Design for Success: New Configurations and Governance Models for Catholic Schools

Regina M. Haney
National Catholic Educational Association, Virginia

The 2008 Selected Programs for Improving Catholic Education (SPICE), a national diffusion network, shares school configurations and related governance models that may improve the sustainability of Catholic schools. This article describes how these model schools are successfully addressing their challenges. The structure and authority of their respective boards and the shifts in boards nationwide are an important ingredient of changes that must be considered.

For the last 13 years, Selected Programs for Improving Catholic Education (SPICE) has convened those involved in Catholic education to focus on vital issues facing Catholic schools. This diffusion network, a joint project of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and the Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College, was created to "assist Catholic school leaders to choose and to replicate programs that ingeniously and successfully meet the needs of the contemporary Catholic school" (Haney & O'Keefe, 1999, p. 7). Each year SPICE committee members choose a topic and select programs from across the nation that exemplify best practice. For example, past years' conferences have included "Providing for the Diverse Needs of Youth and Their Families," "Creatively Financing and Resourcing Catholic Schools," "Integrating the Social Teaching of the Church into Catholic Schools," and "Endangered Species: Urban and Rural Catholic Schools." Selected SPICE programs recognizable in Catholic education circles include Stewardship, A Way of Life, Diocese of Wichita; Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), University of Notre Dame; Xaverian Leadership Institute, Xaverian Brothers; Seven Reopened Inner-City Schools: Serving a New Generation of Neighborhood Children, Diocese of Memphis; Faith in the City: Center City Consortium, Archdiocese of Washington; and NativityMiguel Network of Schools.

The main purpose for selecting these effective programs is disseminating the information so other Catholic schools can adopt or adapt them. The diffusion process begins with a symposium held at Boston College that presents

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the models and engages participants in a conversation around the identified focus for that year. Each model provides a dissemination kit to assist with its replication or adaptation. Following the symposium, the proceedings are published and the models are showcased at the following NCEA annual convention. The expectation of those involved in the model is to be available to assist those who are considering implementing the model. Survey data show that the program is an effective means to network schools to identify and adapt exemplary programs that provide viable solutions to the current issues facing Catholic schools (Scheopner, 2005). SPICE has become particularly relevant in recent years as Catholic schools have struggled. From 2000 to 2009, 1,429 schools closed and within this same time period there were 78,382 fewer students (McDonald & Schultz, 2009, p. 16).

Sustaining Catholic education requires not just increased finances but, more importantly, new configurations for how this education is delivered and governed (Buetow, 1970; Goldschmidt, O'Keefe, & Walsh, 2004). Thus, in 2008 SPICE focused on new configurations and governance models. The 2008 SPICE program, "Design for Success: New Configurations and Governance Models for Catholic Schools," highlighted new designs that address issues to enable Catholic education to be viable, namely, student enrollment, increasing costs (salaries and benefits), decreasing parish support, demographic shifts, and inadequate facilities (Cimino, 2009). This article describes how these innovative models exemplify not only effective strategies to address challenges these schools face, but also important shifts in the structure and authority of school governance in many Catholic schools in the United States. Data from the surveys of Catholic schools conducted by the NCEA are combined with data from the five 2008 SPICE models to demonstrate five shifts in Catholic school governance: shifts away from the single-parish school, shifts in authority, shifts in purpose and responsibilities, shifts in membership, and shifts toward increased use of committees.

The 2008 SPICE Models of Successful Governance

Typically, Catholic schools are run by a parish with an advisory board comprised mostly of current parents. Some Catholic schools have adopted a new configuration, often termed consortium (Goldschmidt et al., 2004), which was the case for many of the 2008 SPICE models. While the descriptions of consortia differ based on the arrangement of schools and from diocese to diocese, there are a few common elements. According to Goldschmidt, O'Keefe, and Walsh (2004), a common reconfiguration involves the following:

- A group of parish schools is organized into a regional reconfiguration.

