Holy Child
NETWORK OF SCHOOLS

Governance and Sponsorship

A Reference for Members of the Board of Trustees

The Holy Child Network of Schools

FALL 2026

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The Holy Child Network of Schools is the organization of nine Catholic, independent schools in the United States. The Network is an independent nonprofit entity, governed by a Board of Directors. The Network's religious sponsor is the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province. Each school in the Network traces its origins directly to the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus in its foundation and continuing mission. The schools are rooted in similar traditions and heritage; however, in their geographic areas each school lives out the Holy Child mission in a unique way. All nine schools are committed to advancing the mission of the Society, *"to help others to believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, and to rejoice in God's presence."*

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus is committed to supporting its sponsored schools and requires the schools to engage in the following activities:

- **ENSURE** that school communities are educated about the life, educational philosophy, and spirituality of Cornelia Connelly.
- **ENSURE** that the school communities understand and live out the Goals and Criteria for Schools of the Holy Child Jesus.
- **ENSURE** that the schools are visited annually to verify their fidelity to the mission.
- **ENSURE** that the schools participate in a standardized assessment process that demonstrates mission effectiveness.

SPONSORSHIP

The term "sponsorship" is not formally defined in civil law, canon law or theology. It is often used to describe the official relationship between a ministry of the Church such as a Catholic school, and the religious organization or entity that has designated the ministry to conduct its work. Based on the Latin root, "to pledge oneself solemnly," sponsorship implies a deep sense of responsibility and bond between the sponsoring Congregation and its ministries.

The Society of the Holy Child Jesus identifies the members of the American Province Leadership Team as the "corporate members" of the organization. The corporate members have the power and authority over areas relating to the Catholic nature of the schools and the educational philosophy of Cornelia Connelly as articulated in the seven Goals of the Network of Holy Child schools.

The Province Leadership Team appoints a Board of Directors to manage the business and affairs of the Network. This Board of Directors appoints an Executive Director of the Network to lead and support each school in its mission effectiveness.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE HOLY CHILD NETWORK OF SCHOOLS

Schools of the Holy Child Jesus share in the mission of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus: to help others believe that God lives and acts in them and in our world, and to rejoice in the divine presence. Inspired by the Catholic intellectual tradition and the philosophy and spirituality of Cornelia Connelly, our schools seek to form mature individuals who make choices that enrich their own lives and the lives of others.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

American Province Leadership Team

The Province Leadership Team of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus is the leadership body of the religious community appointed by the Society Leader in Rome. Their role in sponsorship is defined in the corporate documents of each sponsored school. They may hold reserved powers for the school corporation. The Province Leadership Team may be the same body as the Corporate Members or the Province Leader may appoint other Society or non-Society persons to serve as Corporate Members as dictated by the articles of incorporation and bylaws of each school corporation.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **PROMOTE** and preserve the Holy Child educational mission through the development of a program of sponsorship and articulation of fundamental documents for Holy Child sponsorship.
- **REFLECT** the Society's responsibility to the Church as stewards for the Holy Child educational mission. These reserved powers deal with the educational mission, Catholicity, and modification to a school's corporate documents. They may also include alienation or encumbrance of property, and dissolution.
- **ACCEPT** a school for membership in Holy Child Network of Schools and to withdraw sponsorship from a member school that consistently fails to live up to the mission, values and *Goals of Holy Child Schools*.
- **APPOINT** members of the Board of Directors of the Network of Holy Child Schools.

In certain circumstances when a school has a specific and unique standing and relationship to the Society, the Province Leadership Team may also include:

- modification of all or specific aspects of the corporation documents,
- election of trustees to the governing board,
- purchase, sale of property or any encumbrance of a school's assets,
- establishment of associated legal entities,
- merger or dissolution,
- approval of the appointment of a new Head of School.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Board of Directors of the Network of Holy Child Schools

The American Provincial Leadership Team of the Society, acting as the Corporation, empowers the Board of Directors to manage the business affairs of the Network. The Board of Directors may exercise all the powers of the Corporation (Province Leadership Team) except for the reserved powers dealing with the mission and Catholicity of the schools. Members of this Board possess a deep knowledge of and appreciation for Holy Child education and its value to students and to society. This Board works directly with the Executive Director of the Network and maintains a collaborative relationship with the Province Leadership Team. This Board provides strategic leadership of the Network, managing the resources and initiatives to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the Network.

A member of the Board of Directors shall not be a Member of the of the Province Leadership Team, nor may they be a current teacher, administrator, staff member or member of the Board of Directors at any Network School, or the parent of a current student at a Network School.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **RECRUIT**, select, employ, and evaluate an Executive Director.
- **DEVELOP** short- and long-range plans to ensure the Network's viability and advancement of the philosophy, mission, and goals & criteria of the Network of schools.
- **REVIEW**, evaluate and propose revisions to the articulated Goals & Criteria.
- **DEVELOP** and approve major policies of the Network in accord with its Statement of Mission and Philosophy.
- **PROVIDE** through the Executive Director for adequate maintenance, upkeep and supervision of the land, buildings, and other assets of the Network.
- **INSURE** sound fiscal management. procure an annual audit. and develop and approve an annual operating and capital budget.
- **NOMINATE**, review, and elect candidates for the Board of Directors.
- **SUPPORT** and administer the Holy Child Network of Schools Endowment Trust as its trustees.
- **RECEIVE** a school's Mission Effectiveness self-evaluation and Visiting Committee reflection and approve a school's Mission Effectiveness action plan and to evaluate school's compliance in fulfilling the action plan.
- **DETERMINE** the annual level of funding from the American Province of the Society to the Holy Child Network of Schools office.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Executive Director of the Holy Child Network of Schools

