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Sustainability of Catholic Secondary Schools  
in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area from 2003–2016

David Gardiner  
Seton Hall University

Dissertation Committee  
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Dr. Mary Meehan

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Executive Doctorate in Education (Executive Ed.D.)

Department of Education, Leadership, Management, and Policy  
Seton Hall University

2020

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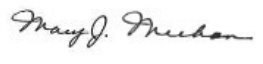

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT & POLICY**

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**APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE**

**David Gardiner**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the EdD degree during this **Spring 2020 semester**

**DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**  
(please sign and date beside your name)

COMMITTEE:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Mentor: Dr Martin Finkelstein		4/5/20
Dr Mary Meehan		3/9/20 Re-signed: 4/5/2020
Dr Richard Blissett		3/9/20 Re-signed: 4/5/2020

The mentor and any other committee members who wish to review revisions will sign and date this document only when revisions have been completed. Please return this form to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be placed in the candidate's file and submit a copy with your final dissertation to be bound as page number two.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation committee for all their help and guidance throughout this process. My sincerest appreciation and respect for my mentor, Dr. Martin Finkelstein, who forced me to think critically about research and writing that took me outside my comfort zone to produce results. Without you, Doc, I could not have completed this journey. I will forever be thankful for you and your simple but motivating word of encouragement—“onward.” To Dr. Richard Blissett and Dr. Mary Meehan, thank you for your guidance, feedback, and support. Your insight to see things differently enhanced my study and made me a better researcher. I appreciate the partnership you created and endeavored to pass along the knowledge you shared throughout this process.

To my parents, thank you for being proud of my accomplishments and being a positive force in my learning process and to my sister, Traci, thank you for always believing in me. To Dr. John Wingerter, thank you for your insight, assistance, and support. To my colleagues, family, friends, and fellow cohort members, thank you for your support and encouragement throughout this process.

## **Dedication**

To my wife, Michele, and my son, Zachary. None of this would have been possible without your love and support. The journey was hard but your encouragement, sacrifices, and faith in me to accomplish this was never ending. You are both pillars in my life and achieving this together as a family means the world to me. To Zachary, my inspiration, believe in yourself, work hard, and you will accomplish anything you want. Michele, thank you for always being there for me, being a loving wife, standing by my side, and believing that I would accomplish this degree. I couldn't have done this without either of you.

## **Abstract**

Since 2003, Catholic school enrollment has decreased nationally creating closings, mergers, and consolidation of many Catholic schools. This study sought to understand how a subgroup of Catholic secondary schools managed to navigate the external forces distressing Catholic secondary schools nationally. This study will define what enrollment management practices were used in the Washington, D.C. area that sustained and even grew this subgroup of Catholic secondary schools. This study is vital to Catholic education because it will define what enrollment practices work best, thus, helping Catholic schools globally.

This study investigated Catholic secondary schools and secondary school administrators in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area through their enrollment processes and defined the four components of enrollment management. These components—admission management, retention, research, and marketing—are the conceptual basis for the study and the research questions. The findings from this study revealed four themes: promoting community involvement, organizing a team development approach, seeking professional feedback/advice, and increasing focus on public relations. The study will guide professionals in admissions and administration to design the best practices and policies for sustainable schools. Furthermore, the study will broaden collaborative leadership and professional culture in Catholic schools, creating a sustainable school network.

keywords: enrollment management, sustainability, admission management, retention, research, marketing, president, principal, director of marketing and advancement, director of enrollment.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Dedication	v
Abstract	vi
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
<b>Chapter I: Introduction</b>	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Questions	4
Sub-Questions	4
Conceptual Framework	5
Significance of the Study	6
Limitations	6
Delimitations	7
Definitions of Terms	8
Summary	8
<b>Chapter II: Literature Review</b>	10
Historical Overview	10
Influences on Catholic Education	11
School Choice Movement	11
Montessori School	13
The Waldorf School	13
Homeschooling	13
Common School	13
Private School Choice	14
Public Education	15
Enrollment Trends	16
Sex Abuse Report	17
Components of Catholic School Sustainability	24



President/Principal Model	24
Merger and Consolidation	27
Admissions and Demographics	30
Charter School Influence	34
Washington Metro Area	37
Comparison Cities	38
Researchers and Enrollment Management	40
Conceptual Framework	42
Enrollment Management	42
Archdiocese and Other School Options	43
Summary	44
<b>Chapter III: Methodology</b>	46
Research Questions	46
Conceptual Idea	47
Participants	49
Data Collection	50
Interview Questions	53
Data Analysis	54
Research Validity	56
Ethical Concerns	56
Statement of Positionality	56
Summary	57
<b>Chapter IV: Results</b>	58
Overview of the Research Questions	58
Research Questions	59
Sub-Questions	59
Sample	60
Interview Data Collection	61
Document Collection	61
Data Analysis for Documents	63
Data Analysis from Interviews	63

Findings	64
Four Themes	64
Analysis of Schools Whose Enrollment Increased Versus Other Subgroups	73
Summary	78
<b>Chapter V: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion</b>	<b>80</b>
Restatement of the Problem	81
Research Questions	81
Sub-Questions	81
Purpose of the Study	82
Review of Methodology	82
Limitations	83
Discussion of the Findings	84
Research Questions	84
Conclusion and Themes	84
Theme: Promoting Community Involvement	85
Theme: Organizing a Team Development Approach	85
Theme: Seeking Professional Feedback/Advice	86
Theme: Increase Focus on Public Relations	87
Research Questions and Enrollment Management	88
Recommendation for Policy	88
Recommendation for Catholic Secondary Schools	88
Recommendation for Practitioners	89
Suggestions for Future Research	90
Conclusion	91
<b>References</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Appendix A: Consent to Interview Participant Form</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Appendix B: Approval of Institutional Review Board</b>	<b>104</b>

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. <i>Average tuition Cost per Pupil in Catholic School</i>	21
Table 2. <i>Student Enrollment by Population</i>	21
Table 3. <i>Legal Court Settlements</i>	23
Table 4. <i>Ranking Order of Importance of Using President/Principal Model</i>	25
Table 5. <i>Hispanic/Latino Enrollment and Percentages</i>	31
Table 6. <i>Sample School Student Enrollments by Academic Year</i>	32
Table 7. <i>Enrollment Trends of 20 schools in the Archdiocese of Washington 2003–2010</i>	37
Table 8. <i>Four Criteria of Enrollment Management</i>	52
Table 9. <i>Student Body and School Enrollment Types</i>	61
Table 10. <i>Document Collection</i>	62

## **List of Figures**

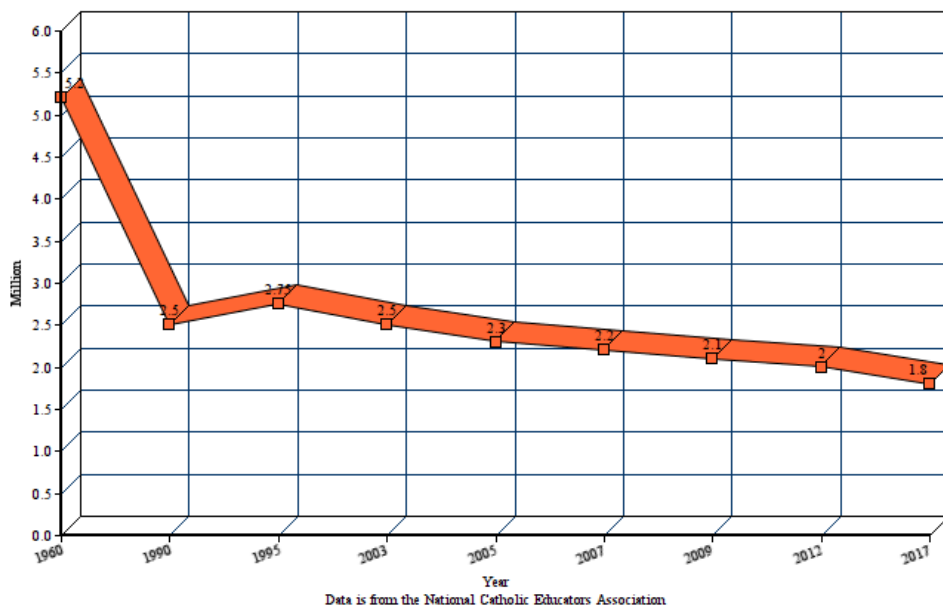
Figure 1. Catholic School Enrollment	1
Figure 2. Total Catholic School Enrollment in the Washington Archdiocese	2
Figure 3. Enrollment Trends in School Choice Movement	12
Figure 4. Private School Enrollment Trend Comparison	15
Figure 5. Public vs Private School Long Term Enrollment Projections	15
Figure 6. Catholic School Enrollment	17
Figure 7. Cost of Sexual Abuse in the U.S. Catholic Church	18
Figure 8. Sexual Abuse Allegations in the U.S. Catholic Church	19
Figure 9. Annual Tuition Average for Catholic Schools	22
Figure 10. Catholic Nun and Priest Numbers	29
Figure 11. Number of Charter Schools, 1999–2014	36

# Chapter I

## Introduction

### Background of Study

The first Catholic school was formed in 1606 and the first Catholic college opened in 1789 (International Student, 2018), and over the course of time Catholic schools flourished in the United States. “By the mid-1960s, 4.5 million elementary school students were enrolled in private Catholic schools in the United States. Another million enrolled in Catholic high schools and post-secondary education was becoming increasingly attainable for the growing middle class” (International Student, 2018). Following a precipitous drop in enrollment, approximately 46 percent between 1960 to 1990, the Catholic school system has seen a steady, gradual drop in enrollment over the ensuing 27 years.



*Figure 1. Catholic School Enrollment*

Figure 1 charts enrollment in Catholic schools at all levels. It illustrates the precipitous drop from 1960 to 1990 and the continued gradual decline thereafter. This decline from the 1960s, the height of national Catholic school enrollment, fell by approximately 2.9 million

students (NCEA, 2018). Similarly, the Washington, D.C. area had its own decline in total enrollment. Different from the drop in national trends in school enrollment, the Washington, D.C. area dropped approximately 14 percent from the 1960s to the 1990s, yet only dropped an additional 8 percent through 2010. This data shows that although there were decreases in enrollment numbers, the Washington, D.C. secondary Catholic schools began to level out.

Figure 2 represents the drop in enrollment from the 1960s to 2016 in the Washington Archdiocese.

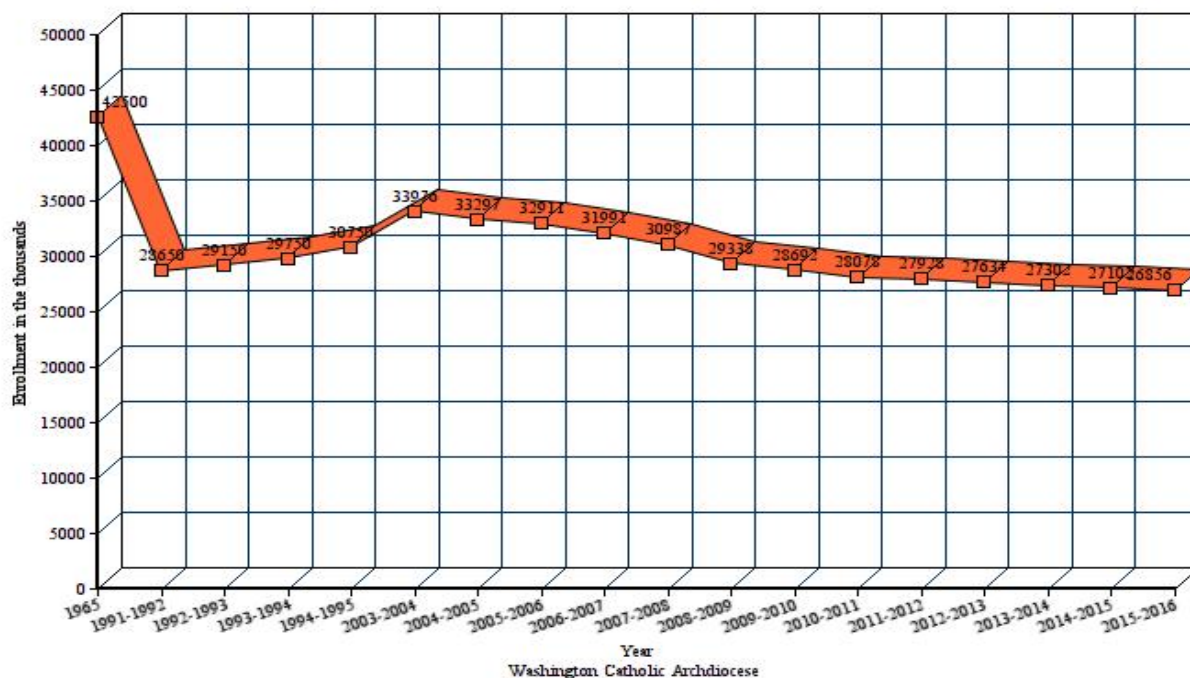


Figure 2. Total Catholic Enrollment in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. Archives Database

The drops were a result of many influences on Catholic education. Some of these influences on national and local Catholic school enrollment numbers were as a result of the sex abuse scandal as well as an increase in charter school, public school, and other private school choices (Meyer, 2007). An additional factor was the loss of religious staff in Catholic schools, which led to a rise in tuition because schools no longer had free faculty and needed to

supplement salaries with non-religious teachers they did not have prior (Zech, 2016).

One of the more influential factors on Catholic education was the sex abuse scandal report of 2003 (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004). The report indicated that many of the abuse cases occurred during the 1960s through the mid 1980s (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004). As a result of the scandal, there were years of mistrust in the Catholic Church and many parishioners started to seek other worshipping options (Steinfels, 2002). This led to decreased families in the Church, thus, the national number of Catholic families decreased (Steinfels, 2002).

Like the national trend, the enrollment in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area declined as well—from 33,297 in 2004 to 28,692 in 2010—a reduction of a little more than 4,000 students and a little over 8 percent.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The research in this study identified how most of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area schools, 16 out of 19, maintained or increased their enrollment, thus beating the national trend of enrollment issues from 2003 through 2016. Since the 1990s, in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area 19 secondary schools did not close during the reduction of Catholic school enrollment. The major area of concern was how the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools as a whole defied the national trend and how they accounted for the variable enrollment experiences among the 19 Washington, D.C. metropolitan area Catholic secondary schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to determine what procedures and policies secondary Catholic schools used in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that resulted in sustainable enrollment trends from 2003 through 2016.

This study discusses and addresses sustainable Catholic secondary education and investigates enrollment management policies that influenced secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. According to the National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA, 2012), nationally, Catholic school enrollment has dropped tremendously since the 1960s. However, according to the data from the NCEA, these low enrollment trends, approximately a 14 percent drop, extended to the Washington metropolitan area but reached sustaining levels during 2003–2016 time period. Results from this research and from previous research discusses the enrollment management obstacles that the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area secondary Catholic schools overcame.

### **Research Questions**

How did Washington, D.C.’s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy trends of closings and mergers from 2003 to 2016 that were visible at the national level?