- The consortium is administered by a single administrative body.
- The consortium is separately incorporated civilly and the incorporated body links the schools under the diocese.
- The separately incorporated entity is essentially separate from the parishes that once sponsored the individual schools comprising the newly formed consortium, but are still pastorally connected to them. (p. 5)

Carol Cimino (2008) categorized the consortia showcased in SPICE 2008 as follows:

> These five new configurations include regional schools, where geographic data was used to group schools (Chippewa Area Catholic Schools and St. Augustine Elementary and High School); merged schools, where grade configurations have been separated into various buildings or many buildings have been merged into fewer sites (Risen Christ School); and the creation of systems, where K-12 education is available through a centralized structure (Twin City Catholic Educational System and Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools). (p. 19)

The SPICE models included the Chippewa Area Catholic Schools in the Diocese of La Crosse in Wisconsin, a unification of three parish-based schools into a unified parochial system in which the pastors are the authoritative body over the schools through the dean of the deanery; St. Augustine Schools in the Diocese of Laredo in Texas, serving grades K3-12 in shared facilities with shared faculty and staff as well as one advisory board and one business office; Risen Christ Catholic School in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis in Minnesota, where three schools consolidated into one with two campuses governed by a decision-making board; the Twin City Catholic Educational System in the Diocese of Green Bay in Wisconsin, where four schools joined together to form a system and create a middle school that is incorporated with a limited jurisdictional board and joint administrative, business, and advancement efforts; and Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Sioux City in Iowa, a separately incorporated system with four campuses (including one high school) that is governed by a decision-making board and administered as a system.

According to the selection process, these models have been validated for effectiveness, have been in operation at least 3 years, and have received documented support from a local diocesan administrator. These models were deemed adaptable for meeting the needs of students and involving parents. Thus, the 2008 SPICE models are proven to work and, therefore, provide in-

formation about effective approaches to governance and new configurations that can assist others in their efforts to sustain Catholic schools.

Trends in Catholic School Governance

In many ways these models highlight important shifts in the governance structure and configuration of Catholic schools, including shifts away from a single-parish school, and shifts in authority, purpose, and responsibilities, in membership composition, and in the increased use of committees. These governance shifts are important as Catholic school leaders consider adapting these models to engender long-term viability for Catholic schools.

A Shift Away from a Single-Parish School

Historically, Catholic schools were situated within a single parish where boundaries defined the neighborhoods of the schools (Borneman, 2008). The growth of these parish schools was influenced by the First Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1852, which urged the bishops in the United States to have a Catholic school in every parish. Further growth of the parish school was influenced by the U.S. bishops at a later Plenary Council in 1884. Bishops obligated pastors to establish a Catholic school in every parish and to require parents to send their children to a Catholic school. Furthermore, it was preferred that these schools be free ("Plenary Councils of Baltimore," n.d.). By 1900, approximately one million students attended Catholic schools (Youniss & Convey, 2000). In the mid-1960s, these parish schools experienced their greatest enrollment (Tichy, 2004).

It was at this time that O'Neil D'Amour, the father of the board movement in the United States (Hunt, 2004), advocated for schools to move away from the parish so that they would be more professional, autonomous, and less parochial or insular. Hunt cites an example for D'Amour's motive for moving the school from pastoral to professional status: to "stop having choir practice during school hours" (p. 210). In D'Amour's reform plan, the bishops and pastors would retain authority "in matters of faith and morals" (p. 209), while the parish school boards or decision-making boards for schools sponsored by parishes would operate the schools. He predicted that by 1970, 90% of Catholic schools would be operating under this new governance structure rather than under the parish. D'Amour's (1965) ambitious goal was fueled by the belief that "boards of education are essential in order to meet the problems of the future" (p. 317).

