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# Catholic School Identity: Perceptions That Influence Teacher Retention

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**Catholic School Identity: Perceptions  
That Influence Teacher Retention**

Karen Germany Jakuback

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

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**SETON HALL UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
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**APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE**

**Karen Jakuback**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Spring Semester 2017**.

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perceptions of various factors, especially Catholic school identity factors, which are important to them and may influence their job satisfaction and retention in Catholic parochial schools after year five of their teaching career. An additional purpose of this study was to inform Catholic school administrators about factors that may assist them in sustaining a climate, culture, and organizational structure that influences teachers to remain in the Catholic school setting.

School climate is often used as a broad term that refers to teachers' perceptions of their general work environment. The cohesion or collective personality that Wayne Hoy (1990) says makes up climate is also echoed in Richard Ingersoll's (2001) work on teacher retention (Hoy, 1990; Ingersoll, 2001). Culture, the beliefs and customs of an organization may persist over time, regardless of climate changes. Hoy differentiated culture as types of norms, shared values, and assumptions (Hoy, 1990). The types of practices and symbols that create the culture of the school parallel the practices and symbols in Catholic schools; i.e., the culture or identity. Understanding the teachers' perceptions of these factors and how the factors are valued or impact job satisfaction and retention decisions are relevant to administrators as they seek to retain qualified teachers.

Richard Ingersoll's (2001) theories on teacher retention and attrition are also important to the conceptual framework for this study. Ingersoll noted that the demand for teachers was not due to teacher shortage, as previously believed, but is caused by the high attrition rate, especially in the first five years of a teacher's career. He reported that 40%-50% of teachers leave the profession in the first five years, a 4% higher attrition rate than other professions (Ingersoll, 2001). Additionally, almost 10% leave before the end of their first year, and private schools experience a higher rate of attrition than public schools (Ingersoll, 2001).

As teachers in Catholic schools are traditionally paid less than their similarly qualified peers in public schools, they are clearly motivated by factors beyond salary. This study examines the teachers' perceptions of subtle cultural factors and the role they may play in teachers' retention decisions.

The study gathered information from teachers in parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, through a series of semi-structured interview questions which were asked during one-on-one interviews. One teacher from each of 13 of the 16 parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge participated in the study.

Teachers in this study evidenced high valuation of several aspects of Catholic schools: faith, interpersonal relationships, collegiality, collaboration, culture and climate, and the administrator as spiritual leader. There is evidence of a strong link between personal beliefs, belief in mission, and job satisfaction and retention. The findings are relevant to administrators, seeking to hire teachers committed to Catholic schools who will be more likely to remain in Catholic school teaching positions. It also serves to inform administrators of valuable ways to continue or enhance culture and climate conducive to teacher retention.

### **Acknowledgments**

The completion of this study is the culmination of a longtime personal goal. As with any goal, it is never possible without the support of others. The colleagues I met and friendships formed at Seton Hall University gave me the inspiration to continue the quest for my doctoral degree. Cohort XIX provided tremendous support along the way and always welcomed the student from south Louisiana that they found in their midst. I also gratefully acknowledge the wonderful professors at Seton Hall, and the challenging yet worthwhile experiences I gained from them.

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Dr. Barbara Strobert, as a committee member, also provided the positive encouragement I needed in moving forward, in addition to going well beyond expectation to assist me with the timely submission of Institutional Research Board paperwork. Further, her detailed editing and suggestions along the way were very much appreciated, from one former principal to another!

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Thank you to my family and friends who have supported me along the way, listened to me, encouraged me, and believed in me. They have nurtured me more than words can express and are so very much appreciated.

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### **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to the many committed Catholic school teachers, who live their vocation daily in teaching and building the kingdom of God. It is especially dedicated to the teachers in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, who humble me with both their dedication to their mission, and the stories they so openly shared with me. Most of all, it is dedicated to my dear friends and colleagues at St. Jude the Apostle School, who became my family and who for 25 years trusted me as their leader and friend and inspired me daily as we worked together to live the motto we formed: Faith, Academics, and Excellence.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Catholic school identity, teacher staffing, and retention are inextricably linked in today's Catholic schools in the United States. The challenge of maintaining the Catholicity of schools, a term used to describe being in conformity with the Catholic Church, while staffed primarily with lay teaching staff, is two-fold; lay staff members are expected to instill and uphold Catholic school *identity*, a term often used to describe hallmarks of what it means to be a Catholic school, yet Catholic identity may further be a key factor in retaining lay teachers in Catholic schools. While some teachers may be attracted specifically to Catholic school because of Catholic identity, it becomes difficult to continue to maintain that identity when a school is faced with frequent teacher turnover.

Catholic Identity is at the foundation of a Catholic school. It is our reason for existence. The Gospel of Christ and his very person are therefore to inspire and guide the Catholic school in its every dimension, its philosophy of education, curriculum, community life, the selection and ongoing formation of its teachers and staff, and its physical environment.

Also, our Catholic schools find their true justification in the mission of the Church; therefore, our schools' foundations are based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony. And further, the schools governing body, policies and documents and its management practices reflect the Catholic mission and philosophy of the school. Our schools' leadership teams, faculty, and staff know, support, and model the teachings of the Church. (Salisbury, 2008, para. 4-5).

## **Background**

Catholic schools have historically played an important role in education in the United States. For much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century they served the purpose of assimilating immigrants into the culture of the United States, while helping them to maintain important traditions (Byrne, 2003). In more recent years, the academic success rate of Catholic schools has been a visible sign of the valuable role these schools play in our society, in successfully preparing students for the future (Hunt, 2002). Additionally, based on the per pupil cost of public school education, the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) reports that Catholic schools provide a savings of 24 billion dollars per year in the United States (NCEA, 2015). Many measures illustrate the academic success of Catholic school students, which extends to varying ethnicities and races, as well as varying socioeconomic groups (Shokraii, 1997).

Catholic schools make up the largest segment of private schools in the country; 41.2% of private schools are Catholic and account for almost 7% of all kindergarten through twelfth grade schools in the United States, serving almost 2 million students per year, 4% of the school age population in the United States. (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2015; McDonald & Schultz, 2014). The Catholic school “system” is the largest non-public school system in the United States.

Traditionally, Catholic schools were staffed by religious, priests, brothers, and nuns who have sworn fidelity to a Catholic community and lifestyle and who combined their academic teaching with the teachings, or charisms, of their own particular religious order. In 1960, Catholic schools’ staffs were composed of almost 75% vowed religious and 25% lay staff (Russo, n.d.). Currently, Catholic schools in the United States are staffed by 97.2% lay teaching



staff (McDonald & Schultz, 2014). Just over 2.5% of Catholic school staff in the United States are vowed members of Catholic religious communities. This paradigm shift has created an underlying difficulty that has affected Catholic schools for decades, due to both finances and Catholic identity. Russo echoes the current challenges that have been voiced by many leaders in Catholic education. The four main challenges he identifies are ones that test the very fabric of Catholic schools in America.

- Leaders must examine slowly declining enrollment in various areas across the country, combined with school closings and consolidations, and seek to appeal to those of more diverse cultures and abilities or disabilities.
- Schools must define or redefine their Catholic identity to maintain their unique Catholic culture when more students, and sometimes staff, are not active participants in the Catholic Church.
- Finances, often a factor in teacher retention, must be balanced to maintain the Church's commitment to the poor by keeping schools affordable and accessible, but schools must balance this with paying teachers and staff a fair and socially just salary.
- School leaders must address teacher attrition and retention and look for ways to ensure that they will retain qualified educators to address the academic and faith teachings that fulfill their mission. (Russo, n.d.)

Of these challenges, the last, teacher retention, is not unique to Catholic schools.

Catholic schools are plagued with the problem faced by all schools in our country, the retention of qualified teaching staff. A highly-qualified teacher, as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), requires a teacher to hold a bachelor's degree and state certification (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). While Catholic schools are not generally tightly bound to these

specific guidelines, most must employ certified teachers or teachers who meet certification guidelines for their state, in order to operate as a state approved school. Catholic school teachers must also fulfill a dual role; they must advance the mission and identity of the Catholic school, but they must also be effective academic instructors. The dual directive, promulgated at the close of Vatican II, in one of the early statements from the Holy See to lay teachers in Catholic schools, stated the following:

But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. (27) They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. (Paul VI, 1965, sec. 8, para.3)

Many subsequent papal encyclicals, most notably *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* in 1998 and *Educating Today and Tomorrow* in 2014, echoed and furthered this directive. Recently, Pope Francis, a former teacher and member of the Jesuits, a Catholic order known for founding schools said, “Teachers must guide students to critical thinking and a moral compass. That is exactly where a faith-based education comes in” (Francis, 2014). A year later, in more detail, he stated the following:

You must not teach just content, but the values and customs of life. . . . [T]here are three things that you must transmit: how to love, how to understand which values and customs create harmony in society . . . [Teachers] must aim to build an educational relationship with each student, who must feel welcomed and loved for what he or she is, with all of their limitations and potential. (Francis, 2015)

Pope Francis further talked about the Catholic values that should be evident in the schools; he noted the need to keep Catholic schools affordable, the need for teachers to be paid a “living wage,” and the necessity of having qualified teachers in Catholic schools (Francis, 2014, 2015). The necessity to have a qualified teaching staff in Catholic schools has been noted at all levels of the hierarchy of the Catholic church.

Catholic school administrators face the same challenge faced by all school administrators—how to retain the most effective teachers. The Tennessee Value Added Assessment System research (TVAAS) showed overwhelming evidence of the impact of effective classroom teachers on student academic achievement. Students who experienced three consecutive years with a highly effective teacher showed academic achievement that averaged 50 percentile points above the students who experienced three consecutive years with ineffective teachers (Sanders, 1996). Thus, the need to retain the most qualified and effective teachers is crucial to academic success.

The current rate attributed to teacher attrition in the early years of their teaching career varies among studies, but is generally placed at about 40% leaving the profession in the first five years, with an average attrition rate each year of about 15% (Chatlain & Noonan, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001). In private schools, that figure is considerably higher with an almost 20% attrition rate each year (NCES, 2013; Ingersoll, 2003). Of those private schools, smaller private schools, which make up 86% of the private schools in the country, face an even greater attrition rate. Private or Catholic schools (the data are not disaggregated) of less than 300 students lose the greatest percentage of teachers each year. Ingersoll reports that on average, small private schools lose up to 25% percent of their teaching staff each year. As Catholic schools make up 41.2% of the private schools in the country, it can be inferred that the attrition rate of teachers at small non-public schools would be especially problematic for Catholic schools.

Additionally, Catholic schools typically pay less than public schools and so compensation cannot generally be a determining factor in attracting and retaining teachers. In 2013, the National Educators Association (NEA) reported that the national average starting teacher pay for a degreed beginning teacher in the 2012-2013 school year was \$36,141 (NEA, 2013). That same year, the NEA reported the national average starting pay for degreed beginning teachers in Catholic schools in the United States was \$27,776 (NEA, 2013). Clearly, as Catholic school teachers make almost 23% less than their similarly qualified peers, they are choosing Catholic schools for reasons besides monetary compensation. In a 2001 study on teacher commitment, 339 teachers who had taught in Catholic schools for at least 10 years were surveyed as to motivating factors. While they did not see salary as a motivating factor, it was one of the few areas in which the teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their teaching positions (Squillini, 2001).

This study examined the relationship between teacher retention in Catholic schools and the possible influence of Catholic school identity factors. Often teachers choose Catholic schools for the identity that Catholic schools project, rather than for salary (O'Keefe, 2003). According to a 2010 survey of Catholic school administrators and teachers, they ranked the Catholic school faith culture as the most important Catholic school "identity" factor. The longer they were employed in Catholic schools, the more highly they rated the Catholic identity (Convoy, 2012).

In a secular society, it becomes increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified lay teachers who are also willing to commit to the faith mission of the Catholic school, while being paid significantly less than their peers. Historically, Catholic schools relied upon vowed religious to staff their schools. With vowed religious men and women staffing schools, salary

costs were low and tuition, if even charged, was also low. Since the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the reduction of members of vowed religious orders has had a great impact on Catholic schools across the country. As Catholic school teaching staff has changed from almost 90% religious staff in the first half of the twentieth century to over 97% lay staff, does the Catholic identity stay intact (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993)? Since the decline of religious in the schools in the later part of the twentieth century, Catholic schools have continually grappled with the problem of replacing low cost degreed religious staff with qualified lay teachers, who must be paid a socially just salary.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) conducts a Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), which contains a database for examining some statistics and drawing some conclusions about teacher retention, mainly in public schools. While this information is useful, Catholic schools also offer a unique climate which provides indicators as to factors which may influence teacher retention decisions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research shows that teacher attrition among early career teachers (less than five years) is a great problem facing schools throughout our nation. Catholic schools face an even higher than average attrition rate, particularly smaller Catholic schools (Ingersoll, 2003). While the disparity in teacher pay may be a factor in teachers leaving Catholic schools, there may be cultural and organizational aspects of Catholic schools that become factors influencing teachers' decisions to remain in Catholic schools (Youngs, 2013; Convey, 2012, 2014). In Convey's study of Catholic school identity, the teachers with more teaching experience in Catholic schools highly valued Catholic school identity (Convey, 2012).

With a high teacher attrition rate, it is particularly important to examine the factors that influence teachers to remain in Catholic schools beyond the first five years of teaching. Without stability in the teaching staff of Catholic schools, the Catholicity for which these schools have been known is at a grave risk of being lost. The inability to retain qualified teachers is a costly problem in dollars and a negative impact on students' academic success as well (Synar, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; Sanders, 1996). The problem of attrition of teachers in Catholic schools in the first five years of their careers creates a costly problem in loss of academic programming and initiatives, in dollars spent in retraining, and in the time spent by Catholic school administrators, who are typically tasked with site-based hiring (Synar, 2010). While no data specific to Catholic school attrition costs currently exist, based on models for public schools, we know this is a costly problem for all schools and school systems.

The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) estimated the national yearly cost of replacing public school teachers between \$2.2 billion and \$4.9 billion. Finally, the National Commission of Teaching and America's Future put the national cost at \$7.3 billion a year. (NCTAF, 2007; Synar, 2010, p. xi)

In a Catholic school, teachers must also fulfill the dual role of advancing the Catholic mission concurrent with academic teaching. This double demand calls for teachers in Catholic schools to fill additional roles. Often, they must take classes to achieve and maintain religious education certification or other types of catechist certification, as well as teaching religion, being asked to develop prayer services, create service opportunities for students, participate in planning and facilitating liturgies, and fill roles in the church parish in various ministries. All of these tasks are in addition to the regular requirements of a classroom teacher, and rarely is there any

supplemental pay for the greater workload. As these responsibilities are considered integral aspects of Catholic school identity, the need to retain committed teachers is vital.

Previously considered a “teaching shortage,” the question of teacher retention was addressed by federal law in the No Child Left Behind Act, which mandated districts to retain highly qualified teachers. The United States Congregation of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) similarly called for Catholic schools to be staffed by “highly qualified” teachers in *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (USCCB, 2006). While not a mandate, requirements such as these are generally necessary for non-public schools to gain state approval. However, the problem that continues to persist is not a lack of qualified and trained teachers, but a lack of early teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2003).

Catholic schools in the United States all face the crisis of teacher retention. There is a great deal of research on attrition and retention of teachers in the United States. However, there has been very little research on Catholic school teacher retention and even less on whether Catholic school identity factors influence teachers to remain in Catholic schools after the early years of their careers. This study explored Catholic school identity factors that may influence a teacher to remain in Catholic schools. The results of the research yielded data that can be beneficial to Catholic school administrators in understanding what strategies and procedures may assist in retaining qualified and effective teachers and addresses the gap in literature due to the minimal amount of existing literature on Catholic school teacher retention.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore what factors in general, and specifically which Catholic school identity factors, may influence retention of teachers in Catholic parochial schools in a diocesan school system, after year five of their teaching career. An additional

purpose of this study was to add to the existing body of knowledge for Catholic school administrators in order to assist them in sustaining a climate and organizational structure that influences teachers to remain in the Catholic school.

The problem of early teacher retention, costly to administrators and students and in a unique way to Catholic schools, as the loss of Catholic school identity is a problem that needs to be addressed to maintain the integrity of Catholic schools as communities of academic and faith excellence. Administrators can realize a savings of precious resources, time and money, in not having to commit those resources to rehiring and retraining. Academic initiatives will continue with less impediment, and Catholic school identity will grow with teachers who are committed to staying in a Catholic school teaching position.

This study focused on the factors (especially the ones that relate to Catholic school identity), that influence a teacher's decision to remain in a parochial Catholic school after year five of their teaching career. Many studies have shown that higher teacher pay is not necessarily a predication of retention rates. Teachers are often more influenced by the working conditions within the school than higher pay (Riggs, 2013). Knowing this, it becomes even more important to examine what factors influence the Catholic school teachers who do remain in teaching, to continue their teaching careers. According to research, if almost 40% leave the profession in the first five years of their career, who are the teachers who remain—the other 60 %—and what influences them to continue teaching, particularly teaching in a Catholic school? There is an urgent need for Catholic school administrators to gain a better understanding of factors over which they can exert influence, in order to effect higher rates of teacher retention and retain the high academic standards and Catholicity for which the schools are known.



### **Conceptual Framework**

There are two main areas, the type of school and its organization and structure, which are among factors that may provide additional intrinsic motivation and influence a teacher's decision to remain in teaching or leave. Richard Ingersoll's (2011) theories on teacher retention and attrition are noteworthy in this field of study. When many voices in education in the United States began to note a growing shortage of teachers in the United States, Ingersoll proposed other theories as to the growing need for teachers. Ingersoll claimed that "shortage" was not the problem when the number of college graduates in the field of education was analyzed. Rather, Ingersoll noted the demand is caused by the high attrition rate, especially in the first five years of a teacher's career. He reported that 40%-50% of teachers leave the profession in the first five years, a 4% higher attrition rate than other professions (Ingersoll, 2001). Additionally, almost 10% leave before the end of their first year, and 40% of undergraduate education majors never teach (Riggs, 2013). The problem then becomes how to retain the qualified teachers that are in the profession and determine which factors influence their decisions regarding retention.

There are currently very few qualitative data studies on Catholic school teacher retention. As it is reported that school characteristics may influence teachers' decisions, the unique characteristics that form the climate and culture of Catholic schools may play a part in influencing teacher retention decisions. The focus in teacher attrition has been on the number leaving each year versus the numbers entering the field; much of the research on teacher attrition and retention has been quantitative in design.

Wayne Hoy's (1990) work on climate and culture in the workplace helps to explain some of the qualitative factors that may influence teachers to stay or leave. In Hoy's work on climate and culture, unlike his predecessors, he differentiates between the two concepts. Hoy describes

climate as being roughly conceived as the personality of the organization. Climate is the internal characteristics which influence the behavior of the members of the organization. The behavior of the individuals is based upon what they perceive as the behavior of the organization as a whole. Culture dimensions are those in which the values in the organization create a distinct identity which influences all aspects of the organization. According to Hoy, “This distinctive character ties the individual to the organization and generates in its members a sense of commitment to the organization” (Hoy, 1990).

There is a large body of research that exists which examines these factors, type of school organization and structure, as to how they relate to retention and attrition of teachers. The Catholic schools, however, which encompass a unique cultural sense of mission, vision, and values, provide a distinctly different type of school organization and structure. There is little research on these Catholic identity factors and teacher attrition and retention.

Both Ingersoll and Hoy noted the unique aspects of the school as an organization with a culture and climate that differs from the business world. Ingersoll noted that schools are an anomaly, and the structural organization that applies to business models does not fit schools (Ingersoll, 2003). Hoy stated that organizational effectiveness models that may work for business differ from school effectiveness models (Hoy, 1985). Ingersoll’s theories on teacher retention and turnover, combined with Hoy’s theories on climate and culture in schools, were examined as aspects of Catholic schools in respect to their unique identity and provided the underlying conceptual framework for this study. Teachers’ perceptions of these unique qualities may therefore be instrumental in gaining insight into retention decisions.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research question to be answered was the following:

In what ways, if any, are the retention decisions of teachers in Catholic parochial schools related to, or influenced by, aspects of Catholic identity; i.e., Catholic school identity factors?

Additional research questions to be answered were the following:

1. What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school after the first five years of their teaching career?
2. What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?
3. How do the Catholic school teachers perceive school identity factors, in terms of importance, in teacher retention decisions?

While the questions examined characteristics of retained teachers in three main areas: teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational characteristics, the main emphasis of this study was to examine what organizational aspects of climate and culture, unique to Catholic schools (Catholic identity factors), may influence the teacher to remain in the school. The study further examined which factors are of greatest influence to teachers who choose to remain in Catholic schools after year five of their teaching career.

### **Design and Methodology**

Catholic school administrators face the continued, and seemingly increasing, problem of retention of qualified and effective teachers. The loss of resources, potential loss of academic achievement, and loss of catechists is continually daunting. Yet, despite the lower pay that Catholic school teachers receive, there are many highly qualified and effective teachers who particularly choose Catholic schools. This is true of Catholic and non-Catholic teachers alike.

We know that this group of teachers who remain committed to Catholic school teaching exist; therefore, it was important to determine who they are and why they choose to stay. Also, we know there are many factors contributing to their decisions. This study examined what particular factors contribute to retention decisions in a Catholic school. In order to examine what factors, unique to Catholic schools, influence teachers to remain in Catholic schools, the stated research questions were asked.