#### **Sub-Questions**

*1. To what extent and in what ways did Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area employ enrollment management strategies to sustain themselves from 2003 through 2016?*

- a. How was admission management used in the overall enrollment management strategy of the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools?
- b. What retention strategies did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area subgroup use?
- c. How did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area use research to help in their enrollment management, and what kind of research did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area conduct?



d. What kind of marketing strategies were employed by the Catholic secondary schools in Washington, D.C. during 2003 through 2016, and how was branding used in marketing strategies?

2. *From a participant's perspective, what enrollment management or other factors appear to contribute to school sustainability (maintaining corporate identity and staying open)?*

### **Conceptual Framework**

The purpose of this study was to find out what enrollment strategies were used by the Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area that were not common to the national trends, and how a subgroup of secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area managed to stay open. The main concept that this paper investigated was the idea of enrollment management and how enrollment management was used to sustain enrollment in this group of Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area from 2003 to 2016.

According to Baker (2012), four areas are necessary for enrollment management to function properly. These are *Admissions Management, Retention, Research, and Marketing* (Baker, 2012).

- *Admissions Management* tracks students and manages all aspects of student life to include financial aid, registration of new students, the orientation process, and current and newly proposed curriculum (Baker, 2012).
- *Retention* is the school's ability to keep students enrolled and reenrolled. It also monitors current student programs to ensure student happiness each year (Baker, 2012).
- *Research* is important because it is the data collection process that defines what is going on inside and outside the school that incorporates student success, community involvement, and school image control. This area should also utilize data that helps the leadership team make

adjustments in key areas of the school education process (Baker, 2012).

- *Marketing* brings together all the processes that define the school's image, advertises the school's mission, helps define what the school offers to prospective students, and uses the school brand to distribute information through the public relations process to all potential markets. Broadly defined, marketing tells the story of the school (Baker, 2012).

These four areas of enrollment management are significant because Catholic schools are private and rely on tuition to sustain themselves (Baker, 2012). This means schools have an operating budget that is dependent on tuition and enrollment (Baker, 2012). Leadership plays a role in enrollment management, and it is the president or principal who is responsible for planning the long-term strategies that the school will pursue for enrollment (Baker, 2012). The research in this study will connect enrollment management and sustainability of Catholic secondary schools.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to provide secondary Catholic educators results, data, and research to address enrollment trends in Catholic secondary schools and provide answers to the research questions that will define enrollment management solutions for Catholic secondary schools.

### **Limitations**

The main construct of this paper evolves around enrollment management and what schools did professionally in enrollment management to sustain their Catholic secondary schools. However, in discussing and researching only enrollment management as a causation to a Catholic secondary school's sustainability, other limitations surfaced in this study because the researcher only looked at enrollment management aspect of sustainability. Schools invest in

managing enrollment through many avenues, but when researching exclusively enrollment management as a tool for sustainability, the research showed other venues for which a school can seek sustainability. As a result, while the research in this paper concentrated on enrollment management as one factor to school sustainability, other factors that produce school sustainability should be researched.

Additionally, the research provided data that supported procedures and policies Catholic secondary schools took to help sustain enrollment. The findings are based on the data produced, but in some instances, respondents also discussed their perception of what worked for enrollment management and ultimately school sustainability. The perceptions of each interviewee are part of the limitations in this study.

The following are the further limitations in this research paper:

1. There are unaccounted-for biases and factors that could influence responses.
2. New leadership in one or more of the 19 Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area was not available or a part of the Catholic education reform in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area from 2003–2016.
3. Lack of prior research.

### **Delimitations**

This paper discusses procedures, opinions, and statements that identify ways the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools avoided closing or merging from 2003 through 2016. This study does not offer a final solution to sustaining Catholic schools nor does it offer personal opinions without information based on research data provided. Furthermore, this paper does not promote data or information that is not part of the research group selection.

## Definition of Terms

The following are a list of terms and definitions used in this paper. This researcher has identified terms and terminology that require further clarity for the appropriate understanding of this research.

**Enrollment Management:** Hossler and Bean (1990) have defined enrollment management as: An organizational concept and a systematic set of activities designed to enable education institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments. Organized by strategic planning and supported by institutional research, enrollment management activities concern student college choice, transition to college, student attrition and retention, and student outcome.”

**Organizational Management:** A combination of many parts of leadership coming together to develop strategies to promote a business (Leonard, 2018).

**Sustainability:** The ability to maintain at a certain rate (University of Maine, 2020).

**Charter Schools:** These schools are publicly funded school options that operate as its local education agency under a charter granted by the commissioner (New Jersey Department of Education, 2013).

## Summary

The major question of this research was: How did a large subgroup of Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools manage to defy the enrollment declines from 2003–2016 that were visible at the national level? This study investigated the enrollment trends of these subgroups in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas, 19 Catholic secondary schools, and identified organizational programs that helped to sustain enrollment trends from 2003 through 2016.

Additionally, the research in this paper also identified what types of organizational

practices and enrollment management tools were used by Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

The findings of this study will benefit Catholic school reform in secondary schools. The demand for Catholic secondary school survival justifies the need for this study and a need for more effective Catholic school enrollment management. Therefore, schools that take note of the recommended approaches outlined in this research will be able to create applicable programs to help sustain enrollment trends in their school. Leaders will be guided on what approaches are consistent with successful secondary school enrollment as well as what organizational tools work best to achieve appropriate school reform and sustainability.

This research uncovered important information for Catholic secondary school enrollment and therefore will be vital for Catholic secondary school sustainability nationally.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

This literature review provides background information about Catholic education and the influences that affected Catholic school enrollment trends from 2003 through 2016. Based on the literature, the following overarching question was addressed: How did Washington, D.C.'s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy the enrollment declines between 2003–2016 that were visible at the national level?

The research in this chapter identified literature relating to the dissertation questions in Chapter I and the conceptual framework of enrollment management policies and procedures in Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area from 2003 through 2016. The literature documented and discussed in this study is based on national and local research in Catholic education and how different components of this research relate to secondary Catholic school sustainability in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

#### **Historical Overview**

After enrollment numbers in Catholic schools peaked nationally in the 1960s, there was a decrease of almost 46 percent in Catholic school enrollment nationally through the 1990s. The numbers in the Washington, D.C. Catholic schools decreased as well during this same time frame at approximately 14 percent. This decrease in enrollment leveled to 8 percent from 2003 to 2016, which was better than the enrollment declines nationally (NCEA, 2017).

Numerous influences were identified in Catholic education that impacted Catholic school sustainability. Catholic educators attempted to overcome the decrease in enrollment in Catholic schools and sustain Catholic school enrollment. This chapter discusses the historical aspects of the decline in school enrollment, the sustainability in school enrollment, and the factors that

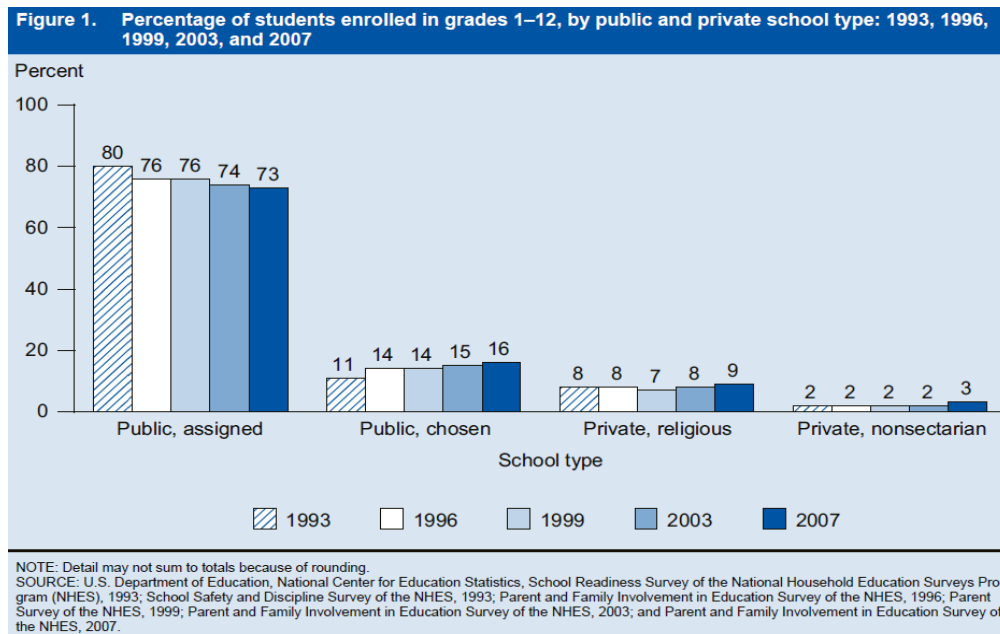
affected both. This chapter also discusses ways Catholic secondary schools attempted to overcome school enrollment decline.

## **Influences on Catholic Education**

### **School Choice Movement**

In 1990, Catholic school enrollment experienced a decline as a result of the school choice movement. This new school movement was influenced by several factors that resulted in lower Catholic school enrollment. At the time, parents were seeking quality education options to their standard public school enrollment other than Catholic schools. As a result, the school choice movement began, which became the beginning of a downward trend in Catholic school enrollment. Parents were able to use vouchers to attend public schools, apply to science and tech programs at other public schools, as well as apply to other religious and non-religious private schools (NCES, 2010).

From 1993 to 2007, the school choice movement expanded, creating more options for Catholic students and caused additional strain on Catholic school enrollment beginning in 2003. Figure 3 shows the influence of the school choice movement on schools in the United States (NCES, 2010). Bar graphs illustrate public, nonsectarian, other religious, and other public school (voucher) options. Figure 3 indicates parent selection of schools between 1993 and 2007. While public school enrollment declined, charter and voucher school enrollment increased along with private nonsectarian schools.



*Figure 3. Enrollment Trends in School Choice Movement*

The school choice movement created an opportunity for students and parents to select their own school (Ed-choice, 2018). This movement allowed parents varied financial options for education. Some of these were, but not limited to, school vouchers (these allowed students in the local public schools to attend another school outside their school zone), tax credit scholarships, education savings accounts, scholarship funded schools, tax credit and deduction systems, and financial aid based schools. Parents were overwhelmed with the educational system and Catholic education took a back seat (Ed-choice, 2018). Parents looking into school options were made to feel like it was a big sorting-out process (Boland, 2019).

There are many categories of private schools and types. Students can choose from charter schools (considered private but public funded), Montessori schools, common schools, independent private, private Christian (parochial), specialty for-profit schools, boarding, and home school. Each type of private school offers something different. These choices added a greater competition for student enrollment that impacted Catholic schools.



### **Montessori School**

In Montessori school education, there are 4500 licensed schools based on the experiential approach designed by Dr. Maria Montessori (AMS, 2018). Similar to the Waldorf schools, the Montessori approach puts equal emphasis on traditional academic areas and the arts. Parents like the Montessori model because it believes in the shared educational learning theory. The goal of Montessori education is to foster a child's natural inclination to learn (AMS, 2018).

### **The Waldorf School**

The Waldorf School approaches education "outside the box." The Waldorf schools promote learning in the total sense, not just defining taught curriculum. The Waldorf school approach was founded in the early 20th century. Waldorf Education is based on the insights, teachings, and principles of education outlined by the world renowned artist and scientist, Rudolf Steiner. The principles of Waldorf Education evolve from an understanding of human development that address the needs of the growing child (AWSNA, 2018).

### **Homeschooling**

Another approach to private education is the idea of homeschooling, which is based on parent involvement in home learning. The parents base their educational approach on the interest of the child and builds on that rather than a preset curriculum (Mintz, 2006). Though homeschoolers are not in a classroom and are not a part of a predesigned structured curriculum, they tend not to fit into a specific category; thus, they are in need of a new alternative and that becomes the homeschool choice (Mintz, 2006).

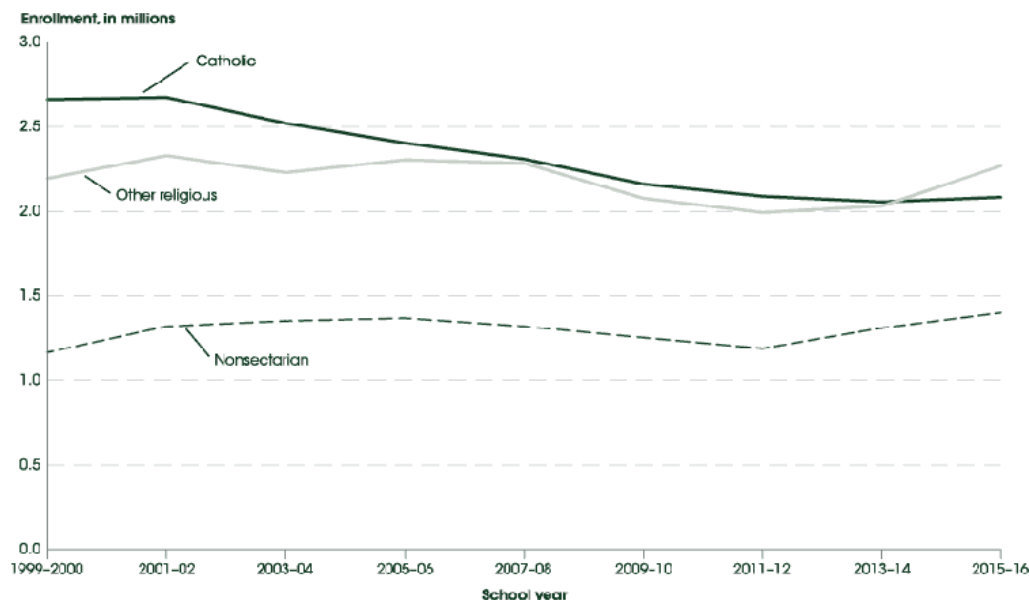
### **Common School**

The common school became a school choice in the 18th century (The American Board blog, 2015). These schools educated students of all ages in one room with one teacher. Students

did not attend these schools for free. Parents “paid tuition and the school provided housing for teachers” (The American Board blog, 2015). Horace Mann created the common school movement (Warder, 2015). It was his idea that “oral language emerged as the forefront to education” (Warder, 2015). Today the Common Schools design is geared toward grade level grouping for students. Modern common school theory exists from Mann’s original colonial ideals. Emily Johns, in 1967, revised the Common School program in Massachusetts. In doing so, she created another private school option. Her educational strategy has transformed the student hands-on style learning. Johns believed teachers should guide, challenge, and support students but also encourage them to take ownership of how they learn. The Common School offers an innovative alternative to traditional education, built on a rigorous and effective academic program (The Common School, 2018).

