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Sustainability of Catholic Parish Elementary Schools in the Twenty-First Century and the Driving Forces of Leadership

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SUSTAINABILITY OF CATHOLIC PARISH ELEMENATRY SCHOOLS IN THE TWENTY-
FIRST CENTURY AND THE DRIVING FORCES OF LEADERSHIP

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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

Ryan Killeen, 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 most prevalent model of Catholic schools has always been and remains the parish elementary school. Catholic schools are not simply private schools but a faith-based arm of a larger parish. The interconnected leadership of schools by pastors and principals is at the core of understanding the model and inseparable in long-term viability. The purpose of the study was to explore the commonalities and divergences within the pastor and principal relationships in New Jersey Catholic suburban elementary schools. The study investigated the following research questions: (1) How do New Jersey pastors and principals of suburban Catholic elementary schools perceive the key areas of mission and need within the parish school of 2016? (2) How do New Jersey pastors and the principals within suburban parish elementary schools describe their roles and responsibilities within the school and parish? (3) How do pastors and principals perceive the sustainability of Catholic parish schools?

This mixed-methods study sought to gather a robust response set to best analyze the research questions. Pastors and principals of suburban Catholic parish elementary schools from three dioceses in the State of New Jersey were invited to complete an anonymous electronic survey. The electronic survey was primarily quantitative with only a few open-ended response items. The survey collected some basic demographic information and collected responses to key areas of mission aligned to a Likert scale.

Five each of pastors and principals later participated in confidential interviews. Interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length and further explored the research questions. The electronic survey and interview transcriptions were analyzed by the researcher identifying key themes. The primary areas of focus and concern voiced throughout the surveys and interviews by both pastor sand principals were enrollment, finances, and Catholic Identity. This

study builds upon an expansive body of research on Catholic education. The study seeks to bring greater clarity to the key roles and mission of suburban Catholic parish elementary schools and provide a framework for further research.

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I especially acknowledge and thank my mentor, Dr. Barbara V. Strobert, for her limitless patience and encouragement. Her practical guidance and scholarly wisdom were unfailing and have been a constant source of support through these many years of work. Her clear, concise assessment and advice provided clarity and fortitude for which I will always be in debt. She has taught me so very much, and each lesson was infused with her passion for the field of education.

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I am sincerely grateful to the many colleagues and mentors who have supported me in my career as an educator. I offer thanks to my previous pastor, Reverend Monsignor Walter Nolan, and my Superintendent, Mrs. JoAnn Tier, for their support and guidance.

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I owe a debt of gratitude to the incredible contribution made to the study of Catholic education by so many researchers but most notably to Dr. John Convey, Reverend Ronald J. Nuzzi, Dr. James Frabutt, and Dr. Anthony Holter.

Dedication

It is with the deepest gratitude and love that I dedicate this work to my wife, Maureen. Without her steadfast support, I never could have completed this long and winding journey. There is not a letter on these pages that could have been produced without the wisdom, guidance, and faith she generously gives and of which I am the very grateful recipient every day. Maureen is the wisest, strongest, most empathetic person I have ever known, and the scope of how very blessed I am amazes me. Her insights and keen observations guided me throughout this process as they do in all things. Maureen as my best friend and partner is always in my corner. She challenges and inspires me to realize great goals.

I also dedicate this dissertation to our beautiful, talented children, Tiernan and Mara. It is my hope that the realization of this long held dream of mine will remind them that they can achieve whatever goal they set for themselves with faith, perseverance, and determination. They both bring amazing joy to my life and immeasurable pride.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Catholic education has undergone a significant transformation since its inception in the United States in the late 1800s. Catholic schools have evolved from small offshoots of overall religious education programs and havens for new Catholic immigrants to a variety of permutations serving populations of the elite, middle class, and marginalized students. The once-exclusive model of small K-8 parish elementary schools remains pervasive, but its numbers are sharply declining (Armstrong, 2015). While financial pressures grow, so too does the level of competition for students. The education landscape today includes traditional public schools, publicly funded charter schools, as well as other private school options. Catholic schools face new challenges and greater competition for students every day.

The role of a parish school has greatly changed in recent years. Catholic schools must function both as educational institutions and ministries within a larger parish community. As stated by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Vatican wing charged with oversight of Catholic Education:

By reason of its Identity, therefore, the Catholic school is a place of ecclesial experience, which is molded in the Christian community. However, it should not be forgotten that the school fulfils its vocation to be a genuine experience of Church only if it takes its stand within the organic pastoral work of the Christian community. In a very special way the Catholic school affords the opportunity to meet young people in an environment which favors their Christian formation. Unfortunately, there are instances in which the Catholic school is not perceived as an integral part of organic pastoral work, at times it is considered alien, or very nearly so, to the community. It is urgent, therefore, to sensitize

parochial and diocesan communities to the necessity of their devoting special care to education and schools. (The Catholic School, 2000, par. 12)

The difficult task of supporting and leading Catholic schools falls upon pastors and principals working in partnership.

Historical Perspectives

Catholic schools have an evolving and dynamic history in the United States. McDonald (2006) traces the roots of Catholic schools to early French and Spanish settlements. Catholic schools did not become widely accessible until the early twentieth century when concerted efforts on the part of the American Church to expand participation were realized. The presence and availability of Catholic schools paired with affordability propelled their popularity with a large, active, growing Catholic population.

Walch (2003) notes a watershed moment in the development of Catholic schools with the First Plenary Council of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore in 1852. Ardent advocacy on the part of Catholic bishops led to a proliferation of schools in most Catholic parishes (Walch, 2003). As Walch documents, by 1903 the reports of the U.S. Commissioner of Education lauded that more than a million children were being educated in the growing network of Catholic schools at no cost to taxpayers (2003). The result was the robust development of new schools throughout the nation, forming the system of parochial schools that remains today. As documented by Cieslak (2006), a catalyst to the development of Catholic schools was the First Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1852, which called for each parish to support a Catholic school, in hopes of providing an alternative to public schools for Catholic families. The effect of the council can be seen in the existence of 3,500 schools in the United States by 1900 and 6,551 by 1920. The population of Catholic school students continued its growth through the 1960s but has seen a

marked decline since 1970. The number of Catholic schools has decreased by 29.9% since 1970, and a 44.5% decrease in student enrollment can be seen during the same time period (Cieslak, 2006).

Catholic schools reached their highest level of participation in the 1960s. As will be shown, the picture today has changed drastically from those early days. Hunt (2005) recalls an era of growth of Catholic schools in the early to mid-twentieth century, when Catholic schools were encouraged strongly by the Church as an alternative for what was perceived to be a public school system not always tolerant of Catholics. At times nearly unilateral participation in Catholic education was seen among Catholics.

The traditional structure of Catholic elementary schools has been the K-8 model. The trend by most public school districts to promote separate junior high schools and middle schools has certainly had an impact on Catholic schools. The popularity of the public middle school model saw sharp declines in seventh and eighth grade attendance in Catholic schools in many areas, while in others a large influx of students to Catholic schools can be seen at the same grade level (Cimino, 2007). Cimino points to recent initiatives by some public school districts to return to the K-8 mode.

As stated by McDonald (2006, p. 16) when discussing the mission of Catholic schools, the greatest drivers for parents selecting Catholic schools are quality religious education and strong academics; but the responsibility for sustaining Catholic schools belongs to all Catholics, not just school parents. Although obviously faced with challenges, Catholic schools continued to be viewed favorably by most Americans with 66% overall favorable ratings and 88% among Catholics. (Cantor, 2008).

Although enrollment shows a marked decline, some recent studies point to growth in support for Catholic schools among Catholic families. McDonald (2006) shares research reporting that one quarter of those Catholics surveyed had enrolled a student in a Catholic school and 26% of Catholic parents of preschoolers indicated the intent to send their students to Catholic school. Cantor (2008) also found more positive views of Catholic schools by Catholics than those held by the population in general. When asked to grade various types of schools, the overall population showed little difference in grading Catholic schools compared with public schools; however, 76 % of Catholics gave Catholic schools a grade of A/B compared to only 57% giving the same grade to public schools. Positive views on Catholic education would appear to contribute to parental choice in favor of Catholic education.

Huber (2007) conducted research looking at the motivation of families to choose Catholic schools. The top reason identified by elementary school parents for choosing Catholic school was “Catholic tradition and philosophy” (25.1%) while “strong academics” (28.1%) was cited as the top factor for Catholic high school students. Strong academics and discipline were also ranked high by elementary school parents, reported at 20.1 % and 19.3%, respectively.

An impact can be seen from what can best be described as the distancing of Catholic schools from parish life. McDonald’s (2006) research shows that parents who regularly attend Mass, at least monthly, are more likely to send their children to Catholic schools than those parents who attend less frequently or not at all. Furthermore, parents of young, school-aged children are shown to be less likely to attend Mass regularly, reducing the potential for a significant connection to a parish community. A reduction in overall religiosity of Catholics can, therefore, be seen to have a direct impact on participation in Catholic education.

Sander's (2005b) work in *Catholic Education* shows a significantly strong correlation in family attendance at religious service and participation in Catholic education. Of those studied, families with the highest level of participation in religious services were the most likely to have children participating in Catholic education. Interestingly although some similar finding can be seen in other religious denominations, the effect noted appears significantly stronger among Catholics. The research did show that Mass attendance had a much larger effect on private school attendance than religious attendance showed for Protestant fundamentalists. (Sander, 2005b, p. 13). Previous work by Sander (2001) notes findings on the High Schools and Beyond Survey (1980) Sophomore Cohort Study, which showed that 80% of Catholic high school students attended church at least weekly. Participants in the study who had attended Catholic schools were more likely to pray daily, regularly attend church, believe in an afterlife, and identify themselves as Catholics (Sander, 2001, p. 126). Thus, family religiosity can be characterized as a significant factor in Catholic school enrollment, and it would appear a uniquely strong correlation is present between Catholic religiosity and private school participation.

Careful examination of the current state of Catholic education is necessary to identify the specific factors impacting the continued viability of Catholic education. These factors include, but are not limited to, enrollment shifts and decline, financial viability, and family Catholicity. It must also be remembered that one of the essential roles in the establishment of Catholic schools has greatly changed. "The Catholic school system of the 21st century will certainly look different from the Catholic school system of the 20th century, if for no other reason than because Catholics have been well integrated into society and no longer need the social isolation that Catholic schools once offered." (Cieslak, 2006, p. 154). Catholic schools no longer function as safe

havens for at least perceived needed religious tolerance. The model of Catholic education must and will continue to evolve.

Statement of the Problem

Catholic schools are elected as a choice, and the most crucial factor for long-term sustainability is the continued election of Catholic schools by parents. Catholic schools are not simply private schools but a faith-based arm of a larger parish. The interconnected leadership of pastors and principals within schools is essential in understanding the model and inseparable in long-term viability. This study explored the commonalities and divergences within these relationships. The major developments analyzed are expected to have large scale influence on the mission of Catholic education in years to come. As the trends continue to show a decline, it seems certain that the landscape of Catholic education will continue to change and come under greater scrutiny. As the very model of parish based/sponsored schools has been called into question by both research and practice nationwide, the model and its key components require in-depth analysis to assess feasibility and sustainability for the future. Families will continue to make enrollment decisions in large part based upon the leadership and vision exhibited by pastors and principals, and the engagement of those families in selecting Catholic education is critical to sustainability.

The training, background, and foundation of today's Catholic school leaders is significantly different from that of leaders of the past. Sander (2005a) states that less than one in ten teachers in Catholic schools is a member of a religious order, while that proportion had been roughly three out of four in 1960. Sander's findings reflect a parallel shift in school leadership, as the majority of school administrators today are lay people as well. Helbling (1991) confirms these findings. As of 1991, 34 % of Catholic secondary schools and 37.9% of Catholic

elementary schools were led by lay leaders. O’Laughlin (2001) cites that according to a probe by the National Catholic Education Association, that percentage will reach 90% in the not too distant future. Findings by the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education (2008) align with these estimations, as they predict that within the next ten to fifteen years nearly all Catholic school leaders will have had no experience in religious life. The changing face of Catholic school leadership also may impact the religious direction and mission of schools, with Cook (2008) noting evidence of a lack of theological background among lay leaders and only one in five new administrators having received training in a Catholic university. The long-term effects of lay leadership on mission is yet to be seen.

Today’s Catholic school principal must work collaboratively with pastors to ensure strength in both academic and faith formation. The Congregation for Catholic Education states, “Educating the young generations in communion and for communion in the Catholic school is a serious commitment that must not be taken lightly. It must be duly prepared and sustained through an initial and permanent project of formation that is able to grasp the educational challenges of the present time and to provide the most effective tools for dealing with them within the sphere of a shared mission. This implies that educators must be willing to learn and develop knowledge and be open to the renewal and updating of methodologies, but open also to spiritual and religious formation and sharing. In the context of the present day, this is essential for responding to the expectations that come from a constantly and rapidly changing world in which it is increasingly difficult to educate” (Educating Together in Catholic Schools, para. 20), which asserts again the need for alignment of mission for all Catholic school leaders.

Purpose of the Study

Catholic schools are not simply private schools but a faith-based arm of a larger parish. The interconnected leadership of schools by pastors and principals is at the core of understanding the model and inseparable in long-term viability. The purpose of the study was to explore the commonalities and divergences within the pastor and principal relationships in New Jersey Catholic suburban elementary schools. The urgency of pressure and challenges for parish schools have spurred rapid change and innovation to meet immediate needs without the benefit, it can be argued, of scholarly research and analysis. Throughout the country, regional and consolidated schools have emerged as the leading model for change, often led by examples from the corporate community.

In light of so much change, a factor that cannot be overlooked is the changing and varied perception of the mission of Catholic schools. All the contributing factors to sustainability impact the perceived mission as well. “It is likely that no single entity—not bishops, principals, teachers, or parents—should bear the blame for an unclear Catholic school mission, since this uncertainty reflects the absence of a clear consensus by Catholics on the mission of the Church in a postmodern society (Cieslak, 2005, p. 186).

Practical, not pastoral concerns, have for understandable reasons been at the forefront. What research does exist focuses primarily on Catholic education at the secondary level and in urban settings. The researcher has identified further areas for study and reflection in the continuing dialogue on the future of Catholic education and sought to contribute further study in an under evaluated area, that of suburban Catholic elementary education. As the most pervasive model the parochial school has important influence of Catholic secondary school and larger parish life.

Research Questions

1. How do New Jersey pastors and principals of suburban Catholic elementary schools perceive the key areas of mission and need within the parish school of 2016?
2. How do New Jersey pastors and the principals within suburban parish elementary schools describe their roles and responsibilities within the school and parish?
3. How do pastors and principals perceive the sustainability of Catholic parish schools?

Theoretical Framework

The researcher approached the study through a constructivist theoretical framework. A constructivist approach calls for careful and systematic examination of the data researched in light of the impact of multiple perspectives and perceptions, taking into account the experiences of the researcher. Furthermore, in looking at the key constructs of constructivism, Higginbottom (2014) presents that, just as the researcher has a socially constructed reality that influences the research, the participant has a socially constructed reality that serves as the data. Summarizing, Higginbottom asserts, “In other words, researchers cannot separate themselves and their experiences from their research or be objective about the data” (2014, p. 11). Constructivist research acknowledges the subjective nature of each participant’s perspective and supports the identification of connection and divergence in multiple perspectives. The research can therefore be analyzed, placed in a context in light of multiple realities drawn and shaped through multiple perspectives (Charmaz, 2006). It is hoped through the collection of views, experiences, and expectations of various stakeholders, a clear view of the factors influencing Catholic education and sustainability can be gleaned and examined. This framework, by its design, recognizes the previous knowledge and experience of the researcher, a Catholic educator of 20 years, and

allows for a depth of understanding of the unique role and perspective of key Catholic educational leaders, pastors and principals.