The research was conducted as a qualitative study, using an interview approach. The value of the qualitative design in explaining an organization, such as a Catholic parochial school, is that the approach can elicit a deep understanding, through multiple sources, of what is happening in regard to teacher retention. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature. Themes not foreseen by the researcher can emerge in the course of the study. The qualitative design allowed for inductive reasoning as themes emerged and assisted in gaining insights into the participants' perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2014). It further allowed the researcher to gain insight into the essence of the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2014).

The target participants for this study were one teacher, from each of the 16 Catholic parochial elementary schools that are located in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. A purposeful selection process was employed, and the teachers were selected from a pool of teachers who met the stated criteria of being actively employed in a Catholic parochial school in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and having more than five years of teaching experience in a Catholic school. Additionally, in order to be adequately informed to answer questions that related to their perceptions of school culture and Catholic identity in their school, the teacher needed to have been employed at their current school for a minimum of three years. Thirteen of the 16

parochial elementary schools had volunteers who met the stated demographic profile, and therefore participated in the study.

The interview questions used with the participants to gather the data included basic demographic information, questions about teachers' decisions to remain in their career, questions that identified teacher characteristics such as grade and subject, and school characteristics such as size, and location. Additionally, there were questions which related directly to Catholic school culture and identity factors. These questions were asked to gain information valuable to administrators in sustaining or creating opportunities for these factors to be experienced by the teachers in their school. The data can be especially helpful to new school administrators as they work to develop the culture of their schools. The data were collected and factors were assessed to observe if there are trends which exist among teachers who choose to remain in Catholic parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Additionally, Catholic school identity factors found to possibly be influential to teachers were ranked in order of importance to yield data useful to school administrators in effecting change and assisting them in the retention of qualified teachers.

### **Significance of the Study**

Research suggests that factors influencing teacher retention decisions are often intrinsic and not simple extrinsic motivators. The factors identified by this research can be examined by Catholic school administrators who can seek to improve upon the factors unique to a Catholic school that may influence teacher retention decisions. By utilizing these data in their own schools and possibly further enhancing aspects of a Catholic school which result in the benefit of improved teacher retention, they can therefore reap the added benefits saving time, money, improved academic achievement, and sustainment of greater Catholic school identity. Faith and

academic excellence, hallmarks of Catholic schools, can therefore be positively affected and sustained for the future.

### **Limitations**

The research was limited by the fact that it took place in 13 of the parochial schools in one diocese in Louisiana; however, the composition of the diocese, schools varying in size and location, yielded data that can be generalized to a different diocese. These schools are state approved and accredited through AdvancED (formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). Therefore, they typically hire teachers who are fully degreed and certified. That is not necessarily a requirement of other Catholic schools and therefore results may not be applicable to schools in a diocese which does not require state certification. Qualitative research, while providing richly descriptive data, cannot account for perceptions that may be skewed by personal experiences, nor discrepancies in self-reporting. Additionally, personal bias may be a limiting factor.

### **Delimitations**

This study was limited to 13 of the 16 elementary parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, an accredited and state approved system of schools in southeastern Louisiana. The researcher recognizes that the use of interviews to gather information is a delimiting factor. Subtle cultural information may be difficult to obtain with the use of open-ended questions. As participants must have had five years of experience, information was gathered about those who stay; but predictions about those who chose to leave the profession cannot be made, except as to the perceptions of the other teachers as to why others left.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Catholic school identity** – the particular expression of the Catholic heritage, the practices of the Catholic community, the living of the Gospel message, and the information and relationships that sustain the school’s activities.

**Catholicity** – the character of being in conformity with a Catholic church.

**Catechesis** – religious instruction given to a person in preparation for Christian baptism or confirmation, typically using a catechism. Catholic school teachers must act as Catholic catechists in addition to being academic instructors.

**Catechist** – a teacher of the principles of Christian religion, especially one using a catechism.

**Charisms** – an extraordinary power given by the Holy Spirit for the good of the Catholic church. Generally, a religious order (i.e., Dominican Sisters) is known for a particular charism or mission—teaching, serving the poor, etc.

**Diocese** – a geographical district under the pastoral care of a bishop in the Catholic Church who has been appointed by the Pope.

**Diocese of Baton Rouge** – a geographical district under the pastoral care of a bishop in the Catholic Church who has been appointed by the Pope. Located in southeastern Louisiana, the Diocese of Baton Rouge encompasses 29 schools, rural and metropolitan areas, and encompasses eight civil parishes.

**Encyclical** – a papal letter sent to all bishops of the Roman Catholic Church and intended for wider circulation.

**Highly qualified teacher** – defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) as a teacher who holds a bachelor’s degree and full state certification (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

**Holy See** – the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Catholic Church in Rome, the episcopal see of the Pope, and an independent sovereign entity.

**Lay** – a commonly used term for laity - the laity consists of all members who are not a part of the clergy, or are not members of religious orders; e.g., a nun or brother.

**Liturgy** – a form or formulary according to which public religious worship, especially Christian worship, is conducted.

**Mission advancement** – advancing the vocation or calling of a religious organization, to go out into the world and spread its faith. Catholic schools subscribe to the mission of the Catholic church and all staff are agents in advancing the mission.

**Parochial** – of or relating to a church parish. Parochial schools are under the jurisdiction of the local Bishop.

**Religious** – members of a religious order or ordained priests, sisters, brothers, by virtue of religious vows made committing themselves to service, also referred to as vowed religious.

**Teacher attrition** – a reduction or decrease in numbers of teachers, a gradual reduction in work force without firing of personnel, as when teachers resign or retire.

**Teacher retention** – the act of keeping the teacher employed, the ability to keep the teacher.

**Vatican Council (Second)** – also called “Vatican II” — the twenty-first Roman Catholic ecumenical council (1962–65) convened by Pope John XXIII. Its 16 documents redefined the nature of the church, gave bishops greater influence in church affairs, and increased lay participation in liturgy.

### Summary

Teacher attrition is an increasingly burdensome problem to schools across the county. It is costly to schools in terms of loss of academic achievement for students, and loss of resources



for schools and administrators. It is especially costly to Catholic schools due to both a higher attrition rate in Catholic schools and the loss not only of academic instruction but of Catholic catechesis as well. Factors which may affect teachers' decisions to choose to remain in Catholic schools may include Catholic identity factors. It was necessary to identify these factors so that school administrators can have a better understanding of what strategies and procedures may assist in retaining qualified and effective teachers so they can work to sustain them. These factors may be able to be further advanced so as to affect higher levels of teacher retention. Chapter I discusses the background for this research, the purpose of the research, the statement of the problem, the research questions, design methods, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, and the definition of terms. It also places the research within a conceptual framework. It is important for Catholic school administrators to understand what factors may influence teachers to choose to remain in Catholic schools and what role Catholic school identity factors may play in their decisions.

Chapter II reviews the literature on Catholic education in the United States. It reviews literature that exists on teacher characteristics, and school characteristics as they relate to attrition and retention decisions. Additionally, literature on the role of culture and climate in schools and what role teachers' perceptions of the culture may have, if any, on their job satisfaction is reviewed. Chapter II further examines Catholic school identity factors and includes a review of related literature and research related to the topics of early teacher retention, retention of qualified teachers, and Catholic school identity, as well as teacher characteristics and Catholic school characteristics which may influence retention. The underlying conceptual framework is also presented in Chapter II. Chapter III presents the research design and methodology including participants, data instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This study examined the retention level of qualified teachers after year five of service in a parochial school in Baton Rouge to identify factors which may influence retention and enable administrators to advance the structures, culture, and social factors present in Catholic schools which may contribute to teacher retention. These schools are governed under the auspices of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic school system. This study particularly examined what, if any, Catholic school identity factors influence teacher retention.

The correlation between Catholic school identity and teacher retention is also an important area to study, as the ability to retain qualified teachers who participate in the mission of the Catholic school is integral to the school's ability not only to provide quality academic instruction but also to develop and maintain the Catholicity of the school. Community and mission, two hallmarks of Catholic schools, may also play an important role in teacher retention decisions (Brock & Chatlain, 2008).

### **Introduction**

Beginning in 1983 with *A Nation at Risk*, national reports began to decry the upcoming teacher shortage in our country. Additionally, the 1983 report cited high turnover, lack of teacher preparation, and the rise of mediocrity in American education (NCEE, 1983). Since that time, countless studies and ensuing mandates have attempted to address the impending "shortage." However, other studies have refuted those findings and reported the problem to be less one of shortage and more one of attrition (Ingersoll, 2003).

Few educational problems have received more attention in recent years than the failure to ensure that elementary and secondary classrooms are all staffed with qualified teachers. Severe

teacher shortages, it is widely believed, are confronting our elementary and secondary schools. We have been warned repeatedly that “the nation will need to hire at least two million teachers over the next ten years” (National Commission on Teaching, 1997, pp. 15-16), and our teacher training institutions are simply not producing sufficient numbers of teachers to meet the demand. The resulting shortfalls of teachers, the argument continues, force many school systems to resort to lowering standards to fill teaching openings, inevitably resulting in high levels of underqualified teachers and lower school performance (Ingersoll, 2003).

There is another problem with the conventional wisdom on shortages. The data show that the demand for new teachers and subsequent staffing difficulties are not primarily due to student enrollment and teacher retirement increases, as widely believed, but these are largely due to teacher turnover—teachers moving from or leaving their teaching jobs—and most of this turnover has little to do with a graying workforce. (Ingersoll, 2003)

Since the 1983 report, hundreds of pieces of legislation and policy, the most notable of which is the No Child Left Behind Act, have been put into place across the nation to ensure that highly qualified teachers (NCLBA, 2001) are in every classroom in the country. Additionally, the USCCB called for Catholic schools to be staffed by “highly qualified” teachers in their 2005 report, *Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Education*. While the mandate for highly qualified teachers has continued, what has been done to stem the tide of early career teachers leaving the profession? In Catholic schools, which are affected to an even greater degree by teacher attrition, the need for answers becomes even more profound.

### **Literature Review Process**

Chapter II examines the literature that is relevant to this study. The review of literature on Catholic schools and teacher retention and attrition was performed using resources found in

the Seton Hall University library databases, as well as texts, journals containing peer reviewed work and websites. Databases accessed on-line included: Academic Search, Catholic School Standards, Ebsco, ERIC, NCEA, and NCES, as well as several ProQuest databases. Search terms used included: Catholic education, Catholic schools, Catholic school identity, highly qualified teachers, lay teacher, mission, school climate, school culture, teacher attrition, teacher retention and teacher turnover. Research in this chapter is centered on themes related to the following:

- Catholic education
- Teacher retention and attrition
- School climate and culture
- Catholic school identity
- Qualified teachers

The literature review particularly examines these areas in relation to Catholic schools in the United States and societal factors, as well as providing background as to the scope of the teacher retention issue since the 1980s, laws and mandates enacted to combat it, the unique challenges to Catholic schools, Catholic documents related to schools and teachers, and factors that have been shown to influence retention decisions of early career teachers. The five key assertions that are examined are as follows:

- Catholic education has played an important role in education in the United States.
- Teacher retention is problematic and costly in the United States, especially in Catholic schools.
- Teacher experience is important to student achievement.
- Catholic school culture, or identity, is an important hallmark of Catholic schools.

- Teachers who remain in Catholic schools do so for non-monetary reasons.

### **Catholic Education in the United States**

Catholic schools have a long and rich history and tradition of excellence in the United States. The first Catholic school in the United States was founded in 1606 in St. Augustine, Florida, by the Franciscan brothers. Over the next century, Catholic schools were founded in Maryland, established as a Catholic colony, and other colonies, with the first school for girls being established in Louisiana in 1727 by the Sisters of St. Ursula. This school was notable as the first free school and the first to hold classes for female slaves as well as Native Americans. Under Spanish and French control, many Catholic schools were established in the Louisiana Territory. Over the course of the next century, Catholic schools were established in many areas of the United States. However, it was the wave of immigrants, particularly Irish Catholic ones, in the mid 1800s that caused a surge in establishment of Catholic schools in the United States. Catholic population in the United States increased from 5% in the mid 1800s to 17% in the early 1900s (Byrne, 2006). This percentage represented the largest religious group in the country (Byrne, 2006).

The hundred or so years preceding this immigration wave of the mid-late 1800s saw religion often taught in public schools in America. The protestant religion was predominant throughout American schools. As the immigrant population grew in the United States, there was a call by this new population and the Catholic Church, for Catholicism to be taught. Many state governments, who represented constituents that feared the wave of immigrants taking root in their regions, passed “Blaine” amendments, which forbid tax dollars to be used to fund Catholic schools. The amendments were called by the name of “Blaine” because the U.S. speaker of the house in 1875, James Blaine, tried unsuccessfully to pass U.S. laws forbidding this use of funds.

When this failed, many states sought the establishment of a state law of the same nature and by the late 1800s many states had passed amendments, called Blaine amendments, forbidding use of public funds in Catholic schools.

### **Parochial Schools**

Following the passage of Blaine amendments, in order to support and maintain Catholic education, the parochial school model began to take hold in the United States (McCarroll, 2014). The Plenary Council of Baltimore, a collection of bishops from throughout the United States (now called the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB), met in Baltimore, with the permission of the pope, three times in the late 1800s, and strongly urged the establishment of Catholic parochial schools throughout the country. This model would allow the church much latitude in two distinct ways: the schools could cater to their local community to provide instruction that fit the culture of the community, often in the native language of those in the community it served. Additionally, since there was no public funding, it established a model whereby each church parish provided for the establishment and financial support of a local “parochial school.” With the funding from each church parish supporting it, a parochial school could charge little or no tuition; thus, immigrants, who sometimes arrived without any financial resources, could have their child receive an American education that encompassed the Catholic faith they practiced (McCarroll, 2014).

### **Factors Affecting Parochial Schools**

As these schools grew in the early twentieth century, they modeled themselves after the American public school system and often deemphasized their immigrant roots. The parochial school model existed first to serve the children of the church parish and still operates by that tenet today. The Catholic church wanted to ensure that every Catholic child had access to

Catholic education. Fortunately, there were many priests or religious brothers and sisters to provide the education. Thus, a low-cost labor supply was readily available, and church financial support meant tuition costs were quite low.

Although a great deal has changed in the last hundred years of Catholic education in America, especially the current lack of religious causing the need for ever-increasing tuition dollars to provide salaries for qualified teachers, there are also a few things that have remained constant. Catholic schools on average cost much less than their private school counterparts. Predominantly, the parochial school model is still the main model for Catholic schools in the United States, accounting for 20% of the Catholic schools in the country (NCEA, 2015).

The “Blaine” amendments are still pivotal in many states today as voucher and school choice issues are explored. Despite a number of court challenges, to date, only Louisiana has successfully repealed the state Blaine amendment. In a 1974 re-write of the state constitution, the Blaine amendment was removed. The long history of Catholic school children receiving some state funding in Louisiana has withstood numerous challenges. Dating from laws passed by populist governor Huey P. Long in the early twentieth century to current statutes, school children in private schools in Louisiana, most of which are Catholic, receive some textbooks and some “materials of instruction” (paper, pencils, and library books). Private school systems, including religious ones, are reimbursed a percentage of what they spend to perform, various required services such as assisting with transportation, taking attendance, performing emergency drills, and completing state required reports. Additionally, a diocese can contract with the public-school system for their buses to be used to transport children to the local Catholic school within the Church parish in which the child resides.

**Role of Catholic Schools**

Catholic education was firmly established in the United States a century ago, as was a long history of academic success. The dividends of Catholic education have been measured in high graduation rates, educational attainment levels, and earnings (Neal, 1995). Additionally, their effectiveness has been proven and touted in a variety of studies in the last quarter century (Meyer, 2007). Notably, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution in January of 2002 honoring the contributions of Catholic schools in the United States, enumerating areas of achievement:

Whereas America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a superior scholastic education; and

Whereas Catholic schools ensure a broad, values-added education emphasizing the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people; and

Whereas the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2000-2001 academic year was 2,647,301, the total number of Catholic schools is 8,146, and the student-teacher ratio is 16 to 1; and

Whereas Catholic schools provide more than \$17,239,224,112 a year in savings to the Nation based on the average public school per pupil cost; and

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students and over 25 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are minorities; and

Whereas the graduation rate of Catholic school students is 95 percent, only 3 percent of Catholic high school students drop out of school, and 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college; and

Whereas Catholic schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual, character,



and moral development; and

Whereas the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated,

Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives. (H. R. Rep. 335, 2002, p. 323)

During the passage of House Resolution 107-28, the following statement by former Speaker of the House John Boehner was entered into the Congressional Record:

Last year, Catholic schools around the country enrolled more than 2.6 million children in more than 8,000 Catholic schools across the country. The student-teacher ratio in most Catholic schools is 17-to-1, and more than 24 percent of their students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. 95 percent of Catholic school students graduate; and 83 percent of their high school graduates go on to pursue a higher education. It stands to reason that if it were not for our Nation's Catholic schools, and the dedicated teachers who serve them, the achievement gap between the disadvantaged students in our society and their peers would be even wider. Moreover, I would point out that of the total students enrolled in Catholic schools, about 13 percent are not of the Catholic faith. These students come from a wide variety of faiths and have chosen to attend a Catholic school. I think that it speaks to the mission and success of Catholic educators to reach out to all students and their parents who are seeking the best possible education for their

children, especially for inner-city schools in which the majority of students enrolled are non-Catholic. (H.R. Rep. 107-28, 2001, p. 1406)

The academic value of Catholic education has long been established and additionally, acknowledged by the U.S. Congress. Since the 1960's, the number of Catholic schools in the United States declined but staffing has continued to increase. In 1960, there were over 112,000 religious and almost 40,000 lay staff, in 2011 there were slightly more than 5500 religious and 151,310 laities for a net gain of almost 5,000 staff (McDonald, 2011). Not only has this change in both aggregate numbers and percentage of lay staff had a huge impact on Catholic school finances, but Catholic schools face the same challenges of retaining qualified teachers that all United States schools must face. Additionally, it is of great import that Catholic school teachers maintain the mission of faith formation in order for Catholic schools to flourish.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study of teacher retention in Catholic schools and Catholic school identity factors examined the problem in the context of two important educational theorists. Richard Ingersoll's theories on teacher turnover were examined as they pertained to schools in general and in particular to Catholic schools. Additionally, Wayne Hoy's theories on climate and culture were examined as to the parallels that exist in Catholic school climate and culture, usually referred to as Catholic school identity within the Catholic school community.

#### **Teacher Turnover: Ingersoll's Theories**

Ingersoll (2003) has extensively studied teacher turnover in the United States. His theories are based in organizational theory and the sociology of organizations and schools (Ingersoll, 2003). Ingersoll's studies have provided important guiding theories on teacher

turnover in the US. He debunked the teacher shortage myth in the late twentieth century by pointing out four important areas of misperception:

- The NCES data that pointed to dwindling teachers were due to other areas than “shortage” or “graying.”
- Qualified teachers leaving education was more because of job dissatisfaction than previously believed or reported.
- Teacher recruitment initiatives are not enough to “stem the tide” of attrition.
- There are further organizational characteristics of schools driving teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2004).

Ingersoll has further argued that organizations that are service-based are not easily controlled by central authority. He describes that, paradoxically, schools need some control in a centralized manner yet are difficult to control centrally as teachers, those who perform the daily work, are somewhat independent and are rather de-centralized. Additionally, his work discusses the difficulty of maintaining this balance between centralized control and teacher autonomy. Without this balance, an unsatisfactory work environment can result (Ingersoll, 2003). Many studies have found that teachers seek support and collaboration but also want autonomy (Schoepner, 2010; Riggs, 2013).

Ingersoll’s work also notes the importance of cohesion among employees as being a necessary part of sustaining an organization (Ingersoll, 2003). Attrition in schools is a clear threat to the cohesion that must be built for schools to effectively prosper.

Ingersoll assessed three main categories in his work on teacher retention and attrition: teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational characteristics. For the teachers’ data, he assessed age, teaching area, gender, and ethnicity. For school data, size,

location, level, and type were assessed. In assessing organizational characteristics, salary, level of support, collaboration, conflict, and faculty influence were assessed (Ingersoll, 2001).

There are many characteristics which can be studied to examine the problem of teacher turnover. Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) identify a number of individual teacher characteristics that may affect retention and attrition of early career teachers. The SASS data also provide information on school characteristics which may influence retention and attrition. The data are disaggregated by a school's size and type and provide good data for comparison, but it does not disaggregate private and Catholic schools.

A number of studies have examined Ingersoll and teacher retention, including how the problem persists in Catholic schools. Cimino (2002), Convey (2012), O'Keefe (2003), Pryzgocki (2004), Scheopner (2010), and Youniss (1997) have all examined Catholic school teacher retention. None of these studies however, examined the factors of Catholic school identity, an important hallmark of Catholic schools, as it may influence teacher retention.

Teacher commitment in Catholic schools is an area which has been examined by a number of research studies. Cho's quantitative study in 2012 examined four main dimensions of teacher commitment in order to determine a primary area of commitment. He examined dimensions of commitment in terms of teachers' commitment to the following:

1. The mission
2. The school
3. Teaching as a vocation or profession
4. The students

Cho's (2012) study found that there was a strong relationship between these dimensions of commitment and four primary dimensions of faith as he defined them:

1. Personal belief
2. Intimacy with God
3. Actions
4. Living faith

Cho also found that environmental characteristics, such as Catholic school identity factors, were important predictors of commitment, especially in two main areas: the school's culture as one based on Gospel values and the spiritual leader of the school (Cho, 2012). Cho's study focused on Catholic school characteristics and their relation to commitment. The study did not focus on aspects or decisions relating to teacher retention.