### **Private School Choice**

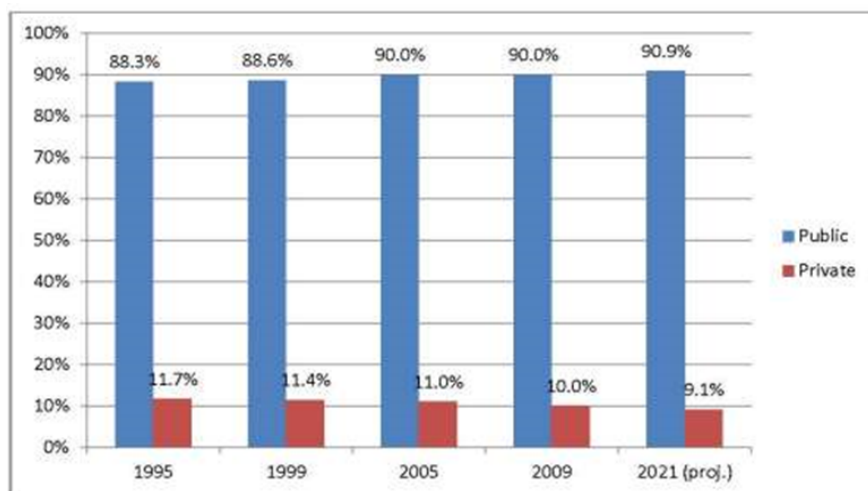
The private school (non-secular) and the parochial school (non-religious), meaning the school has religious affiliation but is not Catholic, are privately funded and operates on endowments or student tuition (Pascal, 2012). Non-Catholic parochial schools are attracting more students because they can gain important religious teaching that some parents feel is an important part of their child’s education process. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of student enrollment from 1999-2016 compared to Catholic schools. The enrollment represented in this figure shows the comparison between Catholic schools, other religious, and non-sectarian schools covering the same time frame. The enrollment trend indicates Catholic enrollment diminished, while nonsectarian and other religious types of private schools have increased.



*Figure 4. Private School Enrollment Trend Comparison*  
IES-National Center for Education Statistics January 2018

### Public Education

An additional influence in choice and its effects on Catholic schools is the rise in appropriate public school education. Figure 5 shows trends leaning toward a continual increase in public school enrollment, which in turn redefines the choice many parents are experiencing for education. As public schools improve with more available resources, parents are enrolling in their district schools rather than enrolling in Catholic schools.

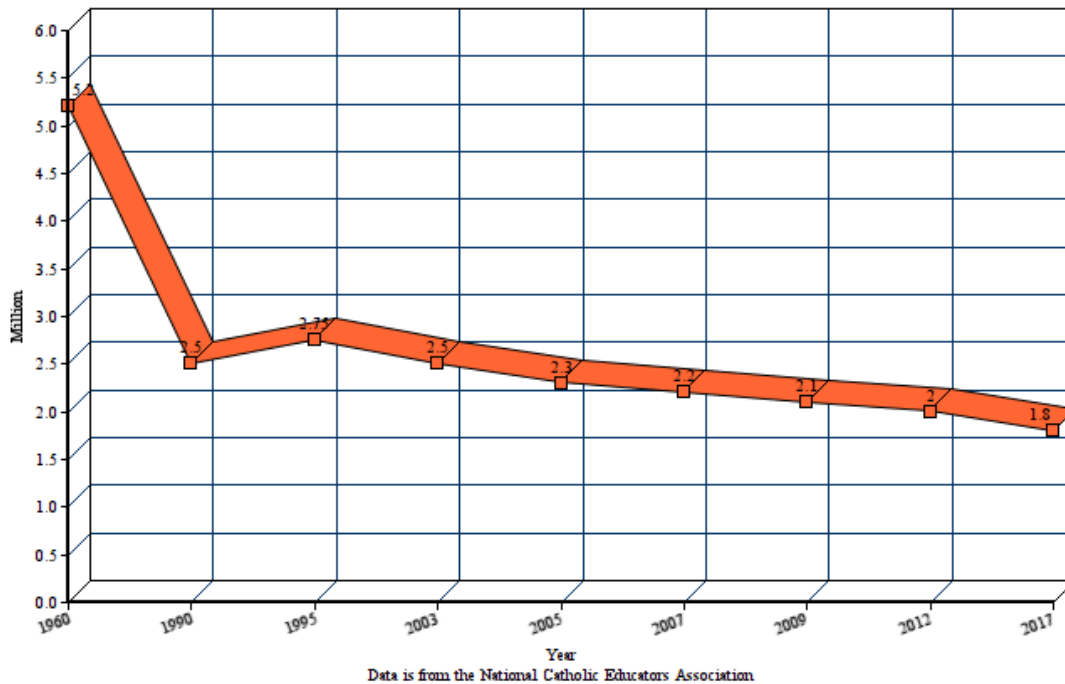


*Figure 5. Public vs Private School Long-Term Enrollment Projections*  
IES: National Center for Education Statistics (January 2012)

## **Enrollment Trends**

As a result of the multiple choices in education, there were documented decreasing trends in enrollment in Catholic schools across the country. “In the mid-1960s, more than 13,000 Catholic elementary and secondary schools enrolled 12 percent of the U.S. school children. But by 2012, fewer than 7,000 Catholic schools enrolled about two million or 5 percent of U.S. school-aged children” (MacGregor, 2013). Catholic school enrollment was at its peak in 1965; 5.2 million students were enrolled in Catholic schools nationally. At the same time, the churches network and parochial schools numbered more than 12,000 in the United States (Vitello et al., 2009). The NCEA states, “U.S. Catholic school enrollment reached in 1965 when there were more than 5.2 million students in almost thirteen thousand schools across the nation” (NCEA, 2017). They continue and report that, “the 1970s and 1980s saw a decline in both the number of schools and students. By 1990, there were approximately 2.5 million students in 8,719 schools” (NCEA, 2017). In the ten years since the 2006 school year, 1,511 schools were reported closed or consolidated (19.9%) nationally, while 314 school openings were reported. Because of different definitions used by dioceses for consolidations, closings, and their transitions into new configurations, along with actual new schools opened, the actual decrease in number of schools since 2006 is 1,064 schools (14.0%). The number of students declined by 409,384 which amounts to 17.6 percent nationally (NCEA, 2018). Some of the enrollment declines were also due to decreasing populations (Rivera, 2007). Many families were moving away from the urban areas to suburbia where there are fewer concentrated parish and school options (Rivera, 2007).

Figure 6 shows the enrollment trends presented by the NCEA demonstrating the continual decline. The figure indicates Catholic schools have taken the biggest loss over the demonstrated trends (NCES, 2011).



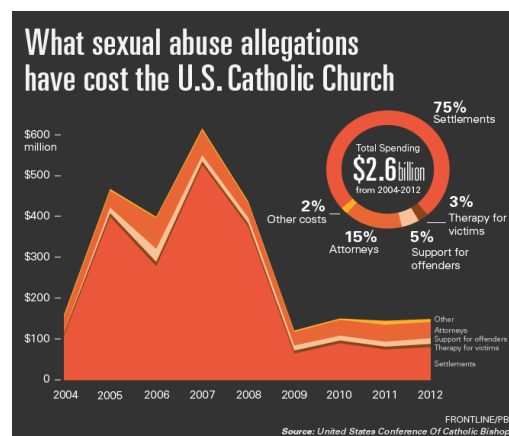
*Figure 6. Catholic School Enrollment*

### **Sex Abuse Report**

Many notable influences on Catholic education in recent years have led to changes in Catholic school educational practices. Some of these changes in enrollment started in the late 1960s and progressed through the 1990s. These changes have both a negative and positive influence. One of the greatest negative influences on Catholic education was the release of the findings of the Catholic priests sex abuse report.

In 2002, a draft survey investigation was completed for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which noted that more than 4,000 priests were accused of sexual abuse between 1950 and 2002 (cnn.com). “The report is based on a nationwide survey of church records, and was compiled by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for the conference” (cnn.com). This report noted that, “6,700 of the 11,000 allegations were investigated and substantiated, and another 1,000 were unsubstantiated. The remaining 3,300 were not investigated because the priests involved had died” (cnn.com).

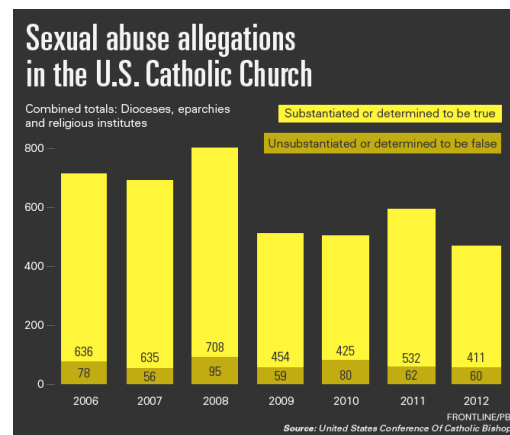
The effects this report had on the Church were devastating. Parishioners stopped giving and there were steep declines in church attendance (Jacobs, 2015). With little or no money coming into the churches and parishes, there was a foreseen struggle of sustaining schools. The scandal forced the parishes and local archdioceses to pay out large sums of money for settlements. These payouts hurt the schools financially, and in other ways, and caused many schools to close. “By 2011 the dioceses of Wilmington and several religious orders throughout the diocese distributed more than \$110 million to \$152 million dollars to adult survivors who were sexually abused by area Catholic priests” (*USA Today*, 2017). This was only the beginning of more changes. Numerous dioceses across the country have been paying off lawsuits for years and filing for bankruptcy. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the money spent in lawsuits and the total number of allegations as the number of cases increased. “Bishops have tried to hide this for years, so there is no reason to believe all of a sudden they would change their ways; the only prudent thing to do is assume this is not the entire truth” (Clohessy, cnn 2004).



*Figure 7. Cost of Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church*  
(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Figure 7 illustrates monetary implications of the Catholic Church spent on the sexual abuse allegations. The money spent on these allegations was divided into different percentages.

This financial strain on the Catholic Church resulted in the Catholic schools absorbing some of these expenses which influenced Catholic school costs.



*Figure 8. Sexual Abuse Allegations (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

Figure 8 represents the number of sexual abuse allegations by year. In 2008, there were the most sex abuse allegations at 708 substantiated allegations. The fewest allegations were in 2012 at 411.

The sex scandal continues with many allegations of abuse that have been identified. “They wait years before they are ready to speak. They are too ashamed, or confused, or afraid of not being believed. But eventually they tell someone and once they start speaking, some cannot stop. That’s why the sexual abuse story has emerged so slowly over the years in waves” (Goodstein, 2016). The amount of money and the payout cost is \$2.6 billion and as result, many church school systems have had to close. “Perhaps the most obvious negative repercussion of the sex abuse crisis in the Church is the rapid closing of many Catholic elementary schools throughout the nation. In the past two decades, archdioceses throughout the country have closed over 2,000 Catholic elementary schools” (Woloszyn, 2017). This scandal caused tuition and operating costs to increase in the Catholic education system. “Catholic schools are a financial offshoot of their respective parishes. Because of this, when parishes themselves face massive

expenses because they fail to generate or collect sufficient funds to cover their fees, they greatly compromise their schools' chances of remaining open. The sex abuse scandal resulted in precisely some of these massive financial shortcomings" (Woloszyn, 2017).

In addition, money and donations were being limited by supporters of the church. "The *New York Times* revealed that the Boston Archdiocese ran up a \$46 million deficit in its annual budget because \$150 million had been paid in settlement money for sex abuse cases. The second major way in which the scandal cost the Church exorbitant amounts of money: Catholics' new negative perception of the Church. In 2003, a Gallup poll revealed that once Catholics were made aware of the sex scandals, four in ten withheld money from the Church" (Woloszyn, 2017). Additionally, these types of situations drive up tuition costs, making school tuition unaffordable for parents, especially in the low-income urban areas that many Catholic elementary and secondary schools are based and are alternative learning environment for students. According to Glazer (2014), many parents made the decision to attend these schools primarily because of the schools' reputation for effective discipline and in reaction to the observable disorder of their local public schools. These trends were strong in urban areas and when schools started closing, many parents and families in these low-income areas were without any optional education choices (Glazer, 2014). Catholic schools had such a great reputation for educating black children in the inner cities but were now faced with an increasing financial crisis, which radically reduced their enrollment numbers (Glazer, 2014). Consequently, the trickle-down effect of the sex-abuse scandal has had a major impact across many disciplines in Catholic education.

A corresponding influence that the sex-abuse scandal has had on Catholic education is also the rising costs of Catholic education. In addition to settling lawsuits, Catholic schools are responsible for providing help to victims of sex abuse and new training. With a rise in operating



costs that many schools and school parishes have undertaken, they cannot afford to pay the upkeep of buildings, pay rent, and maintain payrolls. This directly impacts school tuition as the schools attempt to cover the new expenses. Table 1 illustrates the average mean tuition for Catholic schools and the average mean tuition for non-Catholic private schools in 2017 in the United States. Table 1 depicts the mean average of Catholic school tuition increases in both elementary and secondary tuitions. Table 1 also shows the comparison in tuition in non-Catholic private schools and how the cost parish Catholic schools are rising because of the influence of the sex abuse allegations.

Table 1  
*Average Tuition Cost Per Pupil in Catholic Schools*

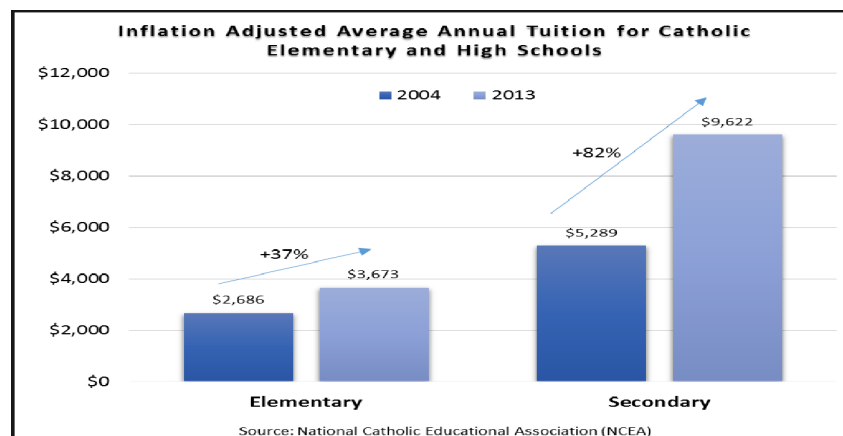
<b>Elementary</b>			
Mean parish school tuition:	\$4,400	per pupil cost:	\$5,887
<b>Secondary</b>			
Mean freshman tuition:	\$9,840	per pupil cost:	\$13,939
<b>Total average tuition for Non-Catholic Private School</b>			\$10,413
<b>Elementary</b>			
Mean private school tuition:			\$9,398
<b>Secondary</b>			
Mean private school tuition:			\$14,205

Table 2 represents where these schools are located in the United States.

Table 2  
*Student Enrollment by Population*

	<b>Elementary/Middle</b>		<b>Secondary</b>		<b>National Totals</b>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	1,526	29.3	439	36.3	1,965	30.6
Inner-City	508	9.7	119	9.9	627	9.8
Suburban	2,054	39.3	468	38.8	2,522	39.2
Rural	1,136	21.7	179	14.9	1,315	20.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,224</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,429</b>	<b>100.0</b>

There has been a significant decrease in the total number of Catholic schools during the past four decades. Absorption of costs from the sex abuse allegations and settlements has caused school closings. Table 2 illustrates a commitment to Catholic schools in important demographical areas which includes urban settings. Table 2 also illustrates the rise in cost schools in these areas remain a significant presence: four decades ago 47.9 percent were located in urban and inner city areas, today 40.4 percent of the schools are still in urban/inner city locales despite population losses and financial difficulties in maintaining them. During that same period of time, suburban schools increased from 25.0 to 39.2 percent of the total (NCEA, 2017).