This research builds upon a body of study and investigation of the continued sustainability of Catholic education. In particular, the examination and assertions of the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education will be used. In its 2006 final report, *Making God Known, Loved, and Served: The Future of Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools in the United States*, the task force draws clear connections between stakeholders, identifies the importance of collaborative lay leadership in the form of administrators and school boards, especially in light of the reduced number of priests, but still asserts the important and irreplaceable role of the pastor in a Catholic school (2008). The task force has continued its investigation with the 2008 study *Faith, Finances, and the Future: The Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors*, which also served as a foundation to this study.

Study Design and Methodology

The researcher undertook mixed methods, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. An electronic survey instrument was distributed to all pastors and principals affiliated with a suburban parish school in three of the five dioceses of the state of New Jersey. The instrument used by the Notre Dame Task Force study, *Faith Finances, and the Future: The Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors* was used in this study. Minor modification was made to the survey administered to principals to make it applicable. Permission to use the Notre Dame study has been granted by its authors. The survey was distributed to both pastors and principals. It is primarily quantitative in nature with selected open-ended questions in the survey. Only parishes attached to a single parish-supported suburban Catholic elementary school were included in the study. The quantitative instrument was anonymous and collected by electronic means.

Along with survey research, interviews were conducted with principals and pastors on the various component parts of Catholic education and their impact on the health and viability of a parish school community. Five each of pastors and principals were randomly selected and invited to participate in brief interviews to extend the questions and responses posed in the qualitative questionnaire. Interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length and, with participant permission, recorded to ensure accuracy in collection of information.

The Notre Dame instrument was selected for its proven validity, ease of administration, and alignment with the research questions being investigated. The limitation of this study was more specific and culled to a smaller population of Catholic parish elementary schools. In this research only pastors currently overseeing a parish school in suburban New Jersey were included. The same areas were investigated for response from Catholic school principals.

A mixed-methods approach was selected to best gather and investigate the full breadth of feeling, experience, and perception held by both sets of key stakeholders, pastors, and principals. The ability to gather robust quantitative data builds a foundation upon which deeper investigation through interviews was undertaken. Interviews were selected to obtain deeper, more specific insight into the experiences of each leader. The ability to gather both sets of data strengthens the study and its contribution to the body of research on Catholic education.

The quantitative portion of the study was conducted first to establish a framework for subsequent interviews and focus groups. All suburban pastors and principals from among three of the five dioceses were invited to participate. Permission to conduct the survey was first obtained from each diocese. Detailed instructions and letters of introduction were provided prior to participants accessing the electronic survey.

Five pastors and five principals were interviewed from the sample group of schools. The quantitative study was collected electronically and then analyzed. The Quantitative data was analyzed to identify significant themes and recurrence and divergence of perspective. Demographic data were collected and cross-referenced for significance. The quantitative items included demographic questions and responses based on a Likert scale. The qualitative responses gathered were categorized to identify themes that emerged and contextualize quantitative data.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study should be read within the framework of the body of research upon which it has been built. The findings of the research should be used to continue to develop an understanding of the interconnected relationship of school and parish leadership and infuse deeper understanding within the ongoing conversation of sustainability. The findings of the research can be used to better define roles of pastors and principals, delineate responsibility, and identify key areas of need to strengthen the interconnected relationship and best support the health and vitality of the suburban Catholic parish elementary school. It is hoped that this research can build upon existing research and continue to develop clear correlations between best practice and long-term school sustainability.

Limitations

A variety of factors determined the scope, size, and direction of the study. Due to these factors there will be limits to the generalizability of the study. The limitations are described below. Several limitations of the study and its finding are identified.

1. The study is limited to suburban Catholic elementary schools within the three dioceses of New Jersey that elected to participate.

2. Responses in both quantitative and qualitative portions of the study are subject to the confidence in confidentiality held by the respondent.
3. Due to the nature of an anonymous electronic instrument, it was impossible to conclude with certainty that those invited to participate would complete the survey.

Delimitations

1. The study included only pastors and principals from suburban Catholic parochial elementary schools in three dioceses of the state of New Jersey.
2. The study was limited to suburban parish elementary schools and did not include regional, inter-parochial, or private Catholic schools.

Definition of Terms

Catholic School: A school that is aligned with the teachings of the Catholic Church, established with the permission and authority of the bishop, and includes Catholic religious instruction.

Diocese: An ecclesiastical district within the Catholic Church under the direction of a single bishop, consisting of all parishes and other Catholic organizations within that geographic region.

Parish: An ecclesial community attached to a Catholic Church under the direction of a pastor.

Pastor: The leader and director of a Catholic church community and all ministries therein.

Parochial School: A Catholic school administered and governed by a single parish and pastor.

Private Catholic School: A school under the direction of a religious congregation not governed directly by a diocese.

Inter-parochial School: A Catholic school supported by multiple parishes.

Regional Catholic School: A Catholic school not affiliated with a parish serving a geographic region.

Suburban: A district outside a large city or town in a primarily residential community.

Summary

Attention continues to focus on the long-term viability of Catholic education and the parochial school model. Chapter I presents an overview of background which forms and informs this study. The study focuses on three guiding questions: What is the mission and key area of need for parish schools as perceived by pastors and principals in suburban Catholic parish elementary schools in New Jersey? How do these perceptions converge and differ? How will the influence of these leaders shape the future of these institutions?

A review of related literature is presented in Chapter II. Existing research relative to Catholic parish elementary schools is presented. The description of research methodology and procedure is expanded upon in Chapter III. A comprehensive description of the research undertaken is presented. Chapter IV is inclusive of the results and findings of the research described in Chapter III. A summary of all finding and suggestions for further research is presented in Chapter V. This study was intended to gather and present insights on the perspectives of key leaders within Catholic parish elementary schools, pastors and principals. An exploration of perspectives and mission of each can build upon the existing body of research and, it is hoped, propel the conversation forward.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature builds a framework for understanding the current model of Catholic education. It attempts to build understanding of Catholic schools and prevalent existing research in the field. This review of literature presents an overview of research and prevailing issues affecting Catholic education, including student achievement and demographics, mission, parental involvement, Catholicity, and financial viability.

Literature Search Procedures

This review of literature in the field examined existing research, identifying both consensus and disparate views as a foundation for further research. Literature included in this review, with the exception of some items that connect to later studies or provide a broader historical context, was limited to published literature from 2000 to the present. Resources for compiling the literature reviewed include the Academic Search Complete Electronic Database, ProQuest database, ERIC database, Online resources of Catholic Education, a Journal of Inquiry, and the Seton Hall University library. Literature was selected that provided a context and framework for Catholic Education, supported opportunities for further research, and provided a grounded context and framework for further study.

Research on various models of Catholic education were brought into consideration. Key determining factors included student demographics, parental/family involvement, school climate, Catholic Identity, and financial viability.

Catholic School Student Profile

Historically, Catholic schools served a primarily White, non-Hispanic, Catholic population; but as many can confirm, the population has expanded to a much more heterogeneous group even though public perception has not always kept pace with reality. Catholic schools serve students from varied socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Today's Catholic schools admit students from a wide range of ethnic and religious affiliations. Diversified enrollment would seem essential to grow and sustain Catholic schools.

An area of special interest in recent years has been the positive opportunities for achievement offered to low-income students of color in urban settings. Bempechat, Boulay, Piergross, and Wenk (2008) provide data substantiating this positive effect, including evidence that students attending Catholic schools outperform their public school counterparts on measures of GPA, SAT, and college acceptance. Catholic schools are also shown to have a 99.2% graduation rate, which can be compared to 74% in public school counterparts (Cattaro, 2002). These measures directly relate to non-traditional student participation and controls for the positive selection effect evident in many studies measuring student achievement.

While Catholic school closure has been rampant, new schools continue to open; and many established schools continue to sustain strong enrollment. As noted by the Committee on Education of the United States Conference of Bishops (2006, p. 266) "The National Catholic Education Association's annual statistical report shows that there are currently 7,799 Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States, which enroll 2.4 million students." Apparent disparities are difficult to account for without careful, thoughtful analysis. Further study reviewed linking these opposing situations to Catholic population redistribution.

As trends in Catholic education have taken dramatic shifts in recent decades, significant research has been undertaken on the variables at work. Hunt, when speaking of the history and achievements of Catholic schools, also made note of reactions to recent school closures and noted great concerns being raised (Hunt, 2005, p. 162). Simultaneously, new Catholic schools are opening every year, and one-third of existing schools have enrollment waiting lists. (Hunt, 2005) Research has been undertaken by many to address this phenomenon and dichotomy. Resolving these contradictory conditions will be essential for Catholic school leaders.

Hunt (2005) states that as of 2004-2005, non-Catholics constituted 13.6% of the overall population and members of minority groups, 27.1%. Research by Huber (2007) is consistent, showing that Catholics currently represent 85% of the Catholic school population. The upswing in these populations indicates a distinct increase in diversity from the roots of Catholic education. Catholic schools today reflect a broader demographic and cross-section of American society.

Sander (2005a) also asserts a rise in the non-Catholic population, citing a jump from 3% of the school population in 1970 to 13% in 2001. In light of this change in population, Cieslak (2006, p. 2) points to findings from the National Center for Educational Statistics which found that “only 45% of Catholic high school principals identified the ‘religious development of the student’ as their school’s primary mission.” All of these studies point to that fact that religious instruction and affiliation are often not the driving force attracting students. Catholic schools must serve and accommodate a more diverse learning community with varied motivations driving the choice of Catholic education.

The work of Huber (2007) looks at a shift in the socioeconomic backgrounds of families participating in Catholic education. Huber notes data indicating a trend of a greater participation

of students from advantaged economic backgrounds and a decrease in the number of students from working or middle class backgrounds. Huber, conducting survey research, compiled data from Catholic school administrators, Catholic school parents, and parents of students in Catholic religious education programs. Families of students in Catholic high schools were shown to have the highest incomes followed by those in Catholic elementary schools; all responders had incomes higher than the United States census average, showing higher economic status than the average American family. Huber's data also showed that 27.2% of families were receiving financial assistance, and the majority of students receiving financial assistance came from families with annual earnings of \$70,000 or less. Many, therefore, have an income well in excess of the 2001 mean household income of \$42,288. Catholic school families were shown to have average incomes significantly larger than national norms. In fact, evidence of above average socioeconomic status of Catholic school families goes even further, with over half of the respondents reporting family income in excess of \$100,000, twice the national average. Similarly, Nuzzi (2001) argues that the "eliting" of the Catholic school population is necessitated by dramatic increases in cost driving the school tuition.

Many draw connections between the rise in affluence in families seeking Catholic education and the overall trend toward upward mobility seen in the Catholic population as a whole in the twentieth century. Nuzzi (2001) relates that by the 1980s Catholics represented one of the highest earning segments of the population with families sending their children to Catholic high schools earning an average of \$6,000 more than public school peers. Keister (2007) also speaks to the upward mobility seen in Catholics. "That is, non-Hispanic Whites raised in Catholic families have moved up in the wealth distribution more rapidly than average." (Keister, 2007, p. 1206). Keister finds 32.6% of Catholic respondents in the study moved from the lowest

income quintile to the top two quintiles between 1985 and 2000. Factors identified by the researcher as contributing are lowered birth rates among Catholics in recent years as well as a reduced portion of respondents having transitioned through more than one marriage. Some may argue that more elite, and expensive schools have evolved along with the financial resources of a large number of Catholics.

While the pool of students has diversified, the largest number of students attending Catholic schools remains students from Catholic families. Sander conducts extensive survey research in the field. Sander's research identifies a strong correlation between parent religiosity and Catholic school attendance. (Sander, 2005b) Sander finds that parents who attend Catholic churches and make financial contributions are more likely to seek out Catholic schools. As the overall religiosity of the Catholic population has declined, so too has Catholic school attendance. At their peak in the 1960s families were contributing 2.2% of their income to the church while by the 1980s the percentage was 1.1% (Sander, 2005). "Indeed, part of the decline in Catholic religiosity might be attributed to the decline in Catholic schooling" (Sander, 2005a, p. 267). Today's Catholic families appear less likely to be actively religious and develop strong affiliations with Catholic education than previous generations. "The results in this paper indicate that Catholic religiosity, usually an omitted variable in studies on Catholic school effects, is an important factor that affects selectivity of Catholic school" (Sander, 2005a, p. 267). An identified weakness in the research is that Church attendance is the only measure of religiosity included in the study although additional predictors of religiosity may well exist. Although the Catholic population has overall increased, the level of participation and religiosity has greatly decreased. Both trends would appear to impact each other and even promote a perpetuating cycle. Without a

strong personal investment in the church, parents appear to be less likely to seek it as an educational alternative.

As noted earlier, recent decades have seen dramatic expansion of participation in Catholic schools by members of minority groups. Sander (2001) reports confirming findings, including the fact that while in 1970 less than 4% of Catholic school students were African American, that percentage reached 8% by 2001. Similarly, the percentage of participants from all minority groups has risen from one in ten to one in four during the same period. Sander (2001) also finds the most significantly positive effect on student achievement can be seen for African American and Hispanic students, showing better academic performance and higher levels of attainment when compared with peers attending public schools.

The most substantial increase in participation by minority groups can be found in economically depressed urban areas (Bempechat, Boulay, Piergross, Wenk, & Kenzie, 2008). In some settings, Catholic schools are developing a niche as an alternative to low performing public schools. Similar findings are asserted by Bempechat, Boulay, Piergross, and Wenk (2008, p. 168). “Furthermore, inner-city Catholic schools achieve the greatest success with students who are the most disadvantaged and at risk for school failure, for both demographic and public policy reasons.” The researchers undertook a qualitative longitudinal study with 20 students at each of two urban Catholic high schools. Respondents were shown to have a positive view of their schools’ environment and a favorable view of their teachers. Students expressed strong motivation and personal responsibility along with the ability to articulate educational goals. Students were shown to be invested in learning, comfortable taking risks, and genuinely appreciative of the efforts of their teachers. Teacher support was described as consistent and ongoing. These more qualitative aspects of student perceptions and motivations align well with

other research, indicating a strong benefit for minority students in urban Catholic schools on academic achievement and attainment.

The work of O’Keefe and Murphy (2000) builds upon several studies undertaken by the National Catholic Education Association, addressing the participation of minority groups in Catholic education. In their research, O’Keefe and Murphy analyzed data gleaned from a sample of Catholic schools having at least a 50% minority population. In sharp contrast to Riordan and Baker’s (1998) findings, schools studied showed a significant portion of students coming from an economically depressed background with principals reporting 17% of students not having health care coverage and 14% of principals reporting students residing in government subsidized housing. The studies reflect a higher minority group participation in urban settings. It is obvious that great variety exists in Catholic education and one must avoid assuming consistency of population.

The student demographic variations between urban and suburban settings should be brought under consideration when considering the sustainability of Catholic schools overall. Sander (2001) notes especially high rates of participation in Catholic education by minority students, using the city of Chicago as an example where minority students constituted 48% of high school students and 56% of elementary school students in 2000.

A surprising contrast can be seen in the relatively small participation in Catholic schools by members of the Latino community. As noted by the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education, Latinos represent the largest growing segment of the American Catholic population and will soon form a majority. Latino families, however, only show a 3% level of participation in Catholic education. In light of these findings, the participation among Latino community members would appear to be an underexplored area of research.

