



# FRAMEWORK FOR DIRECTIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

*Approved May 27, 2014  
Revised October, 24, 2017  
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# Strategic Priorities 2021-2025



## **Vision**

Creating a culture of faith, hope and love to ensure equity and well-being.

## **Mission**

To accompany our students as we strive for excellence in Catholic Education.  
We educate students in faith-filled, loving, safe, inclusive schools to develop the God-given abilities of each person.

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## Introduction

Directional policy is “a set of organizational statements, values and perspectives adopted by a board, to direct a course of action.” In our Catholic Board, clarity of integration with our faith tradition and gospel values is critical.

Thoughtful, carefully developed directional policy provides a framework for ethical decision-making and guides the operations of the board. By giving final approval to all policies, trustees ensure that decisions reflect board values. At its highest level, directional policy helps to translate the vision and the intention of the school board into actions for its students. This is how school boards establish direction and give structure to their boards.

Boards across the province are recognizing the importance of staying “on message” about a few key priorities that create a student-centered learning climate, and recognizing that this focus requires meaningful adjustments to their directional policy-making role.

The Education Act, in describing the authority of school boards, sets out their specific authority to exercise power through directional policy. This authority rests with the Board as a whole and represents the “voice” of the board. Individual board members demonstrate effectiveness through an ability to influence and help the board come to decisions as a group.

Directional Policies fulfill the following purposes:

- explain why things need to change;
- communicate the board’s priorities and expectations in clear and easily understood language;
- inform judgment and ensure long-term planning throughout the system;
- help the board to focus on what is important – student learning;
- improve decision-making by addressing issues central to authentic governance, such as the need to be accountable, or to address issues related to equity or safety;
- rely on evidence, analysis and evaluation;
- help the board to manage risk by considering the impact of direction to people and organizations;
- are compliant with government mandates and requirements; and
- strengthen relationships by actively engaging the board with its staff, parents and the larger community, both to provide information and to communicate.

Certain portions of this document have been excerpted from Ministry and Association Guidelines. For clarity these excerpts have been updated to reflect the definitions from the Board Bylaws:

- "Board" means Board of Trustees which governs the School Board
- "School Board" means the corporation that has authority over the schools in a defined district, comprised of a Board of Trustees;
- "Director" means the Director of Education and Secretary/Treasurer of the Board

Further, throughout this document:

- "Directional Policy" has been used in place of "Policy"
- "Administrative Procedure" has been used in place of "Procedure"

## **Building A Community That Accompanies**

We chose the theme of accompaniment, the image of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, carefully. The art of accompaniment is about taking the time to walk alongside one another to listen, and in so doing, to transform. If the global pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the road ahead is unpredictable and it is more important than ever that we walk this road together.

"Each person in a Catholic school practices accompaniment by helping students realize their own unique story is given greater meaning and purpose in knowing and living the story we share in Christ. Our faith is about an encounter with God — an incredible love story that inspires faith and joy," – [Renewing the Promise, 2018](#).

## **Differentiated Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees and the Director**

The Board must comply with provincial government directives related to balancing the budget, codes of conduct, municipal freedom of information and protection of privacy, EQAO testing, etc. There are mandated aspects of their own directional policies which boards cannot change. On the other hand, there are aspects of governance, such as board goals, strategic planning, and student accommodation, which provide the opportunity to deeply engage partners in setting directions for the board. Knowing the difference is at the heart of inspiring public confidence.

The Board also needs to be clear about its role in developing directional policies which express overall direction and purpose. The Director of Education then develops, implements, and monitors administrative procedures which provide detailed direction to the staff and which must be aligned with board policies.

## **Reconciliation with First Nation, Metis and Inuit People**

Residing on Indigenous Lands, we support the ongoing work of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Together, we revisit and explore our historical narratives at PVNC Catholic. As such, PVNC Catholic responds to the articles from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Calls for Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. PVNC Catholic continues to recognize the need to explicitly acknowledge and address the history and ongoing impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples and communities. Understanding our privilege and responsibilities as a Catholic community, we focus on listening to authentic voices and integrating the realities of Indigenous lived experiences within education. Although this work is often difficult or uncomfortable at times, we continue to work towards implementing teaching practices which support Indigenous peoples' traditions, cultures, and worldviews. We support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in their work of remembrance, reclamation, and resurgence.

PVNC Catholic aspires to provide a holistic and safe educational learning and working experience for all to belong. PVNC Catholic is committed to inclusive policy development processes. To best serve the needs of our community, in its diversity and fullness, PVNC Catholic engages in policy development processes that are committed to stepping into positive, life-giving relationships. PVNC Catholic collaborates with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in a process of co-creating new ways of being and knowing together. This includes actively engaging Indigenous peoples by valuing their input into actions and decision-making, and reviewing, and revising policies to better reflect Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and needs. We focus on furthering our understanding of Indigenous teachings and on engaging in actions of reciprocity with the land on which we reside and in relationship with Indigenous community partners. PVNC Catholic understands that reconciliation is a continuous journey that we must actively engage in and explore.