Similarly, several studies focused primarily on the concept of the commitment of Catholic school teachers and examined commitment to mission or commitment to profession. The findings of these studies concluded that Catholic school teachers primarily were more motivated by the mission of the school as it aligned to their mission or beliefs (Convey, 2014; Squillini, 2001; Tarr, 1992).

Additionally, the theories of intrinsic commitment and motivation provide concepts to consider. More recent studies on the value today's work force increasingly places on intrinsic rewards, and the subtle devaluation of extrinsic ones, can be instrumental in building a more highly engaged workforce (Thomas, 2009).

According to Thomas' work, extrinsic rewards are sometimes seen as more routine and democratic, while intrinsic ones are seen as more highly valued due to implicit self-fulfillment. Thomas (2009) gives four main areas of intrinsic motivation:

- Commitment to a meaningful purpose
- The ability to choose the best means to fulfil a given task
- The competence in your given area to perform the work at hand
- Being able to see that you are progressing towards a goal

Intrinsic rewards can be a strong predictor of job satisfaction. Additionally, according to Thomas, higher levels of intrinsic motivation are predictive of better retention of the “right kind,” the retention of quality personnel. Thomas also writes that many under-estimate the power of internal reward (Thomas, 2009). These areas are all potentially related to the intrinsic motivators that teachers may experience in pursuing their work.

Thomas’ correlation of intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, while providing new findings through more recent research on impact in the workplace, is not a new concept. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, while sometimes debated as to its inclusivity, still provides a watershed work, reflecting the importance of intrinsic motivation and needs in human motivational psychology (Maslow, 1943, 1998). Maslow’s hierarchy of five basic needs begins with the two foundational needs of physiological needs and safety and moves into the “higher” needs of love and belonging, esteem, and finally self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

Maslow describes the highest level of the needs hierarchy as the need or motivation towards self-actualization. The commitment of Catholic school teachers, who may be influenced by the values, faith and spirituality aspects of Catholic schools, may align to the level of self-actualization that the teachers derive from their teaching positions in Catholic schools.

In further examining the impact of school identity factors as possible motivational factors, Wayne Hoy’s theories on school climate and culture provide a valuable lens through which to view Catholic school identity.

**Climate and Culture: Hoy**

Wayne Hoy's significant work on climate and culture is invaluable as a means of examining schools to assess various strengths and weaknesses. Hoy defined school climate as, "a prevailing quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior" (Hoy, 1990, p. 152). Culture was explained by Hoy as a set of shared "norms, values, philosophies, beliefs, expectations, myths and ceremonies" (Hoy, 1990, p. 157). School climate is generally a fairly broad term that refers to teachers' perceptions of their general work environment. The climate is influenced by many things. The collective personalities of the group and the leadership, as well as their cohesion collectively, are important components of school climate. School climate should be able to ebb and flow through crisis and pivotal moments without substantial change in the short term (Hoy, 1990). The cohesion or collective personality that Hoy says makes up climate is echoed in Ingersoll's work on retention. The cohesiveness of a group, which is important to academic success, is strongly threatened in schools with high rates of teacher turnover.

The effects of culture and climate on academic achievement in schools has often been noted in research. While some researchers consider them one and the same, there is an important distinction in Hoy's work on schools. Culture, the beliefs and customs of an organization may persist over time, regardless of changes in climate. Hoy differentiated culture as types of norms, shared values and assumptions (Hoy, 1990). He further discussed symbols of culture which can strongly parallel the symbols in Catholic schools and the culture or identity. Stories, myths, legends, icons, and rituals were all indicators of culture, according to Hoy (1990). As Catholic institutions are rife with these symbols, it is logical to translate these symbols of culture as being synonymous with the types of symbols that synthesize to form Catholic school identity. Hoy

summarized the key elements of school culture thus: Values, norms, rites, trust, efficacy, pupil control, and academic optimism are important tenets of school culture (Hoy, 1990).

Culture and climate have been shown to be valued aspects of school effectiveness. In a Catholic school, where a strong culture must permeate in order to advance the mission, it is important to examine how the culture, also viewed as Catholic school identity factors, may influence decisions of teacher retention or attrition. Again, the culture is paradoxical in Catholic schools in that in order to maintain its Catholicity, a school needs a consistent and cohesive staff; and yet when examining retention factors unique to Catholic schools, it is necessary to weigh the possible influence that the culture (identity factors) has in determining a teacher's decision to remain in Catholic school teaching or leave. Successful Catholic schools maintain a strong culture, as do other successful schools. In schools with difficulty maintaining or articulating the culture, whether through weaknesses in leadership or staff, how does this cultural deficit affect teacher turnover?

### **Catholic School Identity**

A Catholic school has a unique culture in that its main purpose, according to the Holy See and USCCB, is mission advancement, advancing the mission of faith formation and evangelization. While this is expected to take place in an atmosphere of academic excellence, according to *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* documents, it remains the primary purpose to date for establishment of Catholic schools. As Catholic schools seek to inculcate and propagate the faith, it is through the culture—beliefs, customs, traditions, and accepted practices—that the traditions of Catholic schools remain alive in the United States, three centuries after their inception.



The strongly articulated mission of Catholic schools has been long identified as a part of their academic strength. In 2012, The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) in conjunction with Loyola University sought to identify what factors are important hallmarks of Catholic schools. The resulting document, *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* was published. It has since been adopted by AdvancEd (Formerly Southern Association of College and Schools), a school accreditation organization for schools of all levels and types across the country, and is now an important part of self-studies for Catholic school accreditation. The defining characteristics are as follows:

1. Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ
2. Contributing to the Mission
3. Distinguished by Excellence
4. Committed to Educate the Whole Child
5. Steeped in a Catholic Worldview
6. Sustained by Gospel Witness
7. Shaped by Communion and Community
8. Accessible to All Students, Physically and Fiscally
9. Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop

In addition to documenting the attainment of these characteristics, Catholic schools must show attainment of a number of standards in the following areas: Mission and Catholic identity standards, governance and leadership standards, academic excellence standards, operational vitality standards (*National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, 2012). The *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary School* (2012) describes how the most mission-driven, program

effective, well managed, and responsibly governed Catholic schools should operate. It is particularly noteworthy for this study, that one quarter of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* relates to Catholic school identity. The emphasis placed on identity in the national benchmarks for Catholic schools further illustrates the uniquely important role and value of Catholic school identity in defining the Catholic school and its culture.

The substantial focus on “mission” in Catholic schools has a two-fold influence relating to teacher turnover. Catholic schools must maintain qualified teachers in order to further the mission that defines them; and while teacher attrition is high in Catholic schools, how does mission and Catholic identity possibly influence teacher retention or attrition decisions?

The mission, Catholic identity, and the resultant sense of community within Catholic schools, may be factors that influence teacher retention (Schuttoffel, 2001). Research that examines factors of retention which are particular to Catholic schools and disaggregates the data from private schools is important in assisting Catholic school administrators in determining allocation of resources such as time and money as well as initiatives to utilize in retaining qualified and committed Catholic educators. While multiple factors may contribute to retention of Catholic school teachers after year five of their career, the role of Catholic school identity cannot be overlooked.

Catholic schools face a unique challenge in recruiting and retaining teachers. A generation ago, Catholic schools’ staffs were primarily composed of a vast majority of vowed religious, who were given only small stipends, if any, for their teaching services. Since the 1960s the number of religious in U.S. Catholic schools has steadily and sharply declined, while the number of lay teachers has risen from 10% in the late 1960s to 97% today (Bryk, Lee, &

Holland, 1993), the challenge is then two-fold: to attract Catholic lay teachers who are degreed, certified, and subscribe to the Catholic mission of the schools and to be able to pay competitive salaries while keeping tuition costs affordable for Catholic families. Unlike many private schools, most Catholic schools seek to appeal to a large middle class population by balancing affordable tuition and socially just salaries. In 2005, the USCCB in their report on Catholic education, affirmed that the Catholic schools were the responsibility of the Catholic faith community and that they must ensure affordability and accessibility to all Catholic families who desire a Catholic education. This mandate, to keep Catholic schools affordable and accessible to as many who desire a Catholic education as possible, is a daunting task indeed in an age of charter schools, vouchers for publicly funded schools, and the school choice landscape in the United States. This important and overarching goal is left to the determination of individual schools and school leaders as to how to bring about the desired result fiscally, while remaining faithful to the mission the schools espouse. Additionally, as the need for lay salaries has increased exponentially over the past 40 years, it has created yet another unique hurdle for Catholic schools.

The additional problem, of ensuring that recruitment and retention policies focus on maintaining a staff that carries out the evangelizing mission of the church, is also unique to the Catholic school system. Canon Law, documents from the USCCB, and additional encyclicals all call for the necessity to ensure that the unique culture of Catholicity, as well as the teaching of gospel values, is evident in the school in a distinct way from other private or Christian schools. In a society with decreased church participation and with Catholic school teacher salaries being lower than average teacher pay, it becomes increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified

and committed new teachers, while paradoxically studies have shown teachers with more years of teaching in Catholic schools are a significant predictor of Catholic school identity.

A teacher's perception of job satisfaction is based on what he or she values. Catholic school teachers who remain in the profession are satisfied with their job in ways other than salary (Knauer, 2014).

As Catholic schools play a unique role in American education, so too do the Catholic school principals; and the Catholic leadership styles and expectations fill a unique role. Catholic schools are typically site-based managed schools, and thus Catholic school principals are called upon to fulfill all managerial needs. Additionally, they must still meet the needs of the school as an academic leader; and further, they are to act as the spiritual leader of the school (Cirello, 1998). The three-fold task—managerial, academic, and spiritual leader—is in addition to recruiting and retaining qualified teachers who can further the Catholic school's mission. And yet, despite the exhaustive three-fold demands placed on Catholic school principals, there is very little existing data about the reasons teachers in Catholic schools choose to stay or leave.

In assessing the overall landscape of Catholic school teacher retention and Catholic school identity for the purpose of this study, it was important to examine through the lens of two important educational theorists, Richard Ingersoll and his theories on teacher retention and Wayne Hoy and his theories of school climate and culture.

There are countless documents that exist regarding Catholic school identity; the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (2012) is one of the most recent and comprehensive. Convey's work regarding Catholic school identity is also noteworthy in this field. He examined perceptions of administrators and teachers in Catholic schools and found that these two groups of stakeholders felt that the school's culture

was the most important and compelling factor related to Catholic identity. They identified this as being a highly-valued aspect of effective Catholic schools (Convey, 2012). More recently, Fuller and Hawley have also examined perceptions of Catholic identity among stakeholders (Fuller, 2013, Hawley, 2016). Fuller's case study of an urban Catholic high school that "ignored" Catholic identity in pursuit of academic excellence and failed argued that focusing on Catholic identity to foster collaboration and spiritual growth could yield benefits in culture and climate, as well as academics (Fuller, 2013). Hawley's qualitative study explored perceptions of Catholic identity among stakeholders (Hawley, 2016). This study echoes the importance of Catholic identity factors in a parochial school. Hobbie (2009) also studied the impact of Catholic identity, the culture of Catholic schools, on school vitality. While these studies all emphasize the value of Catholic identity, none focus on teachers' perceptions of how Catholic school identity may influence their job satisfaction or decision to teach in a Catholic school.

### **Teacher Retention and Attrition**

Beginning in 2008, the National Council on Educational Statistics (NCES) conducted a School Staffing Survey (SSS) which noted that most teachers leaving the profession were early career teachers. Borman and Dowling (2008) noted the annual teacher attrition rate to be in excess of 17%, while other studies, considering teacher moves as well as retirement, place it higher than 40% (Chatlain & Noonan, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll (2002) noted that "not much is known about the concentrations of teacher turnover in particular types of schools or which aspects of school affect turnover." Ingersoll (2002) also noted five main reasons that teachers chose to leave the profession: personal reasons, 39%; cutbacks, 28%; dissatisfaction, 26%; other careers, 25%; and retirement, 12%. Teachers with less than five years of experience make up the largest group of teachers who leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2002). Additionally,

while little data regarding private schools have been disaggregated, studies have shown that the private school attrition rate is considerably higher (NCES, 2013; Ingersoll, 2003). The rate of attrition in private schools has been reported to be 11% higher than public schools (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll also reports that small private schools of less than 300 students lose up to 25% of their teaching staff each year. Both private and Catholic schools experience a higher than average rate of teacher attrition, even though research suggests somewhat higher levels of teacher satisfaction among Catholic school teachers than other private school teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Students who have consecutive years of effective teachers have a much greater chance for academic success than with any other measure provided by the school or system (TVAAS, 1996). Additional studies have also shown the value of effective experienced teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Corcoran, Jennings, & Beveridge, 2011). A teacher gains experience and effectiveness during the early years of his or her teaching career. The rate of teacher attrition before year five has created a costly problem for school systems and administrators. Based on studies of private schools, Catholic schools face an even more onerous burden of retaining effective teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Additionally, in Catholic schools, the training in catechesis and the advancement of the mission, integral parts of the Catholic school identity, are lost with teacher attrition. The damage caused by the lack of retention of teachers in early career years in Catholic schools is then threefold:

- Loss of academic achievement for students when effective teachers leave
- Loss of valuable resources—time and money
- Loss of catechesis and mission advancement (Catholic identity factors)

There are numerous and varied studies on teacher retention. Most point to the problem that continues to persist in the United States with high rates of teacher attrition. Borman and Dowling (2008), Cochran-Smith (2006), Darling-Hammond (2003), Gray (2015), Ingersoll (2001, 2002, 2003), McGrath and Princiotta (2005), and Synar (2010) all examine teacher retention issues as they exist for schools throughout the United States. Studies on Catholic school teacher retention are much fewer. Brettnacher (2002) focused on principals' perceptions of teacher attrition in Catholic schools. Ingersoll (2001, 2002, 2003) disaggregated data for private schools but did not disaggregate Catholic school data. Bronsard, in a 2012 quantitative study, examined factors impacting teacher retention at Catholic schools in the Diocese of St. Augustine but did not look at qualitative data or specifically at Catholic school identity factors. Similarly, Przygocki's (2004) and Radecki's (1987) studies on Catholic school teacher retention and attrition did not research the interaction of identity or culture. This study can serve to advance the research as it pertains to both Catholic schools and Catholic school identity factors.

### **Influence of Catholic Identity Factors**

Studies have shown that in Catholic schools, teachers' perceptions of Catholic Identity factors were important predictors of their school's vitality (Hobbie, 2010). When teachers perceived their schools to have strong Catholic school identities, as well as a principal who strongly promulgated the mission and provided support, they also perceived their schools to be successful (Hobbie, 2010). The teachers' perceptions of strong Catholic identity and good leadership was a significant predictor of school vitality in Hobbie's study. These findings were compatible with Hoy's theories that shared goals increased the commitment to the school. Teachers who were optimistic that they could achieve their objectives in the organization were

more successful than those who did not see their objectives as being united with the school objectives (Hoy, 1990).

Similarly, many studies have examined the importance of non-monetary factors on teacher job satisfaction and retention. Scheopner's (2010) work on retention concluded that there was no simple solution to the complex problem of teacher retention but that culture and commitment needed to be examined as aspects of retention (Scheopner, 2010). Chikri (2000), Cimino (2001), Convey (2014), O'Keefe (2003) and Williby (2004) have all examined this problem specifically in Catholic schools (Chikri, 2000, Cimino, 2001, Convey, 2014, O'Keefe, 2003, Williby, 2004). All concluded that there are motivators, other than monetary ones, that compel teachers to remain committed to teaching in Catholic schools. This research examines those motivators and specifically examine teachers' perceptions of Catholic school identity factors as possible motivators.

### **Summary**

Despite the known numbers of teacher attrition and some of the contributing factors, little research has shown what factors contribute to teachers' decisions to remain in teaching after year five as it relates to Catholic schools. Research on the decline of participation in the Catholic church is limited but may also be a factor in lack of retention. Further, research on school climate and culture has shown the influence these factors have on teacher retention and attrition. Studies have not, however, assessed the identity factors of Catholic schools and how they relate to retention or attrition decisions in Catholic schools.

This study examined factors that influence teacher retention within the Catholic school setting. Although compensation is a known factor that can positively influence retention, most individuals who choose teaching do not enter the profession for monetary gain. The lower



salaries and call for commitment to Catholic mission require truly committed individuals to staff Catholic schools, and the strongly articulated mission and sense of community within Catholic schools may be factors that influence teacher retention (Schuttoffel, 2001). Research that examines factors of retention which are particular to Catholic schools and Catholic school identity factors and disaggregates that data from private schools is important in assisting Catholic school administrators in determining allocation of resources, such as time and money, as well as initiatives to utilize in retaining qualified and committed Catholic educators.

Chapter III includes the research methodology for this qualitative study, which evaluates the factors contributing to teacher retention after year five in Catholic parochial schools in Baton Rouge as well as any correlation between Catholic identity and teacher retention. The chapter includes information on the sample population surveyed, the questions researched, the methodology and instrumentation of the study, as well as the data collection and analysis methods.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The methods detailed in this chapter were used to explore teachers' perceptions of what factors influence Catholic elementary school teachers in the Diocese of Baton Rouge to remain in their teaching positions in a Catholic parochial school after year five of their career. The study also examined teachers' perceptions of which, if any, Catholic school identity factors influence their retention decisions. The design chosen for this study was a qualitative one. The phenomenological characteristics of qualitative research were well suited to the type of information sought and the questions to be answered by the researcher. The broad and deeply descriptive information derived from this design helped develop the themes for analysis of teacher retention factors in parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the import of Catholic school identity factors based on teachers' perceptions.

In this chapter, I explain my interest in this topic, as well as my background in Catholic education. I also provide the procedures and methodologies used, the population sample and selection process, the questions that were researched, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. Following the research, a brief profile of the participants using code numbers is provided.

#### **Background**

Catholic school administrators face the continued, and seemingly increasing, problem of retention of qualified and effective teachers. The loss of resources, especially time and money, potential loss of academic achievement, and loss of catechesis is continually daunting. Yet, despite the lower pay that Catholic school teachers receive, there are many qualified and

effective teachers who particularly choose Catholic schools. This is true of Catholic and non-Catholic teachers alike. Research has shown that there are many motivators for teachers beyond pay that impact their job satisfaction and retention decisions. In order to examine particular factors unique to Catholic schools that influence teachers to remain in Catholic schools, the research questions were asked in a one-on-one interview format.

My experience with Catholic parochial school spans 25 years as a Catholic school administrator, the last 17 of which I served as the principal of a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade parochial school in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Over the years, one continually growing problem that I and other administrators faced was the problem of teacher attrition. As the research shows, there are a number of factors that influence teachers to leave their teaching post or remain in the field. Satisfaction with their salary is only one facet of the problem. In examining the problem as it pertained to my school, as well as discussing this with colleagues in neighboring schools, I became intrigued by the passion and commitment of those teachers who decide to remain in Catholic schools despite opportunities for higher pay in neighboring civil parishes. For these individuals, the culture of Catholic schools seems to be of great import. As advancing the mission and culture of Catholic school identity is an important focus of all Catholic schools, by understanding the perceptions of the teachers who are dedicated to their work in these schools, school leaders can focus attention on the features that are valued by these teachers to increase retention rates in their schools.

This study was designed to explore teachers' perceptions of what factors in general, and which, if any, specific Catholic school identity factors influence teachers' decisions to remain in a Catholic parochial elementary school in Baton Rouge after year five of their teaching career. The questions were asked to gain information, valuable to administrators, in order to assist

administrators in creating or sustaining a positive Catholic school climate and organizational structure conducive to teacher retention. Additionally, the study adds to the existing body of knowledge of Catholic school teachers' perceptions about teacher retention.

Theories underlying this research include Ingersoll's theories on teacher retention and attrition, as well as Hoy's theories on school culture and climate; which together provide the conceptual framework for this study.

The primary research question to be answered was as follows: In what ways, if any, are the retention decisions of teachers in Catholic parochial schools related to or influenced by aspects of Catholic identity; i.e., Catholic school identity factors?

Additional research questions to be answered were as follows:

1. What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school after the first five years of their teaching career?
2. What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?
3. How do the Catholic school teachers perceive school identity factors, in terms of importance, in teacher retention decisions?

### **Design**

The design of this study employed a qualitative method. While the questions examined characteristics of retained teachers in three main areas—teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational characteristics—the main emphasis of this study was to examine what organizational aspects of climate and culture unique to Catholic schools (Catholic identity factors) may influence the teacher to remain in the school. It further examined which

factors are of greatest influence to teachers who choose to remain in a Catholic parochial school after year five of their teaching career.

A qualitative strategy was used to gather the data. The research was conducted using an interview approach. The value of this approach in explaining an organization, such as the Catholic parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, is that the approach involves seeking an in-depth analysis to explain what is happening in regard to the issue, teacher retention. Qualitative research is richly descriptive in nature, and the interview data revealed thoughtful and insightful information from the teachers in the study.

The general design of qualitative research is useful when there is a concept to be explored that has little research. It allows the researcher the opportunity to gain insight into the essence of the experiences of the participants and to examine variables that are important, especially when existing research may not apply to the particular group or sample to be studied (Creswell, 2013). It also gives the researcher “clues” into what direction to move with the study. Qualitative methods help the researcher decipher what meaning the participant ascribes to his or her experience (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative design allows for inductive reasoning as themes emerge. Themes not foreseen by the researcher often emerge in the course of the qualitative research, and this can assist the researcher in gaining further insights into the participants’ perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2014). Inductive reasoning is useful in this context as the researcher moves from the broader question or problem to slowly sift through the various layers and narrow the focus. From a wide range at the outset, the researcher moves to the narrow focus to develop the themes and answer the research questions (Bogdan & Biklan, 2014).