The high level of participation by minority students in urban areas, especially in the Northeast is also consistent with the overall student density of Catholic school participation as asserted by Sander with roughly 60% of Catholic school students concentrated in the East and Midwest of the United States. (Sander, 2001, p. 3). Sander (2001) continues that roughly half of Catholic school participants are attending the 20 largest Catholic school districts. The population of Catholic school students shows unusual geographic concentrations. Urban and suburban settings represent two divergent and influential factors on student enrollment in Catholic schools. A problem facing school enrollment is lack of available Catholic schools in areas where Catholic populations have shifted (McDonald, 2006).

Family Involvement

The impact of parental involvement plays a significant role in the research regarding virtually any educational setting. Not surprisingly, considerable scholarship, primarily qualitative in nature, has been devoted to the impact of parental involvement in Catholic education. Warren, Young, and Hanifin (2003) conducted research on parent-school partnerships in Australian Catholic schools. Findings point to high importance placed by parents on communication and shared values. In the research sample, parents and all faculty members from six schools were administered a 92-item questionnaire, and focus group interviews were also conducted. Both teacher and parent groups ranked the schools high in the frequency of opportunities for parents to participate in children's spiritual growth. Interviews showed that parents valued openness and accessibility on the part of administrators and sought a positive social environment for their children. Socio-emotional factors such as caring and tolerance were ranked the highest indicators by parents of a faith community in all six schools. Data collected on teachers' responses were too

small to show a valid conclusive view, although ritual was ranked slightly higher by school personnel.

Although enrollment shows a marked decline, some recent studies point to growth in support for Catholic schools among Catholic families. McDonald (2006) shares research reporting that one quarter of those Catholics surveyed had enrolled a student in a Catholic school, and 26% of Catholic parents of pre-schoolers indicated the intent to send their students to Catholic school. Cantor (2008) also found more positive views of Catholic schools by Catholics than those held by the population in general. When asked to grade various types of schools, the overall population showed little difference in grading Catholic schools compared with public schools; however, 76 % of Catholics gave Catholic schools a grade of A/B compared to only 57% giving the same grade to public schools. Positive views on Catholic education would appear to contribute to parental choice in favor of Catholic education.

Some research, however, would indicate that additional research of attitudes of Catholics toward Catholic schools and the Church in general might be warranted in light of recent events. McDonald's (2006) research showed that 15% of respondents who did not plan to pursue Catholic education reported that recent sex abuse scandals involving Catholic clergy had a strong impact upon their decision not to choose Catholic education. Research, however, is limited and further study would be warranted to draw any significant conclusions. McDonald also notes that the drain of Church resources to make financial settlements in these cases has also reduced funding assistance at the diocesan level and also warrants further study. CARA, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate out of Georgetown in research on the impact of Catholic schooling on religiosity and participation in the Church (2014) shows a marked decline in Mass

participation for younger generations, with only 55% of millennials attending Mass regularly. It is yet to be seen what reciprocal impact there may be on the future of Catholic schools.

School Climate and Mission

The faith-based nature of Catholic schools adds additional elements for analysis. Along with academics, religious instruction is a major factor for families choosing Catholic schools. Huber (2007) conducted research looking at the motivation of families to choose Catholic schools. Huber's survey research also compares differences in response from parents of elementary and high school students, as well as looking at both Catholic and non-Catholic populations. The top reason identified by elementary school parents for choosing Catholic school was "Catholic tradition and philosophy" (25.1%), while "strong academics" (28.1%) was cited as the top factor for Catholic high school students. Strong academics and discipline were also ranked high by elementary school parents, being reported at 20.1% and 19.3%, respectively. Catholic high school parents ranked Catholic tradition and philosophy at 18.5%. When comparing motivations of Catholic and non-Catholic families of high school students, findings were similar with slight differences. A 2006 CARA study reveals the great importance parents who choose Catholic education place on "quality religious instruction," with 81% of respondents selecting it as "very important" in their enrollment decision.

It would seem that religious principles, values, and discipline play a combined role in attracting families. Cantor's research (2008, 112) yields similar results as he asserts, "Catholic schools have a clear, but narrow brand identity—they are credited for instilling discipline and moral values." Cantor found respondents less likely to associate Catholic schools with serving an urban, disadvantaged population.

Research undertaken by Dorman, McRobbie, and Foster (2002) shows a positive correlation between favorable attitudes of students to their religious instructor and positive attitudes toward religion and social justice. The hope of many, therefore, is that strong religious education programs can assist in perpetuating support for Catholic schools. Warren, Young, and Hanifin (2003) place the reasons for choosing Catholic schools in three broad categories. “These are religious, social-emotional, and physical-intellectual. Religious reasons encompass such notions as living a full Christian life, understanding the Catholic faith, and finding a Christian value system for living” (p. 66). They continue to elaborate with an emphasis on compassion, consideration, and recognizing the needs of all learners. Maintaining a positively nurturing environment would seem essential to Catholic schools.

Dee (2005) cites numerous examples of higher levels of civic engagement among Catholic school students, finding students to be more civic minded and knowledgeable. Dee also cautions the difficulty of separating the impact of the school from the impact of families who might choose Catholic education. Dee also found Catholic school graduates displayed an increased likelihood of becoming active voters.

An impact can be seen from what can best be described as the distancing of Catholic schools from parish life. McDonald’s (2006) research shows that parents who regularly attend Mass, at least monthly, are more likely to send their children to Catholic schools than those parents who attend less frequently or not at all. Furthermore, parents of young, school-aged children are shown to be less likely to attend Mass regularly, reducing the potential for a significant connection to a parish community. A reduction in overall religiosity of Catholics can, therefore, be seen to have direct impact on participation in Catholic education.

Sanders' (2005b) work in *Catholic Education* shows a significantly strong correlation in family attendance at religious service and participation in Catholic education. Of those studied, families with the highest level of participation in religious services were the most likely to have children participating in Catholic education. Interestingly, although some similar findings can be seen in other religious denominations, the effect noted appears significantly stronger among Catholics. "However, regardless of the level of attendance at religious services, Catholic attendance tends to have a larger effect than fundamentalist Protestant attendance on the probability of private school enrollment" (Sander, 2001, p. 13). Previous work by Sander (2001) notes findings on the High Schools and Beyond Survey (1980) Sophomore Cohort Study, which showed that 80% of Catholic high school students attended church at least weekly. Catholic school attendance was also shown to have a positive effect on financial contributions to the Catholic Church with respondents with 9-12 years of Catholic schooling making average yearly contributions of \$510 in 1991 compared with \$225 by Catholics with no Catholic schooling. Thus, family religiosity can be characterized as a significant factor in Catholic school enrollment, and it would appear a uniquely strong correlation is present between Catholic religiosity and private school participation.

Financial Viability

Not surprisingly, one of the most aggressive factors impacting the sustainability of Catholic schools is the financial burdens of education. Recent decades have seen rising costs come in direct opposition to declining enrollment. Today's school budget must accommodate salaries, substantially increased costs for benefits, technological resources, and proportionally larger staffs. Schools are faced with the challenge of sustaining schools while faced with ever

increasing costs. It can be seen that quantitative research dominates in the area of Catholic school finance.

Many point to the shift in the staff population of Catholic schools as one of the most powerful factors at work. As Meyer (2007) finds, 90% of Catholic school staff in the 1950s was female religious, but that number has dipped to just 5% today. Cattaro (2002) also points to the dramatic shift in expense represented by the change from a majority vowed religious teaching staff to a lay one. “In 1965, when Catholic schools had the lion’s share of nonpublic schools with approximately 87% of the enrollment in private schools, they were staffed by 122,029 religious men and women who totaled 73.8% of the faculty and worked for a stipend, with some literally receiving a dollar a day” (Cattaro, 2002, p. 105). Competing in the current market for qualified teachers has forced compensation, and therefore tuition, to rise. Similarly, Sander (2005a) states that less than one in ten teachers in Catholic schools is a member of a religious order, while that proportion had been roughly three out of four in 1960. Sander’s findings reflect a parallel shift in school leadership, as the majority of school administrators today are lay people as well. Helbling (1991) confirms these findings. As of 1991, 34 % of Catholic secondary schools and 37.9% of Catholic elementary schools were led by lay leaders. O’Laughlin (2001) cites that according to a probe by the National Catholic Education Association, that percentage will reach 90% in the not too distant future. Findings by the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education (2008) align with these estimations, as they predict that within the next ten to fifteen years nearly all Catholic school leaders will have had no experience in religious life. The findings of Notre Dame showed that as of 2008, 95% of Catholic school educators were lay men and women and over 50% of principals were lay as well. All indicators point to increasing staffing costs in years to come, as Catholic schools transition to virtually full lay direction. The changing face of Catholic school

leadership also may impact the religious direction and mission of schools, with Cook (2008) noting evidence of a lack of theological background among lay leaders and only one in five new administrators having received training in a Catholic university. The long-term effects of lay leadership on mission as well as economics is yet to be seen.

Along with rising staffing costs, Catholic schools find a decreasing enrollment and greater competition for students. Although the Catholic population in the United States has increased since the peak of Catholic schools in the 1960s, the student enrollment has sharply declined. According to both Meyer (2007) and Walch (1996), in 1960 5.2 million students attended Catholic schools while in 2006 only 2.3 million were in attendance. This decrease has precipitated the closure of schools across the nation along with decreased school enrollments at those schools remaining. It should be noted that the majority of the decrease has been felt in parochial schools, those affiliated with a parish, while independent Catholic schools have by some estimates shown increasing enrollment. (Notre Dame Taskforce on Catholic Education, 2008)

These trends also reflect a shift in the Catholic population, as schools in urban areas and those from low-income families have been hit the hardest. One example can be seen in Chicago as documented by Zehr (2005), where the closure of 23 Catholic elementary schools in 2005 decreased the population of participating students from low-income families from 18,463 down to 15,828, representing a 2% decline. Zehr draws a national comparison when citing estimates by the National Catholic Education Association that only 30% of students enrolled in Catholic schools come from low-income families.

Disparities in the cost of Catholic schools must also be recognized. The cost of secondary school attendance is dramatically higher than elementary schools, which impacts both on school

finance and accessibility. Because Catholic elementary school tuition is consistently lower, they have historically served a much greater disadvantaged population and remain more accessible. (Nuzzi, 2001) Huber (2007) reports similar findings with respondents who chose not to send children to Catholic high schools, citing the high cost of tuition as the primary determining factor. Huber's research points to the cost of Catholic high schools having a limiting effect on accessibility, especially in light of other financial demands for today's parents, such as ever-increasing college tuition. Rising costs would appear to have the most substantial impact on Catholic high school accessibility.

Catholic school enrollment also can be linked to Catholic population density. Sander (2005) asserts that Catholic schools are more prevalent and accessible where there are large populations of Catholics, typically in large urban centers and their immediate suburbs, with especially high concentration in the East and Midwest. McDonald (2006) concurs, citing a lack of schools in areas where Catholic populations are rising and an overabundance where populations have diminished. Sander (2005) also points to a related issue of location, as Catholic schools are directly impacted by the pool of educational public and private choices in a given area. Nuzzi (2001) also notes that due to decreasing numbers and population shifts, close to 45% of all existing Catholic schools report admission waiting lists, thus suggesting that potential enrollment can foster continued sustainability. Reflective of shifting demographic patterns, Nuzzi notes that nearly 55% of new Catholic schools are being established in suburban areas, while enrollment continues to diminish in urban areas. The Committee on Education of the United States Conference of Bishops (2008) concurs that nearly all of the 2,500 Catholic schools documented to have waiting lists are in suburban settings.

Catholic schools are competing in a market for students among other religious and non-religious schools as well. In analyzing statistics compiled by the United States Department of Education, Sander (2005) notes shifts in the percentage of student participation in Catholic schools when compared to other religious and non-religious schools. In the 1989-1990 school year, Catholic schools accounted for 54.5% of the overall private school participants while in the 1999-2000 school year that level had dropped to 48.6% of participants. During those same comparative years, conservative Christian schools saw a rise from 10.9% to 15% and non-sectarian schools increased from 13.2% to 15.7%. Looking over a longer arc, Sander (2005) notes an even more dramatic comparison upon review of United States Census statistics. In 1960 92.6% of private school students were attending Catholic schools compared to only 48.6% in 2000. Catholics schools representation relative to other private school options shows significantly diminishing strength. The trend of home schooling is also on the rise as described by Hunt (2005), but unfortunately limited tracking has been conducted with estimates of participation varying from 1.1 million up to 2.1 million.

A 2012 study, Catholic New Media Use in the United States, found that members of the millennial generation, those born after 1982, that attended Catholic elementary school were nearly 30% more likely to attend Mass regularly than their counterparts who had not attended Catholic school, indicating a strong correlation between Catholic school attendance and overall religiosity.

Adding to the competition for students has been the aggressive rise in the number of charter schools in recent years. A remedy considered by some would be the conversion of struggling Catholic schools into charter schools, but Cantor (2008) encountered strong opposition among respondents. Cantor found 62% of Catholics opposed such a plan under which

the converted schools would need to cease all religious instruction. Although controversial, seven struggling schools in Washington, DC, are exploring possible conversion to charter schools. (Cech, 2008). Although the schools would continue to serve urban students, they would cease to be Catholic. Although Catholic schools continue to serve nearly twice the number of students as do charter schools, charter schools have shown steady growth since their first inception in 1991 while Catholic school enrollment has diminished at the same time, supporting a threat seen by many, especially in urban settings (Cech, 2008). The trend would indicate the charter schools to be the competing provider with the greatest potential for growth.

As previously discussed, many Catholic schools located in urban areas have seen a substantial increase in students from economically depressed backgrounds. Financial assistance is needed and prevalent to sustain enrollment for many of these students. O’Keefe and Murphy (2000) reported that 62% of students attending Catholic schools with a minority population of 50% or more receive some level of financial assistance. The new pool of students provides enrollment benefits but does not always bring with them the needed financial resources. Urban Catholic schools find the need to build and maintain robust financial assistance programs along with providing for other budgetary needs.

A unique response to financial need can also be found in Wichita, where as reported by O’Keefe (2008) all schools are funded directly by parishes and no tuition is charged to Catholic students. Funding instead comes directly through Church subsidy. Such a solution relieves what seems to be an increasing tuition burden from the shoulders of parents. In a 2006 study by the National Catholic Education Association, 44% of respondents who were parents of school-aged children described insufficient tuition aid as problematic. By some estimates, maintaining two

Catholic school tuitions can exceed 11% of a family's total income. (Hunt, 2005). The Wichita plan shows an aggressive effort by Church officials to expand accessibility.

Nuzzi (2001) describes Lundy's 1999 findings when comparing schools within the Archdiocese of Chicago. Lundy compared survivor schools with non-survivor schools, those forced to close or consolidate between 1991 and 1994. Several areas of difference arose. In an analysis of quantitative data, parish subsidies for surviving schools averaged \$160,000, while non-survivors received \$138,000 on average. A more substantial difference can be seen in enrollment. Surviving schools on average had 345 students compared with only 175 in those forced to close or consolidate. Non-survivor schools also spent slightly more than 24% more of their income on compensation than did surviving schools. Decreased enrollment, as well as low levels of parish financial support, was shown to negatively impact the financial viability of schools.