The Executive Director reports directly to the Network Board of Directors. Together with Network office staff, the Executive Director works closely with the Heads of schools and the Boards of Trustees of each school and acts as a liaison between these groups and the Society Provincial Leadership Team. The Executive Director assists the schools in the implementation of the *Goals and Criteria of Holy Child Schools*.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **PROMOTE** and advance the value of a Holy Child education to internal and external audiences, using printed, digital, and personal communications, including the Network website and social media presence.
- **IMPLEMENT** the Network strategic plan, developed in collaboration with the Network Board.
- **PROVIDE** support to the Heads and Trustees of schools by providing resources, programs, consultations, and networking opportunities that enhance the mission of Holy Child education for all constituencies.
- **VISIT** each Network School at least once a year, meeting with the Head of School and other appropriate individuals and groups.
- **ANNUALLY** attend one Board meeting of each school to provide a Network update and reflection on the annual school visit.
- **SERVE** as an active member of the Search Committee of any Network school involved in the recruitment and appointment of a new Head of School.
- **FACILITATE** the Mission Effectiveness process and training programs in collaboration with the Mission Effectiveness Committee.
- **PLAN** and facilitate ongoing sponsorship programs, including orientation of new trustees, orientation of new Heads, Mission Effectiveness Process, orientation of teachers/staff.
- **PLAN** and implement the annual national and/or regional meetings of Heads, Chairpersons, and Network Board.
- **PREPARE** and oversee the Network budget.
- **ADMINISTER** the website of the Holy Child Network of Schools. ensure frequent and timely updates and revisions.
- **LEAD** a periodic review of the Goals and Criteria for Holy Child Schools with input from Faculty, Administration, and Board.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Holy Child Schools Governing Boards of Trustees

Members of Boards of Trustees exercise the governing responsibilities of an individual school. They are accountable to the Province Leadership Team and the Network Board of Directors for the implementation of the mission of Holy Child education in their schools.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **ALWAYS** be an ambassador for the school. Promote the understanding and implementation of the mission and philosophy of the school in accordance with the *Goals and Criteria of Holy Child Schools*.
- **APPOINT** the Head of School and provide support and counsel to him/her.
- **PARTICIPATE** fully in all Holy Child Network of Schools activities in collaboration with the Society, the Network Board, and the Executive Director of the Network.
- **COLLABORATE** with the Head to develop operational and strategic goals and a well-defined strategic plan. Annually evaluate the Head based on those goals.
- **APPROVE** all school policies in accordance with the school's bylaws and the *Goals of Holy Child Schools*.
- **ASSUME** fiscal responsibilities of the school and careful financial planning.
- **FULFILL** fiduciary responsibility to support advancement and fundraising activity and choose to make the school a personal philanthropic priority.
- **ACTIVELY** participate in the Network Mission Effectiveness Process as well as all accreditation activities of professional associations and government agencies.
- **CONTINUOUSLY** monitor personal and professional networks to identify potential new candidates for trusteeship.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Board Chairperson

As the administrative leader of the Board, the chairperson ensures that the Board fulfills its responsibilities and runs effectively for the good of the school and in accordance with the mission, philosophy and Goals of Holy Child education. The chairperson has the primary responsibility to ensure that trustees are practicing the principles of good governance, keeping the focus on the long-term, strategic issues that will ensure the school's strength and viability, as opposed to operational concerns.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

→ Interactions with the Board of Trustees

- Be responsible for developing a strong collaborative working relationship between the Board and the Head.
- Motivate trustees to fulfill their responsibilities and to take an active part in the work of the Board.
- Call and preside over all meetings of the Board and all Executive Committee meetings, calling for votes on matters of law and bylaw, and working toward consensus decision-making.
- Collaborate with the Head on agenda for all meetings.
- Maintain appropriately functioning charges to each committee. Serve as *ex oficio* of all committees except the committee charged with nominating new trustees.
- Ensure one committee actively recruits nominees for trusteeship based on the needs of the Board.
- Appoint a Search Committee or other *ad hoc* committees as necessary or when directed to do so by the vote of the Board.
- Use Board and Head evaluations to clarify the decision-making process and set goals for the coming year.
- Provide guidance to trustees who become unduly involved in the day-to-day affairs of the School or who violate rules of confidentiality regarding Board business.
- Ensure that trustees annually review the conflict of interest policy and submit written affirmation of compliance; bring disclosed conflicts to the Executive Committee for review and determination.

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→ Interactions with the Head of School

- Support the Head of School, serving as a sounding board, and providing counsel, encouragement, and collegial, constructive, corrective guidance when needed.
- Work in partnership with the Head to ensure that the Board agenda, activities, and discussions remain focused on the long-term growth and viability of the school and its faithfulness to the Mission.
- Maintain close communication with the Head regarding major school issues; keep the trustees apprised of relevant activities, concerns, etc.
- Ensure that there is an annual review of the Head's performance relative to mutually agreed upon goals. Facilitate an annual review of the Head's salary and benefits to ensure competitive and fair compensation.

→ Interactions with the Network Board of Directors

- Communicate with the Network Board of Directors and the Network Executive Director as requested, keeping them informed of ongoing developments in the school.
- Attend and participate in the national and regional meetings of the trustees, specifically, the New Trustee Orientation, the Annual meeting of Holy Child schools, and other Network activities.
- Participate fully in the Mission Effectiveness Evaluation Process.

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