This approach was well suited to the type of information sought and the questions posed by the researcher in determining teachers’ perceptions of their Catholic school teaching career.

Broad and deeply descriptive information was helpful in developing the themes for analysis of teacher retention factors in parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the import of Catholic school identity factors, based on teachers' perceptions.

### **Population and Sample**

The setting for this study was the Catholic parochial elementary schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic school system. The Diocese consists of 29 schools, in eight civil parishes; Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. James, Tangipahoa, and West Baton Rouge. The school system consists of one primary school, 20 elementary schools, one K-12 school, and seven high schools. Of these schools, there are four independent schools run by religious orders, three regional high schools, six inter-parochial schools, and 16 parochial schools. These schools are in a variety of settings, inner city, urban, suburban, and rural. The schools vary in size from the smallest student body of about 125 students to the largest, with an enrollment of approximately 1,200 students. Additionally, the socioeconomic makeup of the schools is quite diverse. Of the approximately 14,000 students in the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, more than 7% are receiving state scholarship funding which pays the entirety of their tuition, while others come from many varying socioeconomic groups. As the parochial school model differs from the inter-parochial, regional, or independent schools, and teacher retention can vary greatly between school types, this study focused on the parochial elementary school model and gathered data only from teachers in parochial school settings.

The parochial school in the United States was a designation traditionally reserved for Catholic schools. While it is occasionally used to designate schools of other faiths, it is predominantly linked to a particular Catholic school concept. Parochial comes from the Latin, *parochia*, which meant relating to an ecclesiastical district. The term *parochial*, in reference to

Catholic schools, means it is related to a particular church parish. Most Catholic church parishes have very distinct boundary lines which determine the make-up of the parish. The parochial school designation also means that according to canon law, the local pastor serves as the local “superintendent.” Each diocese or arch-diocese will have a diocesan superintendent, but the local pastor has ultimate authority over his school. This model evolved mainly in the late 1800s in the United States. There were two predominant reasons for this model to take root. One was the huge influx of immigrants from Ireland and European countries, a populace that was predominantly Catholic; the other factor, which came about as a result of the immigrant influx, was the passage of the Blaine Amendments in 40 of 48 states. Parochial schools represent 60% of Catholic schools in the United States and 20% of all private schools in the United States. As they are the predominant Catholic school model in the United States, they provide the best population for this study.

The target participants for this study were purposefully selected teachers from the Catholic parochial elementary schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. A criterion-based sampling was used. The teachers were selected from a pool of teachers who met the stated criteria of being actively employed in a Catholic parochial elementary school in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and had more than five years of teaching experience in a Catholic school. Additionally, in order to be adequately informed to answer questions that related to their perceptions of school culture and Catholic identity, the teacher had to have been employed at their current school for a minimum of three years.

Permission was obtained first from the Diocese of Baton Rouge School Board. The board must give approval to conduct research in schools that are located within the Diocese. Additionally, the researcher was granted approval from the Institutional Review Board of Seton

Hall University to conduct the proposed study. Following that, and with the permission and approval of Dr. Melanie Verges, Superintendent of Schools, a notification was sent to the principals of the 16 Catholic parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, explaining the study; and an email was sent to the teachers in the parochial schools with an invitation to participate and a letter of informed consent. Approximately 750 teachers received that email. Teachers who chose to participate completed a brief online demographic questionnaire which was returned to me to ensure they met the selected criteria of more than five years of Catholic teaching experience and more than three years in their current school. From the invitation to participate, I received 102 positive responses of participation. From the respondents, 73 met the criteria of five years of Catholic school teaching. Of the 73, 63 had been in their current school for three or more years, and 58 met the criteria of classroom teachers. These 58 teachers formed the stratified random sample group from which the interviewees were selected.

The information was used to purposefully select teachers who met the criteria of five or more years of Catholic school teaching and three or more years in their current school. The years of experience were needed so that teachers could adequately reflect upon why they chose to remain in teaching in contrast to the teachers in Ingersoll's work on attrition, many of whom chose to leave before year five. Additionally, three years of service in their current school gave the teachers an adequate knowledge base to evaluate the Catholic identity of their school setting. Teacher names and identifying information were not used. Each respondent was assigned a number. Numbers were then used for selection purposes. Numbers were placed on slips of paper and randomly drawn by the researcher. In order to have a more representative sample, if the sampling process provided any additional teachers from a school already chosen, that number was discarded and another number was selected.



Teachers who were not selected were notified via a letter sent by e-mail. They were thanked for their interest in participating and given the opportunity to answer an open-ended question regarding Catholic school identity. However, no additional responses were received.

Teachers who were selected were likewise notified by e-mail and then sent via mail a letter of informed consent. Interviews were then scheduled at the participant's site school, at a time and location of their choice.

Purposeful criterion-based sampling ensured that criteria relevant to the phenomenological nature of the study was present. This sampling method is often used in qualitative studies to identify those experienced in the area being researched (Creswell, 2013)

### **Profiles of Participants and Sites**

After the study, a demographic profile of teachers (using a number) without a school name or identifying information, was compiled and has been included.

Table 1

#### *Participant Profile*

Code #	Sex	Position	Total Years	Years Catholic School	Years Current School	State Certification Y/N	Degree B/M.Ed.	Catholic /Non-Catholic
1	F	7 <sup>th</sup> Science	13	13	4	Y	B	C
2	F	K	25	23	8	Y	B	C
3	F	PK4	14	11	4	Y	B	C
4	F	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Religion	21	21	21	Y	B	C

5	M	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Social Studies	24	24	24	Y	B	C
6	F	Middle School Math	6	6	6	Y	B	N
7	F	Middle School Math	31	28	3	Y	B	C
8	F	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10	10	10	Y	M.Ed.	C
9	F	K	25	15	15	Y	B	C
10	F	PK4	5	5	5	Y	B	C
11	F	K	20	19	4	Y	B	C
12	F	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Science	45	38	38	Y	B	N
13	F	K-8 Spanish	28	19	3	Meets criteria for Foreign Lang	B	Y

### Data Collection

The interview protocol for this research was formulated after an extensive literature review on teacher retention and Catholic school identity factors and in conjunction with a review of the questions by a jury of experts in the field of Catholic education. The jury consisted of two practicing Catholic school administrators and an expert teacher. An interview format was selected because of the depth of data needed and the opportunity to delve more deeply into

gathering information about the participants' perceptions through one-on-one interviews. Use of the interviews provided a "qualitative, investigative perspective" (Creswell, 2013). The jury of experts assisted in determining flaws or limitations in the interview question design so that adjustments could be made prior to implementation of the research.

These questions related directly to the research questions to be answered. The questions were asked to gain information, valuable to administrators, in sustaining or creating opportunities for these factors to be experienced by the teachers in their schools. Using a set question format, as opposed to an informal interview protocol, provided for data that were more consistent and reliable (Creswell, 2013). The value of interviews is that they seek an understanding of the lived experience of the participants (Bogken & Biklen, 2014).

Each interview was held at each school location to assist the teacher in feeling comfortable in this or her environment. The classroom or the library, or other confidential and comfortable space, was used for the interviews. Names of teachers were not used in the gathering of data to ensure confidentiality. The researcher scheduled the interviews outside of school time at the interviewees' convenience, and conducted interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes in duration.

The interviewees were given set questions, which were semi-structured, with some being open-ended, to discuss their perceptions regarding their school's Catholic identity, their decision to remain in a Catholic school, and what influence, if any, Catholic school identity factors have had on their decision. Open-ended questions yielded more detailed data by allowing the interviewee additional input. They also allowed the interviewee the opportunity for personal reflection and to explore perceptions and provide detail. The drawback to the use of open-ended questions is that they can make coding more difficult for the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The

questions were developed specifically for use in this research to fit the sampling and type of data needed. The researcher provided different prompts or probes during the interview, as needed and as were germane to the interview taking place.

The participants were asked to provide any suggestions regarding their perceptions of elements that influenced their decision to remain in Catholic schools that could be beneficial to administrators in assisting early teacher retention. The interviews were conducted individually. The interviews were tape recorded to ensure accuracy and were transcribed and coded by the interviewer to ensure confidentiality. Following the transcription, each participant was emailed a copy of the transcript and given the opportunity to make comments or note a correction. Once transcripts were finalized, audio tapes were no longer kept.

The transcriptions were housed by the researcher in a secure and locked location throughout the duration of the study; and at the conclusion of the study, the data has been, and will remain, stored securely for three years and then properly disposed of.

Table 2

*Relationship of Interview Questions to Research Questions*

Overarching question: In what ways, if any, are the retention decisions of teachers in Catholic schools influenced by aspects of Catholic identity?		
Sub-questions	Theorist	Related Interview Questions
What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school teaching position after the first five years of their teaching career?	Richard Ingersoll	-Why have you remained in teaching as a career? -Why have you remained in your current Catholic school?

		-Do you have any suggestions for administrators regarding Catholic school identity factors that may help them retain more teachers?
What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?	Wayne Hoy	-What school practices make your school identifiable as a Catholic school? -Are there other Catholic school identity factors that you would like to see as part of your school? -Does your school have a mission statement? How is the mission statement used? -Do your school's Catholic identity factors influence your decision to remain in Catholic school teaching?
How do Catholic school teachers perceive school identity factors, in terms of importance, in teacher retention decisions?	John Convey, Marion Hobbie, Audrey Scheopner	-What opportunities are there for teachers to practice their faith? - How would you rate your school's Catholic school identity? -Which 3 identity factors do you believe are most important to your job satisfaction?
Questions to provide background information: What is your current teaching position? Have you worked at other schools? If so, what type of school?		

### Data Analysis

The researcher used standard data analysis measures to review and analyze the research. The interview data, which supports the research, were gathered and summarized. The researcher used the questions and summarized findings to assess patterns and themes that are recurring among the surveys. As the interviews were taken and transcribed, the data analysis began as the

researcher compared and contrasted, examined, and sought to find any concurrent themes among interviewees.

Through a process of inductive reasoning, conclusions were drawn from the data to analyze important recurring factors that assist with retention. Although there may be some bias towards Catholic education, the researcher has sought to discover factors which encourage teachers to remain in teaching in Catholic schools.

### **Coding**

The process of transcribing and coding took place shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy. Qualitative data were clustered into meaningful categories through the emergent themes to examine whether or not teachers perceive Catholic school identity and teacher retention to be highly congruent in concept, mutually exclusive, or loosely related. Participants' responses to common themes were useful in addressing the research questions. Coding, notation, and identification of any emerging themes all took place interactively while the research was being analyzed. These themes were used throughout the analysis to organize the data. Following the clustering of data, factors were assessed to examine possible trends existing among teachers who choose to remain in Catholic parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Additionally, Catholic school identity factors were viewed in order of importance to possibly yield additional data useful to school administrators in affecting change which may assist in the retention of qualified teachers. Similarly, teachers' perceptions of climate were assessed in relationship to their perception of Catholic school identity factors in order to assess possible congruency. Through the process of coding and clustering, as well as the process of

inductive reasoning, conclusions were drawn from the data to analyze important recurring factors that emerged from the data.

Table 3

*Preliminary Coding List*

Academics	Mass
Administration	Mission
Catholicism	Mentoring
Christianity	Prayer
Climate	Priest
Collaboration	Professional Development
Collegiality	Public School
Commitment	Retreats
Common Language	Salary
Communication	School Size
Community	Service
Culture	Spouse
Discipline	Students
Evangelize	Talk about God
Faculty Prayer	Whole child

In developing the interview questions, I included some background questions which provided a framework for the perceptions that teachers expressed. Additionally, each research question had at least three interview questions that related directly to the specific question. Further, as the responses were coded and clustered, analysis of similarities of perceptions were assessed through careful analysis of the interview transcripts. Additional analysis, using a mathematical approach applied to coding, yielded an analytical perspective in evaluating responses.

## Themes

As the data were analyzed and themes emerged, codes were synthesized to assess the themes. Recurrent themes from interviews were examined to deepen the analysis of the teachers' perceptions. It is important to note that the individual responses were not subsumed into the group themes that emerged. Individual responses were all noted and carry great weight separately because they make up the totality of the individual's lived experience and perceptions. After factoring individual responses, the synthesis of themes was similarly analyzed. Emergent themes were related back to the research question for further analysis. The main themes that emerged were labeled as follows: academics, climate/culture, collegiality, administration, extrinsic motivators, and faith.

Table 4

### *Emergent Themes Related to Research Questions*

Questions	Themes
What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school teaching position after the first five years of their teaching career?	Community/School family - <b>Culture</b> Vocation Prayer/faith sharing - <b>Faith</b> Colleague support - <b>Collegiality</b>
What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?	Community/School family support - <b>Culture &amp; Collegiality</b> Community prayer and faith sharing with students Faculty prayer and retreats Whole child/Mind and heart - <b>Faith &amp; Culture</b>
How do Catholic school teachers perceive school identity factors in terms of importance (value), in teacher retention decisions.	



### **Validity and Reliability**

While reliability is difficult to assess in an interview process, one-on-one interviews with standardized questions have the highest degree of reliability for this qualitative study. The reliability has been manifested in the consistency of data while the transcripts were thoroughly analyzed.

The validity of the instrument has been established through an analysis of the questions by a jury of experts, and suggestions for changes were incorporated to endeavor to ask clear questions and avoid interviewer bias and leading or emotive questions. The validation of the questions was conceptually based to support the research questions and the construct of the study. Additionally, in qualitative research, the validity is also based on the researcher's interpretation of the data and meanings ascribed to interviewee responses. Following the transcription, member checking for validity occurred, as this provided an additional means of establishing validity (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher followed training protocol and was cognizant of avoiding biases, to ensure a higher level of reliability. Also, using a mathematical approach, coding and summing scores, provided more reliability than merely using the discretion of the interviewer.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the research study, ethical protocol, as set by the "Protecting Human Research Participants," was followed. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, it was important for the researcher to be aware of any bias or judgments which could have been present in the researcher-interviewee interaction. Throughout the study, confidentiality of the interviewee was maintained and the purpose and rationale for the research were fully disclosed to all participants in the study through the initial informational letter, the letter of consent that

clearly stated the purpose of the research, and through the member checking of the interview transcript.

### **Role of Researcher**

As a qualitative researcher, I must acknowledge my bias in this research study. Validity is predicated on the fact that the researcher is accurately ascribing meaning to the data. As a longtime Catholic school administrator who believes in the mission of Catholic schools, it is important to recognize and report that bias. Having recognized that bias, I also maintain that I clearly understood my role as researcher and how important maintaining that role in the most ethical way was to the validity of the study.

Using predetermined questions in a semi-structured format, allowed the interviewee the opportunity to answer questions in their own words. Conversation was able to flow at their pace without leading prompts.

### **Summary**

Chapter III presented the methodology intended for use in this study. The use of qualitative analysis is beneficial in determining qualities which influence the teachers' decisions to remain in Catholic education. The sample population provided a large enough sampling to assume that results can be generalized when considered along with reliability of the study.

Internal validity was established and researcher validity was maintained to ensure the legitimacy of the study. The data collected and analyzed yielded results which should have important implications for Catholic school administrators. The impact of the data provides some predictive information that, if replicated, can possibly benefit Catholic schools, their teachers, and, most importantly, their students in the retention of qualified teachers. This can ultimately greatly benefit all stakeholders and the schools in providing quality academic Catholic education.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and the analysis of the research. The chapter also presents an overview of the contextual background of the study. The subsequent sections examine themes that emerged in relation to the three research questions. Finally, the last section summarizes significant research findings that arose.

Teacher attrition in U.S. schools is astonishingly high. The plight of most Catholic schools in regard to teacher attrition is even more serious as the pay is generally lower and attrition is consistently higher than in public schools. Additionally, Catholic schools must meet new challenges in several areas. As Catholic schools face a critical crossroads as to what their future may be, including whether to retain their true Catholic identity and roots or forgo that identity to take on a more secularized mission focused primarily on academics, issues of retaining qualified and committed teachers to provide a strong academic environment remains critical. The combination of a vast demographic shift in the teaching staff from religious to lay, the skyrocketing costs despite efforts to keep tuition costs affordable, the proliferation of free charter schools, and the growing homeschool movement have all created large hurdles that Catholic schools must overcome to remain strong and viable entities. Most of these hurdles are not unique to Catholic schools but have greatly impacted independent private schools across the country as well (In the Era of School Choice, 2015). Yet, as Catholic schools have always maintained a unique mission, their Catholic mission has always been the foremost purpose for which the schools exist. In a parochial setting, the uppermost purpose is to educate the Catholic children of that church parish and assist the parents in teaching the faith. Throughout the years

and with declining enrollment Catholic school teachers face the additional demands beyond teaching their curriculum; they must further act as faith educators, a role that often requires them to have additional, and sometimes ongoing, training. Administrators have had to grapple with attracting and maintaining a qualified teaching staff despite lower wages and to struggle with balancing the budget despite sometimes declining enrollment and working to keep tuition costs affordable.

Yet despite these obstacles and the teachers who leave, often in the early years of their teaching career, there are the committed teachers who seek to fulfil the mission of the Catholic school by combining faith and academics, despite the sometimes-lacking salary and benefits.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives of what factors in general, and specifically which Catholic school identity factors are important to them and may influence their job satisfaction and retention in Catholic parochial schools in a diocesan school system after year five of their teaching career. An additional purpose of this study was to inform Catholic school administrators about factors that may assist them in sustaining a climate and organizational structure that influences qualified teachers to remain in the Catholic school setting.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge, the setting for this study, currently has 16 parochial elementary schools, pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Teachers from 13 of the 16 schools were interviewed for this research. This study was conducted in the winter of the 2016-2017 school year. Nine of the schools visited for interviews were in the city of Baton Rouge, the other four were in the neighboring towns of Hammond, Independence, Paincourtville, and Ponchatoula. Of the nine schools visited in Baton Rouge, four of them are designated as National Blue Ribbon Schools, as awarded by the U.S. Department of Education.

The 13 classroom teachers who were interviewed for the study were asked questions developed by the researcher for this study after a review of the literature and the development of the conceptual framework. The questions were also reviewed by a panel of experts in Catholic education for reliability, prior to the beginning of the interview process. The purpose of the questions was to understand Catholic school teachers' perceptions of Catholic school identity in their school and whether these identity factors impact their decisions to teach in Catholic schools. The information gained by the use of the questions was used to answer the three research questions that were the basis for this study. The questions were as follows:

1. What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school after the first five years of their teaching career?
2. What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?
3. How do the Catholic School teachers perceive school identity factors, in terms of importance (value) in teacher retention decisions?

Understanding teachers' perceptions about what they find important to their decision to remain in Catholic schools could potentially assist administrators by highlighting critical Catholic identity factors or practices that they may then implement or sustain to assist in retaining qualified teachers.

### **Themes - Research Question 1**

Research Question 1. What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school after the first five years of their teaching career?

Before addressing Catholic identity as a possible factor in teacher decision making, it was important to ask open-ended questions about what factors, in general, influenced the teachers'

decisions. Interview questions 6-8 addressed this area. Question 13 also addressed this area but is discussed separately, later in this chapter, as it gave teachers an opportunity to offer suggestions for administrators.

The answers given by the participants in the study indicated that major themes for this question were the following: faith, which encompassed prayer in many forms, as well as faith sharing; the climate and culture, especially as a Catholic community; and collegiality, which encompassed both peers and administrators.

For this question, six of the 13 teachers mentioned all three themes, faith, climate/culture, and collegiality in their responses. Five mentioned two of the three themes, faith, and climate and culture. One teacher mentioned just faith, and one, in a unique situation, did not name any of the aforementioned themes but stated simply, “I’m here for the kids.” Teacher 7, including all three themes, said the following

We have gone through tremendous hardship. We sold our dream home. We chose to sacrifice to keep our daughters in Catholic education and for me to stay. Last year, I tutored every night until eight o’clock. I have a true love and passion for what I do.

She also told stories of both colleagues and administrators supporting her and one another and sharing faith. Parts of the school and many nearby homes were greatly affected by historic flooding in August, 2016. This teacher again linked community and faith as reasons why she stays in Catholic school, in recounting tales of generosity.

This year has been a unique year with the flooding. Very trying. I tell you it has been a very difficult year for our students but we have seen them come together in ways that are unbelievable. Many of them are living at each other’s houses. Other school families

took in those who lost their home. They've really bonded and they help each other out with everything. I think this has brought our faith community even closer.

Ten of the teachers specifically mentioned that they get to "pray with the children," and all but one mentioned that they get to "talk about God/Jesus." In describing their role, three teachers specifically referenced teaching as their vocation, a faith-based calling, an inclusive love of what they do. Teacher 2 summed it up with, "I just can't imagine doing anything else." Teacher 7 said, "It's who I am. It encompasses all I believe and am." Teacher 12 said, "I feel that I am doing what I was called to do."

The interview question that touched on various motivating factors, intrinsic and extrinsic, received responses that strongly highlight the intrinsic motivators that lead teachers to remain in Catholic school teaching positions. Extrinsic motivators such as salary were less important. Hence the decision to remain in a school setting where the salary is lower becomes more understandable. Ten respondents stated that salary and benefits were either unimportant or worth the sacrifice, "a trade-off." However, all 13 teachers felt that the intrinsic values, the personal rewards and interpersonal relationships, were irreplaceable and discussed this in various ways. "It was amazing the outpouring of support after the flood," said Teacher 3, who lost her home. She further referenced many concrete ways that people reached out to her and her family. Teacher 1 said simply, "I don't do this for the salary." From the ten teachers who stated that salary was unimportant, or only slightly important and a "trade off," if given a choice to stay or go to a non-Catholic school, all of the teachers in the study, even the non-Catholic ones, evidenced a desire to remain in Catholic schools.