Nuzzi (2001) further documents the effects of dwindling financial support through an analysis of the work of Harris. Harris (1996) pulled together data from a variety of sources on 142 parishes from a random sample of 712 for the years 1991-1993. Data showed an increase in parish revenue of only 3.1% from 1980 to 1993, while school expenses during the same period increased an average of 8.7%. The study also showed a marked decrease over preceding decades of parish subsidies to schools, noting a decrease in the level of subsidy accounting for 63% of the school budget in 1969 down to 33% of the school budget in 1996. As Schafer asserts, pastors have ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of all education programs within a parish. The commitment of the pastor is essential to the long-term viability of a school (2001). To meet these gaps in funding, Catholic schools are also more aggressively seeking philanthropy and the

building of endowment (Montejano, 2007). Cattaro (2002) also notes a growth of fund development in many dioceses, including New York.

In order to sustain parish subsidies, Catholic schools must be seen favorably by all segments of the parish population, including Catholics with and without school-aged children. Fundraising efforts and the establishment of schools also depend upon a broad base of support. Cieslak (2006) conducted research on attitudes toward the importance of access to Catholic schools held by members of the Diocese of Rockford in Illinois. Cieslak states that parishes that had an existing school showed the greatest level of support to access. Age was also shown to be a strong determining factor, with the greatest level of support coming from parishioners over the age of 65. As a whole parishioners of various ages in parishes without schools were shown to rank schools low; and in contrast, parishes without schools showed the greatest support for school access among the youngest group of the adult population. Middle-aged groups showed consistently low support, a result for which the researcher suggested additional study was needed to explain the disparity when compared with younger and older groups. In parishes with schools weekly Mass attendance showed a high correlation with school support. The greater the participation in religious services, the higher the proportion of support for Catholic schools could be found. The attitudes of the overall Catholic population on Catholic schools would seem important for continued sustainability but have been the subject of limited research.

Leadership

As noted previously, there have been significant changes in the background training and preparation of Catholic school leadership in recent years with the majority of principals now represented by lay men and women. The preparation of these administrators can vary greatly, but as Cook (2008) asserts, only “one in five new Catholic school principals completes a preparation

program at a Catholic university. Most receive their leadership preparation at public universities and several novice Catholic school leaders are former public school administrators” (p. 355). As asserted by Weiss (2013) “The role and relationship of the parish priest and the school principal is critical to the effective operation of the Catholic school” (p. 13). The work of Fraser (2013) confirmed a consensus of similar findings, validating the need for collaboration in leadership and the designation of specific responsibilities for pastors and principals.

The Mission of Catholic Schools

In light of so much change, a factor that cannot be overlooked is the changing and varied perception of the mission of Catholic schools. All the contributing factors to sustainability impact the perceived mission as well. “It is likely that no single entity—not bishops, principals, teachers, or parents—should bear the blame for an unclear Catholic school mission, since this uncertainty reflects the absence of a clear consensus by Catholics on the mission of the Church in a postmodern society (Cieslak, 2005, p. 186). Catholic religious instruction, as well as academics, is frequently cited as determining factors in the choice of Catholic schools (Huber, 2007). Donlevy (2007) reports findings that increased inclusion of non-Catholic students has contributed to increased ambiguity among Catholic school faculty of the mission of Catholic schools as distinguished from other Christian schools. The documented variety in the view of the role and mission of Catholic schools would appear to hamper efforts to support increased student participation. The key stakeholders determining and conveying the mission of a Catholic school are the pastor and the principal. “The pastor possesses both responsibility and the authority within the parish for the establishment and operation of the parochial school. The pastor also possesses the canonical authority to hire a principal, teachers, and staff to operate the school”

(Schafer, 2004, p. 236). The collaboration and alignment of the goals of pastor and principal are essential for sustaining the Catholic school model.

Summary

In completion of the review of literature, several key factors rise to the fore. Substantial changes have occurred in the size, scope, and mission of Catholic schools in recent decades. Research in the field represents a mix of methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, with quantitative analysis forming a baseline for measuring the current health and performance of Catholic schools.

The review of research presents the research in context relevant for its assessment. A variety of factors drive motivation to choose Catholic schools and impact the perceptions of the overall Catholic population of Catholic schools and their viability. Although the decline in enrollment cannot be denied, it is not as pervasive and unilateral as an initial review might suggest.

Enrollment in Catholic education and overall religiosity has sharply declined in recent decades. Student demographics have significantly diversified. The pool of students attending Catholic schools today represents a far more heterogeneous group than has traditionally participated. Strong representation can be seen among student bodies by non-Catholics and members of minority groups. Populations also vary greatly from urban to suburban settings.

Urban schools are increasingly serving a large population of minority students from low-income families and seeing a dramatic effect on student achievement. In suburban settings by contrast school populations include an increasingly affluent population, with reduced participation by members of low and middle income groups. Both settings include significant participation by non-Catholics.

Catholic schools are chosen by families for a multitude of reasons. Significant research supports academics, religious instruction, and values as being chief among them. Parents also seek a greater level of engagement in Catholic schools, and discipline is highly valued as well. Catholic school parents favor a collaborative approach to education. The religiosity of both parents and students shows a strong correlation with Catholic school participation. Similarly, parishioners who demonstrate more active religious participation are more likely to view Catholic schools favorably.

A complex set of factors produce a powerful impact on the financial viability of Catholic schools. The decline in enrollment and increase in lay instructors and administrators as opposed to religious ones have coupled to create a significant financial drain on Catholic schools. Today's Catholic schools are led and staffed almost exclusively by lay leaders. At the same time, educational costs have risen and financial support from parishes has declined. Support remains for Catholic education, as demand is growing in previously underserved areas and Catholic schools attract overall positive perceptions by both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The reaction to the many challenges reviewed remains squarely on the shoulders of today's Catholic school pastors and principals.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

While conducting my preliminary research and literature review toward completion of my dissertation, several issues rose to the foreground in relation to Catholic education. This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study. This begins with a description of the setting and population of the study. The next section reviews instrumentation and data collection.

Ongoing research has been conducted on the survival and permutations of Catholic education. The predominance of study has focused on urban settings and secondary education. A trend in the governance model of Catholic schools can also be seen as schools are consolidated and are severed from traditional parochial settings. The researcher elected to direct investigation on the largest subset of Catholic schools, suburban, parish, elementary schools. This research sought to build upon existing research by delving into the interconnected relationship of parish and school and in particular the perceptions of pastors and principals in particular relative to needs assessment and mission.

Purpose of the Study

Catholic schools are not simply private schools but a faith-based arm of a larger parish. The interconnected leadership of schools by pastors and principals is at the core of understanding the model and inseparable in long-term viability. The purpose of the study was to explore the commonalities and divergences within the pastor and principal relationships in New Jersey Catholic suburban elementary schools. The urgency of pressure and challenges for parish schools

has spurred rapid change and innovation to meet immediate needs without the benefit, it can be argued, of scholarly research and analysis.

Research Questions

1. How do New Jersey pastors and principals of suburban Catholic elementary schools perceive the key areas of mission and need within the parish school of 2016?
2. How do New Jersey pastors and the principals within suburban parish elementary schools describe their roles and responsibilities within the school and parish?
3. How do pastors and principals perceive the sustainability of Catholic parish schools?

Setting

The focused area of research was suburban Catholic K-8 elementary schools from among three of the five Catholic dioceses of the state of New Jersey. The five Catholic dioceses are each independent under the governance of a bishop but similar in nature and structure and affiliated to the national and global Catholic Church. One diocese does not have parochial schools and therefore was not eligible to participate. Another chose not to participate. Each diocese maintains an office of Catholic schools, but the five dioceses collaborate in many statewide norms and initiatives. The dioceses represent a diverse mix of geographic regions as well as socioeconomic populations. As stated previously, this study was limited to parish elementary schools, the vast majority of which are located in suburban settings. The setting for these schools does represent significant diversity of size, scale, and resources.

Population

Pastors and principals from suburban Catholic and elementary schools in New Jersey were included in the survey. Only pastors and principals serving in a location where a single parish school is supported by and affiliated with a single parish were included in the study. There

are 80 sites that fit these criteria and were eligible for inclusion. All participation was anonymous. Participation in the quantitative portion of the study was entirely electronic. Respondents represented a diversity of experience from schools of varied size, which is addressed in Chapter IV. Five pastors and five principals were randomly selected for participation in the qualitative interview portion of the study.

Participant Characteristics: Pastors

Eighty pastors were eligible to participate and were invited to complete the online survey. Twenty-one pastors completed the online survey. There were an additional three incomplete responses which have not been included in the data presented. That represents a response rate of 26%. All pastors who responded were diocesan priests and not part of a religious order. Of pastors who responded, 76.2 % had attended seven to eight years of Catholic elementary school and 9.5% had attended for five to six years. Only 14.3% had not attended Catholic elementary school. Slightly lower representation was shown for attendance of Catholic high school with 66.7% having attended Catholic high school. Thirty percent of respondents had once taught in a Catholic school.

When asked to estimate the percentage of students in their schools that were Catholic, over 85% of pastors estimated the Catholic population of their schools to be over 90%. Pastors identified 90% of students in their schools to be Caucasian; 90% of the schools identified as PreK-8.

Participant Characteristics: Principals

Eighty principals were eligible to participate and were invited to complete the online survey. Twenty-one principals completed the online survey. There were an additional four incomplete responses that were not included in the data presented. That represents a response

rate of 26%. Twenty-eight percent of principals had not attended Catholic elementary school. Similarly, 33.3% had not attended Catholic high school. Furthermore, 47.6% had attended seven to eight years of Catholic elementary school, and 66.7% had attended three to four years of Catholic high school. Also, 90.5% of principals had also taught in a Catholic school.

When asked to estimate the percentage of students in their schools that were Catholic only 50% of principals estimated the Catholic population of their schools to be over 90%. 66% estimated it to be 80% or greater. Principals identified 85.7% of school populations to be Caucasian. 95% of schools were identified as PreK-8.

Design Methodology

Published in 2008, *Faith, Finances, and the Future, The Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors*, analyzed the essential role of the pastor as leader of the parish school and collected comprehensive responses from pastors across the United States. The authors of the study, Rev. Ronald J. Nuzzi, Dr. James Frabutt, and Dr. Anthony Holter have granted permission for the use of the instrument in the completion of this dissertation. The instrument builds upon their previous research as well as that of Dr. John Convey. The Notre Dame Study has established a baseline from the perspective of pastors. This study looked at the goals and expectations of pastors and principals with a hope of identifying common threads as well as divergence of thought.

The Notre Dame Study instrument served as the basis for a survey instrument administered to a selection of pastors and principals of suburban parish Catholic elementary schools serving in the three dioceses of the state of New Jersey. Minor adjustments were made to some questions to make them applicable to principals. The survey instrument is divided into sections, including demographic information, a needs assessment, and attitudes and perceptions.

Items on the survey have a mix of response types but the majority, exclusive of demographic type questions, assesses areas presented on a Likert-type scale. Items are designed to gather needs assessment and perceptual data. Some items on the electronic instrument allowed for an open-ended response.

One-on-one interviews with a cross-section of pastors and principals were conducted in person at each location. Interviews provided for more open-ended responses. Data gathered through the electronic survey were used to build and shape the interview design and broaden the depth of questioning. The mixed-methods approach was selected to best delve into the complexity of the research question and glean the most descriptive analysis of all stakeholders. By joining a robust pool of quantitative data with the subtlety and specificity of qualitative interviews, the study was strengthened and most accurately reflective of the reality of parishes and schools. Questions addressed all areas but focused primarily on the mission and needs of Catholic education as well as perceptions of the roles of both pastors and principals. Both qualitative and quantitative strands of the study were analyzed individually and as a collective body of research.

Restatement of the Problem

This study investigated the influence of various factors on the success and sustainability of Catholic parish elementary schools. Because Catholic schools are elected as a choice the most crucial factor for long-term sustainability is the continued election of Catholic school by parents. Catholic schools are not simply private schools but a faith-based arm of a larger parish. The interconnected leadership of schools by pastors and principals is at the core of understanding the model and inseparable in long-term viability. This study examined the commonalities and divergences within these relationships.

Instrumentation

The Notre Dame instrument was selected for its proven validity, ease of administration, and alignment with the research question being investigated. The instrument is brief, including a total of 33 items. Twenty items at the start of the survey collect general background information related to background, experience, and general location. The second section of questions included 13 items pertaining to needs assessment with three open-ended questions for additional comments and feedback. The limitation of this study was more specific and culled to a smaller population of primarily suburban Catholic parish elementary schools.

A mixed-methods approach of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis was selected to develop a deeper, more robust collection of data. Through the use of mixed methods, a greater depth and richness of data can be collected and supports the opportunity to identify greater divergence and complimentary views (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The quantitative component can best and most clearly identify key themes through statistical analysis, while the qualitative component can fully explore the complexity of the research question. (McKusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Therefore, the two-pronged approach supported a comprehensive analysis of the research question.

Interview Questions

1. What are the greatest challenges and needs facing your parish school in the next two to five years?
2. What impact does the relationship between pastor and principal have on your school?
3. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge to the sustainability of parish Catholic elementary schools?

4. From what resource do you receive the greatest level of support in your position as a Catholic school leader?
5. Please describe how you perceive the significance of the Catholic school in your parish community.

Quantitative

The findings and instruments used by the Notre Dame Task Force study, *Faith Finances and the Future*, *The Notre Dame Study of US Pastors*, were used in this study. A letter of introduction and request to conduct the study was submitted to the superintendent of each of the five dioceses of the state of New Jersey. Approval to administer the survey was obtained from the superintendent of schools of three of the five dioceses of New Jersey; as previously noted, two of the dioceses did not participate.

A letter of introduction was sent via email to each potential respondent and a window of several weeks was available for completion of the electronic survey. The survey instrument was anonymous and collected by electronic means. A second email was sent subsequently to request completion of the survey (see Appendix C and Appendix D, Survey Instruments).

Qualitative

Along with survey research, interviews were conducted with the principals and pastors on the various component parts of Catholic education and their impact on the health and viability of a parish school community. Prior to conducting the interviews the interview questions were reviewed by a jury of experts consisting of two pastors and two principals not included in the study to confirm validity and reliability. Interview questions were designed to extend key areas and findings that emerged from the Notre Dame study and bring greater clarity to the quantitative data. The interview process was selected to augment and expand upon the

quantitative data collected. The data gathered through the electronic survey served to direct and inform the interview process. Five each of the pastors and principals from each of the three dioceses were randomly selected and invited to participate in brief interviews to extend the questions and responses posed in the electronic survey. The interviews were structured and aligned to a series of questions but allowed for open-ended responses. A request to conduct the interview was sent via email to each potential respondent. If selected participants declined, alternates were randomly selected as replacements. Interviews were 30 to 40 minutes in length and, with participant permission, recorded to ensure accuracy in collection of information. Interviews were all conducted in person with each respondent. After the interviews were transcribed, transcriptions were sent to each participant to verify accuracy. Recordings and transcriptions were locked and secured at all times to ensure the data and confidentiality were not compromised.

Procedures and Collection of Data

The quantitative portion of the study was conducted first to establish a framework for subsequent interviews and focus groups. Pastors and principals from among three New Jersey dioceses were invited to participate. Detailed instructions and letters of introduction were provided via email prior to participants accessing the electronic survey. The survey was available for a six-week window of time. A reminder email was sent subsequent to the initial survey invitation to remind participants to complete the survey.

Five each of the pastors and principals were interviewed from the sample group of schools. Pastors and principals were randomly selected for interview. Pastors and principals were not necessarily from the same school/parish locations. In the case selected participants declined, alternates were selected through the same random selection process.