The 1999 and 2009 Catholic school enrollment and sponsorship data show that his prediction did not come true: Most Catholic schools are still

parish schools. Each year, the NCEA gathers Catholic elementary and secondary school census data from the 176 arch/diocesan offices of education in the United States. These annual reports include "school and staffing demographics data that highlight school, student, and staffing characteristics and special services provided to students in Catholic schools" (McDonald & Schultz, 2009, vii). While most Catholic schools are parish schools, the data indicate that there is a continual shift away from the parish school. Data in Tables 1 and 2 show an emergent movement away from the single-parish school toward schools that are inter-parish and diocesan sponsored, especially for elementary schools. All of the 2008 SPICE models, which include elementary and secondary reconfigurations, validate this shift from the once-prevalent model of dependence on a single parish for support, staffed largely by non-salaried religious and serving a specific geographic neighborhood. Two of the five models (Chippewa Area Catholic Schools and Risen Christ Catholic School) are supported by multiple parishes, one is sponsored by the diocese (St. Augustine Schools), and three are incorporated or independent civil entities that are recognized as Catholic by the diocesan bishop (Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, Risen Christ Catholic School, and Twin City Catholic Educational System).

Table 1

Elementary (K-8) Schools by Sponsorship Types

	Single-Parish	Inter-Parish	Diocesan	Private
1998-1999	79.2% (5,535)	11.3% (789)	4.4% (305)	4.7% (328)
2008-2009	72.8% (4,390)	12.4% (746)	9.4% (568)	5.4% (324)

Note. From McDonald & Schultz (1999, 2009).

Table 2

Secondary Schools by Sponsorship Types

	Single-Parish	Inter-Parish	Diocesan	Private
1998-1999	11.3% (139)	11.3% (140)	35.2% (432)	42.0% (516)
2008-2009	10.2% (125)	9.5% (116)	36.0% (439)	44.2% (540)

Note. From McDonald & Schultz (1999, 2009).

A Shift in Authority

Three basic board types are typically referred to in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. In *A Primer on Educational Governance in the Catholic Church* (Haney, O'Brien, & Sheehan, 2009) they are defined as follows:

> Advisory. An advisory board is a body that participates in the decision-making process by formulating, adapting, and recommending policy to the person with authority to enact it. The authority does not have to accept the board's advice.
>
> Consultative. A consultative board is a body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and recommending policy to the person with authority to enact it. The person with authority is required to consult the board before making decisions in designated areas, but is not bound by the board's advice.
>
> Limited Jurisdiction. A board with limited jurisdiction, also called a policy-making board, is a body that participates in the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and enacting policy. The board has been delegated final authority to enact policy regarding certain areas of institutional operation, although its jurisdiction is limited to those areas of operation that have been delegated to it by the constitution and/or bylaws, and approved by the delegating Church authority. (pp. 69-70)

Schools with these types of boards could be separately incorporated. Under the laws of the state, the schools can be set up as a corporation or legal entity. In addition, the separately incorporated schools as well as all Catholic schools, like all organizations and individuals within the Catholic Church, must function in accordance with the Code of Canon Law, a systematic arrangement of the laws of the Church.

Using the definitions for board types described above, the Department of Boards and Councils of the NCEA conducted a national survey in 1993-1994 to assess the status of diocesan, elementary, and secondary school boards, commissions, and councils. With regard to elementary and secondary school boards, the survey results showed that 43% of local boards were advisory, 35% were consultative, 20% were boards of limited jurisdiction, and 2% percent were boards of trustees (with limited jurisdiction; Convey & Haney, 1997).

It is relevant to this paper that at the time of the 1993-1994 survey "almost 60% of private schools and 33% of diocesan, regional, or interparochial

schools reported having boards with limited jurisdiction" (Convey & Haney, 1997, p. 14). Over 10 years ago, one-third of the schools that were not single-parish schools were governed by a decision-making board. The 2008 SPICE models of Catholic schools verify that this shift in board authority is continuing. One of the five models is advisory (Chippewa Area Catholic Schools), one is consultative (St. Augustine Schools), and the other three are boards of limited jurisdiction (Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, Risen Christ Catholic School, and Twin City Catholic Educational System). These three with boards of limited jurisdiction are incorporated according to civil law (see Table 3).

For each of the boards, clarity is vital to success. Brown (2009b) stresses the need for clarity about who owns what property in the operation of the school(s) and who has the authority to make decisions in designated areas. To avoid potential legal issues and negative impact on relationships, he stresses that these are the two critical issues to keep in mind when designing or making decisions about the school's legal structure, whether it be civil, according to state law, or canonical, according to canon law, as well as the requirements for the day-to-day administration.