Unfortunately, six of this group gave the reason for their priorities as a spouse that works. Additionally, eight teachers said that they knew young teachers who generally left to make more

money. The idea that their salary alone was not enough to support them did not seem to distress the respondents but was accepted as a fact of Catholic school teaching.

Further responses about other factors such as administrative and collegial support yielded answers that ranked the importance of these factors (internal motivators) a good deal higher than the extrinsic ones. Nine of the 13 teachers discussed the importance of administrative support with Teacher 7 stating, “Administrative support, that’s the number one thing teachers need or want to be successful.” Additionally, all teachers stated the importance of collegial support and community, with five using the word *family* to describe the interpersonal relationships. Many of the teachers specifically included administrators in the colleague category and gave examples of ways they had seen their principal reach out to others in the community in a supportive and Christian manner, above and beyond what the role of principal requires.

### **Themes - Research Question 2**

Research Question 2. What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?

In order to address the questions of identity factors as a possible influencing factor in teacher retention, it was important to gain insight into a teacher’s perspectives of what Catholic school identity factors they saw in place and which others they may have perceived as missing. In addition, the questions asked of the impact these factors made on the teachers and their retention decisions. Interview Questions 3, 4, and 11 were used to assess these areas. There were a number of areas that the teachers stated as identity factors present in their schools, factors such as the following:

- Sharing the faith/talking about God
- Praying as a community (both student body and faculty prayer opportunities)



- The community as a family
- The school attending Mass on a regular basis
- Service to others/service projects

These specific items were each mentioned by more than half of the respondents. There were three main themes that emerged from the questions relating to Research Question 2. For Interview Questions 3, 4, and 11, which sought to answer this research question, several things were acutely obvious. Again, faith, this time referenced as specific Catholic practices “culture and climate” (Although I distinguished between these earlier, many teachers used these two terms interchangeably, and so they are grouped together for the purpose of reporting findings.) and collegiality. As in Research Question 1, teachers used this term to describe their perceptions of both administrators and peers as valuable to their retention decisions based on the interpersonal relationships which had been formed in their school. Most of the teachers were able to discuss their mission statement in detail, and state its use in their school, with ten teachers responding that the mission statement was used in decision making and as a guiding tenet, and five teachers describing their separate and unique mission statements as seeking to educate the “whole child.” Teacher 2 responded, “We are a Catholic school. We’re here to educate the entire child, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and academically.” Teacher 4 responded, “Our faculty works hard to demonstrate Catholicity in their behavior, their teaching practices, and their daily interactions with students,” as well as the following:

Although there is the temptation of moving to another opportunity, when I look at the opportunity that I have in the classroom to share my faith, my beliefs, with young students that have an open mind, it’s something that draws me and makes me want to stay here.

Teacher 11 stated, “We treat each other fairly, kindly. Everything is about Catholic education. We do our academics, but we bring that religious part to everything we do. We serve others. We help the needy around the school, the parish, and the community.” Additionally, the teachers used terms such as *values*, *morals*, *faith*, and *living their faith* in their responses. Ten of the 13 teachers gave responses indicating that their decision to remain in Catholic school teaching was about the Catholic culture, with one succinctly stating that “It is absolutely all about Catholic school identity.”

The main things that the faculty felt were missing or wanted to see more of fell generally in the area of collegiality and more specifically in the area of faith-sharing with colleagues. Teachers whose schools did not currently have faculty prayer mentioned that as a very desired practice. Additionally, faculty retreats were described by the teachers as being valued on a regular basis, and in the schools where they are not occurring regularly, teachers missed and desired that opportunity to combine two important areas, faith and collegiality. Further, many teachers felt that Mass opportunities, seen as a cornerstone of Catholic education, were lacking. In several instances teachers stated that younger students do not attend Mass but the faculty feel they should attend, as they are part of the school community. Additionally, on Holy Days of Obligation, (i.e., the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8) some teachers stated that their students (at all grade levels) as well as the teachers, did not have the opportunity to attend Mass at all. Several teachers perceived that the priests or pastors of the parochial schools should work to be more inclusive of the school as part of the church parish. Teacher #9 stated, “It’s terrible that we don’t attend Mass on a holy day because we are a Catholic school. Masses are offered, but the pastor does not allow the school to attend.” When asked to further explain this, she stated that the priest did not feel it was important for the students to attend parish

Masses. Several teachers again echoed that the younger students were never allowed to attend Mass. This was very concerning to these teachers, and they perceived this to be completely counter to the mission of a Catholic school.

### **Themes – Research Question 3**

Research Question 3. How do the Catholic school teachers perceive school identity factors, in terms of importance (value), in teacher retention decisions?

In order to determine teachers' perceptions of the value of Catholic identity factors as important to teacher retention, it was important to gain insight into a teacher's perspectives of what Catholic school identity factors were in place that they, as teachers, related directly to, as well as their current view of their school's Catholic identity. Interview Questions 5, 9, 10, and 12 were used to assess these areas. Question 12 was a ranking of most important identity factors for teachers personally, and will be discussed at the end of this chapter along with the suggestions for administrators, Question 13.

Again, the major themes that emerged echoed the results of the earlier two questions. Faith, culture/climate, and collegiality were the predominant themes for this research question.

As teachers discussed opportunities in which they could practice their faith, the communal faith aspects were most important to them. They valued faculty retreats, faculty prayer, and faith sharing over Mass and the rosary in terms of faculty interaction. The item that was mentioned the most, and clearly valued by the teachers, was faculty prayer. Another faith item that was frequently mentioned was service. The idea of service was expressed in terms of service to others, but also in terms of service to the church as a ministry that set an example for the children. Teacher 1 expressed the following:

We take turns leading prayer in the teachers' lounge every morning. And of course, we participate in Mass. The great thing about Mass on Fridays is that our students participate with us. Our students get to read and serve but we serve with them. So, our teachers serve too and its good for the kids to see that example.

The faith aspects of the Catholic school environment were what was mentioned most frequently when teachers were asked what they valued most about teaching in a Catholic school. Teacher 5 stated the following:

What's so nice about a Catholic school is that you can instill values in your lessons. You don't have to think, "Am I going too far in sharing with children?" I mean, today was Pearl Harbor Day and we talked about history, but we also talked about compassion and forgiveness. The kids can take a topic like that and say, "Well that's why we don't like that group today." I can say, "We're all God's people. Let's talk about that." Religion isn't separate. Understanding is a Christian value. Religion has to permeate everything.

Teacher 7 answered this way:

I love, number one, getting to pray with the kids, getting to teach about Jesus, getting to hear their special intentions in the morning. Because it could be a big thing, like grandma being in the hospital, or it could be, pray for my dog. The Catholic education is something that is very important. Teaching the biblical knowledge, it's amazing. I absolutely love it, and I can't imagine being anywhere else.

When asked to rank their school's Catholic identity, most ranked it very high. In order to give teachers a context, as they seemed to need a guide, I prompted them to put it on a scale of one to ten. The number selected most often was 9. Five teachers rated the Catholic identity aspects (culture as a Catholic school) as 9. Three felt their schools were 9.5, and one teacher, a

non-Catholic teacher who has taught in her school for 38 years, ranked her school as 10 and said, “I don’t think there is anything else we could do.” Two schools ranked their Catholicity as 8. One teacher ranked her school as 6 and said that they had lost many Catholic students when they accepted a greater number of state voucher students, which was necessary for financial purposes. One school ranked as an outlier in this area. This teacher, who also is non-Catholic, ranked her school as 2 due to various changes within the school and justified it in the following manner:

The Catholic identity is not there. I feel like it is just a corpse. It’s very sad, because we had a heart at one time. Last year, my motto for everything was always, “We are a church first.” We are a church first. Education, all that stuff comes next. Because that was the way it was. We may be gathering socks for the poor, because we are a church first. Part of being whole, part of doing what you’re meant to do, you are also educated. But here, I don’t feel like we’re a church first anymore. I feel like we have become just a school, a school that hangs crosses everywhere.

In the last interview question relating to this research question, Interview Question 12, teachers named specific items that they valued most about Catholic school identity. These can be found in the table below.

### **Most Important Catholic School Identity Aspects to Teachers’ Job Satisfaction**

Table 5

*3 Items Most Important to Teacher’s Job Satisfaction – Question 12*

Teacher	1	2	3
1	Prayer	Sharing faith	Colleagues and community
2	Prayer	Community as family	Supportive administration

3	Service	Collegiality	Sharing faith
4	Prayer	Catholicity	Mass
5	Values and Beliefs	Catholicity	Prayer
6	Administrative support	Appropriate discipline	More Catholicity
7	Administrative support	Student interaction	Catholicity
8	Retreats	Sharing faith	Bonding with community
9	Happy children	Sharing faith	Community
10	Supportive administration	Talking about God	No answer
11	Supportive Administration	Professional Development	Catholicity
12	Faith	Supportive Administration	Resources
13	Atmosphere	Administration	Sharing Faith

The two answers that occurred most frequently were *supportive administration* and *sharing faith* (which encompassed both students and colleagues).

The responses were distributed as follows:

Table 6

*Frequency Distribution Table of Responses – Question 12*

Catholic Identity Factors	Number of Times Occurring	Percentage of Responses
Supportive Administration	7	18.4
Sharing the Faith	7	18.4
Catholicity	5	13.2
Community/colleagues	5	13.2
Prayer	4	10.5
Appropriate Discipline	1	The first five items combined to make up 73.7 % of the total response. These last ten items combine to make up 26.3%. Each of the last ten items occurred only one time.
Atmosphere	1	
Happy Kids	1	
Mass	1	
Professional Development	1	
Resources	1	
Retreats	1	
Service	1	
Student Interaction	1	
Values and Beliefs	1	

**Lacking Identity**

There were two instances in which the respondent listed multiple identity factors that they perceived as lacking. Teacher 4 felt that the administrator needed to model the faith and work with the faculty to build community, not just come in to evaluate their teaching. Teacher 9,

in a similar manner, felt that the administrator focused heavily on academics and did not model the faith or seem comfortable in that role. This teacher also stated that the pastor is not involved with the school, the children do not attend Mass on Holy Days, and the younger ones never attend Mass. She stated that the Catholicity at the school had been stronger under a previous administrator.

Similarly, Teacher 8 felt that Catholic identity had declined greatly in the past several years but attributed it to the loss of many Catholic students and the acceptance of a high rate of non-Catholic students, for financial reasons.

Last was Teacher 6. She described a great decline of Catholic culture in her school and noted a number of particular areas and specific ways in which the lack was obvious. She noted the lack of Catholicism in these ways:

“I don’t know if there is a whole lot of identity as a Catholic school right now, if that makes sense. There just isn’t much currently.” Also, “I would like to see more of a Catholic identity. I would like to see more of the oneness that comes with it. Further, the teacher discussed the decline of positive discipline, “Discipline should be about helping students do better. Teaching them. I would like a return to a more appropriate approach and less punitive and collective punishments.” She further stated that they no longer had faculty prayer or faith sharing, no retreats, and that the reason she is committed to staying is for the children.

For me, the eighth-grade students are definitely what’s keeping me here. I’m one of the last ones (teachers) still here. They know me. They (students) didn’t want me to leave because they felt abandoned. I stayed because I am committed to them.

In discussing the other teachers who had left, she also discussed the decline of collegiality.



I lost my colleagues. They all left. We had all new people this year. We are not only not friendly but we're drowning in work. I think we should all have a good working relationship. We are working towards a common goal. It has become a competitive atmosphere.

She also noted important ways a change in administration had negatively impacted the Catholic culture of the school in her perception.

She (the principal) is not supportive of us, period. I understand she's good at what she does, but she has zero concern for working with us. It's not just how she treats us, but the kids as well. That's not what we're supposed to be doing. There's a spirit that goes with the school. You have to feel like it's part of your mission. It's hard to define, but I think it starts with the principal. We need to be embracing religion . . . and not being what we have become . . . a school that hangs crosses everywhere.

### **Suggestions for Administrators**

The suggestions that teachers offered for administrators, in answering Question 13, fell into five main areas:

- Administrative support
- Faith
- Valuing of teachers
- Professional Development
- Salary

Table 7

*Frequency Distribution for Areas of Suggested Administrative Action*

Suggested Areas for Administrators:	Number of Responses
Administrative Support	5
Faith	4
Value/respect teachers	3
Professional Development	2
Salary	1

**Administrative Support**

As evidenced by the frequency distribution above, the main area that teachers feel is important for administrators' consideration in supporting teacher retention, is administrative support. Teacher 1 stated, "To have administrators that are supportive and listen. To have an administrator that listens is super important, and an administrator that is supportive in making those decisions. Teacher 4 responded as follows:

I think administrators should be involved with their faculty. They should have a presence in all areas of the school, not just from the standpoint of evaluation, but also from the standpoint of modeling the practices of the faith. I think communication is so important on every level, because if your faculty don't feel part of it, if they don't feel in connection or know what's going on, then that's a very weak link.

Overall, the teachers evidenced a desire to feel supported by the administrator. They stated that they might make a mistake in decision-making, but they want to feel administrative backing and discuss mistakes privately, not in front of a parent. Teachers also want to feel that

there is some avenue for collaboration. They expressed belief in an opportunity for growth if they feel listened to and valued as professionals. They also referenced wanting the ability to take ownership of some of the decisions being made, by having some input in the decision-making process.

### **Faith**

In the area of faith, as suggested to administrators, teachers mentioned not only the value of faith opportunities but the great importance of administrators setting the tone for the school by modeling the faith and acting as spiritual leaders in their school. Teacher 6 stated, “The administrator needs to embrace the religious aspect.” Teacher 7 stated, “Both the administrators and faculty need to have a certain passion or love for Catholic education. Teacher 9 stated the following:

Administrators need to teach and preach God first, and family second. To live by that mission, and to let each person know, teachers and children, how valuable they are, to make them feel important and valued, is so very important.

Teacher 10 stated the importance of weekly Mass for the school community, and Teacher 13 talked about the value of beginning every day with prayer. Teacher 7 mentioned the need for a Catholic faith sharing faculty retreat. Teacher 3 stated the value of “being able to share Eucharist.” Teacher 1 stated the value of “being able to share your Catholic faith daily.”

While it is certainly not surprising in a Catholic school that teachers would highly value faith aspects of the school as critical to their job satisfaction, the value that they placed on the principal as the spiritual leader, the individual who sets the tone and helps create and maintain the culture for the whole school, cannot be overstated.

**Value of and Respect for Teachers**

Teachers stated in different ways, at different times, how important it was to them to feel valued and respected as professionals by the administrator in their school. Teacher 5 said administrators should “respect the teachers and what they do and not just look for advanced degrees.” Teacher 7 said, “Teachers want to feel respected. I feel respected here. Administrators should be reminded of how important their respect is to us.” Teacher 12 referenced respecting and listening to what the teachers have to say because “Teachers just want to feel heard.”

The idea of value and respect was very closely related to the concept of administrative support. Once again, the value of the role of the principal, whether to give support and guidance, be a spiritual leader, or instill value and respect in the teachers, makes a great impact on teachers’ job satisfaction.

**Professional Development**

Three teachers discussed professional development and the importance of it. These teachers each referenced the need for professional development to be about what the teachers’ distinct professional needs are and not what someone else decides is good for all. Teacher 1 stated, “We want more information about the unique challenges of our students. We want to be more aware of them (the students) as individuals and how they change, not just curriculum.” Teacher 11 stated the following:

We need more professional development in the diocese and I don’t know if that’s being looked at. Not just in August, when the whole diocese comes together, but something that is meaningful for our subject or grade level.

Several others made mention of professional development in less specific ways but more as a desire to evolve and to continue to grow professionally.

### **Salary**

Only one teacher mentioned salary as a suggested area for administrative action. Teacher 13 said, “Salary, the problem is the salary. We are not competitive. You can get more money if you go to another place. Sometimes people leave for that. “

However, despite the lack of explicit mention of salary as a suggested area of administrator purview, salary was mentioned by about half of the teachers interviewed as a reason why colleagues had to leave their positions as Catholic school teachers. Further, it was reported by almost all of the teachers that a spouse who also earned an income was the main reason that they could remain in Catholic school teaching. Clearly, this is a finding that bears further analysis.

## **Major Themes**

From the interviews, there were six important themes that emerged. However, the main three themes were consistent in the findings across all three research questions: Faith, culture/climate, and community/collegiality were the predominant themes of all aspects of the interviews. These three themes were referenced by all interviewees at various stages in almost all of the questions asked. The findings of these themes, as predominant themes of the research study, give much credence to the philosophies of intrinsic motivators as integral to job satisfaction. The following is a summary of each of these three themes.

### **Theme Summary**

#### **Faith**

Faith as a predominant theme was echoed in every aspect of the interviewees’ responses.

The faith aspect was valued equally by the two non-Catholic interviewees and the 11 Catholic ones as well. Many areas of faith that the teachers referenced involved not only personal faith but the opportunity to share the faith either with students, colleagues, or the community at large. They highly valued the opportunity to share faith with colleagues, thereby combining two important areas of value to them, faith and collegiality.

The valuation of faith by Catholic school teachers as important to Catholic identity, job satisfaction, and teacher retention decisions is not a surprising one. These findings indicate that Catholic school teachers who remain in Catholic teaching positions are motivated by these intrinsic motivators. Using this measure, work that is meaningful, purposeful, and valuable provides teachers with great job satisfaction (Thomas, 2009).

Teachers in this study identified various faith-related reasons for remaining in their teaching position. The teachers in this study, all of whom chose Catholic school positions and remain in these teaching positions, exhibited a commitment to the mission of the Catholic school.

The commitment of the teachers seemed to be expressed in a few main ways: commitment to the mission of a Catholic school, as an aspect of faith, and/or commitment to their vocation as a teacher in meeting students' needs. The commitment to the Catholic school as a faith-based institution was equally expressed through the teachers' personal commitments to their own faith and their belief system in regard to the church. The analogous aspects of the findings of these two concurrent commitments were evident throughout the teachers' responses relating their dimensions of commitment.

### **Culture and Climate**

These factors as a theme encompassed several main areas. While these terms were differentiated for purposes of the conceptual framework, teachers often used the terms

interchangeably, or referenced them in an interwoven manner. Not only were many references made to the environment of a Catholic school as a distinctly different environment from other types of schools, but also the cultural hallmarks that differentiate Catholic schools from all other types of schools were repeatedly referenced. These aspects of Catholic schools, Catholic school identity factors, were highly valued by the teachers. Teachers throughout the interviews referenced not just external symbols of faith and Catholicity, rites, traditions, and practices but also referenced the more subtle aspects of Catholic school culture that they believe embody the essence of a Catholic school. This culture, particular to a Catholic school, was intricately linked to the faith aspects of the teachers' commitment that keeps them motivated to remain in a teaching position in a Catholic school.

In the instances in which the teacher perceived that the school and its culture had deteriorated, they expressed their perception of loss of Catholic school identity in a manner similar to accepted expressions of grief. The loss of Catholic identity, in three particular schools, was perceived by the teachers in those school as a result of an administrative change. They expressed the loss of identity as a very significant loss. The quotes in the preceding section, particularly those from Teacher 6, give form and validity to the scope of the perceived loss.

### **Community and Collegiality**

The theme of community and collegiality in various forms was referenced throughout the interviewees' responses by each teacher many times. The teachers used the terms somewhat interchangeably, and the theme often included administrators.

In referencing community, the teachers discussed faculty and staff as a community, the school, including the student body, as a community, as well as the larger community, inclusive of the parents and families. Collegiality was similarly referenced in several different ways. The

teachers used the term *collegiality* in referring to the collaborative relationship shared by professionals. They also used the term *collegiality* when discussing interpersonal relationships of camaraderie, which might occur through opportunities to interact with peers on a more personal basis. Throughout the interviews, teachers' positive references to administrators often included them in the term *colleagues*. It was evident by the manner in which the teachers referenced the principals, in most instances in a very respectful manner, that they desired a mutually respectful collegial and collaborative relationship with them.

Words such as *community* and *family* were similarly terms used in a very positive manner, reflective of the high esteem given by the teachers to describe not just the faculty community but also used to reference the larger community as well. Clearly the interpersonal relationships, whether with teachers and administrators or the larger community are of great motivational value to the teachers.

### **Academics**

The theme of academics was present and referenced several times by the interviewees, but used much less than references to faith aspects of mission. It was evident that this reference held less meaning to the teacher in terms of Catholic identity than did other descriptors that more richly described the faith aspects of Catholic schools' missions. Although many, if not most, Catholic schools are noted for their academic rigor, clearly the themes that teachers reference as important personal Catholic school identity themes are not ones they perceive as strongly related to academics.

Academics, as a factor of commitment, is distinct from the commitment to the faith-based mission of the Catholic school. As these research questions were centered primarily around



Catholic school identity factors, which are more often perceived by teachers to be faith-based, it is congruent with the lesser mention of academics as the primary motivator.

### **Extrinsic Motivators**

Additionally, extrinsic motivators was a theme used to reference items such as salary and benefits, academics or discipline as a retention factor, or proximity to school, etc. Very few times did teachers ascribe much value to the extrinsic motivators; instead the cited intrinsic motivators countless times throughout the 13 interviews. The value they ascribed to the extrinsic motivators of salary and benefits was that the lack in these areas, while not a factor in their decision, was the reason why other quality teachers had to leave Catholic education.