Data Analysis

The quantitative study was collected electronically and then analyzed. The quantitative data were analyzed to identify significant themes and recurrences and divergence of perspective. All data were carefully scrutinized to observe any anomalies or inconsistencies which might render the data invalid. Surveys with a significant percentage of incomplete responses were deemed invalid and not included in the presented research. Statistical analysis was conducted to analyze the data collected. Demographic data were collected and cross-referenced for significance. The qualitative responses gathered were also categorized to identify themes that emerge and contextualize quantitative data. The study sought to develop concrete, objective data with both scholarly and practical applications. The qualitative data were collected, analyzed, and organized thematically. Responses were reviewed and key themes and trends were coded to develop a deeper understanding of responses and illicit key findings.

Table 1

Interview Questions Relevant to Research Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1. How do New Jersey pastors and principals of suburban Catholic elementary schools perceive the key areas of mission and need within the parish school of 2016?	1. Please describe how you perceive the significance of the Catholic school in your parish community. 2. What are the greatest challenges and needs facing your parish school in the next two to five years?

<p>2. How do New Jersey pastors and the principals within suburban parish elementary schools describe their roles and responsibilities within the school and parish?</p>	<p>3. What impact does the relationship between pastor and principal have on your school?</p> <p>4. From what resource do you receive the greatest level of support in your position as a Catholic School leader?</p>
<p>3. How do pastors and principals perceive the sustainability of Catholic parish schools?</p>	<p>5. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge to the sustainability of parish Catholic elementary schools?</p>

Summary

This chapter identified the population and setting of the research conducted in the study. The population and setting were reviewed as well as the questions and areas of research. The chapter went on to review the research process, inclusive of both qualitative and quantitative components. The process for design as well as data collection and methodology was also described. With this overview established, the subsequent chapter analyzes the data collected and assesses influences and perspectives on the sustainability of the parish elementary school in the area of research.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

Electronic requests to participate in the anonymous online survey were sent to pastors and principals in active service in suburban parish settings in the Dioceses of Trenton, Metuchen, and Paterson in New Jersey. A reminder email request was sent to again invite participation. The electronic survey did also allow for some open-ended responses. Twenty-one each of pastors and principals completed the online survey.

Ten interviews were completed as part of the collection of qualitative data. Five pastors and five principals were randomly selected and agreed to participate in interviews. The interviews were completely confidential. All participants granted permission for the interviews to be recorded, and the interviews were later transcribed by the researcher. Each interview was approximately 20 to 30 minutes in length.

In reviewing the quantitative and qualitative data, consistent themes emerged. A robust collection of data was gathered that connects directly to the research questions. An in-depth analysis is provided of the responses connected to each of the research questions below.

Research Question 1

How do New Jersey pastors and principals of suburban Catholic elementary schools perceive the key areas of mission and need within the parish school of 2016?

Pastors and principals were asked to provide feedback and opinions regarding needs and priorities for Catholic schools on the electronic survey instrument. When asked to rate, according to a Likert scale, need areas that pertain to their Catholic schools, both pastors and principals answered that Catholic Identity was *extremely important* at a rate of 90.5%, the highest of any

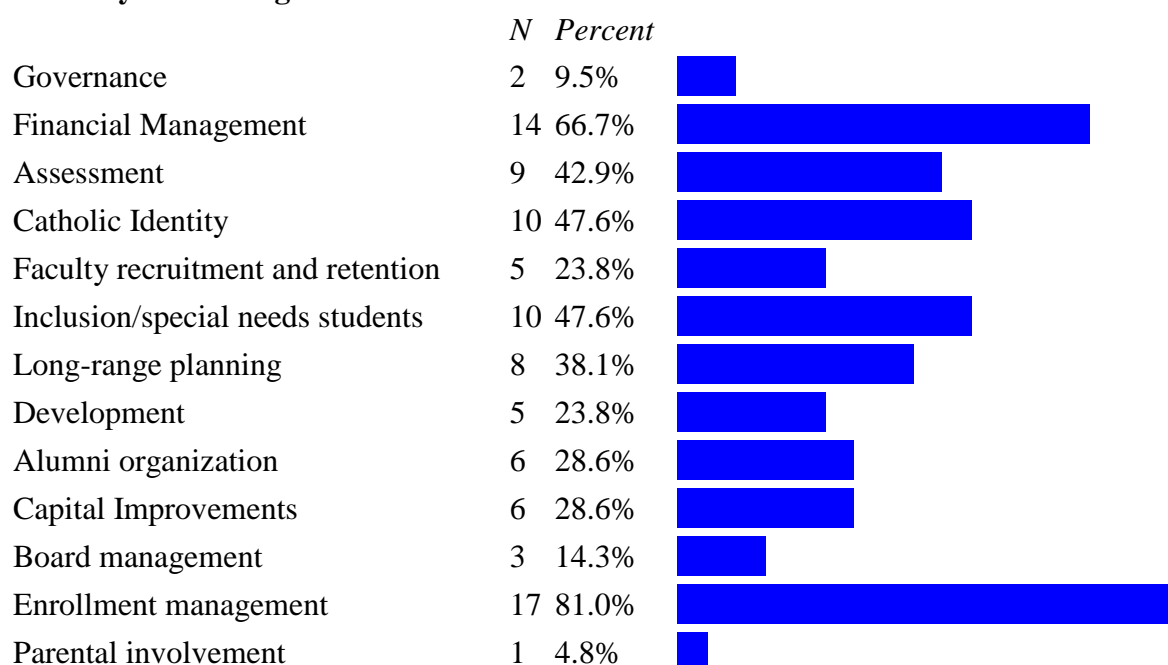
item possible. With 90.5% of pastors and principals rating Marketing as *very important* or *extremely important*, it is shown to be a significant area as well. Furthermore, 95.2% of principals felt enrollment management is a *very important* or *extremely important* need, which aligns with the 95.3% of pastors who also felt enrollment management is a *very important* or *extremely important* need.

When asked to indicate the top five areas that their parish school is currently addressing 81% of principals included enrollment management, as did 71% of pastors. Also, 66.7% of each selected financial management. In addition, 76.6% of pastors selected Catholic Identity, while only 47.6% of principals selected the same item.

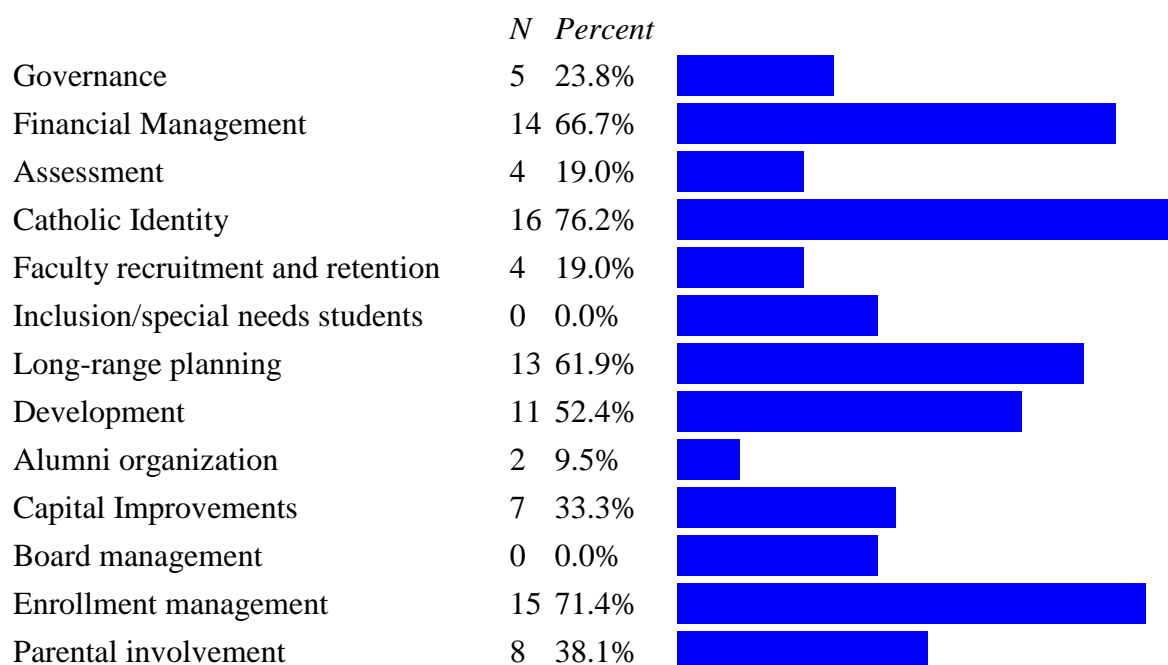
Table 2 below shows principals' and pastors' top five areas being addressed in their parishes.

Table 2: *Principals' and Pastors' Top Five Areas Being Addressed in Their Parishes*

Principals: From the checklist below indicate the top five areas that your parish school is currently addressing.



*Note: This is a multi-choice element so the percentages may add up to more than 100%***Pastors: From the checklist below indicate the top five areas that your parish school is currently addressing.**



Note: This is a multi-choice element so the percentages may add up to more than 100%

When asked to respond to statements on Catholic schools, 90.5% of principals responded *strongly agree* to the statement “Catholic schools are an essential part of the Church’s educational ministry,” and 9.5% chose *agree*. For the same statement, 76.2% of pastors chose *strongly agree* and 19% chose *agree*. Both pastors and principals agreed that the financial support of Catholic schools should be shared by all Catholics. In responding to the statement “The financial support of Catholic schools is the duty of all Catholics whether or not they have children in the schools,” 71.4% of pastors chose *strongly agree* and 19% chose *agree*. Principals had similar responses with 66.7% choosing *strongly agree* and 23.8% choosing *agree*.

Table 3

Pastors' and Principals' Rating of Importance of Parish Needs

Rate the importance of each need area as it pertains to your parish school.

		Extremely Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all important
Governance	Pastor	45.0%	40.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	35.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Catholic Identity	Pastor	90.55	9.5%	0.0%	0.05	0.0%
	Principal	90.5%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%
Long-range planning	Pastor	52.4%	38.1%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	47.6%	28.6%	14.3%	4.8%	4.8%
Marketing	Pastor	81.0%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	61.9%	28.6%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%
Capital Improvements	Pastor	47.6%	28.6%	23.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	38.1%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	4.8%
Enrollment management	Pastor	52.4%	42.9%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	61.9%	33.3%	0%	0%	4.8%
Financial management	Pastor	71.4%	19.0%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%
	Principal	61.9%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Faculty Recruitment and Retention	Pastor	33.3%	47.6%	14.3%	4.8%	0.0%
	Principal	47.6%	33.3%	9.5%	4.8%	4.8%
Development	Pastor	52.4%	42.9%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	33.3%	33.3%	19.0%	9.5%	4.8%
Technology	Pastor	47.6%	42.9%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%
	Principal	52.4%	23.8%	19.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Board management	Pastor	14.3%	23.8%	38.1%	14.3%	9.5%
	Principal	4.8%	28.6%	47.6%	9.5%	9.5%
Parental Involvement	Pastor	42.9%	47.6%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	42.9%	38.1%	4.8%	9.5%	4.8%
Assessment	Pastor	33.3%	42.9%	9.5%	14.3%	0.0%
	Principal	47.6%	42.9%	4.8%	0.05	4.8%
Inclusion/Special Needs students	Pastor	19.0%	33.3%	23.8%	23.8%	0.0%
	Principal	42.9%	28.6%	23.8%	0%	4.8%
Alumni organization	Pastor	23.8%	38.1%	23.8%	9.5%	4.8%
	Principal	4.8%	42.9%	33.3%	14.3%	4.8%
Professional Development for faculty	Pastor	42.9%	52.4%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	42.9%	42.9%	9.5%	0.0%	4.8%

The responses to another statement were very different. Principals responded 81% *strongly agree* and 9.5% *agree* to the statement “Most Catholic schools that I know seem to teach Catholic doctrine reasonably well.” To the same statement pastors responded 9.5% *strongly agree*, 57.1% *agree*, 9.5% *neutral*, and 19% *disagree*. In keeping with the theme of Catholic Identity, 47.6% of principals *strongly agreed* with the response, “Most Catholic Schools I know have strong Catholic Identity,” and 33.3% chose *agree*. Only 14.4% of pastors chose *strongly agree* but 52.4% chose *agree*. Consistently, principals rated the Catholicity of schools more positively than did pastors.

Table 4

Pastors' and Principals' Rating of Statements Regarding Catholic Schools

Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The need for Catholic schools is at least as great today as in the past.	Pastor	71.4%	14.3%	4.8%	9.5%	0.0%
	Principal	81.0%	9.55	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%
Catholic schools are worth what it costs to operate them.	Pastor	57.1%	23.85	9.5%	4.8%	4.8%
	Principal	90.5%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Maintaining a Catholic school is an effective use of diocesan and parish resources.	Pastor	57.1%	23.8%	9.5%	4.8%	4.8%
	Principal	81.0%	14.35	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Catholic schools are an essential part of the Church's educational ministry.	Pastor	76.2%	19.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%
	Principal	90.5%	9.5%0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
In addition to the family, Catholic schools are the best means for religious formation of the young.	Pastor	76.2%	14.3%	0.0%	4.8%	4.8%
	Principal	81.0%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
The Catholic school is one of the best means of evangelization in the Church today.	Pastor	71.4%	9.5%	4.8%	4.8%	9.5%
	Principal	66.7%	14.3%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I enjoy being the pastor/principal of (a parish with) a Catholic school.	Pastor	76.2%	19.0%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	Principal	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 5

Pastors' and Principals' Rating of Statements Regarding Catholic Schools

Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to teach Catholic doctrine reasonably well.	Pastor	9.5%	57.1%	9.5%	19.0%	4.8%
	Principal	42.9%	47.6%	4.85	4.8%	0.0%
The Catholic schools that I know have effective programs of religious formation.	Pastor	4.8%	66.7%	14.3%	9.5%	4.8%
	Principal	38.15	47.6%	9.5%	4.8%	0.0%
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have well-prepared and effective teachers.	Pastor	4.8%	61.9%	19.0%	14.3%	0.0%
	Principal	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	0.05	0.0%
Most Catholic schools that I know have strong Catholic Identity.	Pastor	14.3%	52.4%	9.5%	19.0%	4.8%
	Principal	47.6%	33.3%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have well-prepared and effective principals.	Pastor	14.3%	57.1%	19.0%	9.5%	0.0%
	Principal	28.65	33.3%	38.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Most Catholic schools that I know have clear goals and priorities.	Pastor	5.0%	70.0%	15.0%	5.0%	5.0%
	Principal	23.8%	38.1%	38.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 6

Pastors' and Principals' Rating of Statements Regarding Catholic Schools

Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Every parish should provide some support for Catholic schools.	Pastor	66.7%	23.8%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%
	Principal	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
In areas where there is only one Catholic school and several parishes, each of the parishes should financially support the school.	Pastor	71.4%	19.0%	0.0%	4.8%	4.8%
	Principal	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The financial support of Catholic schools is the duty of all Catholics whether or not they have children in the schools.	Pastor	71.4%	19.0%	0.0%	4.8%	4.8%
	Principal	66.0%	23.8%	9.5%	0.0%	0.05
A parish without a Catholic school should financially assist Catholic schools that enroll its students.	Pastor	71.4%	19.0%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%
	Principal	81.0%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The maintenance of Catholic schools in poor, inner-city areas should be a diocesan priority.	Pastor	40.0%	30.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0.05
	Principal	33.3%	38.1%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%

When given the opportunity on the survey to provide general comments, a variety of perspectives were given. These open-ended responses echoed the prevalent themes of the quantitative responses. Concerns with the financial viability of schools, the drain on parish resources, and the need to find alternate funding sources were all voiced. Balancing conflicting

needs was apparent. As stated by one pastor, “While a strong advocate of Catholic education, I do not feel that the school should stay open at all costs. There needs to be parish life beyond Catholic schools. The bottom line problem for most of us is finances. Parents are not willing to pay cost-based tuition.” The need to strengthen and sustain a strong sense of Catholic Identity and the primary role of schools as sources of evangelization and faith development was repeated. There was strong alignment among the comments of both pastors and principals. As shared in the comments of one principal, “In many ways Catholic schools have to row upstream against the current. Gone are the days when attending church was a priority. Sports and sleep have taken precedence in this “resume building” culture. The spiritually poor in the suburbs are very needy and highlight a great need for the presence of Catholic schools in these areas. If we see the mission of the church as evangelizing, I see no greater place to do this than in a Catholic school setting.”