## **Faith and Equity**

The Catholic faith is the foundation of PVNC Catholic. For this reason, it is imperative that policies are consistent with the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. PVNC Catholic recognizes its Gospel call to spiritually nourish its community, providing opportunities to develop relationships with Christ, and to understand the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. The PVNC Catholic community welcomes and accompanies its members along their own unique faith journeys. We also acknowledge that some of our students, employees, and partners are not of the Catholic faith, but value its tradition and morals, and respectfully work, learn, and belong within our educational setting. As a faith-filled Catholic community, our policies must reflect this commitment and provide opportunities for all to deepen, explore, and live out their faith.

## **Catholic Social Teaching**

Catholic Social Teaching provides a foundation for policy development, implementation, and review. Our work in equitable and inclusive education is grounded both in relevant legislation and human rights documents, and in the social teachings of the Catholic Church, which emphasize the inherent dignity of every person, regardless of their race, age, language, colour, national or cultural background, ability, socio-economic status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

## **Equity**

Equity is foundational to the PVNC Catholic policy process. PVNC Catholic has a duty to provide a safe and accessible learning and working community, where human rights are protected, and everyone has the opportunity to succeed. PVNC Catholic is committed to promoting and practicing equity in all aspects of the policy development process, including the identification and elimination of systemic and structural barriers and supporting previously historically marginalized voices. In doing so, we are understanding our privilege and responsibilities as a Catholic community to create an educational space for all to belong. PVNC Catholic practices equity in the policy development cycle by promoting continuous inquiry into the challenges experienced by equity seeking and code protected groups in order to gain valuable insights to make informed decisions. Multiple iterations of policies are critiqued, collaborated on, and consulted on by a diverse group of partners to ensure representation, reflections of/on power, considering who the policy benefits, and who is left out.

## **Purpose of the Ontario Human Rights Code**

The Gospels, which are expressed through Catholic Social Teaching, are the foundation of teaching and learning at PVNC Catholic. These teachings, along with the Ontario Human Rights Code, give everyone equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. As such, we all have a duty to uphold these legal rights and express this duty through our solidarity with one another. Human rights uphold and recognize the dignity and worth of every person through an environment of mutual respect and belonging. The safety and dignity of staff, students, and partners is an essential and legal responsibility of PVNC Catholic.

## **Directional Policy - Trustees**

Directional Policies provide governance and signal the major intentions and priorities of the elected board. They are few in number and broad in scope. Directional policy is expressed in the board goals and strategic directions and are clearly aligned with the mandate of Catholic education and with government priorities. Directional policies signal long-term institutional commitments to student achievement and well-being, to values, and to fairness.

## **Administrative Procedures – Staff**

Administrative Procedures are a mechanism to implement the directional policies of the elected board. They are operational, specific, detailed and focused. They enable all areas of the organization to fulfill their day-to-day responsibilities to students, employees and the public. The procedures are collected in manuals, handbooks and other resources. They can include guidelines for decision-makers and protocols that set out a prescribed course of action for specific circumstances. Administrative procedures are the responsibility of the Director and their staff and are made available to the Board.

Trustees are responsible for ensuring that Administrative Procedures align with Directional Policies and the Multi Year Strategic Plan.

## **Directional Policy Categories for Student Achievement**

The policies developed by elected school boards will address their significant governance roles and will include the following themes:

### **Vision, Values, and Goals**

Boards develop a guiding vision about the centrality of student learning in their governance work, and create a set of fundamental principles, beliefs, or values. The vision and values keep boards focused on their student-centered strategic directions and should drive all decision-making by the board. In the directional policy about the board's vision and goals, the board creates the conditions and sets the context for student learning and well-being. This directional policy includes a description of the board's values related to the teaching and learning environment and system capacity-building.

### **Governance and Planning**

Boards describe their governance role in strategic planning, directional policy development, budget-setting as well as their understanding of the role of the elected board and the role of the Director of Education.

### **Program and Achievement Standards**

This sets the direction and provides a framework for all of the district school board's programs which have been designed to comply with provincial mandates as well as to reflect local community needs. In this area, the elected board articulates what it wants students to achieve and their philosophy regarding student achievement and well-being.



## Learning Environment

The success, safety and well-being of every student are of paramount importance to boards. It is here that the elected board describes its commitment to safe schools, its respect for the role of students, and its commitment to equity and inclusion.