Usually decision-making authority and property ownership are delineated in the constitutive documents of the school entity establishing the school's governance structure and the type of board, if any, that will govern the school, namely, the constitution, bylaws, and/or articles of incorporation. The documents of the 2008 SPICE models, for the most part, clearly state who has decision-making responsibilities in designated areas. For all the boards it is very clear who has the final say in decisions regarding the school. For the advisory and consultative boards, it is the dean for the Chippewa Area Catholic Schools. For St. Augustine Schools it is the bishop. For the three boards incorporated with a board of directors, it is clear in which areas the corporate boards have reserved powers or decisions that only they can make and in which areas the boards make decisions. The documents for the models that are incorporated are very clear that the corporation owns the property or properties if there are multiple sites, as the parish would own the property of the school in a parish school. However, nothing in the documents of the Chippewa Area Catholic Schools and the St. Augustine Schools states who owns the property (see Table 3).

Of the three SPICE models that are incorporated or structured separately in civil law, Risen Christ Catholic School is the only one that is set up as a separate canonical entity or juridic person. The school is a juridic person with a canonical administrator appointed by the ordinary. Brown (2009a) states that a juridic person is "a canonical entity like a civil corporation (but not the same)" (p. 11). The two campuses of the Risen Christ School that are

Table 3

2008 SPICE New Configurations' Governance Models

Model	Schools in System	Sponsorship	Governance Type/Authority	Purpose & Responsibilities	Membership	Standing Committees
Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, Sioux City, IA	Bishop Heelan High School, 9-12 Holy Cross Grade School (2 campuses): St. Michael Center, K-2 Blessed Sacrament Center, 3-8 Mater Dei Grade School (2 campuses): Immaculate Conception Center, PK-5 Nativity Center, 6-8 Sacred Heard Grade School, K-8	Incorporated/private; general management of the corporation is vested in the board of directors	Board of limited jurisdiction	Run the corporation; select the president of the system	Selected by pastors and parish	Executive Buildings & Grounds, Faculty & Staff, Academics, Finance, Athletic, Technology, Development, Marketing, Spiritual Life, Student Life
Chippewa Area Catholic Schools, Chippewa Falls, WI	St. Charles Primary School, PK-3 Holy Ghost Elementary School, 4-6 Notre Dame Middle School, 7-8 McDonell Central High School, 9-12	9 area parishes	Advisory board	Assist the dean and president; take responsibility for the formal consolidated programs; implement the policies and regulations of the diocese; be the voice of the parishes in educational planning, goal setting, and policy formation; build understanding of and support for the school; adopt and oversee implementation of the annual budget; evaluate periodically the goals of the commission	Lay representatives selected from parishes, the dean, pastors, school chaplains, and deanery representative to the Diocesan Education Commission	Finance, Public Relations, Facilities, Long Range Planning & Development, Policy & Personnel

Risen Christ Catholic School Minneapolis, MN	K-8 school with two campuses, one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-8	Incorporated/private; set up as a juridic person with a canonical administrator; general management of the corporation is vested in the board of directors—one board; corporation has no members but the bishop	Board of limited jurisdiction	Operate and maintain a Catholic regional school, including all responsibilities except adoption of the mission and long-range plan; appointment of officers; approval of the annual audit; adoption of any changes to the articles of incorporation and bylaws; approval of any lease of real property; approval of any loans	Each sponsoring parish appoints either a pastor or his designated representative; the ordinary appoints one director who shall be the canonical administrator of the corporation; other directors voted by the directors	Governance, Executive, Finance, Development
St. Augustine Schools Laredo, TX	St. Augustine Elementary School, PK-7 St. Augustine Jr./Sr. High School, 8-12	Diocesan schools	Consultative board	Assist the bishop of the diocese and the principals; formulate policy; responsible for planning, policy, development, financing, public relations, maintenance and expansion of school facilities; selection of the principal; evaluation of board and of administrator's service to the board	11 elected by families and 3 appointed by principals	Nominating, Executive, Finances, Building & Grounds, Development
Twin City Catholic Educational System Neenah, WI	St. Gabriel Campus, PK-5 St. Margaret Mary Campus, PK-5 St. Mary Campus, PK-5 Seton Catholic Middle School, 6-8 St. Mary Central High School, 9-12	Incorporated/private; incorporated and limited jurisdiction board; two-tiered board—board of directors (corporate board) and board of trustees	Board of limited jurisdiction	Function as a non-stock and nonprofit corporation; prepare the annual budget; board of directors must sign all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, leases, reports, and all other documents necessary or proper to be executed in the course of the corporation's regular business for the board of directors	Elected by the directors	Executive, Finance, Development, Facilities, Athletic, Board, Membership