Responses provided by both pastors and principals in the interviews aligned with the responses provided in the electronic instrument. Common among the interviews were issues of finance and enrollment. Marketing, academic strength, technology, and facilities were also noted as well as Catholic Identity.

At the intersection of finance and physical infrastructure, the cost for improving and maintaining facilities was also voiced. As shared by one of the pastors, “The principalship is no longer just administering educational needs to the children; it goes far greater than that. We have a healthy school right now; we have 230 students. We can operate in the black with that number of students as long as we don’t have a major catastrophe —a pipe breaks, a boiler breaks. We’ll be in the black by the end of the year if everything stays the same, but that’s never guaranteed.” Both pastors and principals noted the challenges of maintaining enrollment in light of rising

tuition costs. Tuitions continue to rise, making accessibility for families more challenging and the investment a more significant sacrifice for families.

One pastor observed, “But I think the other side of that coin is the issue of faith. I think it’s the decline in the practice of faith and the lack of real commitment to the Catholic faith by some if not many of our parishioners. That’s a huge item—the lack of commitment to the faith and practice of the faith spills over into a lack of appreciation for a Catholic education and an unwillingness to sacrifice to obtain that, to pay the tuition that’s necessary to keep the school going. In a nutshell, those are the huge challenges that I see facing this parish community.” Many pastors especially commented on the need for strong, sustained commitment on the part of families to schools but more importantly to faith as a whole and parish life beyond the school.

Several pastors expressed deep concerns with the Catholicity of school families. “The secondary challenge which, as a priest, I find as almost equally important to finances is Catholic Identity. Our schools are Catholic *primarily* in name only. There is a Mass once a month and the kids dress up as saints on November 1; but the vast majority of our teachers, our administrators, and our families in our Catholic schools are not practicing Catholics and the people who have to support the schools are the practicing Catholics, which are also on the decline.” This was shared by a single pastor who went on to state, “Religion isn’t an important value for most of the families in our system.”

By sharp contrast, principals as a whole saw the school as a positive driver of faith formation and spoke very positively of Catholic Identity and faith formation. “I think the parish sees how prepared these students are for the next step in their education and how vitally important they are to the parish. The students are for the most part active participants in the life of the parish—altar servers, choir, cantor—the youth ministry is growing again. We have a

summer Sunday's program. They are an integral part of the parish. So, they see themselves not as a separate entity, but as furthering the mission of the parish as well." It should be noted that several pastors also observed a positive impact of schools on the larger parish and the faith development of students and families.

Attracting and retaining quality teachers was also mentioned by both pastors and principals. As shared by one principal, "Attracting, recruiting, hiring teachers is a major concern because in our situation not only do we have to find teachers who are excellent teachers, they have to be supportive of Catholic education and they have to be willing and able to work for the salary we can offer." Another pastor shared the concern, "Sometimes it is hard to find qualified teachers who have certification and are willing to take what is really a sacrificial salary. Staffing may be an issue going forward in to the future." It was also noted that the scarce number of religious sisters still in active service in schools has had a substantial impact on salary costs as lay employee salary and benefit costs are significantly higher than those for religious.

Principals repeated the issues regarding school finance both in retaining faculty and providing a competitive academic program. Of note was the cost of providing services for a diverse set of student needs. One principal shared, "Accommodating the needs of special-needs students, combined with diminishing state and federal resources . . . The needs of the students who are coming to us, who are asking for admission, that number has grown considerably and that has been a huge financial commitment, trying to increase services we can offer." Providing for the diverse academic needs of students was seen as yet another financial variable that was likely to continue to increase.

Pastors and principals were asked, "Please describe how you perceive the significance of the Catholic school in your parish community." Repeatedly responses focused on an important role

of the school within the parish. “It enlivens the parish and gives it a great spirit. We have more and more of the children and their parents coming to church here. It is enhancing the parish,” shared one pastor. Another pastor shared a similar sentiment. “Well, the school is the life of the parish. If it was all adults, it would get pretty dull. And adults have big egos so you have to deal with that. The children liven up the place.”

Principals saw significant positive support for Catholic schools from the larger parish community and greatly appreciated the broad appeal and support for Catholic education. “I feel that the parishioners feel we are their partner; we are definitely a ministry of the church, we aren’t a separate entity. We are supporting the faith lives of the parish families.” Recurring themes of the positive partnership between school and parish emerged, with several pastors and principals noting that schools were a source of pride among parishioners. “The parish is very proud. In some ways, this is becoming a generational school. Many of the children who are enrolled here, the parents went to school here and have remained members of the parish. There is a great sense that the parents remain active in the parish and the parish mission after the children go through the school and graduate.” Schools were felt to infuse the parish community with life, vitality, and continuity.

A pastor also noted that often families who chose Catholic education became more engaged in the parish and its ministries. “I see the schools as contributing to the overall practice simply of the faith; those who choose Catholic schools by and large—with some exceptions—they are the people who are engaged in other areas of the parish, in ministry in the parish. From extraordinary ministers of Eucharist, their children are serving various social ministry programs that we have here at the parish.” An active reciprocity between school and parish was applauded.

Research Question 2

How do New Jersey pastors and the principals within suburban parish elementary schools describe their roles and responsibilities within the school and parish?

Overwhelmingly, the need for a strong, positive, collaborative relationship between pastors and principals was voiced. Participants stressed the need for mutual respect, acknowledging the pastor as spiritual leader and principal as academic leader. Several pastors and principals noted the need for frequent communication and delineated responsibilities. Respondents asserted that when the pastor and principal are at odds, it has a detrimental effect on the school. “We may disagree, but we disagree behind closed doors. Whenever we are out in public, it’s always a united front because people like to divide and conquer.” Similarly, another pastor shared, “It would be death knell to me if that was not a healthy relationship. Somebody would have to change. Either the principal or the pastor would have to go. I think the relationship has to be collaborative across all the elements.” Several principals expressed great appreciation that pastors were engaged but allowed them to manage the day-to-day activities of the school. Many pastors emphasized the importance of referring any parental concerns to the principal and limiting involvement unless a resolution could not be found.











Only one pastor responded in a contrary manner. “I don’t know that it has any great impact at all. In my opinion, it is whether the children are happy and their parents are happy, the teachers are happy, and therefore the administration is happy because there are fewer complaints, fewer issues, fewer problems, and fewer rivalries. As long as they are respectful towards each other and they can work together, that is a positive thing.”

When asked to respond to the question, “What is your most reliable source for decision-making regarding your school?”, 57.1% of principals cited “the pastor,” which was significantly

higher than any other response. Pastors chose “principals” the most commonly when asked the same question at a rate of 38.1%, with the second most popular choice being “the School Board” at 19%. It is worth noting that no principal selected the school board as a response for this item. When asked what resource provides the greatest level of support to pastors and principals in the position of Catholic school leader, responses were varied. Principals were especially apt to cite strong support from fellow principals and the teaching faculty of their schools. Many principals noted a reliance to a lesser degree on the Office of Catholic Schools and the larger diocese. Principals also relied on the support of their own families.

Table 7

*Pastors' and Principals' Most Reliable Source for Decision-Making regarding Their School***Pastors: What is your most reliable source for decision making regarding your school?**

	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	
Bishop	1	4.8%	4.8%	
Central Office	1	4.8%	4.8%	
Principal	8	38.1%	38.1%	
Superintendent	2	9.5%	9.5%	
School board	4	19.0%	19.0%	
Parent/teacher organization	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Other pastors and priests	1	4.8%	4.8%	
University contacts	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Professional organizations	1	4.8%	4.8%	
Other	3	14.3%	14.3%	
Missing	0	0.0%		

Principal: What is your most reliable source for decision making regarding your school?











	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	
Bishop	1	4.8%	4.8%	
Central Office	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Pastor	12	57.1%	57.1%	
Superintendent	4	19.0%	19.0%	
School board	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Parent/teacher organization	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Other principals	3	14.3%	14.3%	
University contacts	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Professional organizations	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Other	1	4.8%	4.8%	
Missing	0	0.0%		

Table 8

Pastors' and Principals' Rating of Statements Regarding Catholic Schools

Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Parents should have a substantial voice in the governance of Catholic schools.	Pastor	4.8%	57.1%	23.8%	14.3%	0.0%
	Principal	4.8%	38.1%	38.1%	19.0%	0.0%
Parents must be given a substantial role in the development of policy for Catholic schools.	Pastor	4.8%	42.9%	28.6%	23.8%	0.0%
	Principal	9.5%	28.6%	38.1%	23.8%	0.0%
All Catholic schools should have school boards/councils.	Pastor	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%	9.5%	4.8%
	Principal	42.9%	52.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
When a school serves parishes, a representative board/council should be responsible for the school's governance.	Pastor	9.5%	57.1%	9.5%	23.8%	0.0%
	Principal	19.0%	52.4%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%

Pastors frequently noted support from principals and, to a lesser degree, teachers and parish staff. Two pastors specifically mentioned feeling strong support of Catholic schools from the bishop of the diocese. The superintendent of schools and the diocesan school office were also mentioned. School board, although supported by the quantitative data, had very few comments in the interviews.

Research Question 3

How do pastors and principals perceive the sustainability of Catholic parish schools?

The responses aligned to mission and need directly impact views of sustainability as one might expect. Finances and enrollment were the predominant concerns as well as how to continue to respond to growing needs with diminishing resources. Rising costs, especially those relating to teacher salaries and benefits, were cited as well as the cost of maintaining facilities and keeping academic programs competitive. With the rising cost of tuition, a large number of families cannot carry the cost and rely on tuition assistance programs, another factor impacting school budgets. Bridging the gap between income and expense was commonly cited. Many concerns centered on accessibility to Catholic education because of finances. As stated by one pastor, “To me it is a disgrace that for whatever reasons, and valid reasons—mostly money—we’ve abandoned the underprivileged, which goes against what Catholic schools were founded for. I give it ten years; there are going to be very few Catholic schools, and it’s only going to be the very rich who are serviced by Catholic schools because they are going to be the only ones who will be able to afford it.” Accessibility to Catholic education in the present and future was a concern, especially among pastors.

Again, the connection between finances and mission was repeated. “Ultimately, it’s the appreciation for the faith, the values, the discipline, the morality, the lifestyle, all that’s taught and handed on in the Catholic school. Ultimately, it comes down to that, I think. If we lose appreciation for that, if we’re all the same and anything goes in society, then why sacrifice an extra \$5,000 or \$6,000 to send a child to an elementary school when it’s free down the road in the public school where anything goes? Ultimately, it’s that. Sustainability is tied in with the finance deeply in my view. And again, it’s because fewer of our Catholics go to church.”

Another respondent cited a similar concern, as most schools receive a parish subsidy and most parishes see declining financial contributions from parishioners. Some pastors exhibited doubts

about the Catholicity of school communities and an underlying tension that exists when schools receive substantial funding from Mass-attending parishioners and not all school families are Catholic or attend Sunday Mass.

As summarized by one pastor, “The biggest challenge, I think, is a historical reliance on parish subsidy—it’s a huge line item in the parish budget here and has become less reliable on the parish end due to an overall decrease in parish income based on two things. The number of parishioners who regularly attend Mass is lower as is the ability of those parishioners to contribute at the same level as previous generations. There is no nice way to say this so I just have to say it. The highest percentage of contributions has come from the most senior. The group that takes their place age-wise does not have the same financial means to support the parish in the way the previous group did. As the age-brackets go down, the financial support is not there, which impacts the parish’s ability to subsidize the school. The school needs to look for ways to become less reliant on that subsidy. Eventually, in my opinion, looking 15-20 years in the future, the schools would have to operate with little or no subsidy from the parish and how that is going to happen, remains to be seen.” The need for greater financial independence was a common thread throughout the study.

One principal noted the increased competition for students, especially in light of the increasing number of charter schools. High quality traditional public school options were also identified as a threat. As stated by one pastor as a summation of concerns of increasing costs and competition, “I am not optimistic in the way it is going and I am 100% for Catholic schools.” One pastor raised the issue of the cost prohibitive nature of attempts to keep pace with public schools in areas of technology, facilities, and resources in light of the huge disparity between funding of public versus Catholic schools.

On the electronic survey, respondents were asked to identify the most important needs facing their parish schools in the next two to five years in the form of an open-ended response. The overwhelmingly prevalent response was enrollment, with general financial concerns also being repeated several times by both pastors and principals. Along with finances came concerns over the increased competition for students in recent years and the ability to sustain enrollment with rising tuition costs. As shared by one respondent, “Student recruitment. In an area with both good public and many private schools, a ‘Catholic’ school no longer enjoys much automatic support.” Several pastors brought attention to the need to strengthen and maintain Catholic Identity. As noted by another pastor, “Establishing our value proposition: Catholic primacy of spiritual formation, better intellectual formation than competing public and private options.” These thoughts highlight the need for Catholic schools to best position themselves as a compelling choice for families when selecting a school.

Summary

The quantitative and qualitative data were illuminating in forming a complete picture of the roles and perceptions of pastors and principals within suburban Catholic parishes. The review and analysis of these data were used to form conclusions and recommendation included in the next chapter.

Across the board, managing finances and maintain enrollment were of the highest priority of need for pastors and principals. Declining enrollment and rising costs were voiced in every interview conducted.

Focusing on mission, while Catholic Identity was shown to be a priority for both pastors and principals, it was shown to have deeper significance to pastors as might be expected. Pastors

as a whole seemed less confident in the current Catholicity of schools and more focused on strengthening it moving forward.

Principals demonstrated a positive view of strong Catholic Identity and tended to include it among many areas of importance. Keeping pace in the areas of academics, technology, and facilities was more commonly voiced among principals.

Where pastors and principals found consensus was on the need for a positive, collaborative, partnership between pastors and principals to ensure the success of the school community. Along with that, both groups expressed deep appreciation for the distinct roles and responsibilities of pastors and principals and the significant contributions made by both. While serious concerns were evident in responses, pragmatic solutions were offered and a deep sense of commitment and dedication expressed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The focus of this study has been an analysis of the needs and mission of suburban Catholic parochial schools as seen by the two sets of key leaders, pastors and principals. The quantitative and qualitative strands illustrated common areas of alignment as these leaders view fulfillment of mission in their schools. Culled together, the research provides a clear and descriptive picture of Catholic education in suburban parish settings in New Jersey.

The electronic instrument provided a framework for the perceptions of key areas of need as seen by pastors and principals of suburban Catholic parishes from three dioceses in the state of New Jersey. It collected responses rating key areas according to a Likert scale and also allowed for some open-ended responses. The instrument also collected basic demographic and background responses to better contextualize the data. Some items did allow for open-ended responses and collected qualitative data as well. With a 25% response rate from both pastors and principals, a robust pool of responses was provided and key themes quickly emerged upon analysis. Enrollment management, finances, and Catholic Identity all showed to be areas of priority.