## Personnel and Employee Relations

Every staff member of the district school board contributes to the board's ability to achieve its goals. Through this directional policy area, the elected board articulates direction and expresses its beliefs and expectations with regard to its human resources. It also clearly articulates its values regarding succession planning, leadership and capacity building.

## Parent/Community Relations

The engagement of parents and the community is crucial to developing and maintaining public confidence in the local school board to meet the long-term needs of children and citizens. In this directional policy statement, the board outlines the role of decision-making within the context of the responsibility of the board to make decisions. The board also expresses beliefs about volunteers, parent involvement and community partnerships.

## Directional Policy Register

All boards should have a thorough and well-constructed Directional Policy Register posted on-line that highlights and supports the important governance function of the board. In addition to clearly defining the role of the board, the role of the Director of Education and the delegation of authority from the board to the Director, it should include:

- foundational statements which provide guidance and direction for all activities within the board;
- directions for how the board itself is to function, how individual trustees are to conduct themselves, and directions for the functioning of board committees and representatives;
- statements as to how appeals and hearings will be conducted; and
- non-delegable matters, such as directional policy-making and selection of the Director of Education.

The Directional Policy Register of the board must be supplemented by access to the

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**Administrative Procedures**, the documents by which the Director of Education directs staff. The Administrative Procedures must be entirely consistent with the board’s directional policies. The development of separate and distinct documents is meant to reinforce the distinction between the board’s responsibility to govern and the director’s executive or administrative duties.

## **Directional Policies**

- Governance, Vision, Strategic Priorities
- Catholic Education
- Student Achievement and Well-being
- Recruitment, Talent Development, Leadership and Succession Planning
- Employee Relations
- Stewardship of Resources
- Equity and Inclusive Education
- Healthy Schools and Workplaces
- Safe and Accepting Schools
- Parent and Community Relations
- Communications
- Records and Information
- Student Transportation

## **Process for Effective Directional Policy Making – What makes a “good” directional policy?**

*(Adapted from Good Governance for School Boards - Ontario School Trustees Association - [Module 7](#))*

Good directional policy aligns with the mission, vision and values, and strategic directions of the board.

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**Good directional policy is beneficial.** It creates public value. Directional policy change should benefit individuals, organizations and services. Analysis of intended and unintended consequences is a crucial aspect of directional policy work.

The direction to be set, or the problem to be addressed, by directional policy change must be clear from the outset. Good directional policy making considers both the short and longer-term systems' impact. It uses evidence and information as the basis for analysis which should, in turn, be rational, comprehensive, thorough and balanced. Quantitative and qualitative information should be applied.

**Good directional policy is ethical.** Board Codes of Conduct espouse principles of integrity, respect and accountability that everyone in the board should apply to their work. The processes used to develop directional policy need to be clearly communicated and widely understood. The processes should engage from the outset those individuals and organizations who will be affected by directional policy change.

**Good directional policy is intelligible.** Clarity and economy are essential features of good directional policy. A good directional policy should be no more than two or three pages in length and in plain English. Directional Policy should be described in as few words as possible with clear messages which are readily understood. All directional policy documents are constructed, published and written in a particular time and place. They should be reviewed, refreshed, abandoned and/or replaced as the board moves forward. Effective directional policy development and implementation aligns with board milestones and targets, and responds rapidly to emerging challenges and changes of direction. It foresees the challenges of implementation and adapts to the shifting realities of operational environments.

**Good directional policy is reviewed and evaluated.** As part of its process, the Board should establish an annual directional policy agenda with a schedule for regular review and monitoring of progress throughout the board meeting agendas. Here again, this should be done with a view to aligning board priorities and maximizing time for discussion and reflection.

## **PROCESS**

### **Identification of Directional Policy Issues**

The identification of the need for a board directional policy or the need for review or revision of an existing board directional policy may be initiated by board members, constituent groups, a board's directional policy committee, students, or staff members. The need for change could also be identified as a result of directional policy directives from the Ministry of Education, or as a result of regulations or legislation at the federal, provincial, or municipal level.

## Development of Draft Directional Policy

When the Board makes a decision to develop a directional policy or revise an existing directional policy, it must involve consultation with constituent groups who may have an interest in the directional policy. This could include students, parents, staff, employee unions and the broader community.

A draft is considered by the Board or a committee of the board to allow for more input. The school board's senior staff prepares a draft directional policy that considers the input received. A final draft reflecting this input is submitted to the board for approval. Once approved, the document becomes board directional policy and goes into effect.

## Implementation

The elected board is responsible for implementing its own policies and is responsible for the formal delegation of authority to the Director of Education to implement its broad goals and expectations. The implementation plan for a board directional policy will include information about administrative procedures that support the directional policy and a communication plan to ensure that all partners are notified about the new or revised directional policy.

