

The Pastoral Model of School and College Board

■ Overview

The **purpose** of the Pastoral School or College Board is to involve the local community in the "big picture" of schooling planning and to assist in setting direction for the school.

"Parents and parishioners on local Boards bring to decision-making the wisdom of parent educators to complement the skills of teacher educators and pastors" (Boards in Catholic Education, 2001).

The Board is "**pastoral**" – concerned with nurturing the dignity and self worth of people, building life giving relationships and the wholistic educational welfare of the students. School boards within the Catholic education system do not follow a business/management model.

■ What are the responsibilities of the Board?

- ◆ The Board develops a **Vision and Mission Statement**, based on Gospel values, in consultation with the school community, that sets direction for the school.
- ◆ The Board develops "What to Do" **policies** in consultation with the school community. (These policies evolve from values contained in the Mission Statement and are reviewed periodically.) The "How to do it" procedures are the responsibility of the principal and staff.
- ◆ The Board has a role in overseeing **planning and building** and the school's **budget**.
- ◆ The principal will occasionally use the board to "talk through" issues with the Board which are outside its defined areas of responsibility.
- ◆ From time to time Brisbane Catholic Education asks for input on particular issues – eg. enrolment policies, funding issues.

■ How does the board operate?

- ◆ The Board's operations are guided by a Constitution and Commentary. This document provides both the legal and pastoral framework for a Board's conduct.
- ◆ In developing/renewing policies the Board follows a procedure of – data gathering, data processing, drafting (uses sub-committees), refinement and review.
- ◆ The Board uses the "**shared wisdom**" model of decision-making. *Everybody has a piece of the wisdom, no-one has all the wisdom, we all get different pieces.*

■ **Some Key principles of the Board's operation.**

Consensus is used for decision-making. Consensus occurs when alternatives have been discussed thoroughly by the group (with all participants freely expressing their views and feelings) and everyone can live with one particular position/solution as the best way forward for the good of the whole, even though it may not be every person's preferred position/solution. This differs from taking a vote.

The Board consists of **members rather than representatives**. Members bring their perspective, wisdom and experience (as a parent, teacher, pastor) but don't lobby or advocate for a particular group.

Boards exercise "trustee – big picture" leadership, rather than "active – hands on" leadership.

The board follows the principle of "**subsidiarity**" – that is it acts within its defined areas of responsibility. It is not an authority above the principal, staff or the P&F and is not a complaints body. Board members do, however, "keep their ear to the ground" – that is part of bringing perspective to the board.

■ **Who can be on the Board?**

The board aims for **diverse and complementary expertise** amongst its members. Membership includes a combination of pastor, principal, school/college administration, teacher/s, parents and parishioners depending on the board type. Financial expertise and familiarity with Parents and Friends program are also included.

Any parent is welcome to express an interest in being part of the board. Training is available for those interested in the board's operation or its membership. Those who have completed the training are able to elect the new members to the Board. Occasionally someone may be asked to join the Board to as a casual vacancy.

Boards receive support and information from Brisbane Catholic Education through the School Community Development Officer.