

Saint Thomas More Academy

Parent Teacher Organization By-Laws

**Written: May 28, 2007
Adopted: May 30, 2007
Amended: November 13, 2007**

Philosophy

Saint Thomas More Academy (STMA) Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) understands the partnership between parents and the school professionals to be essential in the development of values consistent with and reflective of Christian principles.

The STMA PTO believes the development and nurturing of the school community is best accomplished in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation with the consideration and respect of the distinctive qualities, talents, abilities, and needs of each person.

By providing a vehicle for service, social, and fundraising activities in support of the school, the STMA PTO recognizes the importance of its role in affirming the school community and its member as living expressions of God's love.

The PTO seeks to model service, promote good will, and foster a sincere appreciation for the ideals of Catholic school education by being attentive to Gospel values and being worthy representatives of Christian ideals.

Objectives

The PTO promotes the mission of STMA by providing a means for members of the school community to be of service to the school and for the PTO to be of service to the parents and teachers of the school. The PTO promotes Catholic school education as it facilitates communication between the home and school community. The PTO strives to attain the following objectives:

- ❖ To insure that the school philosophy is reflected in PTO functions;
- ❖ To provide opportunities for family involvement in school activities;
- ❖ To establish regular communication with the school principal;
- ❖ To respond in a timely manner to appropriate communication from parents;
- ❖ To generate funds for the welfare and improvement of the school;
- ❖ To coordinate fund raising with other STMA efforts.

Organization

The most vital component for the success of the PTO is the commitment of the people who join. Outreach to the school community is most effective if sufficient numbers of parents/guardians become active in the ongoing life of STMA. The Executive Board conducts the routine business of the PTO, but only the general membership can create the spirit of dynamic good will that the PTO seeks to establish and perpetuate. The basic regulations governing membership are few:

- ❖ Membership shall include parents and legal guardians of STMA students, faculty, administration, and staff;
- ❖ Members will pay dues annually in order to be in good standing and participate in the voting process at General Meetings;
- ❖ Members will attend general meetings and participate in PTO-sponsored activities.

Executive Board

A few members will be asked by the general PTO to serve as officers and assume responsibility for the management of PTO affairs and organization of PTO business. These officers are:

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

PRESIDENT

The President shall preside at the meetings of the PTO Executive Committee and the general PTO and may participate in any committee except the Nominating Committee. He/She shall also perform the following duties:

- Prepare and prioritize agendas for Executive Board and General Meetings
- Appoint chairpersons who are not otherwise elected by the Executive Board
- Call special meetings

- Present any proposals developed by the Executive Board or PTO
- Represent PTO interests at the Board of Directors' Meetings
- Coordinate PTO activities with other school activities
- Facilitate appropriate communication between members of the PTO and the school administration

VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President at those times when the President is absent or unable to serve, and shall succeed to the office of President in the event of a vacancy in that office. The Vice President shall assist the President and perform such additional duties as follows:

- ✓ Other duties as assigned by the President
- ✓ Chair the Nominating Committee
- ✓ Insure liaison between the PTO and other groups

SECRETARY

The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all General and Executive Board meetings. The Secretary shall also assist on special projects or mailings upon the request of the President. The Secretary shall handle all correspondence of the PTO and shall be responsible for notifying members by appropriate announcements. In addition, he/she shall:

- Maintain written records of PTO activities
- Circulate notice of regular and special meetings
- Distribute agendas prior to meetings of the Executive Committee
- Post and distribute minutes as determined appropriate by the Executive Board
- Prepare documents for presentation

TREASURER

The Treasurer shall keep accurate accounts of all financial matters of the PTO and shall make a report of those accounts at General and Executive Board meetings. The Treasurer shall also:

- ◆ Maintain a record of dues collected
- ◆ Serve as custodian of all PTO financial records
- ◆ Collect and deposit into a separate PTO account all funds
- ◆ Make disbursements at the Executive Board's direction, obtaining signatures of the school business manager or principal.

The Executive Board is comprised of the elected officers as described above as well as one teacher representative and an alternate to be chosen by the teaching staff, and all officers from the prior term. The Executive Board may spend up to 25% of PTO

funds upon it's decision, without approval of the General Membership.