*Figure 9. Annual Tuition Average for Catholic Schools*

Figure 9 reflects the rise in tuition in both Catholic elementary and secondary schools from 2004 to 2013, which was also the same period of time as the sex abuse settlements in the United States (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2014). Figure 9 shows there was a 37 percent increase in tuition in Catholic elementary schools and an 82 percent increase in Catholic secondary schools during 2004–2013.

Table 3 illustrates the lawsuit settlements by year and as a result of these lawsuit settlements and payouts, tuition increases in Catholic schools grew. Table 3 is important because it illustrates how much money was actually spent on settlements from 2003–2014 and how much

money was spent prior to 2002 on all the sex abuse allegation settlements. The table illustrates the greater financial impact was from 2003 to 2014.

Table 3  
*Legal Court Settlements*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Bishops' data on settlements and judgments</b>	<b>NCR data on settlements and judgments</b>
2002 & before	\$ 475,674,835.73	\$ 290,413,017.88
2003	No comparable data	\$ 187,659,500.00
2004	\$ 106,241,809.00	\$ 152,099,500.00
2005	\$ 399,037,456.00	\$ 256,854,000.00
2006	\$ 277,213,420.00	\$ 226,302,000.00
2007	\$ 526,226,283.00	\$ 1,134,022,583.00
2008	\$ 374,408,554.00	\$ 94,102,000.00
2009	\$ 63,575,843.00	\$ 52,814,000.00
2010	\$ 88,737,073.00	\$ 36,699,000.00
2011	\$ 73,681,782.00	\$ 321,100,000.00
2012	\$ 68,302,318.00	\$ 14,255,000.00
2013	\$ 67,190,165.00	\$ 54,755,000.00
2014	Not comparable time frame	\$ 61,210,000.00
2015	Not yet available	\$ 55,650,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,520,289,538.73</b>	<b>\$ 2,937,935,600.88</b>
<b>Note:</b> These figures do not include other costs associated with the abuse crisis, such as therapy for victims, support of offenders, and operation of safe environment programs. <b>Sources:</b> Jack and Diane Ruhl/US Conference of Catholic Bishops/CARA		

Table 3 documents the rise in legal costs for each year since the initial sex abuse scandal study was released. According to the reported statistical information, elementary school tuition cost averaged \$2,686 and secondary school tuition cost averaged \$5,289 in 2004 and the total payout was \$106,241,809 according to the Catholic Bishops report (2004) and \$152,099,500 according to the National Catholic Standard report (2004). In 2013, the elementary schools

reported an increase in average tuition at \$3,673 with secondary schools increasing an average of \$9,622. The total reported payout from 2013, according to the Catholic Bishops report in 2013, was \$67,190,165 and according to the National Catholic Registry, \$54,755,000. The numbers in this table illustrate a rise in costs that have been absorbed by the Catholic Church, thus, causing a rise in costs for Catholic education.

### **Components of Catholic School Sustainability**

Sustaining Catholic schools and Catholic education are missions of the Catholic Church. Many Catholics are looking into and defining what they believe should become a national conversation on saving Catholic schools and as a result, has gained momentum and moved beyond trying to define the scope and nature of the problem to sharing real progress. With these shared feelings, a growing movement in the greater community focuses on creating change and implementing best practices to sustain and ensure the future of Catholic schools (Healey, 2011).

### **President/Principal Model**

Catholic education has changed over the last 20 years and as a result, emerged several changes in leadership styles and governance. The most notable change has been to the leadership models. “In recent years a new structure for the administration of Catholic high schools in the United States has emerged. This structure, referred to as the president/principal model, features dual or shared authority and a division of administrative responsibility between two people as opposed to the traditional or autonomous model of administration for Catholic high schools where authority and responsibility rest with a single person” (Dygert, 2000). In an effort to produce sustainability in many Catholic schools there has been a restructuring push by diocese leaders for a substantial change in Catholic high schools in the United States. So why the change in governance? In Table 4 the *Journal on Catholic Education* (2013) illustrates the

breakdown of why the change was needed in Catholic education.

Table 4

*Rank Order of Importance of Reasons for Using the President/Principal Model Based on Percent of Presidents and Principals Responding*

**Reason in Percent**

Development and fundraising	97
Enable principal as instructional leader	92
Public relations	89
Business and financial management	87
Marketing	87
Strategic planning	85
Relieve overload of the principal	82
Maintain Catholic character/heritage	77
Provide administrator to work with board	70
Sponsorship	64
Prepare lay leadership for the school	49

“The majority of presidents and principals agreed that the most important reasons for the model are development and fundraising along with the related activities of public relations, marketing, and strategic planning; enabling the principal to function as the instructional leader and the related purpose of relieving principal overload; and business and financial management” (Dygert, 2000). In most educational secondary schools the school principal is the primary school leader in a building (Meador, 2018). A principal’s title encompasses many different roles and job duties cover many different areas including leadership, teacher evaluation, and student discipline (Meador, 2018). Sometimes these roles overlap in a school with the president/principal model, but the principal attends to internal matters, such as Catholic identity, recruitment, curriculum, discipline, athletics, service projects, supervising teachers, and working with parents (Murry, 2016).

The president has a global mission and is focused outward. He or she is a resource-builder, who not only works with the principal to guide the school at the ground level but also works with the school board, alumni, donors, foundations, and friends of Catholic education to guarantee that the school has money for endowment growth, scholarships, tuition assistance, new academic programs, in-school technology, and improvements to the physical plant (Murry, 2016).

Joined leadership with planned roles and responsibilities have led to successful school Catholic school sustainability. The information below is based on research from W. Nick and D. Doyle, Office of Catholic Schools. Factors for Successful President/Principal Administrative Models; Research by W. Nick and D. Doyle (Dygert, 2000).

1. Support from the Board of Directors/Trustees (especially with regard to making a case for implementation of the model).
2. The individuals serving in the two roles need to have congruent educational philosophies, values, and commitments to mission.
3. Clear and accurate job descriptions for each position.
4. School constituencies must understand the purpose and function of the model.
5. The two individuals serving as president and principal should have compatible personalities and complementary skills.
6. Even though the roles are distinct, the two administrators should approach the task of administering the school from a partnership frame of reference.
7. Frequent formal and informal, face-to-face communication and consultation must be maintained.
8. The school community must see visible benefits to using this model (such as

improvement in instruction and programs, improved personnel and student services, successful fundraising, future planning, and improved communications and public image. Without these visible benefits, the constituencies perceive the administrative structure as being top-heavy and overly expensive).

### **Merger and Consolidation**

An approach Catholic schools across the United States took to help maintain enrollment and remain open has been to merge and consolidate schools across parishes and districts as a result of declining enrollment and rising costs (Zech, 2016). The head of the diocese of Pittsburgh, Bishop David Zubik, said Catholic schools were not dying. He stated, “We’re trying to strengthen them” (Wadas, 2018). Catholic education, mostly the school buildings, and the enrollment costs were not rising together. The cost to maintain buildings was beyond the enrollment numbers. “The uncertainty surrounding our future home has caused us to lose enrollment these past two academic years, resulting in a significant operating deficit for the schools.” In a letter to parishioners and families, Bishop Zubik informed all constituents that the costs and deficit of the coming year have been covered with resources provided by their endowments (Kramer, 2018). The Diocese of Pittsburgh felt the cure for their financial pains was to unite two schools that would create a stability enabling Catholic school education to prosper and continue to grow (Kramer, 2018).

Population changes from years past was also leading to closing and mergers (Johnson, 2005). “The church is closing and merging schools, trying to form larger schools with a better chance of survival. But closing schools doesn’t mean that the survivors will thrive. Closing haphazardly is one thing; closing strategically is another,” said Rev. O’Keefe (Johnson, 2005). In Illinois, for example several schools merged together. “Our schools were selected for this

initiative because of the economics of falling enrollments and rising operating costs that cannot be subsidized by the archdiocese in the long-term,” officials said. “While we are struggling financially, we believe that collectively we can help create this new sustainable legacy for Catholic education in Chicago” (Pena, 2015). Likewise, communities have come together to form one school (Kramer, 2018). In Connecticut, two different counties with struggling schools have come together. “One option which has always been a possibility is to partner with our neighbors in Branford, to unite our resources and form an entirely new school entity. Having examined all possible opportunities for our future, it became clear to us that the most promising path forward is the creation of this new school, in partnership with St. Mary, offering an innovative option not currently available to east shoreline students” (Kramer, 2018).

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, two districts close to closing were brought together and elected to merge (Hill, 2008). “Despite great efforts made over a number of years now, the declining enrollments and increasing costs at both Transfiguration and St. Michael have made it impossible for the schools to continue” (Hill, 2008). The final decision to merge was thought to produce long-term sustainability.

The merger of the schools came as a result of a consultation process, involving both parishes and schools that looked at the current situation along with future trends. The conclusions from the process indicated that the merger would yield a blended faculty, offer the opportunity for a larger enrollment, draw students from a wider area, and be more fiscally sound sustainable schools (Hill, 2008). In New Jersey, “While painful, the closures and mergers did serve a purpose, helping stabilize enrollment in remaining schools and provide them the opportunity to grow, thus creating some sustainability. Enrollment in the six diocesan high schools and 29 elementary schools is just over 12,700 this year, about the same as last year”



(D’Amico, 2014). In the United States, Catholic schools declined by more than 850 from 1990 to 2005 and many affected major areas like New York, Detroit, and St. Louis were operating in deficit which has resulted in closing in more recent years (Riviera, 2007).

There are many hidden costs that have to be absorbed by Catholic schools causing a rise in operational costs, which added to the need for mergers and closings. One such problem adding to Catholic school sustainability are that the nuns and priests who were once classroom staples have largely disappeared and have been replaced by lay teachers who seek the same salaries and benefits as their public-school counterparts. This rise in the newly required salaries placed a burden on many dioceses who were not prepared for the turnover (Riviera, 2007).

Figure 10 illustrates the number of decreased school-based clergy. “The number of priests (as well as nuns) has declined steadily over the past 50 years, potentially leading to staff shortages at parishes” (Lipka, 2014).

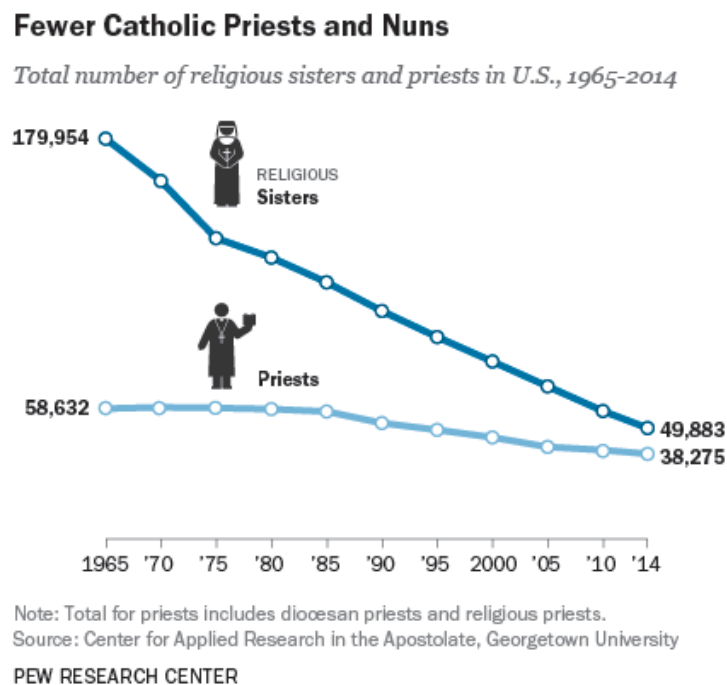


Figure 10. Catholic Nun and Priest Numbers (PEW Research Center, 2014)

However, in these mergers there is financial growth, which has aided in sustaining Catholic school education. “Indeed, some parish mergers have been driven by the need to more efficiently use staff and financial resources. Some of these mergers could create what CARA (Center of Applied Research Apostolate) researchers call ‘million-dollar parishes,’ so named because they have large budgets and serve much larger populations. So, in some cases, there are fewer parishes in a diocese serving more people” (Lipka, 2014). Mergers have also led to Catholic schools’ need to change admissions practices that incorporates demographic shifts in enrollment.

### **Admissions and Demographics**

Nationally, with closings, mergers, and change of governance structure, there have also been changes in Catholic school admissions targeting a new demographic. Catholic schools have targeted new markets. “Catholic schools, many of them in urban areas that are increasingly Hispanic, see Hispanic families as a critical potential market. The Alliance for Catholic Education, a center based at Notre Dame, is trying to help them respond to it, with a goal of quadrupling the number of Hispanic students in Catholic schools to one million by 2020” (Marcus, 2015). Many schools nationally are seeing demographic change as a savior for many schools (Marcus, 2015). “The Segura Initiative of the Diocese of Richmond, for example, is offering financial aid to Hispanic families to go to Catholic schools there, whose Hispanic enrollment has climbed by 35 percent since 2010, with similar initiatives under way in Tucson and Chicago” (Marcus, 2015). This is an encouraging program for school sustainability. With shifts in admissions and demographics, the NCEA released national enrollment figures. “Student diversity: 20.8 percent are racial minorities, 17.4 percent are Hispanic/Latino and 6.5 percent were reported as unknown in the racial data collection” (NCEA, 2017). Table 5 shows the

National Enrollment of Hispanics by school level. Hispanic populations are some of the largest minority populations targeted by sustaining Catholic schools (NCEA, 2017).

According to the Pew Research Center and their research on Latino populations in the United States, the Hispanic population has reached a record high of nearly 58 million in 2016 and has been the largest growth population since 2000 (Flores, 2017).

Table 5  
*Hispanic/Latino Enrollment and Percentages*

	<b>Elementary/Middle</b>		<b>Secondary</b>		<b>All Schools</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
New England	6,585	11.1	2,819	7.3	9,404	9.6
Mid-East	41,660	15.3	18,044	12.5	59,704	14.4
Great Lakes	39,720	13.0	11,968	10.8	51,688	12.4
Plains	12,599	8.6	3,586	7.1	16,185	8.2
Southeast	36,204	16.6	15,438	16.8	51,642	16.7
West/Far West	96,150	35.2	34,877	27.8	131,027	32.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>232,918</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>86,732</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>319,650</b>	<b>17.4%</b>

Many states of the United States are experiencing tremendous growth in Hispanic populations. Oregon has seen a Catholic school increase with the Latino population. Oregon statistics indicate 50 percent of Latinos are Catholic, according to the Archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry (Scott, 2017). Like Oregon, nationally 34 percent of Hispanics are Catholic, comprising a large number of Catholic school populations (Scott, 2017). In order to help sustainability in Catholic schools the goal in Catholic school admissions has to include targeting these Latino groups (Scott, 2017). Hispanic groups thrive on relationships and need to know that they can afford American Catholic schools (Scott, 2017). “The No. 1 priority for schools hoping to attract more Hispanics should be getting the word out that Catholic schools are an attainable

goal and not just for the wealthy” (Scott, 2017). It is important to note that 14.5 million school-age Catholic children in the United States, which comprises about eight million (or 55%) are Latino, with the majority of these population in the West and South (Flores, 2017). The US Latino populations are among the youngest but fastest growing populations (Flores, 2017). According to 2016 data from kidsdata.org, in California, Latinos are already the largest racial/ethnic group among children, accounting for 51 percent of all children under 18 (Flores, 2017).