While research abounds on the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for employees, the findings, while consistent with research, were surprisingly lacking in extrinsic motivators as being more highly valued, even those of convenience or discipline.

### **Lacking Identity**

The theme of lacking identity was an unexpected finding of the research. This theme emerged in several instances based on teachers' perceptions of a changed, deteriorated, or simply lacking Catholic school identity. The teachers who perceived identity as lacking in their schools spoke emotionally and eloquently of what they perceived to be missing and additionally of the great impact they believed the lack of Catholicity to have on their school and its daily culture and functioning. The theme of lacking Catholicity and identity factors was stated most clearly by Teacher 6 in the early sections of Chapter IV. The perceptions of the teachers who perceived the identity as lacking were profoundly insightful. The findings in this area, and their implications, are discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

In summarizing the major findings of this research study, there were several recurrent themes or areas that were of great importance to the teachers in the study. The main areas most highly valued by teachers in the study could be summarized into two key areas: administrative leadership and faith. The other main area to be considered in effecting higher rates of teacher retention is human resource practices.

#### **Administrative Leadership**

The teachers want and value several important traits from the principal/administrator of their school: value, respect, and support.

**Value and respect.** First and foremost, the teachers wish to feel respected and valued, and they especially want to feel they are respected and valued by their principal. The teachers appreciate the principal taking the time to know them on a personal level.

**Support.** The teachers want to feel supported in their decision-making. The teachers evidence a realization that they will make mistakes, but they desire their principal to discuss that with them in a collaborative way. Even when they may have made an error, they would like to feel supported in front of parents and have their mistakes discussed in an individual, non-threatening manner. They stated an openness and willingness to hear principal input in their teaching decisions and not just have the principal act as the evaluator in the classroom.

#### **Faith**

**Spiritual leader.** The teachers stated a strong belief that the climate and the culture of the school must emanate from the principal. The principal, “sets the tone for the school.” The idea that the principal must act as a “spiritual leader” for the school was recurrent throughout most of the interviews. The teachers perceive the need for the principal to act as a true faith leader.

According to their statements, this role is equally as important to them as is the role of academic leader. This area is particularly important for Catholic school principals to take note of, as they personally can have a profound effect on the school as embodying the faith aspect of teaching the mission. The findings of this qualitative study supported the findings of the quantitative study by Cho that found that the principal acting as a spiritual leader had a profound environmental effect, which influenced teachers' commitment levels.

**Commitment to Catholic school mission and personal faith commitment.** Teachers who are committed to the general mission of the Catholic school also stated personal commitment to a belief in the value system of the Catholic mission, whether Catholic or non-Catholic themselves. The high level of commitment, when there is a link between personal belief and belief in mission, brings about a higher level of job satisfaction and a higher degree of teacher retention in their Catholic school position.

**Catholic school identity.** Teachers in the study evidenced a high value in the Catholic school identity factors that are traditionally associated with Catholic schools. The teachers perceive this as an integral part of Catholic school culture and they value it highly. When this area is missing or lacking, as described by several teachers in the study, it affects many parts of the school and the community and seems to lead to the deterioration of the school as a community. Keeping Catholic school identity alive helps to keep schools vital for the future, as not just academic institutions but as a teaching arm of the Catholic church and a means of sharing Christian faith.

**Interpersonal relationships.** The teachers in the study all placed a high value on the interpersonal relationships with colleagues, the administrator, and the community. They stated the desire to have opportunities to collaborate professionally, as well as informal opportunities to

build camaraderie with their peers and principal through lunches, service times, and similar examples of informal fellowship. Additionally, the teachers desire opportunities for faith sharing with their colleagues, especially through practices such as faculty prayer and faculty retreats. The scheduling of opportunities such as these are simple and not costly ways for a principal to maximize opportunities for both faith growth and collegiality, thereby increasing teachers' commitment and job satisfaction, as reported by the teachers.

### **Human Resources**

**Salary and benefits.** The area of salary and benefits has been a traditionally lacking area in Catholic schools. For many years, it has been assumed that teachers who believe in Catholic education should and would be willing to settle for less money as they are living out a faith mission. This is an invalid and unjust assumption to make. While Catholic school teachers are committed due to intrinsic motivators and the self-actualization that they receive in living out their mission, they are performing a valuable service. Qualified teachers should receive pay commensurate with their responsibilities and role. Additionally, as many good teachers are lost to the Catholic system, as discussed by the teachers in this study, regardless of their personal level of commitment to mission, they must earn a wage sufficient to support themselves. The Catholic church and schools need to give strong consideration and devote strategic planning time and resources to this area.

**Hiring.** These findings are very important to the hiring aspect of the principal's role. Committed teachers who share the beliefs of the Catholic school mission report greater commitment and job satisfaction. This is an area that should be explored by principals in preparing interview topics and questions.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the responses from the interviews were reported in order to describe and answer the overarching research question, “In what ways, if any, are the retention decisions of teachers in Catholic parochial schools related to, or influenced by, aspects of Catholic identity; i.e., Catholic school identity factors?” The findings of the interviews, conducted with 13 teachers, were presented as applicable to the three research questions. The personal accounts of the teachers and their deeply descriptive answers provided much opportunity for the discussion of the implications of the findings. In Chapter V, a summary of the findings in relation to the research questions is presented, along with discussion of the relationship between the findings, the implications, the relevant literature, and the conceptual framework for the research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the complete research study. The chapter begins with a restatement of the purpose of the study, the research questions that guided the study, followed by a summary. The summary reviews the implications of the findings and how they relate to the literature base and the conceptual framework which guided the study. The final part of this chapter contains implications and recommendations for practice, for policy, and for future research.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives of what factors in general, and specifically which Catholic school identity factors are important to them and may influence their job satisfaction and retention in Catholic parochial schools in a diocesan school system after year five of their teaching career. An additional purpose of this study was to inform Catholic school administrators about factors that may assist them in sustaining a climate and organizational structure that influences teachers to remain in the Catholic school setting.

Wayne Hoy (1990) defined school climate as "a prevailing quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior" (Hoy, 1990, p.152). Culture was explained by Hoy as a set of shared "norms, values, philosophies, beliefs, expectations, myths, and ceremonies" (Hoy, 1990, 157).

School climate is often used as a broad term that refers to teachers' perceptions of their general work environment. The cohesion or collective personality that Hoy says makes up climate is also echoed in Richard Ingersoll's work on teacher retention. Culture, the beliefs and

customs of an organization, may persist over time regardless of changes in climate. Hoy differentiated culture as types of norms, shared values, and assumptions (Hoy, 1990). The types of practices and symbols that create the culture of the school can easily parallel the practices and symbols in Catholic schools; i.e., the culture or identity. By understanding the teachers' perceptions of these factors and how they are valued or impact job satisfaction and retention decisions, administrators can seek to continue or enhance culture and climate conducive to higher teacher retention.

For the purpose of this qualitative study, the sample consisted of 13 teachers from the 16 diocesan parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. The other three schools did not have volunteers who met the stated criteria for the study. The teachers who made up the sample each had five or more years of experience in Catholic school teaching and three or more years of experience in their current school in order to adequately discuss the culture of Catholic schools in general and their school in particular. Data from one-on-one interviews with the 13 teachers, 12 females and one male, were derived for this summary of findings. The experience of the 13 teachers spanned nine different subject areas and grade levels. All of the teachers were certified to teach in their area in the state of Louisiana. One teacher held a master's degree in education. The rest held bachelor's degrees. It is interesting to note that from these teachers, selected from a stratified random sample, seven of the 13 majored in an area other than education in college and later sought certification to teach.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school after the first five years of their teaching career?

2. What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions?
3. How do the Catholic school teachers perceive school identity factors, in terms of importance (value), in teacher retention decisions?

### **Summary and Discussion of the Findings**

Since the early 2000s, much work and research has been conducted to look for solutions to the difficult problem of teacher retention in this country. Richard Ingersoll's work on teacher retention has been among the more notable scholarly writings on the subject. In the late 1990s, media reports viewed the teacher staffing problems in the country as a "graying" of the workforce caused by a lack of new teachers entering the profession. Ingersoll studied the problem from a different perspective and found that new teacher entry was much less of a problem than teacher attrition. NCES data showed that qualified teachers were leaving education due more to lack of job satisfaction than what was previously reported. New teacher recruitment did not seem to be adequately addressing the problem of attrition. Ingersoll began to look at the organizational characteristics of schools that may be contributing to teacher attrition and dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2004). Additionally, the necessity of finding a balance between some centralized control and teacher autonomy became evident. Without the right balance, an environment that does not enhance job satisfaction can result.

The teachers interviewed for this study echoed that need for balance in many statements in the study and also in describing the things most valued. While more than half of the teachers in the study specifically stated that they want and seek administrative support, one of the positive characteristics almost half of the teachers also mentioned was supportive administration that did not "micro-manage" their daily decision-making.



Further building upon Ingersoll's work on school characteristics, there was a definite valuation of intrinsic characteristics as motivators to teachers' job satisfaction in a Catholic school setting. All but three of the teachers gave answers that related to the theme of climate and culture as one of the areas most important to their personal job satisfaction. The other main themes of collegiality and collaboration, both with peers and administrators, and their personal faith, all speak to the intrinsic motivators that keep these teachers committed to Catholic school teaching, despite the lower pay, often additional demands, and benefits that they viewed as lacking.

Additionally, when asked about extrinsic motivators such as salary and benefits, all but three stated that it was unimportant or a trade-off. One concerning aspect of this statement was that seven of the ten, including the male teacher, all cited supportive spouses who also work as making their choice possible. This further highlights reasons why younger teachers cannot make the sacrifice to stay in Catholic schools and depart in large numbers in the early years of their teaching career. Newer teachers who may have recently graduated, often with student loan debt, are often not part of a two-income household and find it very challenging to accept much less salary even if they believe in the mission of Catholic schools.

Kenneth Thomas, in his work on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in the workplace, describes extrinsic motivators as being routine and democratic but found that intrinsic rewards are a stronger predictor of long-term job satisfaction and lead to the "right kind" of retention, that of qualified and competent individuals. He examined four main categories of intrinsic motivators (Thomas, 2009):

- Commitment to a meaningful purpose
- Having choice in the best way to fulfill tasks

- Having competence in your work
- Making progress towards a goal

While these areas can hold true for many teachers in varying types of school settings, they are certainly valid motivators for the teachers in this study and align with their personal statements. In citing meaningful purpose, one teacher stated, “You feel like you make a difference, not just in academics, but in their lives.” In personal choice, several teachers stated positively that they had “supportive administration” that did not “micro-manage” their decisions but collaborated with them and made them feel heard. The teachers also expressed confidence in their ability in the classroom, with appropriate support. They evidenced the competence required for this area of intrinsic motivation. The last area, making progress towards a goal, was stated by several teachers who made comments on the personal value of “watching a child grow.”

The correlation of intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, while providing new findings through more recent research on impact in the workplace, is not a new concept. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, while sometimes debated as to its inclusivity, is still a watershed work, reflecting the importance of intrinsic motivation and needs in human motivational psychology (Maslow, 1943, 1998). Maslow’s hierarchy of five basic needs begins with the two foundational needs of physiological needs and safety, and moves into the “higher” needs of love and belonging, esteem, and finally self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

The intrinsic motivators referenced repeatedly throughout the interviews, provides distinct alignment with this theory. The theme of community and collegiality describes the teachers’ need to experience a sense of belonging. The sense of purpose they describe in their commitment, both to their teaching and to their faith, echoes Maslow’s fourth level, esteem. Maslow describes the highest level of the needs hierarchy as the need or motivation towards self-

actualization. The themes and terms that arose throughout the interviews—values, faith, spirituality, and sharing of faith—are clearly, closely aligned to the level of self-actualization that the teachers have derived from their teaching positions. These factors tie closely to their expressions that despite lacking extrinsic motivators, they find great fulfilment in their vocation, thus increasing their commitment to their teaching position in a Catholic school.

In Catholic schools across the country, culture, in recent years, has become an important aspect of Catholic schools that administrators are challenged to focus on in their schools. Since the tremendous decline of religious staff in schools since the late sixties to the current staffs that are greater than 95% non-religious on average, the Catholic school identity has faced the danger of extinction. To that end, Loyola University in Chicago, Center for Catholic School Effectiveness, collaborated for two years with Catholic school educators and leaders across the country to develop the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. This all-encompassing document sets new standards for what Catholic schools should be and do. These benchmarks have become a part of Catholic school national accreditation in conjunction with AdvancEd (formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). The first two sections of the standards, “Defining Characteristics” and “Mission and Identity,” focus almost entirely upon Catholic school identity factors, practices, and hallmarks, thereby defining the expectation for culture in a Catholic school.

As the findings of Ingersoll on teacher retention related to important items such as culture and climate, so too do the intrinsic motivators, highly valued by teachers in the study, relate to the work of Wayne Hoy on culture and climate and can align very closely with the findings of this study. Although often the teachers in the study used the words culture and climate somewhat interchangeably, Hoy draws a fine distinction between them. Culture is described as

beliefs and customs that may exist over time despite changes in climate. Culture is also the shared symbols, norms, and values that exist in an organization. In a school with a healthy Catholic school identity, there should be a viable culture experienced by all stakeholders in the school. Climate was described by Hoy as a “prevailing quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behavior.” (Hoy, 1990, p.152). Climate was described by Hoy as a, “prevailing trend of opinion, and mood.” Climate is often perceived by teachers as their general work environment (Hoy, 1990).

Teacher commitment in Catholic schools, as it relates to Catholic school culture, is an area which has been examined by a number of research studies. Cho’s quantitative research study in 2012, which examined four main dimensions of teacher commitment in terms of teachers’ commitment to:

1. The mission
2. The school
3. Teaching as a vocation or profession
4. The students

found that there was a strong relationship between these dimensions of commitment and four primary dimensions of faith as he defined them:

1. Personal belief
2. Intimacy with God
3. Actions
4. Living faith.

Cho further determined that the environmental characteristics of Catholic schools, such as Catholic school identity factors, were important predictors of commitment, especially in two main areas: the school's culture as one based on Gospel values and the spiritual leadership of the principal (Cho, 2012).

The findings of the Cho quantitative research are analogous with the current qualitative research findings in several important ways. First, Cho's finding of the strong relationship between commitment and culture, as evidenced by Catholic school identity factors, are clearly resounded in the statements of the teachers as they describe the things they value in their Catholic school setting as well as their personal commitment to continuing their profession in a Catholic school. The statements of the teachers particularly referenced their commitment to the mission of a Catholic school, as well as their profession, in combining teaching and sharing of faith. This ties in to several of Cho's major dimensions of faith in that the commitment to their teaching ties into deep personal beliefs, the concepts of acting and living the faith, and presumably reinforces their spiritual relationship (Cho, 2012). Additionally, the findings from Cho's study on the importance of the spiritual leadership of the principal is completely consistent with the findings of the current study. The principal as the spiritual leader of the school and how valued that role is to the teachers in setting the tone for the whole school was stated multiple times and in multiple ways throughout this study. Clearly in a Catholic school, it is vitally important that the principal is a spiritual leader in addition to being an academic one. Cho's study concluded that the findings of his study strongly suggested that faith-based motivation is integral to and predictive of teacher commitment.

Similarly, several studies focused primarily on the concept of the commitment of Catholic school teachers and examined commitment to mission or commitment to profession.

The findings of these studies concluded that Catholic school teachers primarily were more motivated by the mission of the school as it aligned to their mission or beliefs (Convey, 2014; Squillini, 2001; Tarr, 1992). In a similar manner to the relationship between the current findings and the findings of the Cho study, the teachers in the current study are particularly motivated to the mission of the Catholic school, which creates a symbiotic relationship between the commitment to school and their commitment to faith. The concurrent commitments seem to nurture and build the each other, thereby reinforcing the teacher's job satisfaction and retention, through the nurturing of their school and faith commitments.

These varying theorists all provide perspectives which align with the findings of this study. Culture and climate, collegiality and collaboration with peers, support and trust by administrators, and an academic and faith-based purpose were the identity factors that were most valued by the teachers in this study.

The data derived from these interviews shed light on both the explicit and implicit nature of Catholic identity in schools as well as the value placed on them by teachers. The role of these values, found in this study to be intrinsic motivators of positive job satisfaction, ties in to the existing literature base. However, the values discussed, combined with the value placed on strong collaborative spiritual leadership as motivators for teacher retention, bring a new dimension to this area of study, and provide important implications for administrators and Catholic educational leadership.

### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1: What influences teachers to remain in a Catholic parochial school after the first five years of their teaching career? For this research question, the predominant themes found in the teachers' answers were those of faith, climate and culture, and collegiality.

In this study, 11 of the 13 teachers stated answers that fell within two of the three themes. The results differed from Brettnacher's 2002 study, which measured Catholic school principals' perceptions of the retention of teachers as compared to Ingersoll's theories. Parochial school principals in Brettnacher's study were found to be the group most likely to agree with Ingersoll that salaries were the key issue (Brettnacher, 2002). The teachers interviewed for the present study did believe that younger teachers, in their first few years of teaching especially, might need to leave Catholic school teaching for higher salary, but none of the teachers cited salary as a motivator for their own current choice to teach in a Catholic school.

These results are consistent with the findings of Carol Cimino's 2001 Catholic school study that surveyed Catholic school teachers in New York state. The focus of the Cimino study was to explore the vocational aspects of teacher retention in Catholic schools and the teachers' views of their job as a ministry. The findings were that while longtime teachers in Catholic schools did view their job as a vocation or ministry, they had to balance that motivation with the financial considerations that were also a factor (Cimino, 2001). The teachers interviewed for the present study indicated similarities in that the vocational aspect of their jobs is very important to them and a highly motivating factor in their retention decisions. While the teachers interviewed for this study did not personally view salary as a main motivator, about half of the teachers interviewed stated that they perceived low salary to be a key reason that some good teachers have left Catholic school teaching positions.

In the Chikiri study (Chikiri, 2000), one area differed from the findings of this study. Chikiri viewed teachers' perceptions of mission as related to job satisfaction. He found that the non-Catholic teachers had a statistically significant difference between Catholic teachers in their view of the value of faith and mission. The non-Catholic teachers interviewed for the current

study did not differ in their answers regarding the value of faith from the Catholic teachers' responses. Chikri's study and this study were very comparable in the relationship of mission to higher levels of satisfaction, but the Chikri study did not explicitly link the findings to job retention. Chikri did note that teachers with positive perceptions regarding mission reported higher job satisfaction. All of the teachers who participated in the current study noted positive perceptions of mission as a motivating factor and negative perceptions of the lack of mission. In some instances, several teachers reported that lacking Catholic identity or mission was a likely cause of some colleagues' attrition. The teachers also emphasized the factors relating to positive mission perceptions, throughout the study, as being factors important to teacher retention, and in the case of negative perceptions due to lacking identity, teacher attrition.

## **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 asked: What role do Catholic school identity factors have, if any, in influencing teacher retention decisions? In the interviews, 10 of the 13 teachers strongly stated reasons related to Catholic identity as vital to their decision to remain in Catholic school teaching, with two others giving reasons of collegiality and administrative support, and one stating that she was there "for the kids." In discussing the faith factors which influenced them, the teachers often referenced explicit Catholic school identity factors such as attending Mass, using an advent wreath in their classroom, and various symbols often found throughout Catholic schools. In discussing areas of Catholic school culture and climate, they referenced implicit identity factors such as the importance of the administrator acting as a faith or spiritual leader. This was specifically referenced by five of the teachers interviewed as either something they valued or something that they believed was important but was currently missing. The sense of family among faculty (especially when the principal was part of that or fostered that



environment) and the greater community was referenced by six of the teachers in a very specific way but was also referred by all but two of the teachers in a general sense of culture and climate.

The area of collegiality was also an important theme, as the teachers desire that relationship, not just with their peers, but they also greatly desire a sense of collaboration and collegiality with their principals, as well as desiring strong supportive leadership from them.

Convey, in his 2014 study, similarly found the environment to be an important predictor of job satisfaction among Catholic school teachers. Convey also examined teachers' commitment to mission as a predictor of job satisfaction (Convey, 2014). This examination of Catholic school identity and culture and teachers' perceptions of it, while not directly related to teacher retention, found that perception of mission and identity in the school was an important motivator for teachers in choosing to teach in Catholic schools. The teachers in the present study all expressed identity as a motivator. Even in the schools in which the teachers felt it was somewhat lacking, they felt the lack or loss of what they perceived as Catholic identity very deeply.

Chikri's work researched which aspects or attributes of Catholic elementary school teachers could predict teachers' positive perception of the mission of Catholic school. He used a survey approach and his finding was that Catholic teachers, especially Catholic teachers who more actively practiced their faith, correlated positively with teachers who have a positive perception of the mission of the Catholic school (Chikri, 2000). Two of the teachers in the present study were non-Catholic; however, their perception of the mission as a motivating factor could not have been stated any more strongly than that of the Catholic teachers who were interviewed.

Cimino's research studied the problem of teacher attrition in Catholic schools. Her primary focus was whether or not teachers' views have changed over time in respect to seeing their work as a vocation or ministry as opposed to just a job (Cimino, 2001). This study focused on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for teachers in choosing to remain in Catholic schools. The findings were that many who stayed did so because of the intrinsic motivators, but that motivation had to be balanced with salary considerations as extrinsic needs. This relates to the findings in the current study in that the teachers interviewed who have chosen to remain in Catholic schools primarily do so for intrinsic reasons that relate to Catholic identity. However, in almost half the interviews, the teachers stated that they believed many teachers who leave in the early years of their career do so because of extrinsic pressures, usually the need for a higher salary.