The interview process served to provide the more complete picture of Catholic school leadership and the sometimes subtle nuance of difference in the perspectives of pastors and principals. Interviews expanded upon the closed and open-ended responses provided in the electronic survey. The mixed-methods approach allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the research questions. A robust set of responses were received with clear, frank, practical insights. Five each of pastors and principals were interviewed to delve more deeply into the needs and

mission of Catholic education. Respondents demonstrated great passion for and investment in Catholic education. Though responses were varied, definite themes aligned with the electronic instruments, while greater nuance and breadth was revealed.

Conclusions

The results of this study build upon the previous body of research, in particular the Notre Dame University study, *Faith, Finances, and the Future: The Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors*. The responses elicited from this study are closely aligned with those found in the 2008 study. At the forefront remain concerns of Catholic elementary schools closely tied to finances, including enrollment management, rising budgetary costs, and financial accessibility for families. Finances and in particular enrollment were voiced equally by both pastors and principals. The pressure that decreasing enrollment places on already stressed schools and parish budgets is a growing concern. The findings of *Faith, Finances, and the Future* also showed deep concerns on the part of pastors with sustaining parish budgets and balancing the needs of a school in light of the needs of the larger parish. (Nuzzi, Frabutt, & Holter, 2008). Findings of the Notre Dame study also showed significant challenges shared by pastors in managing school finances, keeping schools affordable and accessible, retaining high quality teachers, and implementing necessary capital improvements. All of these sentiments were echoed by the pastors and principals participating in this research. First and foremost were concerns regarding enrollment and the related financial impact that has on the overall health of the school.

As was the case in previous studies cited earlier in the literature review (Sander, 2005), the population of the schools reporting in this study are predominantly Catholic and represent limited diversity with the large majority of students being White, non-Hispanic. As previously presented (Sander, 2001), while the diversity of the student population has broadened to serve

students from minority populations, representation by minority groups in these suburban settings is still very limited by comparison. In keeping with that research, while the Latino community continues to represent an increasing segment of the Catholic community in America, participation rates in Catholic elementary school education have not increased proportionally.

Catholic Identity was the next most prominent area of concern and focus. This also was a key finding of need identified by the Notre Dame study. “Pastors made several comments describing how critical it is that Catholic Identity be strongly and deeply embraced among school faculty. They expressed that without a sense of abiding Catholic Identity, the faculty could not successfully combine high quality education with students’ faith formation.” The study goes on to report, “Furthermore, several pastors questioned whether Catholic schools are effectively instilling the faith and in doubting schools’ overall efficacy, they claimed not to value as much as they once did” (Nuzzi, Frabrautt, & Holter, 2008).

Responses of pastors, especially those interviewed, echoed some of these sentiments. While there are areas of concerns, pastors interviewed had overall strongly favorable and passionately positive views of Catholic schools, seeing them as integral aspects of the Church in advancing its mission.

While principals acknowledged the importance of Catholic Identity, pastors set it as a more distinct priority in need of cultivation and attention. Principals often placed it amongst a broad range of academic drivers. Pastors expressed less confidence in the current Catholic Identity of schools and stressed the need for it to be at the forefront and integrated in all aspects of the school and parish community, including the selection and formation of faculty.

The interconnected relationship between Catholicity and finances emerged through the interview process. As families become less engaged and less active in parish participation, as

evidenced in Mass attendance, the financial commitment required in the election of Catholic education appears to be a more difficult leap for families to make. Catholicity needs to be a compelling driver to sustain enrollment. Those families who do attend Catholic school were seen to be more positively integrated in all aspects of parish life and more consistent in religious practice and Mass attendance. The Notre Dame Study also identified a strong theme of Catholic schools being a “vital part of holistic and vibrant parish life” (Nuzzi, Frabutt, & Holter, 2008).

Previous research supports the connection between Catholicity and deeper integration to school and parish life. Huber (2007) found that “Catholic tradition and philosophy” was the top factor in choosing Catholic education by those surveyed. McDonald (2006) also demonstrated a strong positive correlation between regular Mass attendance and participation in Catholic education. Similar findings that also aligned with this study presented by Sanders (2001, 2005b) showed a significant connection between religiosity and the election of Catholic schools. The research is supported by comments shared by both pastors and principals in this study, who cited a decline in the participation by young families in Mass and parish life and the direct impact in school participation playing out in these dioceses.

Pastors must also balance the needs of schools against the larger needs of the parish. With a decreasing number of school families contributing to parish revenue and an increasing percentage of contributions coming from parishioners without children attending schools, school subsidies become harder to sustain and justify. Concerns were voiced that sustaining Catholic schools could not come at the expense of other parish ministries. The most recent estimates of parish subsidy nationally average \$162,927, second only to tuition in source of revenue for parochial elementary schools (NCEA, 2017). While participation and Mass attendance is lower, the perception of those principals and pastors surveyed in this study is that their schools are still

greatly valued and held in high esteem by parishioners, a finding that aligns with previous findings by McDonald (2006) and Cantor (2008) who both found Catholics to have more positive views of Catholic schools than the general population. Catholic schools were described as a unifying source of pride among parishioners by both pastors and principals alike.

Principals voiced broader concerns relative to greater competition for students and the need to keep pace with public schools. The challenge of maintaining students and competing with public and private school options is not a new dilemma, nor is it unique to these dioceses as demonstrated by previous research by Zehr (2005), Sander (2005), and Huber (2007) all of whom chronicled significant decreases in Catholic school participation in part due to increased competition for students. While Nuzzi (2001) cited general increase in Catholic schools and school enrollment in suburban areas due to population shifts, this trend does not seem to play out in the Northeast where historically Catholics participated at very high levels and the number of Catholic schools continues to decrease, unlike some regions of the country.

In particular, the need to support educational technology, maintain facilities, and support faculty were all crucial areas of need expressed. The attraction and retention of qualified faculty and the cultivation of a strong sense of Catholic Identity within the teaching faculty was also of primary concern to principals. As presented by Meyer (2007) and Cattaro (2002), the shift to predominantly lay faculty and administrators has significantly driven the rise in staffing costs, which as shared by pastors and principals is the largest single driver of school budgets. Faculty and administrators come to their positions with less formal training in faith formation and inherently less equipped to foster the Catholic Identity of schools. The lack of formal training and preparation specific to the needs of Catholic education was voiced also by Weiss (2013) in

noting that the majority of Catholic school principals are trained in public institutions and many are former public school administrators.

Principals and pastors identified the critical nature of collaboration and the need for a shared vision in the leadership of Catholic schools. The potential negative influence of a disharmonious relationship could have an exponentially negative impact on the health of a school community. Frasier (2013) confirmed in his research the need for a collaborative model with clearly delineated responsibilities. Nurturing an environment of mutual respect and partnership in a framework of clearly delineated roles and responsibilities serves the best interests of school and parish. Weiss (2013) asserted as well how crucial both leaders are to the success and operation of the Catholic school. The vast majority of pastors and principals in this study described respect and partnership to be pivotal for true success. Pastors voiced the crucial role of principals in leading schools as had the priests who responded to the Notre Dame Study. Respect and partnership were shown to be key while still acknowledging the ultimate canonical authority of the pastor (Schafer, 2004). Consistent throughout the research was the importance of the cultivation of partnership.

Implications

Attention to the growing financial concerns should be a top priority for Catholic school leaders. The tension between the needs of school and parish will continue to grow. Leaders will need to remain committed to solving the complex financial challenges facing schools in the context of limited resources. Investigation of alternate funding sources and tuition models should occur, as the gaps between costs and revenue may continue to grow.

A deep sense of commitment to Catholic education can be seen in the vast majority of responses from both pastors and principals. Both groups perceive great value in Catholic schools

and demonstrate a deep commitment to sustaining schools. The call to Catholic education as a vocation was articulated by principals and admired by pastors. As asserted by one principal, “Catholic school leadership is more than a career. It is a calling to share your professional expertise and your faith. You are more than the manager and curriculum leader, you are also the spiritual leader of both the faculty and students. Without Catholic schools, future generations will not have the traditions of our faith.” Pastors and principals agreed on the need for priests and principals to hold a deep commitment to Catholic education. The key areas identified to have the largest influence on sustainability are finance, Catholic Identity, and collaborative partnership.

Recommendations

Policy

The research findings can be used to develop policy recommendations to be considered by the Catholic dioceses. The researcher provides the following recommendations for policy enhancements at the diocesan level to best support the strength and vitality of Catholic elementary education.

1. Programs and practice to better cultivate collaborative partnership for pastors and principals should be designed and initiated.
2. Careful discernment in the selection of pastors for placement in a school setting should be exercised to identify the leadership skills most aligned to the mission of a Catholic school.
3. Careful discernment should be given in the selection of principals to identify the key skillset that best aligns with the mission and leadership of the Catholic school model.

4. Partnership with Catholic colleges in the faith formation programs for Catholic school faculty and administrators should be established to provide better preparation for the unique challenges of Catholic schools and foster more cohesive Catholic Identity.
5. Best practice models for Catholic schools with a particular focus on Catholic Identity, enrollment management, and finance should be collected and disseminated.
6. Partnership with Catholic colleges and universities in supporting training, formation, and guidance of Catholic school pastors, principals, and teachers should be expanded.

Practice

The following recommendations are made to encourage the continued sustainability of Catholic parish elementary schools by strengthening best practice in Catholic parochial settings.

1. All schools should establish formalized programs and designated staff in support of student enrollment and retention in all parish schools. Marketing efforts, public relations, and communication should be leveraged to support increased enrollment and retention of students.
2. Advancement and fundraising efforts should be initiated to provide additional revenue streams and lessen the dependence on parish subsidies. School endowments and annual funds should be established at all schools.
3. The professional expertise of parents and parishioners should be leveraged through the implementation of trained boards of designated responsibility, especially with regard to financial oversight.
4. Mechanisms should be institutionalized in support of ongoing, consistent formal and informal communication and collaboration between pastors and principals.

5. Efforts should be made to strengthen Catholic Identity within schools and best communicate Catholicity of the school community within the parish and broader community. Deliberate and concerted efforts should be made to integrate schools into all aspects of parish life, increase participation in Mass by school families, and increase visibility of the school within the parish community.
6. Catholic schools should model best practice in academic innovation, delivering specialized programs in academics, including STEM programs, the arts, and programs for advanced students to best attract and retain families. Providing high quality, inquiry- based instruction should be an area of focus to remain competitive.

Future Research

It is the hope of the researcher that continued analysis be undertaken to support Catholic schools and further identify areas of need. Continued, ongoing analysis of trends and success indicators in Catholic education is recommended. Exploration of alternate funding sources and budgetary models should be undertaken. Deeper investigation of the complex variables impacting school and parish finance must be conducted. Shifts in demographics, Mass participation, school attendance, and staffing costs should all be taken under consideration.

Particular areas worthy of future study include the following:

1. Because of the small sample population in this research, the study should be replicated on a larger scale and in a variety of regions.
2. Investigation should be undertaken to analyze the research questions of this study with school and parish leadership in urban and rural settings.

3. Similar analysis should be undertaken to identify the views and perceptions of other key stakeholders including bishops, diocesan leadership, school boards, faculty, parents, and parishioners.
4. Similar research can be undertaken with regard to Catholic secondary schools as well as diocesan and independent Catholic schools.
5. Analysis is also recommended with regard to the role of Catholic higher education institutions in support of Catholic education and the formation of Catholic school leadership.

Investigation of the pivotal roles played by other key stakeholders is recommended. Constituencies to investigate further include diocesan superintendents and offices of Catholic schools, bishops and other priest leadership; and lay leadership within the schools should be considered. School boards and other parent groups should also be engaged to broaden the conversation and best utilize talent and expertise available in the whole community. Further study of the roles for leadership from school boards and how this third prong can be leveraged in conjunction with pastors and principals in support of Catholic schools is worthy of further investigation.

Pastors and parishioners not directly linked to a school and their perceptions of the need and mission of Catholic schools should also be investigated. In light of the shift to lay leadership, investigation of the training and preparation of Catholic school faculty and administration is also worthy of review. Especially in light of concerns voiced in regard to Catholic Identity and faith development, the preparation of school faculty and administrators as spiritual leaders should be evaluated to best develop faith-based strategies.

Closing Comments

The evidence reviewed supports the merit of further research to investigate Catholic school sustainability in contemporary America. Increased investigation needs to be undertaken to continue to explore specific factors that contribute to the growth and sustainability of Catholic schools in the current national climate.

The major developments analyzed would be expected to have large scale impacts on the mission of Catholic education in years to come. “The future of American Catholic parochial education is uncertain. Thirty years ago there were more than 5.7 million children enrolled in Catholic schools, but by 1994 the enrollment had slipped to less than 2.5 million, a plunge of 56 percent” (Walch, 1996, p. 241). While Walch’s comments accurately describe some major shifts in Catholic education, the decreases described are not in fact endemic to all Catholic schools. That being said, today’s Catholic school enrollment continues to decline with current estimates of enrollment at 1.9 million students (NCEA, 2017) In the most recent statistics available for the 2015-2016 school year, 1,897 Catholic elementary schools reported to the National Catholic Education Association; and 47% of those were parochial, nearly half and the largest single model of Catholic elementary schools in the United States. (NCEA, 2017) As the trends continue to show a decline, it seems certain that the landscape of Catholic education will continue to change and come under greater scrutiny.

The research describes strong, passionate support for vital, vibrant Catholic school communities. The dedication and commitment of the respondents imbues the responses with enthusiasm and optimism even in light of significant challenges.

Catholic education can always be seen to be in transition, as it must evolve to meet the always changing needs of families, the Church, and society. All stakeholders must adapt to these changing circumstances, evolve new strategies, and collaborate to reach consensus.

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Appendix A

LETTER OF SOLICITATION

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Ryan Killeen. I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University in the College of Education in the Department of Education, Leadership, Management and Policy under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Strobert.

This letter is to request your participation in a confidential electronic survey of pastors and principals of suburban NJ Catholic elementary schools.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the needs, perceptions, and attitudes of pastors and principals with oversight for Catholic schools.

If you decide to participate, this survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

A survey has been designed pertaining to the current needs and mission of Catholic schools, the roles and responsibilities of pastors and principals, and various factors impacting the future of Catholic education. The survey includes 35 questions. Questions 1-21 collect basic demographic and background information. Items 22-35 collect views and perceptions on the current and future state of Catholic schools. Three of the questions allow for open-ended responses.

Participation is voluntary. You may choose to stop participating by closing your browser at any time.

The survey is anonymous. No identifying data will be collected.

Be aware that any online survey could be subject to hacking.

Participation in this study is confidential. To maintain confidentiality, data will be stored electronically on a USB memory key in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher and his dissertation committee. Privacy will be protected because participants will not be identified by name as a participant in this project and all responses will be de-identified. Data from this survey will be reported only in aggregate form, and responses will not be identified individually.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB@shu.edu), Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue,
President's Hall 325, South Orange, NJ 07079, (973) 275-2361

Further information regarding the research can be obtained from the principal researcher, Ryan Killeen, rkilleen@spsprinceton.org, (908) 675-1913 or my faculty advisor Barbara V. Strobert, Ed.D.,

barbara.strobert@shu.edu, (973) 275-2324. Copies of the data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet for a minimum of three years following the conclusion of the project.

Thank you for your kind consideration. All surveys must be completed by Friday, September 26, 2016.