There are numerous programs helping to increase Latino Catholic school enrollment. “In response to national data suggesting Latinos are both the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. Catholic Church and the most underserved by Catholic schools, the University of Notre Dame’s Catholic School Advantage program founded the Latino Enrollment Institute (ACE) in 2012. This initiative identifies and assists Catholic schools with substantial unmet capacity (open seats), favorable demographic potential—namely, a growing number of Latino families in the surrounding area—and motivated principals by offering a framework to transform schools in order to attract and serve Latino families” (ACE, 2018). Table 6 identifies national trends on minority Catholic school enrollment and how it balances against other school types. The Latino Enrollment Institutes’ focus was on black and Hispanic students.

Table 6  
*Sample School Student Enrollments by Academic Year*

	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
<b>Student Enrollment</b>	<b>576,042</b>	<b>568,600</b>	<b>548,600</b>
<b>Minority</b>	<b>136,313</b>	<b>147,677</b>	<b>155,400</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>40,626,</b>	<b>46,201</b>	<b>44,244</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>64,492</b>	<b>70,258</b>	<b>66,762</b>

\*Note: Some of the schools included in the sample enrolled students below the high school level. Because of how the data was reported, these students below the high school level are included in these total and the subsequent figures.

\*\*The 2009–2010 Private School Universe Survey included a ‘two or more races, not of Hispanic or Latino origin’ student demographic category that had not been included in the prior years. A total of 13,686 students were considered to be of two or more races for the 2009–2010 academic year (*Journal of Catholic Education*, Volume 19, Issue 3, 2016).

In Boston, a study was done by the School of Theology and Ministry and Lynch School of Education, Roche Center for Catholic Education, “Catholic Schools in an Increasingly Hispanic Church” (Ospino et al., 2016). “The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) reports that only 15 percent (296,186) of students enrolled in Catholic schools in 2013–14 and 15.3 percent (296,903) of students enrolled in 2014–15 were Hispanic. Given the latest enrollment evidence, it is clear that of the total Hispanic school-age population (approx. 12.4 million nationwide), only 2.3 percent (296,203) are enrolled in Catholic schools (Ospino et al., 2016). Their evidence supports national understanding of this new admissions target market. Using the data associated with the steady growth of the Hispanic Catholic school-age population and the declining enrollment in Catholic schools, the Church must be realistic and plan creatively—and prophetically—to serve this demographic in the Church. It is a fact that more than 97 percent of school-age Hispanics, most of them possibly growing up in Catholic households, do not benefit from Catholic school education. Most do not benefit from Catholic education in our parishes either: only 10 percent of Hispanic children are enrolled in religious education programs in parishes with Hispanic ministry” (Ospino et al., 2016).

The study also reports staggering numbers. “Nearly two-thirds (61.3%) of all Catholic

schools are concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest regions as defined in this report. Yet the larger percentage of those schools identified as serving Hispanic families is in the South and the West where the Catholic population is growing fast, particularly school-age Hispanics. While 53.6 percent of Hispanics in the South and 61.4 percent in the West self-identify as Catholic, these are also the regions of the country with the fewest resources to meet the needs of Hispanic Catholic families” (Ospino et al., 2016). The findings conclude that “Parish leaders must collaborate with public school officials, teachers, and especially parents to help improve the educational attainment level of Hispanic young people, the majority of whom attend public schools. Dioceses and parishes should take steps to help increase Catholic school accessibility and attendance by Hispanic children, possibly through scholarships and other incentives” (Ospino et al., 2016).

### **Charter School Influence**

Since the mid-1960s when Catholic school enrollment reached its zenith of 5.5 million students, enrollment has declined dramatically to about 2.1 million in 2009–10. In addition to the 1968 Vatican II decision to drop the requirement that Catholics send their children to Catholic schools, changing demographics and economic hardships straining families’ ability to pay tuition have also contributed to this decline. The rising costs of providing a Catholic education added to the dwindling enrollment.

As a result of the continued need to sustain Catholic education, many parishes and districts nationally began to look into charter schools as an answer to the Catholic school education need. “After the economic downturn hit, the archdioceses overseeing Catholic schools in the District of Columbia and Miami determined they couldn’t support some of their schools. The school systems created a plan, which included closing schools, renting out the buildings to charter

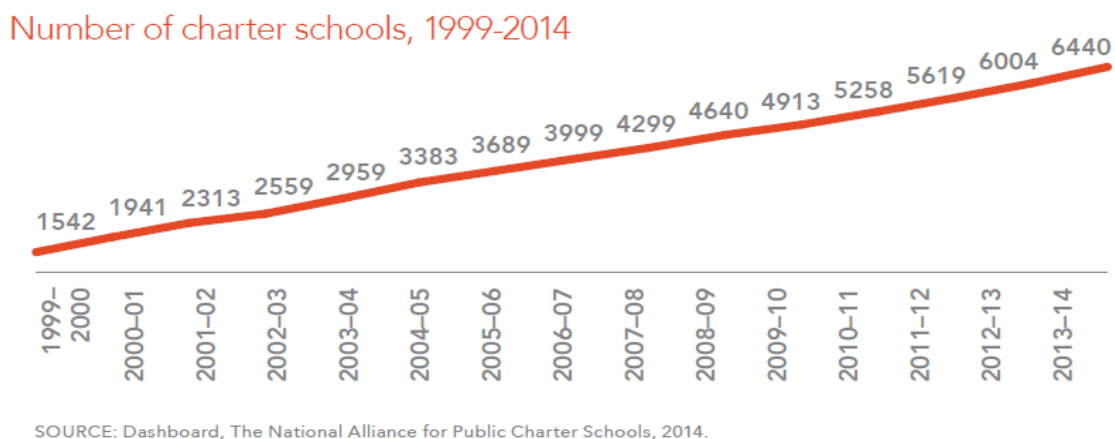
operators, and reopening the private schools as public charter schools. Some of the converted schools retained most of the original staff and students, but also saw a boost in enrollment” (Cairney, 2014). This was an important step in sustaining many Catholic schools. It was found that “Roman Catholic schools that converted from private schools to public charter schools experienced a significant increase in student enrollment” (Cairney, 2014). It should be recalled that “From 2004 to 2014, U.S. Catholic school enrollment dropped by 23 percent, to fewer than 2 million students, compared with 5.2 million at the pinnacle of such enrollment in the 1960s, according to data compiled by the National Catholic Educational Association, based in Arlington, Va” (Prothero, 2014).

Several organizations have been establishing Catholic charter crossovers to promote sustainability. One of the more notable organizations is the Friedman Foundation, which is well known for its investigations into charter school options for Catholic schools (Cariney, 2014; Horning, 2013; Prothero, 2014). The Friedman report showed enrollment trends that Catholic schools were losing an average of 7.3 students per year, while the charter schools that opened in their places gained an average of 34.4 students per year and the proportion of minority students enrolled also increased over a time period of two to four years (Prothero, 2014). Many believe the charter school program model of schooling, though not readily developed in the United States, could be an answer to the Catholic school issues. Charter schools have been developed to address the needs of a specific focused area (Horning, 2013). However, with success has come some negative backlash (Horning, 2013). According to a Weinberg study, “Several charter schools have come under great scrutiny regarding the alleged inappropriate and illegal promotion of religion” (Horning, 2013).

Some criticism comes with the Catholic values in mind, so, “While the seductive allure of

converting cash-strapped Catholic schools into charters is clear, a closer look reveals that these conversions are mostly a mirage. Understanding is crucial to charting a path forward that will actually achieve the goal of revitalizing urban Catholic education in America” (Portor-Magee, 2018). One main argument opposed to the religious charter idea is, “First and foremost, we lose the ability to unapologetically teach our faith and values because there is no actual ‘conversion’ taking place. Catholic schools close and stop teaching the faith, and authority over curriculum and instruction is turned over to a state-authorized public school” (Porter-Magee, 2018).

Hardline Catholics see the charter school in a way that “converting struggling Catholic schools to charters weakens rather than strengthens community support for our schools because it hitches our future to an increasingly controversial educational model” (Porter-Magee, 2018). In sustaining Catholic schools, charter schools offer an alternative option to Catholic education. A benefit of converting failing Catholic schools to public charter schools means money for both Catholic diocese school systems and the charter school network, therefore providing the needed sustainability in Catholic education and the continued growth of charter schools (Horning, 2013). Figure 11 represents the steady growth of charter schools in the United States.



*Figure 11.* Number of Charter Schools, 1999–2014



## Washington Metro Area

During 2004–2010 Catholic education decreased enrollment and in schools nationally as well as in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (NCEA, 2010). According to the Institute of the Renewal of Priesthood, in 2004 there was a total loss of 123 schools, both elementary and secondary nationally, which resulted in a drop in overall enrollment of roughly 69,000 students. This is a drop of about 2.7 percent from the previous five years (NCEA, 2004). As stated in previous research, Catholic education was going through new challenges. According to statistics presented by the NCEA, many of the closings occurred in urban areas with the largest influences of closings and consolidations occurring in the Midwest (39 schools) and the Great Lakes region (30 schools) (NCEA, 2004).

The Washington D.C. metropolitan area was not immune to the loss in enrollment. However, they recovered with positive trends during the most critical time in recent Catholic education. In secondary schools from 2004 to 2010, overall enrollment (i.e., the total combined number of schools in the Washington metropolitan area) fluctuated (Archdiocese of Washington ten-year Study Data Bank).

Table 7  
*Enrollment Trends of 20 Schools in the Archdiocese of Washington 2003–2010*

Year	Schools	Enrollment
2003/4	20	8,883
2004/5	20	9,750
2005/6	20	9,810
2006/7	20	9,875
2008/9	20	10,083
2009/10	20	10,621

In the Washington metropolitan area there are six districts and 20 secondary schools that comprise the Archdiocese of Washington school network. These areas are Montgomery County, the District of Columbia, Charles County, Saint Mary's County, Prince George's County, and

Calvert County. Within these counties or districts, there are both independent secondary Catholic schools and archdiocese secondary Catholic schools.

The data trends offered by the Archdiocese of Washington total enrollment demonstrates a steady increase in enrollment across the entire diocese. These trends are different when comparing them to the struggling national enrollment trends for secondary archdiocese schools. In most situations, each archdiocese school, whether independent or archdiocese controlled, showed positive sustainable trends in data unlike those in various regions of the United States. Nationally, enrollment trends changed by region. According to the NCEA, during 2004–2010, enrollments dropped an average of 18 percent combined per region with an overall drop in secondary Catholic education of 49 percent. In New England, there was an average 5.5 percent drop in enrollment during this time frame but there was a large influx of school closing at this time, which led to consolidation of Catholic Schools (NCEA, 2014). As stated previously, the Mideast and Great Plains suffered the largest drops. The Plains, Southeast, West, and Far West had average drops of 10.5 percent to 21.5 percent falling enrollment.

In trying to understand the statistical information provided, the researcher in this study defined what practices were used in the Washington metropolitan secondary Catholic schools that sustained and even grew their enrollments when comparing them to other regions in the United States from 2003–2016.

### **Comparison Cities**

Along the east coast, many urban areas suffered from Catholic school decline. These issues matched the declining national enrollment trends. Two major cities, New York and Boston, had downward enrollment trends that exceeded the national average and resulted in large-scale closures, mergers, and declines.

In New York, the archdiocese initiated the closing of 15 schools in 2007 (Santos, 2008). This was part of a “large-scale reorganization plan” that also involved the closing of 21 parishes (Santos, 2008). The archdiocese felt closing and consolidating Catholic schools would have a positive impact on the growing debt and low enrollment. However, that was not to be true. The numbers told the story. From 1995 to 2005 enrollment fell 27 percent and from 2004 to 2005 four schools closed on Long Island alone (Santos, 2008). Even in New York, they were acutely aware that more than 1,260 Catholic schools, mostly elementary schools, have closed since 2000 (Santos, 2008).

The Archdiocese of New York is vast and expands from Staten Island to Albany. This region was home to 414 Catholic schools in the early 1960s (Otterman, 2013). However, this area also suffered in continual closings. By 2007, 28 Catholic schools closed (Otterman, 2013). This devastated local Catholic school parents who were looking for a Catholic faith education. In an interview, Dr. Tim McNiff stated, “This is the most unfortunate thing about what we have to do. We are closing schools that are not failing academically, that are not failing in terms of helping the child with their faith journey and that provide safe harbors for kids” (Otterman, 2013). Clearly, the archdiocese knew something had to change but also realized more closings would happen if schools could not justify remaining open or provide enrollment numbers that demonstrated stability (Otterman, 2013).

New York City and its surrounding areas were not immune to the crises that fell upon Catholic schools nationally from 2003–2016. Because they were expansive in territory and in numbers, it appeared they had the most to lose and suffered from some of the largest closures in the nation. Similarly, Boston, another large urban area, had the struggles with closures and keeping Catholic schools afloat during this time.

According to an article written by Mary Connaughton, the Boston Archdiocese closed nearly 58 schools and was down 21 percent in total enrollment through 2014 (Connaughton, 2017). The issue plaguing Catholic schools nationally was also affecting schools in the Boston Archdiocese. There were fewer students, higher operational costs, less clergy, and higher expenses because of the shift in workforce. These influences not only troubled parts of Boston but were also felt across the State of Massachusetts resulting in wide spread additional closings. The surrounding areas felt the pinch of rising costs and could not raise enough funds to offset the inevitable closings. In 2004, the Associated Press published an article about the Archdiocese of Boston, the fourth largest diocese in the country (Lavoi, 2004). In 2004, the archdiocese announced the immediate closing of 65 parishes (Lavoi, 2004). These closings were a result of the sex scandal fallout and the lack of faith many parishioners had in the church. The effects of the scandal really hurt Boston Catholics. Parishioners stopped giving money to the Church because indirectly they saw a rise in legal costs and felt their money was going to these legal fees (Lavoi, 2004). Two of the largest Catholic organizations in the nation, Boston and New York, suffered greatly from 2003-2016. These large cities were only a piece of the puzzle the country was facing during this time. Neither city saw a means to changing or sustaining practices that would keep them from closing, merging or consolidating.

### **Researchers and Enrollment Management**

In 1976, Jack Maguire, Dean of Admissions at Boston College, wrote an article that specifically addressed the need for a review of admissions practices and how the idea of enrollment management would play an important role in the admissions process (Hill, 2008). It was this article and change in culture at Boston College that drew immediate national attention and became the backbone of future admissions processes in all education arenas (Hill, 2008).

Maguire was trying to find answers to a struggling enrollment and a problem with attrition with registered students. It was his research and findings that led to the development of the enrollment manager as an independent position but also as an integral part of the entire admissions process and school sustainability (Hill, 2008). To further his position, Maguire proposed the use of research and data that formulated the studies in enrollment management, a practice utilized today (Hill, 2008). As a result of Maguire's new position toward admissions and enrollment, he left Boston College and opened a consulting firm that grew immediately and became the basis for many educational institutions across the country (Hill, 2008).