located in two separate parishes are formed into a juridic person, making the school legally independent of the parishes canonically, and since the school is incorporated, independent according to civil law. Even though the school is separated from the parishes and is an independent canonical entity, the bylaws stipulate the role of the pastors. The pastors or their designated representatives serve on the board of directors for an appointed time versus a 3-year term as with other directors. As members of the board of directors, the pastors, like the other board members, have "the power to do and perform all acts and functions not inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the laws of the State of Minnesota pertaining to nonprofit corporations" (Risen Christ Catholic School, 2008, p. 3).

A Shift in Purpose

Catholic school boards can be traced back as early as the 19th century; however, it was not until the mid-1960s that there was rapid expansion of boards. Those who spearheaded the movement advocated that the parish school board have as its purpose the involvement of competent lay men and women who bring their expertise to decisions concerning the Catholic school. In order for the Catholic school to meet the rapidly changing educational demands of the time it must involve an effective board (Murdick, 1967). The boards would be a mechanism to gather the "best people in terms of knowledge, experience, and ability" (p. 7) to make decisions affecting the Catholic schools and the entire Catholic community as well as the secular community. This represents a shift from the days when pastors and principals made decisions and developed policies in isolation.

The National Congress for Catholic Schools for the 21st Century advanced the 1960s vision of the purpose of boards to the next level. Catholic school leaders who participated in the congress challenged all leaders to establish governance structures that "give all those committed to the Catholic school's mission the power and the responsibility to achieve it" (Guerra, Haney, & Kealey, 1992, p. 26). This was a call to involve the laity, representative of the school and secular communities, in greater decision-making, especially in the areas of finance and the hiring of the principal.

The 2008 new configurations represent the shifts not only to involve all those committed to the school's mission, but more importantly those who have the competence and necessary community connectedness to ensure high-quality Catholic education and promote the image of their respective schools or systems. Furthermore, they demonstrate the creation of an environment in which laity, clergy, and professional educators come together for the purpose

of creatively responding to the challenges of today. Even more importantly, these new configurations recognize a need for the board to design and implement the "new paradigms to enable schools to survive and thrive" (Cimino, 2009, p. 2) and provide Catholic education for all those who wish it and ultimately to enable Catholic school graduates to help build a world of care and concern for all God's people. The board's degree of involvement in realizing its purpose differs from one configuration to another, but they do have one significant commonality: their promotion of a common vision shared by the administration and the board (Cimino, 2008).

The board may relate to and provide support, proposals, decisions, and advice to more than just the principal or pastor, as was its role in the past. Characteristic of the 2008 SPICE boards is an increase in the number and types of administrators and representatives sharing responsibility for the enterprise with the board. For example, there may be a dean or pastor who is moderator of the pastors in an area, several pastors of the sponsoring parishes, representatives of the sponsoring parishes, members of a corporate board, and others. This requires a clear delineation of the roles in the constitution and a clear understanding of these roles on the part of board members and others with whom board members collaborate (Sheehan, 1990), not to mention parents, who have their own expectations of board members and administrators. Most of the 2008 boards have this clarity (see Table 3). For example, in the case of the Chippewa Area Catholic Schools, rather than remove the canonical authority of pastors for the parochial system of schools, the pastors are the authoritative body over the schools through the dean of their territory in the diocese. The board assists the dean in the governance of the system. Pastors, administrators, and board members are aware of the dean's role as the one with the final say regarding the decisions of the board. The pastors in the deanery expect and trust the dean to represent their opinions and wishes as he fulfills his board role.