Having read the information provided above, please provide your consent to participate by accessing the survey at the link below: <http://asset.tltc.shu.edu/asset/asset.AssetSurvey?surveyid=7191>

Note that the User name will default to "guest" in the survey. Please leave this field as is and proceed to Login.

Appendix B

MAR 01 2016

Approval Date

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND HUMAN SERVICES

Expiration Date

MAR 01 2017

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT -INTERVIEW

Researcher's Affiliation: Subjects are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ryan Killeen, a doctoral student in Seton Hall University's Department of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the needs, perceptions, and attitudes of pastors and principals with oversight for Catholic schools.

Duration: Interviews will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Procedures: Interviews will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and location to discuss the mission of suburban, Catholic, parish elementary schools, the roles and responsibilities of principals and pastors and long-term sustainability of Catholic Schools. Permission to audiotape the interview is requested but can be declined at any time. If individuals choose not to have audiotaped discussion, detailed notes on responses to the questions will be taken.

Instrument: A questionnaire has been designed with 5 questions pertaining to the current needs and mission of Catholic schools.

1. What are the greatest challenges and needs facing your parish school in the next two to five years?
2. What impact does the relationship between pastor and principal have on your school?
3. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge to the sustainability of parish Catholic elementary schools?
4. From what resource do you receive the greatest level of support in your position as a Catholic School leader?
5. Please describe how you perceive the significance of the Catholic school in your parish community.

Voluntary nature: Participation is entirely voluntary. Subjects may end the interview at any point.

Anonymity: Interviews are not anonymous as the researcher will know participant's identity.

Confidentiality: To maintain confidentiality, all recordings and notes will be stored electronically on a USB memory key in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher and his dissertation committee.

Records: All responses will be kept confidential. Responses will be coded to ensure confidentiality of the data which will be kept secure at all times. Transcripts and audio files will be kept secure in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher and his dissertation committee has access for three years after completion of the project and then destroyed.

Risks or discomforts: There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

MAR 01 2016

Approval Date

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND HUMAN SERVICES

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Expiration Date

MAR 01 2017

Benefits: There are no immediate benefits.

Compensation: No compensation will be provided.

Contact information: If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB@shu.edu), Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, President's Hall
325, South Orange, NJ 07079, (973) 275-2361. If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Researcher:

Ryan Killeen
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Avenue
Jubilee Hall Room 422
South Orange, NJ 07079
(973) 275-2324

Advisor:

Dr. Barbara Strobert
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Avenue
Jubilee Hall Room 408
South Orange, NJ 07079
(973) 275-2324

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

Audio Recording: If you grant permission for audio recording, all recorded files will be stored on a USB memory key which will be used by the researcher to transcribe. Transcripts will be sent to you for your review and confirmation. Subjects will only be identified by code number on audio tapes and transcripts. Transcripts and audio files will be kept secure in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher and his dissertation committee has access for three years after completion of the project and then destroyed.

Permission: Signature indicates that the subject has read and understands the information provided above, and willingly agrees to participate.

_____ Audio Recording

_____ No Audio Recording

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Survey Instrument: Pastors

1. How many years have you been ordained a priest?

2. Are you a diocesan or religious priest?

☐ Diocesan

☐ Religious

3. Where did you attend seminary?

City, State

City, State

4. Did you attend a Catholic elementary school?

☐ Did not attend

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

☐ 5-6 years

☐ 7-8 years

5. Did you attend a Catholic high school?

☐ Did not attend

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

6. Did you attend a Catholic college or university before seminary?

☐ Did not attend

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

☐ 5 years or more

7. Have you ever taught in a Catholic school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Number of years:

8. Have you ever been an administrator of a Catholic school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Number of years:

9. Have you ever been a chaplain or campus minister for a Catholic school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Have you ever been superintendent of Catholic schools?

☐ Yes

☒ No

11. Have you ever worked in a diocesan office or chancery?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Number of years:

12. How many years have you worked in a parish school?

13. How many years have you been pastor at your current parish?

14. How many students are currently enrolled at your school?

15. Approximately what percentage of the student population in your school is Roman Catholic?

16. What is the primary race/ethnicity of the student population at your current school?

- a. American Indian
- b. Hispanic or Latino
- c. Asian or Asian American
- d. Caucasian
- e. Black or African American
- f. Other: Please specify

17. How is your current school structured?

- a. Pre-K to 6th
- b. Pre-K to 8th
- c. K to 6th
- d. K to 8th
- e. Other: Please specify

18. Which best describes the location of your school?

- a. Inner city: Area located within the central portion of a major city generally characterized by a larger proportion of low income students.
- b. Urban, but not inner city: located within the city limits of a major city, but not in an area characterized as inner-city.
- c. Suburban: Located outside the city limits of a major city.
- d. Small town or rural: located in an area that is not considered a suburb.

19. Rate the importance of each need area as it pertains to your parish school.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not as all important
Governance					
Catholic Identity					
Long-range planning					
Marketing					
Capital Improvements					
Enrollment management					
Financial management					
Faculty Recruitment and Retention					
Development					
Technology					
Board management					
Parental Involvement					
Assessment					
Inclusion/Special Needs students					

Alumni organization					
Professional Development for faculty					

20. From the checklist below indicate the top five (5) areas that your parish school is currently addressing:

	Governance		Financial management		Assessment
	Catholic Identity		Faculty recruitment and retention		Inclusion/special needs students
	Long-range planning		Development		Alumni organization
	Marketing		Technology		Professional development for faculty
	Capital Improvements		Board management		
	Enrollment management		Parental involvement		

21. In your own words, what are the most important NEEDS facing your parish school in the next two to five years?

22. Does your school currently have any relationship with an institution of higher education (college or university)?

Yes

No

Which college or university?

23. Do you perceive the mission of your school to be supported by Catholic institutions of higher education (colleges and/or universities)?

Yes

No

In what regard?

24. What kind of assistance would you accept from Catholic colleges and universities regarding your needs? Check all that apply.

	Diocesan conference/workshop
	Regional conference/workshop
	Written materials
	University-based conference/workshop
	Web-based conference/workshop
	Web-based resources
	Consulting services
Other:	

25. What is your most reliable source for decision making regarding your school?

	Bishop		Parent/teacher organization
	Central office		Other pastors and priests
	Principal		University contacts
	Superintendent		Professional organizations
	School board		
	Other:		

Directions: Questions are designed to provide relevant information regarding perceptions of and attitudes toward Catholic schools and education.

26. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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The need for Catholic schools is at least as great today as in the past.					
Catholic schools are worth what it costs to operate them.					
Maintaining a Catholic school is an effective use of diocesan and parish resources.					
Catholic schools are an essential part of the Church's educational ministry.					
In addition to the family, Catholic schools are the best means for religious formation of the young.					
The Catholic school is one of the best means of evangelization in the Church today.					
I enjoy being the pastor of a parish that has a Catholic school					

27. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to teach Catholic doctrine reasonably well.					
The Catholic schools that I know have effective programs of religious formation.					
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have well-prepared and effective teachers.					
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have strong Catholic Identity.					

Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have well-prepared and effective principals.					
Most Catholic schools that I know have clear goals and priorities.					

28. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Every parish should provide some support for Catholic schools.					
In areas where there is only one Catholic school and several parishes, each of the parishes should financially support the school.					
The financial support of Catholic schools is the duty of all Catholics whether or not they have children in the schools.					
Some of the surplus of affluent parishes should be shared with financially struggling parishes that support Catholic schools.					
A parish without a Catholic school should financially assist Catholic schools that enroll its students.					
The maintenance of Catholic schools in poor, inner-city areas should be a diocesan priority.					

29. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Parents should have a substantial voice in the governance of Catholic schools.					
Parents must be given a substantial role in the development of policy for Catholic schools.					
All Catholic schools should have school boards/councils.					
When a school serves several parishes, a representative board/council should be responsible for the school's governance.					

30. Please provide any additional comments regarding thoughts and opinions on Catholic schools and Catholic school leadership.

Appendix D

Survey Instrument: Principals

1. How many years have you been an educator?

2. Did you attend a Catholic elementary school?

☐ Did not attend

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

☐ 5-6 years

☐ 7-8 years

3. Did you attend a Catholic high school?

☐ Did not attend

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

4. Did you attend a Catholic college or university?

☐ Did not attend

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

☐ 5 years or more

5. Have you ever taught in a Catholic school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Number of years:

6. How many years have you been a catholic school principal?

Number of years:

7. Have you ever been superintendent of Catholic schools?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Have you ever worked in a Diocesan office or chancery?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Number of years:

9. How many years have you worked in a parish school?

10. How many students are currently enrolled at your school?

11. Approximately what percentage of the student population in your school is Roman Catholic?

12. What is the primary race/ethnicity of the student population at your current school?

- a. American Indian
- b. Hispanic or Latino
- c. Asian or Asian American
- d. Caucasian
- e. Black or African American
- f. Other: Please specify

13. How is your current school structured?

- a. Pre-K to 6th
- b. Pre-K to 8th
- c. K to 6th
- d. K to 8th
- e. Other: Please specify

14. Which best describes the location of your school?

- a. Inner city: Area located within the central portion of a major city generally characterized by a larger proportion of low income students.
- b. Urban, but not inner city: located within the city limits of a major city, but not in an area characterized as inner-city.
- c. Suburban: Located outside the city limits of a major city.
- d. Small town or rural: located in an area that is not considered a suburb.

15. Rate the importance of each need area as it pertains to your parish school.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not as all important
Governance					
Catholic Identity					
Long-range planning					
Marketing					
Capital Improvements					
Enrollment management					
Financial management					
Faculty Recruitment and Retention					
Development					
Technology					
Board management					
Parental Involvement					
Assessment					
Inclusion/Special Needs students					
Alumni organization					
Professional Development for faculty					

16. From the checklist below indicate the top five (5) areas that your parish school is currently addressing:

	Governance		Financial management		Assessment
	Catholic Identity		Faculty recruitment and retention		Inclusion/special needs students

	Long-range planning		Development		Alumni organization
	Marketing		Technology		Professional development for faculty
	Capital Improvements		Board management		
	Enrollment management		Parental involvement		

17. In your own words, what are the most important NEEDS facing your parish school in the next two to five years?

18. Does your school currently have any relationship with an institution of higher education (college or university)?

Yes

No

Which college or university?

19. Do you perceive the mission of your school to be supported by Catholic institutions of higher education (colleges and/or universities)?

Yes

No

In what regard?

20. What kind of assistance would you accept from Catholic colleges and universities regarding your needs? Check all that apply.

	Diocesan conference/workshop
	Regional conference/workshop
	Written materials
	University-based conference/workshop
	Web-based conference/workshop
	Web-based resources
	Consulting services
Other:	

21. What is your most reliable source for decision making regarding your school?

	Bishop		Parent/teacher organization
	Central office		Other pastors and priests
	Pastor		University contacts
	Superintendent		Professional organizations
	School board		
	Other:		

Directions: Questions are designed to provide relevant information regarding perceptions of and attitudes toward Catholic schools and education.

22. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The need for Catholic schools is at least as great today as in the past.					
Catholic schools are worth what it costs to operate them.					
Maintaining a Catholic school is an effective use of diocesan and parish resources.					
Catholic schools are an essential part of the Church's educational ministry.					

In addition to the family, Catholic schools are the best means for religious formation of the young.					
The Catholic school is one of the best means of evangelization in the Church today.					
I enjoy being the principal of a parish that has a Catholic school					

23. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to teach Catholic doctrine reasonably well.					
The Catholic schools that I know have effective programs of religious formation.					
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have well-prepared and effective teachers.					
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have strong Catholic Identity.					
Most Catholic schools that I know seem to have well-prepared and effective principals.					
Most Catholic schools that I know have clear goals and priorities.					

24. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Every parish should provide some support for Catholic schools.					
In areas where there is only one Catholic school and several parishes, each of the parishes should financially support the school.					
The financial support of Catholic schools is the duty of all Catholics whether or not they have children in the schools.					
Some of the surplus of affluent parishes should be shared with financially struggling parishes that support Catholic schools.					
A parish without a Catholic school should financially assist Catholic schools that enroll its students.					
The maintenance of Catholic schools in poor, inner-city areas should be a diocesan priority.					

25. Please rate the following statements regarding Catholic schools.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents should have a substantial voice in the governance of Catholic schools.					
Parents must be given a substantial role in the development of policy for Catholic schools.					
All Catholic schools should have school boards/councils.					

When a school serves several parishes, a representative board/council should be responsible for the school's governance.					
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26. Please provide any additional comments regarding thoughts and opinions on Catholic schools and Catholic school leadership.

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. What are the greatest challenges and needs facing your parish school in the next two to five years?
2. Please describe the impact of the relationship between pastor and principal on your school.
3. What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge to the sustainability of parish Catholic elementary schools?
4. From what resource do you receive the greatest level of support in your position as a Catholic School leader?
5. Please describe how you perceive the significance of the Catholic school in your parish community.

Appendix F



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

March 1, 2016

Ryan Killeen

Dear Mr. Killeen,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns for your proposal entitled "Sustainability of the Catholic Parish Elementary School in the Twenty-first Century and the Driving Forces of Leadership." Your research protocol is hereby approved as revised through expedited review. The IRB reserves the right to recall the proposal at any time for full review.

Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Form. Make copies only of this stamped document.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Thank you for your cooperation.

In harmony with federal regulations, none of the investigators or research staff involved in the study took part in the final decision.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.

Professor

Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Barbara Strobert



February 13, 2017

Ryan Killeen

Dear Mr. Killeen,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your Continuing Review application for your research proposal entitled "Sustainability of the Catholic Parish Elementary School in the Twenty-first Century and the Driving Forces of Leadership".

You are hereby granted another 12-month approval, effective March 1, 2017 **for data analysis only.**

If any changes are desired in this protocol, they must be submitted to the IRB for approval before implementation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.

Professor

Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Barbara Strobert

Office of Institutional Review Board

Presidents Hall • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079 • Tel: 973.313.6314 • Fax: 973.275.2361 • www.shu.edu

Appendix G

Ryan Killeen

From: Fr. Ron Nuzzi <RonaldJ.Nuzzi.1@nd.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2013 9:07 AM
To: Ryan Killeen
Subject: RE: Dissertation

Ryan-

Thanks again for your note and interest. After consulting with my colleagues, Drs. James Frabutt and Anthony Holter, we think it is fine for you to make use of the survey. We appended the entire instrument to the study for just this reason, hoping that some future researcher might try to replicate the study or parts of it.

As you will note from our study, many of our questions were taken from a survey initially created by John Convey at the Catholic University of America. You would do well to cite both Convey and us as you proceed.

We would be happy for a copy of your dissertation once complete. If you could include us on a list to receive one, it would be much appreciated.

Good luck in your work.

Sincerely,

Rev. Ronald J. Nuzzi, Senior Director
The Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program
Alliance for Catholic Education
The University of Notre Dame
PH. 574-631-7730; Fax 574-631-7729

From: Ryan Killeen [RKilleen@spsprinceton.org]
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2013 10:41 AM
To: Fr. Ron Nuzzi
Subject: Dissertation

Dear Fr. Nuzzi,

My name is Ryan Killeen. I am principal of St. Paul Catholic School in Princeton, New Jersey and completing my EdD at Seton Hall University. I am very familiar with your research and have reviewed much of it. In particular I have been reviewing Faith, Finances, and the Future.

My own study that I hope to undertake will include both qualitative and quantitative research comparing the leadership and perspectives of pastors and principals in parish elementary schools in New Jersey.

I would like to request permission to incorporate many of the questions from your survey into my own. Please advise on what materials I can provide to assist in your review of my request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Killeen

908-675-1913