undivided support. If the principal seems disorganized in school administration duties, you may want to privately suggest in-service education or other help, but you must always remember that management is not your task. The best leadership in the strongest schools is found when the board chairperson and the principal have honest and wide-ranging private conversations every week, but stay out of each other's responsibilities and stand together in public. You should maintain close contact with the conference superintendent of schools who has overall responsibility for operating conference schools.
4. **Communication.** As chairperson you are the primary liaison between the school and the church or churches that form the constituency. Be careful to keep the channels of communication open and report regularly to the pastors, treasurers and other key people in each congregation. Listen for the attitudes and feelings being expressed by constituents. The chairperson should work

with the church board and congregation to generate strong support for the school in terms of funding, enrollment of every school-age child in church families, finding student aid for families in need, organizing a welcome for new faculty, and orienting new board members to the ministry of the church school board.

5. **Public relations.** The board chairperson is the primary public relations representative of the school. You should take every opportunity to communicate the purpose, activities and achievements of the school in both community and church media and events.

School Board Member

This Quick Start Guide for School Board Members is full of important information to help you fulfill your responsibilities to the church school. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use as a school board member.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series

- Home and School Association
- Church Board
- Church Clerk
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