The perceptions of stakeholders regarding Catholic school identity was the focus of a case study which found that the spiritual leadership of the principal was very closely linked to strong Catholic school identity factors (Hawley, 2016). The findings of the current study were consistent with Hawley's findings in that all of the teachers interviewed valued and discussed the impact of the principal as a spiritual leader in some manner. The relationship between Catholic school identity and organizational leadership was also found to have a significant positive relationship with Catholic school vitality in a prior study (Hobbie, 2009). Although the current study did not examine school vitality (defined as the effectiveness of an institution in the realization of mission), the relationship of the factors of leadership and Catholic identity were evident throughout the interviews as key to successful teacher retention.

### **Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 asked: How do the Catholic school teachers perceive school identity

factors in terms of importance (value) in teacher retention decisions? The teachers interviewed for this study, in all but one instance, gave responses indicating their valuation of Catholic identity as a motivating factor for their decision to remain in a Catholic school teaching position. Again, the predominant themes for their responses were faith and the Catholic culture (identity) of their school. The areas of faith could be viewed in several ways, practices and symbols which would be considered explicit symbols and implicit symbols such as ministry and faith sharing. Although there was great value placed by several teachers on Mass attendance, many of the items mentioned as faith items by teachers involved faith sharing. As the teachers also highly valued the collegiality and community of their faculty, it would seem to be a natural progression that they would also place high value on the opportunity to share their faith with their colleagues, thereby combining two important intrinsic motivators for them in the job satisfaction. Again, this corresponds with the Hobbie study of the importance of teachers' perceptions in valuing Catholic identity factors as a predictor of school vitality (Hobbie, 2009). Strong identity, combined with the principal acting as faith leader and fostering faith opportunities, was found to be valuable in the Hobbie research, and similarly was of great importance to the teachers in the current study.

The current research was also consistent with Convey's study in that when the valuation by teachers, of the mission and culture of the school, and especially the valuation of the Catholic culture is pervasive, it corresponds highly with teacher job satisfaction (Convey, 2014). The teachers interviewed for this study also correlated mission and Catholic identity as highly valued for their job satisfaction. In one of the instances in which the teacher perceived a lack of mission and identity factors in her school, she used words that described grief and loss in relating the impact of this lack of Catholic mission and identity. Words and phrases such as *corpse*, *lack of*

*heart*, and *abandonment* were used during the interview in describing her perception of the loss of the Catholic identity factors and the impact on job satisfaction, the climate, the students, and the whole community.

Consistent with the Cimino study, teachers who choose to teach in Catholic schools often do so out of a sense of ministry or vocation (Cimino, 2001). Almost half of the teachers in this study specifically referenced their valuation of the Catholic identity of the school and choice to remain there as a fulfilment of what they are called to do. Further, the teachers who stated that other teachers had to make the decision to leave due to salary did not relate that these teachers did not value Catholic school identity, but rather that they could not correlate their financial obligations with their desire to be in a Catholic school. This corresponds with the Cimino findings as well.

Unlike the findings of the quantitative Chikri study, which found that Catholic teachers, especially actively practicing ones, had more positive perceptions of the Catholic mission and identity, the findings from the current qualitative research differs (Chikri, 2000). While only two of the teachers in the present study stated they were non-Catholic, they were, perhaps paradoxically, two who evidenced the greatest belief in the mission and identity of the Catholic school. One of the non-Catholic teachers was in a school that she felt used to be “around a nine” in ranking the identity but was now in her perception ranked as a “two.” Despite this and the loss of many colleagues, she remained at the school and expressed her strong belief in the importance of Catholic school identity. The teacher expressed great concern about the loss of identity and mission and discussed her feelings of the void it created. Her very positive perception of the value of Catholic school identity was evident throughout the interview. The other self-identified non-Catholic teacher was the only teacher in the current study to rate her

school's Catholic identity a "ten." This teacher left public school teaching to come to a Catholic school and has remained in her current school for over three decades. She described a time, prior to the current stable administration, when the school experienced several leadership changes over the course of several years. She expressed the loss of identity during that time and stated how strong it has been under the current principal. She also said it was all about the administration and faith and that the administrator set the tone for the school, again linking Catholic identity and spiritual leadership as key variables to teacher satisfaction in a Catholic school setting. Despite being non-Catholic herself, she referenced in detail many identity factors and how important they were to her, the faculty, and the students. This was consistent with a study which again linked leadership and Catholic identity as important keys to Catholic school vitality (Fuller & Johnson, 2013). In this case study, the findings highlighted tension that occurred when Catholic school identity was "sidelined" for more academic emphasis. The study analyzed the loss of identity when emphasis on test scores took precedence (Fuller & Johnson, 2013). While all educators must be accountable for academics, the authors argued that in a Catholic school setting, the interwoven emphasis of Catholic identity and academics is important to school vitality, and both are integral to successful Catholic schools (Fuller & Johnson, 2013). In the current study, five of the teachers specifically referenced the value of educating the "whole child." The non-Catholic teacher, who ranked her school a "ten" in the current study, understood the need for both; and the school she teaches in seems to flourish academically and spiritually, perhaps because of the balance of Catholic identity, academic focus, and spiritual leadership.

### **Culture and Climate**

The main focus of this research study was teachers' perceptions of the Catholic school identity factors, the "culture" of a Catholic school, and how that influences job satisfaction and

teacher retention. In his work on teacher attrition and retention, Ingersoll has studied the importance of climate as it pertains to teacher retention decisions (Ingersoll, 2002, 2003). The findings throughout the current study are consistent with the conceptual framework of both Ingersoll and Hoy in this area.

Hoy's thorough analysis of culture and climate and the distinctions between the two are richly descriptive and analogous to the type of climate and culture embodied in Catholic school identity. Both the teachers who expressed great satisfaction currently and the few who lamented the loss of identity and job satisfaction consistently linked their perceptions with the overall climate and culture of their Catholic school setting. The recurrent themes of faith, culture, and collegiality were almost universally defined by terms and factors that are defined as identity factors in a Catholic school. The symbols and rituals of Catholicity which persist over time are perfectly described by Hoy's definition of culture (Hoy, 1990). The teachers in this study expressed these symbols, practices, and rituals of their school organization as some of the explicit factors of Catholicity that are important aspects of their faith life. The other practices, which I believe embody both culture and climate, are derived from somewhat more implicit hallmarks or beliefs of Catholic or other Christian faiths. The teachers in this study placed high value on faith sharing and opportunities for prayer, retreats, and faith study as other important parts of their school's Catholic identity or culture. In most of the schools, these identity factors were in place and gave the teachers great satisfaction. In the few schools where the teachers perceived they were not in place, the teachers stated those types of practices as something highly desired in their schools. Additionally, in keeping with the importance of leadership, which was found in many studies, including those of Ingersoll and Hoy which provided the conceptual framework for the study, the teachers throughout the study stated their desire for leadership that

was both supportive and collegial, as well as spiritual. The Catholic school principal sets the tone for both the climate and culture of the Catholic school in a very unique way as both the academic and spiritual leader of the school.

An additional highly valued aspect of culture and climate by the teachers in this study is Catholic community. The teachers referenced the school community as a “family,” and many told a personal story of how the community had helped them in a crisis or how they had reached out to others in the community. Although many schools of all different types may exhibit such a strongly close-knit community, these teachers recounted things from a Catholic perspective which described faculty, students, and parents living out both spiritual and corporal works of mercy, a uniquely Catholic perspective on community and service; and the teachers spoke of examples of administrators exhibiting servant leadership.

### **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation**

In the initial conceptual framework, intrinsic and extrinsic motivators impacting teacher retention were touched upon but not reviewed in detail. Throughout the interview process, the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic was very clear. While the teachers are highly motivated and often choose to stay because of the intrinsic motivators, the extrinsic ones remain important.

The intrinsic motivators in Thomas’ work on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in the workplace, were consistently given as reasons for job satisfaction by the teachers who participated in this study. Thomas’ four areas, that work must be meaningful, that individuals must have choices in task fulfillment, competence for their job, and see that they make progress towards a goal, were all echoed in teachers’ responses (Thomas, 2009). Pride in their work, feeling that they make a difference, feeling supported and not micro-managed, and knowing they

are important in a child's growth were intrinsic motivators stated by the teachers in this study in which the teachers evidenced high levels of job satisfaction.

Just as in Cimino's work, *For Love or Money*, teachers are often forced to make difficult decisions and balance the two (Cimino, 2001). The Catholic church relies upon the commitment factor of teachers who are often willing to make personal sacrifices to live out their vocation or calling. But not many individuals are willing and able, when needed, to exhibit the level of commitment shown by a teacher in this study of selling a dream home and tutoring until 8:00 p.m. four nights each week just to remain in Catholic education. Similarly, the teacher who remained in the school where she had felt "abandoned" by colleagues who left and is no longer in a position that gives her satisfaction, remains in her position due to her personal commitment to Catholic education. It is impossible to place value on this type of intrinsic motivation, yet administrators in Catholic schools need to work hard to both cultivate and keep a level of similarly committed teachers.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study are filled with implications for Catholic school leadership. The administrative problem, which became the initial basis for this research, was that of teacher retention and attrition. Recent media reports that United States schools, public and private, are estimated to lose \$1.5 - \$2. billion dollars per year due to the costs of rehiring and retraining new teachers is evidence of the scale of the problem. According to USCCB reports and NCES data, 1.9 million students in the United States attend Catholic schools, with a total school age population (public and non-public) of 55.4 million (USCCB, 2015; NCES, 2015). With almost 3.5% of school-age students attending Catholic schools and a higher rate of attrition among



Catholic school teachers, Catholic school leaders must be aware of the cost and magnitude of the problem.

Additionally, as many studies, most notably the Tennessee study in the late 1990s, found consecutive years of effective teachers is a leading indicator for success in students (TVAAS, 1996), it is of great importance to students' academic advancement to retain qualified teachers in all schools.

The implications for these two important areas alone need to be carefully considered by Catholic school leaders. Although this study focused on the factors that influence teachers to stay, the ones that cause early career teachers to leave Catholic schools cannot be ignored. Many of the teachers in this study cited financial hardship personally and co-workers who had to leave Catholic school due to financial constraints. This is a problematic area of Catholic education that has needed to be addressed for quite some time. Since the decline of religious community members as Catholic school teachers from the mid 1960s, with approximately 90% of the schools' staffs as religious, to the current time, with less than 3% of the staffs of Catholic schools in the United States as religious, Catholic schools have struggled to meet the financial burden of paying just wages. Due not only to the call from the USCCB in the 2006 document, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Schools*, but also to the overall mission of Catholic schools to keep them affordable, accessible, and available, Catholic schools have endeavored to keep tuition at affordable rates for a wide range of families. That is a very positive part of the mission of Catholic schools. However, to achieve this, salaries are typically at least 20% less, and sometimes have an even greater than 20% deficit from the nearby public school salaries. While we heard through the voices of the teachers in this study their incredible commitment to Catholic education and in Cimino's study the balancing of commitment and vocation with financial

obligations, Catholic school leaders must make it a priority to closely examine this social justice issue. To rely upon the personal commitment of teachers who often make enormous sacrifices to accept a lower wage is counterintuitive to the teachings of the church as they relate to social justice. Social justice should begin “at home.” Catholic school leaders need to be empowered to challenge the status quo in this regard. Additionally, while Catholic school salaries are greatly tuition dependent, it is not necessary to abandon the commitment to keep schools affordable but to seek to find a more equitable balance between affordable tuition and just salaries. Affordable tuition should not come about solely through the sacrifice of teachers in earning appropriate salaries, commensurate with their work.

As principals seek to hire teachers, the findings of this study greatly highlight the need to focus on teachers’ beliefs and feelings of commitment to the mission of a Catholic school. As one teacher stated in the suggestions for administrators, “I guess they should not pay so much attention to the degrees and all that . . . You know, your resume can get you in the door. I think that's very fair. But then, people should say, ‘What kind of person are you?’ Once they find out about you, then it should be, ‘Hey, you're the kind of person I want.’” The teacher who stated this during the interview is a highly committed teacher with more than 25 years of teaching in the same Catholic school. Principals need to consider interview questions that focus on the mission dimensions of the Catholic school, not just the academic dimensions.

In the area of lost, or lacking, Catholic school identity, many important implications can be found. The Hobbie study found that loss of Catholic school identity seemed to occur when a large percentage of the school became non-Catholic. Those findings were consistent with statements made by the teachers interviewed in a few schools (Hobbie, 2009). In two schools, which now have a very high percentage of non-Catholic students, the teachers stated that they

felt Catholic identity had greatly declined with the acceptance of large percentages of non-Catholic students. The teachers understood these decisions to be necessary for the financial health of the school, but they felt that changes such as these completely changed the identity of the school. In one school, the teacher reported that the school community was no longer afforded the opportunity to attend mass. Due to the increased non-Catholic student enrollment, school Mass is no longer celebrated at all, despite the fact that there is a church and priest present on the school parish property. A third teacher had a similar perspective but discussed her efforts, along with some peers, to keep Catholicity evident, even when most of the students and faculty are not Catholic. In a time when Catholic school enrollment is typically stagnant or declining, difficult decisions must be made in schools that are financially struggling to keep their doors open. However, when a Catholic school no longer serves Catholic students or functions as a Catholic school, when Catholic school identity is indeed “lost,” is the mission of Catholic education being fulfilled?

In a similar fashion, in recent years, Catholic schools across the country have had to make difficult decisions when hiring a Catholic school principal or president. The decline of qualified Catholic school leaders, willing to accept less pay to undertake a job that involves the role of principal, spiritual leader, and administrator (overseeing budget, human resources, plant and facilities, etc.) is being felt across the country. This too creates a challenge for superintendents and pastors of parochial schools. Much like Catholic school teachers, Catholic school principals are often overworked and underpaid. In many parochial schools, there is a lack of support in place to address this. However, this is a critical area for the future vitality of Catholic schools. The findings in this study, as well as several cited in this research, speak to the great importance of the principal as a collaborative, supportive, and spiritual leader. It is of great

importance that the school leader is not only Catholic but also committed to the dual role of academic and spiritual leadership. In this study, Catholic schools in which teachers perceived that their principal embodied both had teachers report high levels of job satisfaction, and most referenced the administration as leaders of faith and also supportive. In two schools in which the teachers perceived that to be lacking, the teachers expressed a lack of Catholic school identity and lower job satisfaction. Thus, diocesan school leadership and pastors of parochial schools must face the challenge of retaining quality academic and spiritual leaders for the Catholic schools, both through new principal hiring and the necessary support to retain current successful Catholic school leadership.

The findings of this study contained in Chapter IV and the summary and considerations in this chapter are filled with implications for Catholic school administrators as to how to maintain or cultivate higher levels of job satisfaction among their teachers. The continual themes, highly valued by the teachers who perceived them to be in place and highly sought after by those who did not are important to effecting higher rates of teacher job satisfaction.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

#### **Faith**

All of the teachers in the study, Catholic and non-Catholic, spoke of their valuation of the faith aspects and practices of their positions in Catholic schools. Not only do they appreciate and desire faith opportunities for themselves personally, they wish to see the principal as the spiritual leader of the faith building in the school. Principals cannot, nor are they expected to by teachers, to oversee and handle all prayer services, retreats, and the like. However, principals can and should participate in faculty prayer or institute it in schools who no longer have it and schedule time for faculty retreats, faith studies, or similar faith opportunities. Although often there is a

Coordinator of Religion who handles the role of faith development in the school, it is imperative that principals be intimately involved in setting the tone for the faculty and school as the spiritual leader. Ensuring that faculty have personal opportunities to practice, or share, their faith is an important responsibility of the principal.

### **Culture and Climate**

The culture of the Catholic school is the heart of the Catholic school. The culture embodies the school's expression of Catholicity that everyone who enters the doors of the school should feel and experience in some way. From the crosses on the wall, to the prayers with the students each day, Catholic school culture should be abundantly evident. In the new *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, the "identifying characteristics" of Catholic schools seek to put into words, the ineffable qualities that embody the essence of a Catholic school. As one teacher in this study stated, "We have become a school that hangs crosses everywhere." Catholic school culture must begin with the principal, and it involves far more than ensuring there are crosses and prayer tables in every classroom.

The climate, what Hoy describes as the general environment (Hoy, 1990) needs to be supportive and collaborative for the teachers to feel trust and acceptance. The teachers in the study made many positive references to principal support and how greatly they valued that. Several, referenced times when they made a mistake, and the manner in which the principal discussed it with them was of great importance. The teachers desire strong leadership, but they want to experience it in a climate of collaborative support. They also seek a climate where they experience community from the principal as well as their peers. Creating an environment that

seeks to instill trust in teachers and respect for one another gives them confidence and satisfaction in their jobs. Again, the principal must set that tone for the school.

### **Collegiality**

The last main area of high value to the teachers is closely tied to climate. Teachers want collegial experiences in which they feel both valued and valuable. Seeking teacher input in decisions gives them ownership; fostering opportunities for collegiality professionally, as well as personally, provides payoff in terms of teachers' job satisfaction. Teachers seek the opportunities to work with partner teachers, plan, and give input on school activities. The teachers who were interviewed also mentioned other times of collegiality such as "snack day," or birthday lunches, times when there is some camaraderie, which also fosters a climate conducive to collaboration and positive collegiality. However, the great value they placed on faith sharing with colleagues evidences an area of opportunity for principals to frame experiences of faith and collegiality for teachers to share in. By combining these areas, principals give the teachers opportunities to meet the two important stated personal needs of faith and collegiality.

### **Hiring**

The findings of this study have great implications for hiring practices in Catholic schools. These findings, as well as the links to the literature base, give evidence to support the strong relationship between teachers' belief system, their level of commitment, commitment to mission, and how these factors equate to job satisfaction and retention. Teachers who believe in the mission of Catholic schools are strongly committed to their role as Catholic school teachers. The resultant self-actualization that accompanies fulfilling that commitment creates even deeper levels of commitment and job satisfaction, which influences teachers' decisions to remain in

their current position. In order to realize the benefits of this finding, principals need to seek individuals who will be highly mission engaged. Although first, teachers must have appropriate qualifications to teach, the next and almost equally crucial qualifications for a Catholic school teacher are that he or she believes in and is committed to the mission of a Catholic school. It is important to remember that the teachers do not necessarily have to be Catholic to share the mission and values that help form the culture of the Catholic school; they must simply believe in what being a Catholic school means and desire to be a part of that. For principals, in the hiring process, this may mean a slight paradigm shift in the thought processes that are employed when evaluating potential hires. For better chances of retention, it is paramount to consider the individual's commitment to mission during the interview process and ask questions that will shed light on the interviewees' beliefs in this area.

### **Recommendations for Policy**

This study focused on Catholic parochial schools. As discussed in Chapter II of this study, parochial school governance differs from both public schools and other types of Catholic schools in that there is a diocesan superintendent who oversees the schools of the diocese, yet the pastor of each parochial school, under Canon Law, acts as the "local" superintendent. While the superintendent is appointed by the bishop, the pastor has ultimate authority over his school. Additionally, most schools have some type of school board or school advisory council. These all have differing charges and degrees of authority depending on the local pastor and the particular structure or setting. Many are charged with several basic functions: the hiring or approval of a principal, the oversight of the school's finances, overseeing facility improvement, and strategic or long range planning. While the functions of these vary greatly, these are some of the more common expectations for the role of the board member. Typically, the boards do not make

policy. Therefore, in making policy recommendations, the word *policy* will carry various meanings depending on the school setting.

### **Salary**

Salary scales and guidelines should be reviewed and adjusted in two main areas, for teachers, and for principals. Teachers' salaries should be commensurate with the job that they do. It is a great injustice that Catholic school teachers are expected to work for significantly less than their public school counterparts. The church often references social justice issues, and the inequity of wages for teachers is a serious one. Local public school pay should be examined and a goal should be set of reaching at least 90% of the local salary. Relying on the teacher's personal religious beliefs and commitment to mission without seeking to more adequately compensate the teacher is not fully respecting the critical value of teachers in continuing the tradition of Catholic education.

For principals, salaries in this area as well should be commensurate with the job requirements. As Catholic school principals have a threefold role—principal, financial administrator (as well as human resources and facilities), and spiritual leader—policies should be put into place to pay them equitably for the additional duties and responsibilities.

Employee benefits are lacking for both groups, teachers and administrators. A "Benefits Committee" for school employees should study ways to address the problem overall. The combination of low salary and lack of employee benefits, especially combined with the lack of a vested retirement plan, is of great urgency. The urgency is two-fold: the number of teachers leaving Catholic schools for better pay and benefits necessitates addressing this area, as does the social justice concern of properly compensating those who do remain, despite the lacking salaries and benefits.



**Principal Hiring**

Policies should be in place, if they are not, to ensure that Catholic school leaders are not only Catholic but understand and can fulfill the role of spiritual leader of the school. This is key not only to teacher job satisfaction but also to the very identity and vitality of all Catholic schools. The school principal sets the tone for the Catholicity of the school, not just for the faculty, but for all stakeholders. The principal must have the background and leadership skills necessary to fulfil the role of spiritual leader as well as provide academic leadership.

**Spiritual Leadership**

Principals may need additional instruction and support in fulfilling their role as spiritual leader. Instruction should be available, especially for new leaders, and policies regarding school visitation by diocesan leadership should include ensuring that spiritual leadership goals are being met, as well as academic goals.