## Directional Policy Review

It is necessary to review policies on a regular basis to ensure their relevance to the current school board environment and their compliance with applicable legislation and Ministry policy directives. At the time of adopting a directional policy, the elected board usually specifies the date it will be due for review.



## A POLICY CHECKLIST

Directional policy documents should be brief, written in plain English and include the following core elements:

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**Purpose/intention:** a brief, clear and direct explanation of what the directional policy is intended to achieve and to whom it is intended to apply.

**Legislative base:** a reference to the legislation that provides the authority for the directional policy statement.

**Scope:** to whom and to what the directional policy applies, where the directional policy will have effect and the public value it will add.

**Context:** a brief description of the context within which the directional policy will operate, including connections with government directions.

**Principles:** a description of the principles that have shaped the development of the directional policy and their effect on the way in which it should be applied.

**Responsibility:** identification of whether the board is solely responsible for the implementation of the directional policy (e.g., Governance By-Laws and Standing Rules, Board Operations, Board Members' Code of Conduct, Selection of the Director) or whether the board has delegated responsibility to the director to implement the board's expectations across the district (Board Vision and Goals, Board Expectations for Student Achievement and Well-Being).

**Directional Policy statement:** the directional policy itself.

**Evaluation process:** a description of the way in which the impact of the directional policy will be assessed and a timeline for this.

**Review date:** a date for review of the directional policy.

**Document and version control:** the date of original approval of the directional policy and any subsequent review dates.

**Contacts, supporting tools and resource people:** as a minimum, a contact person who can assist with inquiries about the directional policy and any other tools or supporting materials that will help the directional policy to be understood and successfully implemented.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

**The Board is responsible for:**

- Defining, articulating and directing the PVNC Catholic District School Board's mandate to support student achievement and well-being in a Catholic learning community supported by the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

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- Setting direction and directional policy that governs the PVNC Catholic District School Board.
- Reviewing and considering for approval all new and revised policies recommended for consideration by the Policy Development Committee.
- Understanding and communicating with members of the community the content of all Board Policies.
- Assigning responsibility to the Director of Education for operationalizing and managing ongoing directional policy of the Board.
- Monitoring and holding the Director of Education accountable respecting the implementation and operation details of all Board Policies.

**Policy Development Committee is responsible for:**

- Reviewing and amending Board Policies.
- Recommending new or existing revised policies to the Board for final approval.

**The Director of Education is responsible for:**

- Implementation and operational details of all Board policies.
- Ensuring that senior administration and designated staff are responsible for the content and implementation of Board procedure.

**Lead Superintendent is responsible for:**

- Researching and authoring new or revised Board Policies with a representative and integrated team for consideration by the Administrative Council and the Policy Development Committee.

**Superintendents are responsible for:**

- Providing input to ensure the directional policy captures the specific and relevant concerns that may arise from their family of schools and their particular portfolios e.g., Human Resources, Special Education, Equity, etc.

**Principals are responsible for:**

- Leading their school communities in communicating and understanding.
- Implementing and adhering to Board Policies.



### **Teachers and support staff are responsible for:**

- Being familiar with, understanding and adhering to Board Policies.

### **Communications Staff is responsible for:**

- Ensuring the language used in the directional policy is accessible to all of our partners.
- Supporting the consultation process through effective communication.
- Supporting a variety of communication strategies to ensure implementation.

### **Resources:**

[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#)

[Development and Peace, Caritas Canada](#)

[The Education Act, RSO 1990](#)

[OCSTA Trustee Modules](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Ontario Education Services Corporation \(OESC\) Good Governance Guide 2022-2026](#)

<https://www.cccb.ca/document/the-struggle-against-poverty-a-sign-of-hope-in-our-world/> Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2022)

[Walking Together Toward Truth, Healing, Reconciliation, and Hope.](#) CCCB Publications.

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#)

[Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People](#)

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

### **Revisions**

Approved May 27, 2014

Approved: May 27, 2017

Revised October 20, 2020

Revised January 29, 2024

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APPENDIX A

**THE DIRECTIONAL POLICY TEMPLATE**

<b>Board Logo</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>
<b>Title of Policy</b>	
<b>Date Approved</b>	
<b>Projected Review Date</b>	
<b>Policy Statement</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	
<b>Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)</b>	
<b>Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Progress Indicators</b>	
<b>Definitions</b>	
<b>References</b>	

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES TEMPLATE**

<b>Board Logo</b>
<b>Title of Administrative Procedures</b>
<b>Date Approved</b>
<b>Projected Review Date</b>
<b>Directional Policy Alignment</b>
<b>Alignment with MYSP</b>
<b>Action Required</b>
<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Progress Indicators</b>
<b>Definitions</b>
<b>References</b>