There are two research studies in enrollment management that are worth noting for this study. The first is a study done by Dr. Lauren Friedman, 2015. In her study called, *Enrollment Management: Structure and Decision Participation*, Friedman addressed the questions of enrollment management and how it has influenced the decision process. Her two goals were to discuss and find results (1) in higher levels of decision participation that occur as a result of engagement in enrollment management and (2) to develop a new methodology for analyzing the structure of the enrollment management enterprise, notably because enrollment management has become a common practice among American institutions of higher education, but also because the enterprise serves as a primary change agent within the institution and the industry. Friedman research was important because, although centered on higher education, it had importance across all educational institutions.

The other researcher whose study is important to enrollment management is Dr. Monique Snowden (2010). In her research study titled, *Enrollment Logics and Discourse: Toward Professionalizing Higher Education Enrollment Management*, Snowden identified the need for a greater enrollment management practice that exceeds usual admissions practices and

incorporates the big picture idea to school enrollment trends that goes far beyond higher education. Snowden's research is important because it identifies the importance of power and decision making among those involved in the enrollment management process. Snowden states, "This work makes contributions that expand how enrollment management is theoretically viewed, methodologically studied, and analytically understood" (Snowden, 2010).

Both researches keyed off the 'founding father' (Hill, 2008) of enrollment management, Jack McGuire. Although both studies centered on higher education, the practical application of the students relate to enrollment management as a specific practice to sustaining educational institutions and balancing the admission process. Both studies investigated relationship building, decision making and leadership roles as important pieces of the enrollment.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Enrollment Management**

The conceptual component in this study is derived from the enrollment management process and how this was applied to sustaining secondary Catholic school enrollment in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. There are four criteria for enrollment management that are the focus of this study as well as the integral part of answering the research questions. These are *Admissions Management, Retention, Research, and Marketing* (Baker, 2012).

- *Admissions Management* tracks students and manages all aspects of student life to include financial aid, registration of new students, the orientation process, and current and newly proposed curriculum (Baker, 2012).
- *Retention* is the school's ability to keep students enrolled and reenrolled. It monitors current student programs to ensure student happiness each year (Baker, 2012).
- *Research* is important because it is the data collection process that defines what is

going on inside and outside the school that incorporates student success, community involvement, and school image control. This area should also utilize data that helps the leadership team make adjustments in key areas of the school education process (Baker, 2012).

- *Marketing* brings together the processes that define the school's image, advertises the school's mission, helps define what the school offers to prospective students, and uses the school brand to distribute information through the public relations process to all potential markets. Marketing tells the story of the school (Baker, 2012).

The literature explained in this paper addressed the history and influences of Catholic secondary education as well as discussed the different ways Catholic secondary schools tried to manage enrollment downfalls. The research in this study, Baker's (2012) enrollment management theory, defined what was or was not successful in using different enrollment management practices to stabilize the variable enrollment trends from 2003 through 2016.

### **Archdiocese and Other School Options**

In the Washington, D.C. area, the Archdiocese of Washington consists of two Archdiocesan secondary schools and 16 independent secondary schools that expand into five surrounding counties (ADW, 2019). These counties range in similarity with various socioeconomics, demographics and geographic populations. However, each of these counties offer competitive educational opportunities.

In addition to the wide range of public schools in these five counties, there are many other educational choices beyond the secondary Catholic schools. Parents can choose to send their child to private, independent, charter, and Christian schools. As a result of having many choices beyond public school, parents and students can afford to research and decide what type

of educational opportunity best fits their needs. In areas where the public school may not be the best choice, parents can decide to move their child to a school of their choice. Depending on a family's affordability, many of the schools offer financial aid for incoming students. In comparison, there are many secondary Catholic school options in some of the more challenging public school zones.

## **Summary**

This literature review has charted the path of Catholic education and the many pieces that have come together to form modern Catholic education standards and sustainability. In the beginning of this literature review was the historical aspects of Catholic school enrollment decline. Next, the focus was on the different influences of sustainability in Catholic education enrollment. Also noted in the literature was one of the biggest influences on Catholic education, the sex scandal report (US Catholic Bishops, 2002). As a result of this report, many schools could no longer afford to operate as there was a decrease in enrollment, rise in cost, increase in tuition, and fewer religious personnel working in the Catholic schools. Therefore, parents began to search for an alternatives to Catholic education. In many areas of the country, public schools had improved and had challenged Catholic institutions for safer more proficient education environments, which led to lower enrollment numbers in Catholic schools.

Efforts were made by Catholic leadership at different levels to implement internal Catholic school structural and organizational changes. Many of these factors play heavily into the sustainability of schools across the country. Leadership model changes influenced Catholic schools in hope of changing enrollment trends but these initiatives, though helpful, couldn't stop the school mergers and consolidations. Additionally, the literature discussed different types of admission management policy changes, such as broadening demographic regions to fill seats in



struggling schools. The literature also discussed the addition of the charter school influence, which became a competitor for Catholic schools. The terms and definitions of enrollment management (Baker, 2012) is visible in various aspects of the literature review and the proposed solutions by Catholic schools to sustain enrollment trends.

In the Washington metropolitan area, while most of the country saw negative influences on their enrollment trends, the Washington, D.C. area had sustainable enrollment numbers (only a decline of eight percent from 2004 to 2014) that did not result in secondary school closings (Archdiocese Washington, 2014). Though the archdiocese experienced school consolidation and closings at the elementary levels, the secondary school enrollment managed to remain the same, increase, or decrease, but did not close.

Years of Catholic education enrollment declines (1960–2016) negatively impacted Catholic school sustainability. Catholic school leaders made decisions to make changes in Catholic schools in order to sustain and stabilize enrollment. Despite these negative factors and influences on Catholic education over the years, there are leaders who feel Catholic education is an important part of world education (Catholic Bishops, 2017). In the Washington metropolitan area, 16 of 19 Catholic secondary schools had some form of sustainable enrollment trend.

The different enrollment management practices that have led to some sustainable enrollment trends in the Washington, D.C. schools from 2003 to 2016 was the basis for this study. The template for this study was the enrollment management practices in Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and how those enrollment management processes influenced sustainable outcomes. In the methodology chapter, the researcher discusses how this study evolved into practice and how the research questions were answered.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This chapter explains the research methodology used for this qualitative case study to determine what helped sustain Catholic secondary school enrollment in the Washington, D.C metropolitan area. The research provided an understanding of the different ways a subgroup of Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area addressed their enrollment during 2003 through 2016.

This study sought to explain the variation in the enrollment patterns of the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools from 2003 through 2016. During that period, while national enrollments trended downward, a subgroup of Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools bucked the national trend by maintaining or increasing their enrollment. Specifically, this research investigated how enrollment management between schools helped to sustain the schools and prevented them from closing.

### **Research Questions**

How did Washington, D.C.'s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy the enrollment declines between 2003–2016 that were visible at the national level?

### **Sub Questions**

1. *To what extent and in what ways did Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area employ enrollment management strategies or programs designed to sustain enrollment in Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area from 2003 to 2016?*
  - a. How was *admission management* used in the overall enrollment management strategy for the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools?

- b. What *retention* strategies were used by the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area subgroup use?
  - c. How did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area use *research* to help in their enrollment management and what kind of research did the secondary Catholic schools conduct in the Washington, D.C area?
  - d. What kind of *marketing* strategies were employed by the Catholic secondary schools in Washington, D.C. during 2003–2016 and how was branding used in marketing strategies?
2. *What organizational factors appear to distinguish those schools that increase or maintained enrollment from those that corresponded with the national decline?*

### **Conceptual Idea**

The purpose of this study was to find out what enrollment strategies were used by the Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area that were not common to the national trends, and how a subgroup of secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area managed to stay open. The main concept that this paper investigated was the idea of enrollment management and how enrollment management was used to sustain enrollment in this group of Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area from 2003 to 2016.

According to Christine Baker, founder of the Baker group, enrollment management is defined as an “institutional response” to maintaining the “right student body” for a school’s functioning capacity and identified four areas necessary for enrollment management to function properly: *Admissions Management, Retention, Research, and Marketing* (Baker, 2012).

- *Admissions Management* tracks students and manages all aspects of student life to include financial aid, registration of new students, the orientation process, and current and newly

proposed curriculum (Baker, 2012).

- *Retention* is the school's ability to keep students enrolled and reenrolled. It also monitors current student programs to ensure student happiness each year (Baker, 2012).
- *Research* is important because it is the data collection process that defines what is going on inside and outside the school that incorporates student success, community involvement, and school image control. This area should also utilize data that helps the leadership team make adjustments in key areas of the school education process (Baker, 2012).
- *Marketing* brings together all the processes that define the school's image, advertises the school's mission, helps define what the school offers to prospective students, and uses the school brand to distribute information through the public relations process to all potential markets. Broadly defined, marketing tells the story of the school (Baker, 2012).

These four areas of enrollment management are significant because Catholic schools are private and rely on tuition to sustain themselves (Baker, 2012). This means schools have an operating budget that is dependent on tuition and enrollment (Baker, 2012). Leadership plays a role in enrollment management, and it is the president or principal who is responsible for planning the long-term strategies that the school will pursue for enrollment (Baker, 2012). The plan and direction that leadership charts is the vision of the enrollment program, and that is shared with the admissions, financial, marketing, and development teams. It is the responsibility of these groups to apply a viable sustainable enrollment plan (Baker, 2012).

Enrollment management programs must be accurate, and they must be data driven as well as informative (Baker, 2012). Proper enrollment management helps you to recruit prospective parents, to continue student retention, and to give yourself an institution control over that school's long-term sustainability (Baker, 2012). Enrollment management not only involves the

practice of the four key areas of admission management, retention, research, and marketing, but it also requires a clear vision of the school brand, which is the immediate recognizable element to the community. A well-defined school brand, promoted properly, ties all four of the key enrollment management terms together (Baker, 2012). The success of these areas is what drives a successful school community and leads to happy students, strong re-enrollment, happy parents, and, eventually, happy alumni; all these factors lead to school sustainability (Baker, 2012).

It is also necessary when researching enrollment management to understand the changes in the community, particularly in terms of the shifting demographic and economic situations of potential consumers (Sanchez, 2018). Incorporating these emerging patterns into the definition of enrollment management means enrollment management is much more than just a unified internal operating system. Rather, enrollment management for the school requires a global approach that acknowledges many moving parts within communities (Sanchez, 2018). When specifically investigating the enrollment process of this subgroup of Catholic secondary schools in the Washington metropolitan area, all these factors had to be taken into account.

### **Participants**

The researcher in this study chose six schools of the 19 possible secondary Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington. The schools chosen permitted the researcher the best option for answering the research questions.

The first two schools chosen were schools that increased by 9 students in their enrollment. The first school was coed and had an increase of 9.19 in total enrollment from 2003 to 2016. The second school chosen for this study was a single sex school that had an enrollment increase of 10.13 through 2016.

The next school selected was a single sex school whose enrollment average remained the

same from 2003 through 2016.

The last three schools chosen for this study all had decreased enrollment. The first school was a coed school that had an enrollment decrease in enrollment of -22.86. The next two schools chosen were single sex. The first single sex school had an overall decrease of -23.63 since 2003. The last school selected for this study was a single sex school with an enrollment decrease of -18.73 since 2003.

From the schools chosen, the researcher interviewed the president, principal, admissions director, and director of marketing and development. These four school leaders are the key personnel in creating enrollment policy and making decisions about enrollment strategies.

### **Data Collection**

The research methodology was conducted using a qualitative case study approach. The researcher used a triangulation of data sources in this study. A qualitative method was used because the objective in this research was to gain answers to the research questions by using the perceptions, practices, and feelings of a leadership professional's experiences to answer questions about the enrollment trends and practices of the subgroup of secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. Catholic area. The research methodology in this study collected different data sources and connected the main ideas to give the researcher a clear idea of what happened from 2003 through 2016 in the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools.

In order to have a thorough collection of data, the researcher recorded information from volunteer interviews and various documents related to the enrollment management process. The goal of the researcher was to access each school's enrollment and admissions practices as well as each administrator's role during the 2003 through 2016 time period in Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Data collection in this study consisted of a

triangulation of data sources to ensure that the information collected was verifiable, accurate, and comprehensive.

There were sixteen interview questions that reflected the research questions being asked in this study. Included in these interview questions was the theoretical conceptual idea of enrollment management that provided the theme for the research. The researcher grouped the interview questions in a logical manner so when responding to the interview the participant addressed each aspect of the research questions and the conceptual idea for this study.

Table 8 illustrates the various definitions of enrollment management and the data sources that were collected to answer the research questions. The documents collected in this table were from 2003, 2009, and 2016. These years were chosen because they represented equal intervals of time to track different trends in the enrollment process during the 2003 through 2016 enrollment years. Some of the documents collected and listed in Table 8 below are the summary survey results (data), prospective students, demographics, interest information, student grades, and feeder school information that provided the researcher with additional resources to further answer the research questions and conceptual ideas in this study.

To recap, enrollment management encompasses four areas defined by Baker (2012) in the researcher's conceptual idea. Table 8 identifies the four parts to enrollment management and the documents collected for each term that answered the research questions.

Table 8  
*Four Criteria of Enrollment Management*

<i><b>Components of Enrollment Management</b></i>	<i><b>Research Documents to be Collected</b></i>
<b>1. Admission management</b> is the aspect of enrollment management that identifies prospective students and tracks them from expression of interest through the application process. The role of admission management is to strategically identify potentially interested students and help them navigate application submission and subsequent enrollment.	Admissions strategic plan and recruitment policy, school application, prospective student surveys and prospect identification information, recruitment fliers and distribution areas, and alumni surveys.
<b>2. Retention</b> is the school's ability to maintain a secure enrollment each year and to make sure students reenroll each school year and continue through the same school until graduation. School personnel must identify student needs and programs that are working.	Yearly parent surveys, student surveys, course offerings, alumni surveys, senior exit interviews, student-centered retention programs, and initiative activities.
<b>3. Research</b> involves collecting data that reflects student success and which recruitment tools are working best to maintain enrollment.	Evaluations on admitted students compared to evaluations on non-admitted students from admissions applications. Standardized test scores. HSPT scores, recruitment yields and application yields from recruitment programs, interface with internal functions (identifying compatibility between internal programs to maintain enrollment). Comparison models between financial aid students and admissions and non-financial aid students admitted. Data on students offered admissions who decide not to enroll and those offered admissions and do enroll.
<b>4. Marketing</b> is the matching of the product and service to the right person. This process uses branding and public relations conjointly to tell the product's story. As a result, the surrounding community, feeder schools, and parishes identify with particular schools in the Archdiocese of Washington. From this, decisions are made on which school to attend.	Strategic plan, open house advertisement, shadow visit survey, recruitment fliers, community advertising, and school visits fliers.