The Executive Board is responsible for the work of the PTO and, in that capacity:

- ❖ Sets, attends, and announces meetings;
- ❖ Identifies significant issues and makes recommendations to appropriate persons;
- ❖ Works with principal and school board to insure harmony in the school community;
- ❖ Communicates PTO goals annually;
- ❖ Offers suggestions to principal and school board about the ways in which fund raising monies can be used;
- ❖ Coordinates fund raising activities with other school activities;
- ❖ Assembles volunteers for school events and events sponsored by the PTO;
- ❖ Establishes any changes to dues amount, to be approved at General Meeting; and
- ❖ Passes on all official materials pertaining to their offices to their successors.

An audit of the books shall take place at the end of the year. The Audit Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, Vice President, President, and immediate past President.

Committees

Standing committees shall include:

- Catholic Schools Week
- PTO Fund Raising
- PTO Activities
- Hospitality
- Volunteer Appreciation

Election of Officers

Election of officers shall take place on an annual basis, no later than the final General

Meeting of the year. At least two months prior to elections, the Vice President shall assemble a Nominating Committee consisting of at least three members who are not members of the Executive Board. The Vice President shall serve as chairperson of this committee and the President shall announce its membership prior to the selection of candidates. The Nominating Committee is responsible for:

- making a judicious attempt to find two nominees for each office;
- obtaining consent of the member to be placed into nomination;
- establishing the qualifications of all candidates for office;
- informing the PTO of the results at least one month prior to the meeting at which the election occurs;
- insuring that the election takes place properly, as outlined below;
- distributing ballots to all members present, counting them, and reporting the results prior to the conclusion of the last meeting of the year.

In order for a nominee to be considered as qualified, he/she must be in good standing, cannot be contracted school staff, and cannot be in the same family as another candidate.

Elections shall not take place until there are candidates for all offices. In the event that the Nominating Committee cannot obtain a qualified candidate for an office, it brings the matter to the full PTO for resolution. Nominations may be made at the General Meeting, but elections cannot take place until at least a month has passed after the full PTO has been informed of all nominees. The exception to this one-month period is when an officer has stepped down or been removed from the Executive Board. In such a situation, the board may decide to use shorter timeframes to expedite the filling of officer positions.

At the election, the Nominating Committee shall distribute ballots containing the names of all qualified nominees to all PTO members present. Completed ballots must be returned to, tabulated by, and results read by the Nominating Committee. Officers must be elected by a plurality of votes cast. In the event of a tie for any office, a re-balloting of the general membership will be conducted for that office before the end of the meeting. In the event of a second tie, the officer in question shall be determined by a coin toss, unless a candidate chooses to withdraw. Newly elected officers assume responsibilities after the close of the school year in June and shall serve for a term of one year, or until successors can assume their duties. In any case, an officer's service shall not extend beyond the first meeting of the general membership in the school year following the year of service. If for any reason an officer chooses to step down, or needs to be removed from office, a special Executive Board meeting will be called to address the situation. In the case of a removal, a 2/3 majority vote is required. An officer that has been removed from office is no longer considered a prior board member (for purposes of the next Executive Board membership).

General Meetings

General Meetings will be held at least quarterly and will follow an agenda, established by the President with input from the Executive Board. Dates for the meetings will be announced at the first General Meeting of the school year. Agendas will be announced one week prior to the meetings.

A facilitator will be used for General Meetings when there are issues that call for solicitation of many ideas or thorough discussion. Suggestions made at the General Meetings for changes in school policy or practice shall be referred, without debate or vote, to the Executive Board for study. The Executive Board will present issues to the principal. Additional topics brought up at meetings will be put on the agenda for the following General Meeting.

Decisions will be made using a process established by the Executive Board and explained to the full membership. Robert's Rules of Order is one example. One-fourth of the PTO membership in good standing shall constitute a quorum for purposes of decision making. Each family shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the membership, if present at the meeting at which such vote is taken.

Meetings begin and end on time, follow the prioritized agenda established, and are conducted using rules of conduct that will facilitate a successful meeting. These include, but are not limited to:

- Members do not speak out of turn or shout
- Procedures for decision making are established and followed
- No one individual dominates a discussion
- No statements regarding performance of the principal/teachers/staff
- Thorough discussion is encouraged and participation is welcomed
- Improvement is the goal

Executive Board Meetings

The Executive Board shall meet monthly between General Meetings, unless circumstances suggest the need for more frequent meetings. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of decision making. The Executive Board meetings shall be open to the general membership, and shall be announced at the General Meetings. Items for business for the Executive Board shall be submitted during General Meetings or in writing to an officer no later than one week prior to the Executive Board meeting.