A Shift in Responsibilities

The 2008 SPICE boards show a major shift in responsibilities from boards of the days of D'Amour (1965) and Murdick (1967). At that time the major functions of the board were to offset the negative criticism of the Catholic schools as mediocre and to acquire financial support from both the government and the community (Sheehan, 1981). Boards have taken on an increased number of responsibilities, including obtaining alternative sources of funding, maintaining building and grounds, recruiting students through marketing, and strategic planning.

The St. Augustine Schools's Advisory Board accurately represents the responsibilities of all five boards, stating them in detail in its governance document under the article that stipulates its function/responsibilities. The other boards have the responsibilities scattered throughout their documents. In one case, the Board of Directors of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, one has to infer from the mandated standing committees what its functions are. In all cases, the responsibilities of boards of the 2008 SPICE programs are many compared with boards during the D'Amour (1965) and Murdick (1967) days and at the peak of the board movement.

A Shift in Membership Composition

Over its history, board membership has moved from a predominately clerical membership to include more laity (Davies & Deneen, 1968; Murdick, 1967). By the mid-1960s, Catholic education leaders advocated that the majority of board members be laypersons who represented the community, including parents of students currently enrolled in the school (Sheehan, 1981). Murdick (1967) strongly advocated for the involvement of the community through parish boards. He was not promising that boards would be a silver bullet "to define and implement" the future of Catholic schools; rather, "I only say that if there are to be educational prophets in Israel we must be willing to look for them in not only the rectory and convent, but in the community as well" (p. 25).

The research on boards (Convey & Haney, 1997) identified the type of membership needed for an effective board, which could include clergy or laypersons. Among the characteristics of effective boards, or predictors of effectiveness, are boards that include members who are businesspeople and alumni. The research findings encouraged moving away from boards with only parents of enrolled students or with all members appointed to represent a certain geographical area or parish. This same survey identified the lack of members' expertise as an impediment to effectiveness. Membership representative of various areas does not guarantee that the board has the necessary expertise and experience it needs to accomplish its goals. The boards of the new reconfigurations shifted back to an earlier approach, which is to have members representative of both geographic areas and various constituents (see Table 3). The success of these models comes from each member's commitment to Catholic education and their skills to respond to the challenges of the times, especially through strategic planning and the acquisition of new funding (Haney & O'Keefe, 2009).

A Shift Toward the Increased Use of Committees

Committees are subgroups of the board that "assist with specific tasks or aspects of the work" of the board (Dwyer, 2003, pp. 6-7). Davies and Deneen (1968) stated in their late 1960s publication that at that time, many boards appointed committees to "recommend polices in a single area of educational operations" (p. 43). They further claimed that the board work was not accepted by the administration because it was interfering with the role of the professional educators. This nonacceptance of the committees' work led to board member discouragement and absenteeism. Convey & Haney's (1997) research on boards supports having active, working committees. Boards identified in this study are unlike the boards described in Davies and Deneen's (1968) work. Instead, they productively addressed areas outside educational operations, namely, finance, nomination of new members, policy, marketing, development, and facilities.

All of the 2008 SPICE boards' governance documents require committees. The model programs specifically list the standing or permanent committees that are required to function within the board. As one reads each model's account of its achievements, one can conclude that working committees played a major part in the model's achievements. This is unlike the committees reported by Davies and Deneen (1968) and demonstrates the benchmark set by Convey and Haney's (1997) research. Furthermore, the commonalties that characterized the SPICE models and contributed to their success embody the work of the committees. Cimino (2008) outlined common committees and their accomplishments, namely:

- Long-Range Planning and Public Relations/Marketing Committees: Grassroots support for a new school structure
- Long-Range Planning and Public Relations/Marketing Committees: Diocesan and parish support for local efforts
- Executive Committee (with the full board involvement in the search/hiring process): Outstanding leadership within the schools
- Executive and Governance Committees: New and strengthened governance structures
- Finance and Academics Committees: Strengthened curricula and other academic programs
- Finance and Development Committees: Successful acquisition of new funding
- Long-Range Planning Committee: Development of a strategic plan. (p. 21)

Conclusion

The 2008 SPICE model school reconfigurations exemplify not only effective strategies to address challenges these schools face, but also important shifts in the structure and authority of school governance that may significantly improve Catholic school viability, namely, shifts away from the single-parish school, shifts in authority, purpose, responsibilities, and membership, and shifts toward increased use of committees. While the shifts were noted in the five areas, three of the areas call for special attentiveness for those adapting the models. They are the shift from a parish school, shift in authority, and shift in type of members.

Shift from a Parish School

The mission of the Church is to teach, to sanctify, and to serve. As the local expression of the Church, the parish is to teach the truth "as revealed through the Scriptures, taught to us by the Apostles and the Church through the ages" (McCormack, 2004, p. 2). This teaching that leads to living in a faithful relationship with the Lord can take place in many forms and arenas. A few of the obvious ways that the parish fulfills its call to teach are through parish classes in religion and in applying faith to life, retreats, mentoring, discussions, and modeling. Another way the parish has carried out its teaching mission is through schools that extend its teaching into all the knowledge and life skills deemed important preparation for adult life in our society by the public school system, but from a Catholic perspective. Therefore, Catholic schools should not be abandoned just because changes in society make it difficult to sustain the traditional single-parish school. Deliberate steps must be undertaken to create ever-evolving ways for parishes to continue to extend their teaching ministries through Catholic schools, even if that means working together in new and creative ways. The current movement away from the single-parish school will require school communities to identify ways to ensure the schools' continued connection to the parishes that give them their purpose for being, and connect school families back to their respective parishes. For example, one regional school serving several parishes developed strategies as part of its 3-year strategic plan for involving the entire Catholic community of parishes in the life of the school as well as assisting parishes to provide opportunities for families to be engaged in parish life.

Shift in Authority

Clarity of authority is vital to the effectiveness of a board. Brown (2009b) stresses the need for clarity about who owns what property and who has the

authority to make decisions in specified areas. Decision-making authority and property ownership are stated in the documents of the board. Therefore, the constitutions, bylaws, and articles of incorporation (if applicable) must be carefully developed and verified for accuracy and clarity. But more importantly, they must not be neglected as a tool for ensuring good governance, especially the clarity of the authority of persons or groups within the governance of the school or schools.

Shift in Membership

Each board member's commitment to Catholic education should be coupled with his or her skills needed to accomplish the board's work, especially to lead and implement strategic planning and to acquire new funding. Membership with the ability to give or attract dollars would logically lead to recruiting members of affluence and influence. Affluent members may want to determine final decisions because of their affluence. They must be reminded that they are a member of a team and not an individual who determines board action based on the size of the donation. All members must be made to feel important, not just those who give sizable financial contributions. Furthermore, all members should be held to the same expectations, such as to serve on a committee and attend all meetings. All persons, even high-profile people, should participate in an orientation before being invited as a member. You may consider inviting the person to serve on a committee to ascertain the passion for the mission and appreciation for the decision-making process.

What Can the New Models Teach Us about Boards for the Future?

New and strengthened governance structures are needed to address creatively the challenges of Catholic schools and to implement the related strategies. In some cases this calls for bold, daring, and radical structural reform that several of the new configurations have done through forming independent schools or systems. The new models that exemplify this petition or plea give us confidence that we can answer the question "How can we achieve the Catholic school mission at this time in history?"

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Regina M. Haney is the executive director of the Department of Boards and Councils of Catholic Education of the National Catholic Educational Association. Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Dr. Regina M. Haney, 1005 North Glebe Road, Suite 525, Arlington, Virginia 22201. E-mail: haney@ncea.org