## Interview questions

1. How do you assess your school's overall enrollment stability?
2. What does your school's leadership team use as its current approach to enrollment management?
3. Who on the leadership team initiates the school's organizational strategies?
4. Who evaluates the organizational process for admissions?
5. How do you implement the admissions process in your school?
6. Who on the leadership team is involved in the *admissions management* process? This is defined as the entire process of discerning interest inquiries through the application process and acceptance to the institution.
7. Who on the *admissions management* team monitors the application process?
8. Who initiates strategies with regards to *retention*?
9. What organizational strategies do you implement at your school in regards to the *retention* of students?
10. What is your leadership team's approach to *retention* and how has that evolved?
11. Who evaluates data and *research* at your school?
12. What data and *research* have you and your institution used to help in your school's enrollment strategies?
13. What *marketing strategies* does your leadership team use?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add for any of the functions described above?
15. As a member of the leadership team, how have you instilled school-wide ownership to the faculty and staff of your institution and its enrollment management strategies?

16. What, if any, training have you provided to help your faculty and staff understand their individual roles in creating a great learning environment that will help in the satisfaction of students and ultimately become a part of the enrollment management strategy?

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher gathered data from school documents and personal interviews of each school and school administrator. Documents were gathered to provide further support of the processes schools took to manage their school enrollment, thus sustaining their schools. The documents gathered, such as mission statement, admissions application, consulting feedback, and open house information illustrate the improvement plan schools initiated from 2003 through 2016. The data was analyzed using a specific process of identifying, coding, organizing and structuring, converting, consolidating, and summarizing. The researcher used the qualitative coding software Atlas.ti to identify and extract content categories from the interview responses. From these content categories the researcher grouped themes and patterns in both document and interview data. The themes identified by the researcher are the framework for answering the research questions in this qualitative study.

The use of coding by the researcher was used to preserve the school and interviewee's confidentiality and was used in the grounded theory methodology to gather an understanding of the experiences of each participant. Coding of the interviews preserved the school and the participant volunteer's anonymity and provided a more efficient process to gather the information needed to address the research question. The coding was used in each stage of the analysis process to identify the themes in this study.

The following steps were taken in examining the data:

1. All the schools and school administrators were assigned a code.

2. Each interview was recorded in written form through discussion and observations with the interviewee.
3. The researcher took notes from the documents and used follow-up questions during the interview to further clarify the documents collected and how they aligned with the interview questions.
4. The researcher used Atlas.ti, a qualitative analysis computer software, to extract repetitive responses from each school and establish trends in each administrative answer from the participating schools.
5. The computer software Atlas.ti used the codes developed by the researcher as a foundation to document analysis to make sense of the participants' experiences and find trends within the data.
6. The transcribed interview and document notes were uploaded into the Atlas.ti software and produced highlighted themes from the data.
7. The researcher used these results to perform a cross-comparison analysis of the interview responses and the documents to look for and identify common practice and trends between schools and school administrators.
8. Through this analysis process themes between all administrators and schools were established.

The researcher took the following precautions to ensure secure documents for the participants. The interview was free from bias, was anonymous and confidential. The following is a list of precautionary measures:

1. Each research school was coded S 001-S 006 without any geographic, demographic affiliation that could have been interpreted that the school listed for the interview

selection corresponded with that school.

2. Each administrator participant was coded A-01-A 13.
3. Each participant was coded to ensure accurate data collection and a qualitative coding application was used.
4. All data and notes were locked and secured throughout the research process as well as will be locked and secured for five years after the study.
5. A letter of cooperation was issued from researcher to participants.
6. A letter of cooperation was issued to each institution for facilities usage for the interviews.

### **Research Validity**

It was important to assure no researcher bias and complete transparency during the interview and data collection process. The researcher restated each of the interview questions during the interview process. This also included providing the interview questions for additional review by the interviewee at the completion of the interview process.

### **Ethical Concerns**

Ethical practices were adhered to throughout this study. The researcher used the appropriate methods and practices. The participant volunteer's ability to perform his or her duties in his or her position was the certification that he or she had the ability to be a part of this study. Any recorded material will be deleted after a period of time of five years.

### **Statement of Positionality**

Having worked in Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area for over 16 years, the researcher has developed friendships with many administrators in the Catholic secondary schools of the Washington Archdiocese. Additionally, the researcher held administrative positions in

which numerous educational strategies were developed, collaborated, and implemented by many of these schools during the 2003 through 2016 period. Having said that, the interviews and research conducted by this researcher were not influenced by previous employment and the data provided was based on the information provided by the volunteer interviewees.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the methodology used to answer the overarching research question and the research sub questions in this study. In this chapter, the researcher presented the interview questions, data collection process, participant selection process, theoretical idea, and what data was collected and used to answer the research questions.

This qualitative case study provided important answers to Catholic secondary enrollment trends and specifically, how to perform the research necessary to identify those enrollment management practices that were successful.

Each chapter illustrates different pieces of the research puzzle for this study. Chapter I identified the purpose of the study, Chapter II discussed the literature on Catholic schools and the ways in which Catholic schools have attempted to address the downward enrollment trends, and Chapter III provided the plan and methodology in which this study took place. In the chapters to follow, the researcher presents the research findings and how they answer the research questions as well as summarizes these findings and provides suggestions for future studies in Catholic secondary school enrollment management.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

This chapter reports the results and analysis of a qualitative case study conducted to answer the research questions introduced in Chapter I. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to determine how secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area sustained enrollment (i.e., change in admissions approach, school rebranding, new marketing initiatives, changes in school enrollment management) from 2003-2016 and avoided closing, merging, or consolidating.

This chapter is systematically organized so the reader will have a greater understanding of the findings in the study as well as the analytical and discovery process of the data. Chapter IV begins with the introduction of the research questions, followed by the method and analysis of data. Next, the researcher explains the identification of the four themes and clarifies the link between the research questions and these four themes. Finally, the researcher discusses the analysis of the subgroups and concludes with a chapter summary.

While conducting this study, it is important to note that several steps were taken to ensure accuracy in transcribing the data. The researcher used the transcript data from the interviews to generate categories, themes, and recurring patterns in the data. The researcher used pattern coding to extract topics and themes from both the interviews and the documents collected. From these initial results, the researcher focused on coded words and phrases that supported stronger themes from the respondents' answers. From these coded words and phrases emerged the findings in this study and the four main themes that answer the research questions.

#### **Overview of the Research Questions**

The research questions in this qualitative study were designed to answer the overarching question of enrollment management and how enrollment management was used by Catholic

secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area to sustain their enrollment and not result in closings or mergers. Each sub question contained different components of enrollment management as defined by Christine Baker (Baker, 2012). Christine Baker is referenced in this study because of her research in enrollment management that she defines as an “institutional response” to sustaining student enrollment. In Baker’s research, she states, “enrollment management has four specific criteria that incorporate each of the following studies: admissions management, retention, research, and marketing” (Baker, 2012). According to Baker, the more invested a school is in expanding these areas the more invested an institution is in the enrollment management process (Baker, 2012). The research questions in the study extended Baker’s definition of enrollment management by specifically defining what the research schools executed in policy or changed to sustain their enrollment.

### **Research Questions**

How did Washington, D.C.’s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy trends of closings and mergers from 2003 to 2016 that were visible at the national level?

#### **Sub-Questions**

- 1. To what extent and in what ways did Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area employ enrollment management strategies to sustain themselves from 2003 through 2016?*
  - a. How was admission management used in the overall enrollment management strategy of the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools?
  - b. What retention strategies did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area subgroup use?

- c. How did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area use research to help in their enrollment management, and what kind of research did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area conduct?
  - d. What kind of marketing strategies were employed by the Catholic secondary schools in Washington, D.C. during 2003 through 2016, and how was branding used in marketing strategies?
2. *From a participant's perspective, what enrollment management or other factors appear to contribute to school sustainability (maintaining corporate identity and staying open)?*

### **Sample**

The researcher interviewed 13 administrators from six secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The interviewees included three presidents, three principals, four directors of admissions, two individuals serving as both director of admissions and enrollment manager, and one director of enrollment. Each respondent answered 16 interview questions, and each respondent's school provided documents that helped answer the research questions.

Table 9 lists the schools that participated in the study by student body type and enrollment trend from 2003–2016.



Table 9  
*Student Body and School Enrollment Types*

School	Student body of the school	Enrollment Increase	Enrollment Decrease	Enrollment remained the Same
S-001	Coed		X	
S-003	Single sex		X	
S-002	Single sex			X
S-004	Single sex	X		
S-005	Single sex	X		
S-006	Coed	X		

The schools in the research study consisted of three schools that had increased enrollment, two schools that had decreased enrollment and one with enrollment that remained the same from 2003–2016. The schools with increased enrollment consisted of one coed school and two single sex schools. The school with enrollment that remained the same was also a single sex school and the two schools with decreased enrollment were one coed and one single sex school.

### **Interview Data Collection**

The administrators interviewed in this study were asked 16 questions that aligned with the research questions. The researcher created verbatim transcripts from the interviews. In addition to the interviews, each school provided documents relating to admissions, branding, and school mission that were categorized, then analyzed to identify the different practices schools enlisted from 2003–2016 to sustain school enrollment.

### **Document Collection**

In addition to the data collected and analyzed from the interviews with administrators from each school, the researcher collected documents from each of the years 2003, 2009, and 2016. These specific years were chosen because they represented the best sampling of the

progression of changes the research schools implemented. During the interviews with the administrators, each administrator discussed how different strategies led to the initiatives introduced by the schools that reflected the changes made to the documents the school promoted.

Table 10 lists the documents that were collected and which schools provided those documents.

Table 10  
*Document Collection*

<b><u>Document Name</u></b>	<b>Schools who provided the documents</b>	<b>Analyzed</b>
<b>Parent Survey</b>	S-001, S-002, S-006	Compare results of how the parents feel about the school programs and student success
<b>Admission Application</b>	S-001, S-002, S-003, S-004, S-005, S-006	Looked at the new additions or deletions of the application since 2003
<b>High School Placement Scores</b>	S-001	Tracking scores from each year
<b>Financial Aid Record</b>	No documents provided	No documents provided
<b>Admissions Data</b>	S-001, S-002, S-003, S-004, S-005, S-006	Tracked the trends in admissions numbers from 2003
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	S-004	Identify the programs initiated through the administration
<b><u>Document Name</u></b>	<b>Schools who provided the documents</b>	<b>Analyzed</b>
<b>Mission Statement</b>	S-001, S-002, S-003, S-004, S-005, S-006	Reviewed and labeled the changes implemented through marketing
<b>Admissions Plan Notes</b>	No documents provided	No analysis performed
<b>Board Enrollment Plan</b>	S-003	Review the strategies presented by the board to help enrollment
<b>School Marketing Initiative Notes</b>	No documents provided	No analysis performed
<b>Open House Information</b>	S-001, S-002, S-003, S-004, S-005, S-006	Tracked the changes in marketing and branding from 2003
<b>Shadow Visit Surveys</b>	S-001, S-004, S-006	Documented the changes in the program in the schools from 2003

Though many documents were collected, there were only four that every school introduced into data for the researcher. These were the admission applications, admissions data,

mission statement, and open house information. The reader will note no documents were provided by any school that involved financial aid records, admissions notes, and school marketing notes. School administrators A-01 and A-05 indicated a reluctance to provide the documents requested out of concerns to share private information of their families (finance, demographics) as well as appropriate record keeping from 2003. This concern was shared among many of the administrators during the interview. Despite collecting a limited number of the requested physical documents for this study, the researcher found many of the administrators were willing to discuss different components of the documents and how the progression of changes schools took in their enrollment management influenced changes to many of the documents the researcher requested.

### **Data Analysis for Documents**

The documents collected from each school were grouped into categories. The documents were used to support and represent change that occurred at the schools from 2003. Many schools went through new initiatives from 2003 that were reflective in their documents. Each school in the study had some type of change consistent with the other research schools that involved their mission statement, admissions application, admissions data, and open house information. The researcher analyzed the data collected and changes in the documents were noted. The changes were then cross-referenced to the interview answers from the administrators. This allowed the researcher to identify and define how the documents changed over time and how they were reflective of the changes discussed in the interviews by each school.

### **Data Analysis from Interviews**

The transcripts from each interview were reviewed with the interviewee and then coded manually for emerging and common themes. After this initial coding, the transcripts were

uploaded into the computer software Atlas.ti for further coding. The second coding performed using the software was compared to the initial manual coding conducted by the researcher. Coding the interviews twice ensured consistency in the themes derived from the interviewees. To answer the research questions and the supporting research sub-questions, the researcher used the transposed data from the interviews to develop common themes between the representative schools and their corresponding administrators chosen for the study. It is important to note that the themes and data found by the researcher from the interview questions provided answers that supported the overall understanding of what enrollment management is and how changes in enrollment management related to the sustainability of secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area from 2003–2016.

## **Findings**

The findings in this research study answered the overarching research question: *How did Washington, D.C.'s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy trends of closings and mergers from 2003 to 2016 that were visible at the national level?*

The coding resulted in the emergence of four themes and several sub themes. The themes listed in order of relevance below are the building blocks the schools used in this research study to signify the vision and implementation of policy and procedural changes in each school's enrollment management.

## **Four Themes**

Below are the four main themes that consistently surfaced from the coded data. These themes are also visible in the documents collected (Table 10) as they reflect the changes implemented from the strategies launched during the 2003–2016 time period.

### **1. Promoting community involvement**

- Schools open their buildings to the public for use
- Schools host open house events open to the public
- Schools host shadow visit programs for prospective students

## 2. Organizing a team development approach

- Schools use professional development to teach faculty and staff about the admissions process
- Admissions department and administration design events for the school community to take ownership of the school
- School administrators take surveys of the faculty and staff to enhance stakeholder relationship

## 3. Seeking professional feedback/advice

- Schools paid for outside consulting firm to assess the school marketability
- The consulting firm used internal team development surveys provided to faculty, staff, alumni, and parents to provide feedback in the development of new vision statements
- The school administration used a firm to analyze different ways to market the school
- The administrative team, with the help of a consulting firm, identified new approaches to school branding and identity
- A consulting firm was used to recommend new admissions approaches and school mission statements

## 4. Increased focus on public relations

- Schools used social media to increase information about the school to the public

- Schools used specific targeted mailers to certain demographic and geographic areas
- Flyers, brochures about the school, mission statement delivered to parishes and local feeder schools

The findings and themes linked to this study represented the operational changes schools undertook in their enrollment management strategies and demonstrated the various enrollment practices that encompassed each school's sustainability process. The themes answered the research questions and sub questions in this study.

*1. To what extent and in what ways did Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area employ enrollment management strategies to sustain themselves from 2003 through 2016?*

The four main themes in this research study explained below, not only answered the first research question and subsequent sub questions but demonstrated the relationship of the conceptual idea introduced in this study that defines enrollment management as an “institutional response” to maintaining the “right student body” for a school's functioning capacity (Baker, 2012). According to Baker (2012), there are four areas necessary for enrollment management to function properly. These are admissions management, retention, research, and marketing (Baker, 2012). The research questions outlined each process and the findings in this study corresponded with the conceptual ideas of Baker and the research questions.