**Culture, Climate, and Collegiality**

These three areas, while somewhat intangible, are clearly highly valued by Catholic school teachers. Once again, the principal must set the tone for the school in these areas. In annual goal setting, diocesan leadership could assist principals in setting achievable goals in these areas that would yield positive results. Leadership seminars could focus on the fostering of these areas in order to help principals who are not acquainted with how to build these areas in their schools. Additionally, a mentoring program for new principals could be employed, whereby experienced principals could partner with new principals to offer suggestions and be a sounding board. This would serve a two-fold purpose: assisting the new principals and fostering collegiality among all principals. The collaborative approach would benefit all involved by providing for dialogue on Catholic school leadership.

The policy recommendations, while possibly difficult to implement due to the dynamics of the varying leadership structures of the schools, which are largely left to the discretion of the pastor depending on his chosen level of school involvement, still can serve as goals that school leaders at all levels can look to in seeking to effect positive change to impact both the Catholic school identity and teacher job satisfaction.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In the course of reviewing the findings in Chapter IV, and the summary of how the findings relate to the conceptual framework and literature base in Chapter V, I found a number of areas in which I feel future study could be beneficial to the field of both Catholic school identity and teacher retention in Catholic schools, as well as other types of schools.

#### **Catholic School Identity**

Based on the findings of this study, and others reviewed in the literature, it would be beneficial to further study this area in two distinct ways. The study should be repeated using a larger sampling, perhaps a regional one, or a comparison of several differing dioceses across the country to provide a more diverse cross section of Catholic education in the United States.

Additionally, developing a survey instrument and employing a quantitative methodology could yield a larger amount of data to be used in a variety of ways. While it might not yield the deeply reflective personal stories and perspectives of this qualitative study, it could be a more feasible way to access a larger cross section of Catholic school teachers.

#### **Spirituality**

As faith aspects emerged, not surprisingly, as one of the main items key to Catholic school teachers' job satisfaction. It would be useful to employ an instrument such as the IFG, Information for Growth, an assessment supported by the National Catholic Education

Association, which provides a mixed-methods type of feedback to a school administrator on areas of strength and potential areas for growth for the faculty for faith formation. Comparing a school's measures on the instrument to teacher retention levels and longevity in the school could provide for an interesting correlation to further inform school leadership on the link between faith formation and teacher retention.

### **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivators**

The findings in this study that were centered on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators were very interesting, as teachers described great sacrifice and deep commitment to Catholic school teachings, even when the extrinsic benefits were very low and their choice may have constituted a family hardship. These findings, combined with recent research on the growing value of intrinsic motivators to today's workforce, yield many potential areas of study. In this area, teachers in general, not just Catholic school teachers, could be studied as to their motivators to remain in a field that often is underappreciated and underpaid in the United States today. While many theorists have studied internal and external motivation, to further apply those theories to teachers, whether in relation to items like culture, climate, and collegiality, or just the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational yields, would provide a rich field of study.

### **The Principal**

In the findings of this study, again not surprisingly, the principal makes a great impact on the teachers' job satisfaction. To further assist principals in making a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction, there are a number of different ways that the role of principal in a Catholic school could be studied. Teacher satisfaction, teacher retention levels, and teacher longevity correlations to teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their school and Catholic identity could yield interesting results.

As a Catholic school administrator of many years, I believe Catholic schools continue to be vital and important to education across our country. The dedicated teachers who humbly do the work every day to endeavor to teach the whole child, spiritually, academically, and physically are of vital importance in continuing the mission of Catholic schools. The passion that Catholic educators share will continue to enrich children's lives for years to come.

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**APPENDIX A**

Karen G. Jakuback  
Doctoral Candidate  
Seton Hall University,  
College of Education and Human Services Jubilee Hall,  
400 S. Orange Ave.  
South Orange, NJ 07079

[Date]

To Diocesan Parochial School Teachers

Dear [Recipient Name]:

I am inviting you to participate in a research study. I am currently enrolled in Seton Hall University, in the College of Education, Leadership, Management & Policy in pursuit of an Ed.D degree. As partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree, and having received the permission of the Superintendent, Dr. Melanie Verges, I will be conducting a research study in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

The title of the study is Catholic School Identity: Perceptions That Influence Teacher Retention. The study is to determine what influences you, the teacher, to remain in Catholic school teaching. The study will particularly examine your perception of Catholic school identity factors. Due to high rates of teacher turnover, your perceptions, as teachers, are invaluable in gaining insights for administrators, as to what you believe influences decisions for our committed teachers to remain in Catholic schools. This study will be a qualitative study, in that it will examine teacher's perceptions via a one-on-one interview process.

I am asking you to consider volunteering to be interviewed for the purpose of this research. The time required would be one 30-40 minute interview, to be scheduled and take place at your convenience at your school site. I will conduct an interview consisting of 11-12 questions, two basic ones about your current teaching assignment and nine that relate to your perceptions of why Catholic school teachers choose Catholic schools and the role of Catholic school identity. All interviewees will be asked the same questions which were reviewed by a panel of experts. The interview session is all that is asked of you, the teacher. Afterward you will be given the opportunity to review your interview for accuracy. The interviews and review of transcripts will occur over the course of the next 2-3 months. Please note that from the interested respondents, participants from each school will be randomly selected. Not all respondents will be selected. Every respondent will receive a letter of notification of selection or non-selection for the research study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or withdraw will be kept confidentially.

All responses will be kept confidentially during both the research and reporting phase. No names or school sites or identifying information will be used in the research, and full confidentiality will be maintained. It is your perception of your lived experience as a Catholic school teacher that is of great



value for this study. Participants will be coded with a number for verification purposes. However, please be aware that when responding via email, email transmittal is always subject to possible security breaches, i.e. hacking.

Data gathered via the interview will be held securely in locked storage and kept on a flash drive, also stored in a locked location. No information will be held on any computer or database.

I hope that you as a Catholic school teacher will share my interest in gaining insights from the teachers of this diocese and I hope that you will find your involvement professionally rewarding.

If you have questions about my request, please contact me by phone at (973)761-9397 or by email at [karen.jakuback@student.shu.edu](mailto:karen.jakuback@student.shu.edu). Please answer the brief demographic questions online below if you are interested in participating. Those selected for the study through the randomized process, will receive a letter of informed consent via U.S. mail, along with a pre-addressed, postage paid envelope to return the consent form to the researcher, prior to the study taking place.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Karen G. Jakuback". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" and last name "Jakuback" clearly legible.

Karen G. Jakuback, M.Ed.  
Doctoral Candidate, Seton Hall University

**APPENDIX B**

Information needed for Sampling to be gathered via link on emailed letter of solicitation:

Name\_\_\_\_\_

School\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to contact: E-mail or Phone

Best time to contact: Before school, During the day, After school, Evening

Number of years in Catholic education: 0-5, 5-10, 10-20, 20+

Number of years in current school: 0-3, 3-10, 10+

## APPENDIX C

### **Dissertation: Catholic School Identity: Perceptions That Influence Teacher Retention**

#### **The Researcher's Affiliation**

The researcher for this study is Karen Jakuback. Karen Jakuback is a doctoral student at Seton Hall University, College of Education.

#### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to examine teachers' perspectives on Catholic school identity, and to discover whether these teachers feel that Catholic school identity factors influence their decisions to remain in Catholic school teaching. The participants for this study were asked to participate because they are a teacher in a Catholic parochial school. Participation in this research will require approximately forty minutes of the participants' time to participate in an interview and later review the transcript of their interview.

#### **Description of the Procedure**

If the participant chooses to take part, the researcher will ask each participant to be interviewed for approximately thirty minutes by the researcher. All of the conversation will be audio recorded and transcribed solely by the researcher. Approximately 12 teachers will be interviewed and asked the same questions, which have been reviewed by a panel of experts. The following are samples of questions that will be asked in the interview:

- What do you value the most about teaching in a Catholic school?
- Do your school's Catholic identity factors influence your decision to remain in Catholic school teaching?

The interview will take place in the school library, a classroom or a conference room at the teacher's school during non-teaching time. The room will be selected to protect the individual's confidentiality and comfort. Each participant will later be given their transcript to review for accuracy.

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary, any teacher may decline to participate without penalty, and any participant may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If the participant feels uncomfortable during the interview session, the participant has the right to decline to answer any question or end the interview without penalty.

#### **Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Participants' identities will be completely confidential, only the researcher will know the identity of the participants. Each participant will be assigned a code number so that only the researcher can identify their individual responses to interview questions. The researcher will not disclose who participated in this study, or who gave individual responses. The participants will not have anonymity with the researcher, as the researcher will know their responses to interview questions.

#### **Storage of Confidential Data**

To keep the participants' data and information safe, all tapes will be housed in a locked safe at the researcher's home, until a complete written transcript has been created. When that process is completed, tapes will be destroyed. Data will be maintained securely on a USB drive, also stored in a locked safe, accessed only by the researcher. The transcript will be identified only by the assigned code number, not names. The code key identifying names of interviewees, will be stored separately from the data in a secure locked location at the researcher's home, solely accessed by the researcher. This will further protect participants' information. This data will be kept for three years and then destroyed.

#### **Access to Confidential Records**

Only the researcher and the members of the Seton Hall dissertation committee will have access to your data. The committee is obligated to protect the data from disclosure outside of this research study.

**Risk or Discomfort**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in taking part in this study. Answering questions could cause stress. You can refuse to answer any question that causes discomfort or end the interview at any time.

**Direct Benefit from this Research**

There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study. However, the information gained from this research will add to the body of research on Catholic school teachers and Catholic school identity. The research could aid administrators in creating or sustaining opportunities that enhance Catholic school identity and could impact teacher retention.

**Remuneration**

There is no monetary remuneration for taking part in the study.

**Contact Information**

Please contact Karen Jakuback, the principal researcher, at (973)761-9397 or by email at [karen.jakuback@student.shu.edu](mailto:karen.jakuback@student.shu.edu) for any questions. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or wish to ask questions or obtain further information, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Seton Hall Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Anthony Collela, (973)761-9389 or the Seton Hall University Office of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Mary Ruzicka (973) 313-6314.

**Audio-Tapes**

All interviews will be audiotaped and only identified with the participant's assigned number code. The researcher will solely transcribe all tapes and all tapes will be housed in a locked safe at the researcher's home, until a complete written transcript has been created. When that process is completed, tapes will be destroyed. Transcriptions will be held for three years after the end of the study and then properly disposed of. Only the researcher will have access to the tapes and transcripts.

Participants will receive a copy of this document for their records and one copy will be held with the study records.

**I have read, understand, and had the opportunity to ask questions regarding this consent form. I fully understand the nature and character of my involvement in this research program as a participant. In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to the audio-taping of the interview.**

**Consent to participate is indicated by typing your name below and answering the brief demographic questionnaire, attached to the solicitation, and returning both items via e-mail to the researcher.**

---

**Participant**

BY SIGNING MY NAME IN THE ABOVE LINE  
I AM CONSENTING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

---

**Date**

**APPENDIX D****Interview Questions**Background information

- Gender
- Position
- Years in current school
- Years in Catholic education
- Educational background/degrees
- Catholic or Non-Catholic

1) What is your current teaching position?

2) Have you worked at other schools? If so, what type of school?

3) What school practices make your school identifiable as a Catholic school?

Are there other Catholic School identity factors that you would like to see as part of your school?

4) Does your school have a mission statement? How is the mission statement used?

5) What opportunities are there for teachers to practice their faith?

6) Why have you remained in a teaching as a career?

7) Why have you remained in your current Catholic school?

8) How important are salary and benefits? What about collegial and administrative support?

9) What do you value the most about teaching in a Catholic school

10) How would you rate your school's Catholic school identity?

11) Do your school's Catholic identity factors influence your decision to remain in Catholic school teaching?

12) If yes – which 3 do you believe are most important to your job satisfaction?

13) Do you have any suggestions for administrators regarding Catholic school identity factors that may help them retain more teachers?

**APPENDIX E**



*Catholic Schools Office*

Diocese of Baton Rouge  
1800 South Acadian Thruway, P.O. Box 2028  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821  
Phone: (225) 336-8735 • Fax: (225) 336-8711

*Continuous Service Since 1845*

September 27, 2016

Acceptance of Research Study

This confirms that Mrs. Karen Jakuback has received approval from the Diocesan School Board and Superintendent of Schools to conduct research associated with the dissertation project titled, "Catholic School Identity: Perceptions that Influence Teacher Retention" during the 2016-2017 school year.

Research may be conducted at elementary/middle parochial schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, and the Superintendent of Schools will provide contact information for the study so that teachers in the diocese can be invited to participate.

It is understood that there will be confidentiality as to the participants and their schools involved in the research study.

Sincerely,

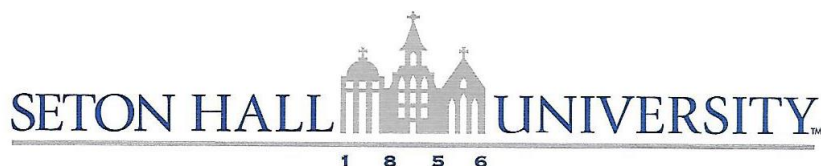
Melanie B. Verges, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools



Nationally Accredited School District



## APPENDIX F

**Dissertation: Catholic School Identity: Perceptions That Influence Teacher Retention****The Researcher's Affiliation**

The researcher for this study is Karen Jakuback. Karen Jakuback is a doctoral student at Seton Hall University, College of Education.

**Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to examine teachers' perspectives on Catholic school identity, and to discover whether these teachers feel that Catholic school identity factors influence their decisions to remain in Catholic school teaching. The participants for this study were asked to participate because they are a teacher in a Catholic parochial school. Participation in this research will require approximately forty minutes of the participants time to participate in an interview and later review the transcript of their interview.

**Description of the Procedure**

If the participant chooses to take part, the researcher will ask each participant to be interviewed for approximately thirty minutes by the researcher. All of the conversation will be audio recorded and transcribed solely by the researcher. Approximately 12 teachers will be interviewed and asked the same question, which have been reviewed by a panel of experts. The following are samples of questions that will be asked in the interview:

- What do you value the most about teaching in a Catholic school
- Do your school's Catholic identity factors influence your decision to remain in Catholic school teaching?

The interview will take place in the school library, a classroom or a conference room at the teacher's school. The room will be selected to protect the individual's confidentiality and comfort. Each participant will later be given their transcript to review for accuracy.

**Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary, any teacher may decline to participate without penalty, and any participant may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If the participant feels uncomfortable during the interview session, the participant has the right to decline to answer any question or in the interview without penalty.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Participants' identities will be completely confidential, only the researcher will know the identity of the participants. Each participant will be assigned a code number so that only the researcher can identify their individual responses to interview questions. The researcher will not disclose who participated in this study, or who gave individual responses. The participants will not have anonymity with the researcher, as the researcher will know their responses to interview questions.

**Storage of Confidential Data**

To keep the participants' data and information safe, all tapes will be housed in a locked safe at the researcher's home, until a complete written transcript has been created. When that process is completed, tapes will be destroyed. Data will be maintained securely on a USB drive, also stored in a locked safe, accessed only by the researcher. The transcript will be identified only by the assigned code number, not names. The code key identifying names of interviewees, will be stored separately from the data in a secure locked location at the researcher's home, solely accessed by the researcher. This will further protect participants' information. This data will be kept for three years and then destroyed.

**Access to Confidential Records**

Only the researcher and the members of the Seton Hall dissertation committee will have access to your data. The committee is obligated to the data from disclosure outside of this research study.

Seton Hall University  
Institutional Review Board

NOV 09 2016

Approval Date

College of Education and Human Services  
Executive Ed.D. Program  
Tel. 973.275.2728

400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Expiration Date

NOV 09 2017



**Risk or Discomfort**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in taking part in this study. Answering questions could cause stress. You can refuse to answer any question that causes discomfort or end the interview at any time.

**Direct Benefit from this Research**

There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study. However, the information gained from this research will add to the body of research on Catholic school teachers and Catholic school identity. The research could aid administrators in creating or sustaining opportunities that enhance Catholic school identity and could impact teacher retention.

**Remuneration**

There is no monetary remuneration for taking part in the study.

**Contact Information**


Please contact Karen Jakuback, the principal researcher, at (973)761-9397 for any questions. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or wish to ask questions or obtain further information, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Seton Hall Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Anthony Collela, (973)761-9389 or the Seton Hall University Office of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Mary Ruzicka (973) 313-6314.

**Audio-Tapes**

All interviews will be audiotaped and only identified with the participant's assigned number code. The researcher will solely transcribe all tapes and all tapes will be housed in a locked safe at the researcher's home, until a complete written transcript has been created. When that process is completed, tapes will be destroyed. Transcriptions will be held for three years after the end of the study. Only the researcher will have access to the tapes and transcripts.

Participants will receive a copy of this document for their records and one copy will be held with the study records.

**I have read, understand, and had the opportunity to ask questions regarding this consent form. I fully understand the nature and character of my involvement in this research program as a participant. In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to the audio-taping of the interview.**

Consent to participate is indicated by answering the brief demographic questionnaire, attached to the solicitation, and returning it  to the researcher.

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Seton Hall University  
Institutional Review Board

NOV 09 2016

Approval Date

Expiration Date

NOV 09 2017

College of Education and Human Services  
Executive Ed.D. Program  
Tel. 973.275.2728  
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR  
RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

All material must be typed.

PROJECT TITLE: Catholic School Identity: Perceptions that Influence Teacher Retention \_\_\_\_\_


CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

In making **this application**, I(we) certify that I(we) have read and understand the University's policies and procedures governing research, development, and related activities involving human subjects. I (we) shall comply with the letter and spirit of those policies. I(we) further acknowledge my(our) obligation to (1) obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally-approved protocol BEFORE making those deviations, and (2) report immediately all adverse effects of the study on the subjects to the Director of the Institutional Review Board, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.

  
RESEARCHER(S) Karen G. Jakuback \_\_\_\_\_ 09/27/2016 \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

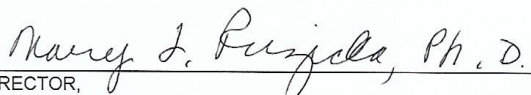
**\*\*Please print or type out names of all researchers below signature.  
Use separate sheet of paper, if necessary.\*\***

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the attached materials of my student advisee and consider them to meet IRB standards.

  
RESEARCHER'S FACULTY ADVISOR [for student researchers only] \_\_\_\_\_ 09/27/16 \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE  
Dr. Anthony Colella  
**\*\*Please print or type out name below signature\*\***

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research at the Oct 2016 meeting.

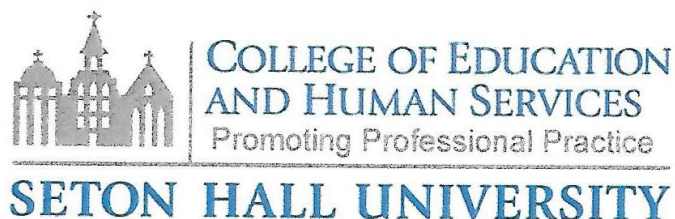
The application was approved X not approved \_\_\_\_\_ by the Committee. Special conditions were \_\_\_\_\_ were not X set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)

  
DIRECTOR, \_\_\_\_\_ 11/9/16 \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE  
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

## APPENDIX G



## APPENDIX H



## APPROVAL FOR DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Candidate, **Karen G. Jakuback**, has successfully completed all requisite requirements. This candidate's proposal has been reviewed and the candidate may proceed to collect data according to the approved proposal for dissertation under the direction of the mentor and the candidate's dissertation committee.

If there are substantive differences between what has been approved and the actual study, the final dissertation should indicate, on separate pages in the Appendix, the approval of the committee for those changes.

## Title of Proposed Dissertation:

Catholic School Identity: Perceptions that Influence Teacher Retention

## Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Anthony Colella

## Mentor (Print Name)

Dr. Barbara Strobert

## Committee Member (Print Name)

Dr. Judith Armstrong

## Committee Member (Print Name)

## Committee Member (Print Name)

## Committee Member (Print Name)

Signature/Date

Signature/Date

Signature/Date

Signature/Date

Signature/Date

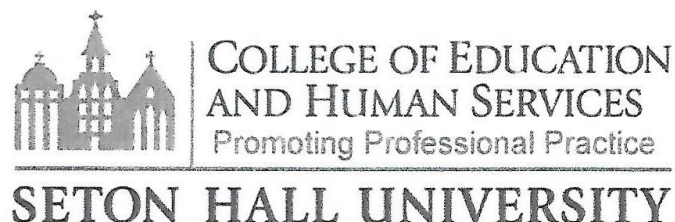
Approved by Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board on: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairperson

Signature/Date

Waived by IRB by: \_\_\_\_\_ on this date \_\_\_\_\_





## APPROVAL FOR DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Candidate, Karen G. Jakuback, has successfully completed all requisite requirements. This candidate's proposal has been reviewed and the candidate may proceed to collect data according to the approved proposal for dissertation under the direction of the mentor and the candidate's dissertation committee.

If there are substantive differences between what has been approved and the actual study, the final dissertation should indicate, on separate pages in the Appendix, the approval of the committee for those changes.

**Title of Proposed Dissertation:**

Catholic School Identity: Perceptions that Influence Teacher Retention

**Dissertation Committee:**

Dr. Anthony Colella

**Mentor (Print Name)**

Dr. Barbara Strobert

**Committee Member (Print Name)**

Dr. Judith Armstrong

**Committee Member (Print Name)****Committee Member (Print Name)****Committee Member (Print Name)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

*Judy Armstrong 9/28/16*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Approved by Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board on: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

Waived by IRB by: \_\_\_\_\_ on this date \_\_\_\_\_