Finding 1:

Corresponding to the research question:

*a. How was admission management used in the overall enrollment management strategy of the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools?*

The theme of *promoting community involvement* emerged as the most coded category in this study. Each administrator interviewed indicated at least one type of initiative that involved reaching out to the school community and the surrounding community to invite prospective students and families onto their campus. All the school administrators indicated that a new focus had been established that highlights different features of the schools. For example, the administrators from S-003, S-004, and S-005 indicated that they planned to change who they were going to target for enrollment and how they were going to specifically pursue students to apply to their schools. School administrators from S-001 identified the need to feature their art program, and administrators from S-002 advertised their literature and athletic programs. A-03 stated, “We hold a large value in our literature program and our athletic program is recognized nationally, these programs sell the school for us” (S-002: A-03). Both administrators, A-12 and A-13 from S-006 said, “They advertise, market, and sell their athletic programs and academic program extensively because they are much stronger than the other school choices in the area” (S-006: A-12, A-13). During the interview, A-13 further stated, “Our school’s Catholic identity is the only Catholic secondary school choice in the area, thus, our market is very concentrated; we open our schools to the community and they see and learn what we have to offer” (S-006: A-13).

Each school in the research study hosted events at their schools that were marketed to the community that consisted of open houses, shadow visits by prospective students, and open school events such as athletics, art shows, and concerts. This sub theme focused on events that were used to increase their admissions application interest base, which ultimately increased their admission applications resulting in an increase in total school admissions. The administrators believed opening their schools to the community was the best way to get feedback about the

school, globally introduce what the school had to offer, and immediately impact the greatest number of families at one time. A-01 commented, “There is a lot of competition in our area; we hold open houses and open our doors to the community to get families used to coming here and see what we have in our school to help their children in their education. This eventually results in families sending their children to our school” (S-001: A-01). In this first theme, building community and creating a way for the community to get involved in the school results in immediate feedback from schools that strategically advertise and market these community events. “We read through all our surveys from prospective families and students after all of our community events” (S-003: A-04). “It appears this practice of issuing surveys to families and students, then analyzing them, provides important information to assist in our admissions planning process as well as provides information on better ways to involve the community” (S-001; S-006). Open house events, athletics, and arts shows are “real important events we open to the community” (S-001: A-01). The only way to get our community to see what our schools have to offer is “invite them on campus” (A-05) and allow them to “use our facilities” (A-08).

#### Finding 2:

Corresponding to the research question:

*b. What retention strategies did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area subgroup use?*

The next theme, *organizing a team development approach*, emerged during the coding and analysis process in two different ways. The first was school administrators saw a need for enhancing the admissions involvement of faculty and staff in their schools. “At our back-to-school faculty meeting, we (director of admission, director of enrollment) speak to the entire faculty about the admission plan for the year and how they will play a role in that recruitment



process” (S-004: A-07, A-08). Each school in the research study had at least one administrator respond in their interview that their school adopted professional development programs to train faculty and staff how to be more engaged with prospective students as well as current students to create a sense of belonging. A-05 stated, “Because we use a ‘lead by committee’ approach, we talk about school wide strategies to all our faculty so they know the relationship to the admissions process” (S-003: A-05). At school S-002, A-03 mentioned how, “At faculty meetings we discuss the process that is needed by everyone in the school to help students feel welcomed and want to attend our school” (S-002: A-05). “Developing a strategy faculty wide is key when defining what a school has to offer prospective to families; all we do is make sure everyone knows how important it is” (S-005: A10).

The second is utilizing a team approach, in which all the administrators in the research study felt that to be successful they had to promote school community ownership. “We use student ambassadors to help talk about the school” (S-005: A-09). Many schools use prospective student days as a way to feature their school. During these days, schools use current students to show them around during their visit. “Our prospective students can attend class all day while they shadow a current student through his schedule. This gives the prospective student a better understanding of our school and it allows for our students to show firsthand how great our school is” (S-002: A-04). “The idea of ownership is contagious among students who attend our school; they enjoy the school and because they feel it is their school, they don’t hesitate to share their experience with others” (S-005: A-09). The concept of ownership creates a large stakeholder base according to some administrators (A-09, A-12). Their belief is students would remain in the school if they felt more connected to the school community and therefore results in better student attrition rates. “It takes an entire school community to build ownership. There are many

moving parts every day of the school year and they all have to believe in the product. When that happens ownership happens and the community stakeholders become a team with administration and faculty” (S-004: A-08).

Finding 3:

Corresponding to the research question:

*c. How did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area use research to help in their enrollment management, and what kind of research did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area conduct?*

*d. What kind of marketing strategies were employed by the Catholic secondary schools in Washington, D.C. during 2003 through 2016, and how was branding used in marketing strategies?*

The third theme that emerged in this study was *seeking professional feedback/advice*. Three concepts or sub themes were fleshed out in this main theme. The first was schools used surveys and parent feedback to explain new advancement in school programs. Schools analyzed the surveys and created informational pipelines from prospective and current families to school administration. The second sub theme was the development of review committees formed by administration that included parents, alumni, students, and faculty as informational groups to provide feedback about the school. These committees shared views, ideas, and discussed strategies for the school to provide different perspectives to administration. The last concept was the use of a consulting firm. Two schools, S-004 and S-005, mentioned using a “consulting firm” (S-004: A-08; S-005: A-10) to assist in their evaluation process. School administrators used consulting firms to share ideas and gain feedback on new strategies for the school. “The best way for us to make sure we are making the right adjustments is to use an external company,

usually a consulting firm, to bounce ideas off of and help sift through material we collected over the year to design new, best enrollment practices” (S-006: A-13). A-12 from S-006 listed the need for a consulting firm because the school “needs to generate a new direction and broaden its internal and external connections to the community.” This theme of connection was also mentioned by A-07, A-09, and A-11. Each administrator expressed how important it was to connect with the community, change direction, and create a new direction. In S-003, both A-05 and A-06 stated that the board rather than a consulting firm proposed the new direction plan and created a marketing plan for the school. In S-003’s board plan, the school shifted to a smaller market, decreasing the overall enrollment. According to A-05, the board felt that the best way to market the school was to advertise smaller class sizes and more individual attention. A-01 from school S-001 designed and implemented the marketing plan with the administrative team. The respondents in this study shared how the help of a consulting firm with the new marketing plans was necessary because of the “amount of competition for students” (A-001, A-004, A-007, A-009) and the change in admissions standards targeting the same students. Among the consulting firm suggestions for the schools in this study was changing the mission statements, adapting new admissions approaches, and revitalizing the schools identity.

#### Finding 4:

Corresponding to the research question:

*2. From a participant’s perspective, what enrollment management or other factors appear to contribute to school sustainability (maintaining corporate identity and staying open)?*

The final theme, *increased focus on public relations*, was a recurring finding in this research study. Every administrator interviewed indicated their school invested in some type of modification of their public relations program. Although the strategies were slightly different

between schools, all administrators in this study stated the increase in use of social media from 2003 and the use of social media as a mass public relations tool expanded community wide communication. A-07 and A-08 from S-004 stated, “Our school acquired a new technology push from 2003; our school saw immediate positive results from using social media as a public relations marketing tool. In our first major post about hosting an open house event on our website around 2008, we almost doubled previous years and the following years attendance” (S-004: A07, A08). In this theme, administrators from the research schools began to use social media platforms as a quick, inexpensive way to advertise and share information en masse to the school community and community at large. It was their feeling that within the 2003 to 2009 time frame, social media usage became a very “necessary new platform” (A-13). Schools S-002 and S-006 launched what their administrators called an “extensive” social media campaign to “continue to build our public relations” (S-002: A-03, A-04; S-006: A-12, A-13). In addition to the increased use of social media, schools followed up social media announcements with specific targeted marketing mailers to the communities in which they were trying to attract new students. A few administrators said they began using their websites extensively as the “main informational and public relations source” (A-02, A-12). Administrator A-01 said, “They revisited their website, modified it so it became user friendly and created rolling banners and links on the main page” (S-001: A-01). This practice enhanced the mass marketing abilities for the schools and increased their public relations information system. “The feedback we received from parents at our events specifically spoke to the easy accessibility of information we were sharing to the community; it was an instant success” (S-005: A-11). Schools began to use this tactic of creating a social media post about hosting a school event such as an open house, then as a follow up, schools would mail event flyers, brochures, mission statements, and other advertising materials

to promote their school. According to school administrators interviewed (A-01, A-13), this process proved effective based on the feedback from family surveys they received and resulted in an increase in attendance at different events. “In addition to the increased use of social media as a public relations tool, we would post and list the schools we partner with and advertise their events. We would also let the community know when, where, and what partner schools we were visiting just in case they wanted to attend” (S-002: A-04). Several schools noted during the interview that they often tried to increase their public relationships by creating “links between community partners” (A-01, A-05, A-07) on their web page. Similarly, schools S-001, S-003, and S-004 had developed a relationship with local schools and community organizations. It was their plan to not only increase public relations by opening their schools to the public and sharing events but also invite community organizations to use their website as a means of advertising. According to A-01 and A-11 this proved effective initially to “build bridges between the school and the public” (A-11).

### **Analysis of Schools Whose Enrollment Increased Versus Other Subgroups**

In this research study, three schools had their enrollment increase during the 2003–2016 time period. Of these schools, two were single-sex and one was coed. Each of the schools geographical locations varied and there were no significant differences in demographics. There was also one single-sex school whose enrollment remained the same during the 2003–2016 time period. This school, S-002, had similar demographics as the schools whose enrollment increased. Two schools, one coed and one single-sex, with similar demographics and geographical details as other schools in the study, had an enrollment decrease from 2003–2016. This study illustrates that regardless of geographic locations and/or demographics, it was the schools that took advantage of the themes of community involvement, organizing a team

approach, seeking professional feedback/advice, and increased focus on public relations that saw an increase in student enrollment.

The first theme, community involvement, a significant difference was found in the viewpoint of why schools were reaching out to the community. While all the schools in the study agreed that community involvement was important, the strategy behind this varied among them. For example, administrators from S-003 stated, “We have a small community in an area where people are looking for safe and viable opportunities for their children; everything we do has to be community centered” (S-003: A-05, A-06). In their response, the administrators spoke about the need for “young women in the surrounding area to have a positive safe school option despite low numbers of Catholic students in the community” (S-003: A-05, A-06). In this first theme, school S-003’s concerns were involving the community but mainly to market safe school options and better educational opportunities. Similar to S-003 and a coed school, administrator A-01 also stated the need to market a safer school option for students in the area. In the interview, A-01 noted, “Our community has to be involved for our school to survive; in an area where competition is high for students and safe/good public school options are low, we have to work together with the community so they know we are the school they should send their children” (S-001: A-01). However, despite the message of safety, the enrollment for these schools did not increase.

In contrast, the single-sex or coed schools whose enrollment increased or remained the same used the first theme as an opportunity to share, grow, and build with the community. These schools responded similarly with, “We involve the community because that is the right thing to do” (S-002: A-03; S-004: A-07, A-08; S-005: A-10). Administrators A-07 and A-08 spoke about providing important opportunities for “young women to thrive” and “how we do that is to open

our doors to the community and show them what we offer and how we empower young women” (S-004: A-07, A-08). School S-002, a single-sex school whose enrollment remained the same, states, “We are in an area that requires us to be inclusive of the community, we are known by our tradition, and history, but we draw students from many different geographical locations. It is important for the community to know our school and our location and how that fits into our mission” (S-002: A-04). From the analysis of the first theme, the subset of schools whose enrollment increased or remained the same held similar beliefs as to why they included the community. They see it as a way to grow, that “community involvement fulfilled part of the schools mission and vision” (S-006: A-12). Rather than using community involvement as a means of survival for enrollment, the schools whose enrollment increased or remained the same used it as a community building point. A-09 found “reaching out to the community built relationships in the neighborhood which we saw as key in building the school population” (S-005: A-09). The schools whose enrollment decreased instead saw this as an opportunity to say “our schools are a better opportunity” and “safer” than other schools (S-003: A-05, A-06; S-001: A-01, A-02).

The second theme, organizing a team approach, saw differences in practice between schools whose enrollment increased (S-004, S-005, S-006), remained the same (S-002), and decreased (S-001, S-003). S-002 saw a need to include their faculty and staff in the admissions process. For years we were including our faculty in the admissions process. We identified early that we have something great to talk about,” Administrator A-03 noted (S-002: A-03). Similarly, administrators from S-004 and S-005 had incorporated “professional development training to faculty and staff” (S-004: A-07, A-08; S-005: A-09) prior to 2003 and “continued to encourage faculty and staff to have a complete buy-in with the admissions process” (S-006: A-013). While

there was a difference in creating a team approach, schools ahead of the buy-in curve had already begun or had already built in place the importance of involving the school community. These schools were using surveys to track admissions processes, as well as retention and attrition rates. Schools that had a decrease used surveys but not at the same level or creativity as the other subset schools. Administrators from S-001 said, “As far as we can remember, the school used student surveys and exit interviews but did not use this as a specific tracking tool for admissions or enrollment” (S-001: A-01 and A-02).

The third theme, seeking professional feedback/advice, presented findings that signified little differences between each subset. The findings indicated all schools in the study used consulting groups during the 2003-2016 time period. Each school identified the value in using a consulting firm and/or receiving parent/student faculty feedback. Administrator A-0 said, “Using a consulting firm and obtaining feedback from school community sources was necessary in helping the school to create a plan to grow the community” (S-004: A-07). One of the best responses came from A-12 at S-006: “The only way to do things right is to get feedback about the school from multiple sources, it’s the only way to plan” (S-006: A-12). Collectively, the study schools recognized the importance and value of having others share ideas and provide feedback. Families and students shared information that directly reflected the schools’ practices and the consulting firms were used as “advisement and consultation” (S-001: A-01).

The final theme, increased focus on public relations, resulted in very similar responses from all the research schools in that each subset saw an increased use in public relation tools. However, the schools whose enrollment increased from 2003-2016 recognized its importance and had the funding to quickly “mobilize” (S-004: A-07) their website into a “marketing agent” (S-002: A-03). Social media, advertising, and marketing were quickly enhanced by the schools



whose enrollment increased. School S-002, whose enrollment remained the same, used its resources to, “advance our IT department and increase our website capabilities” (S-002: A-03). Schools whose enrollment decreased also understood the importance of increased public relations and developed plans similar to those of other study schools. The difference between the subsets came down to money. Schools that were struggling, those with decreased enrollment, were not prepared to maximize the abilities of their school website for public relations, but did increase the use of target mailers and specific community-wide notices about the school. The administrators from S-003 admitted the school was slow in “utilizing social media influence” but said they recognized, “the need to promote the school to the community and increased their communication with community neighbors with the use of outside advertising signs” (S-003: A-03).

According to the findings, the schools whose enrollment increased or remained the same from 2003-2016 had more effective administrative policies in place in their admission and enrollment process compared to the other subset schools. These schools used marketing and rebranding practices that, in 2003, were new and creative initiatives to promote and increase their school community. Additionally, the schools whose enrollment increased or remained the same had available funding that separated them from the other subset schools. From 2003 to the beginning of 2004, the subset of schools who started to see an increase in enrollment began to initiate school-wide practices designed to increase prospective student interest. These practices involved an increase in multi-media advertising, larger promotion of school functions to the community, and new ways of branding their school. Administrator A-03 from school S-003 stated, “We knew we had something to sell, our product is good, and we expanded our recruitment base” (S-002: A-03).

The findings in this study did not indicate a difference in policy, practices, or procedures among schools that were single-sex or coed. Nor did the findings indicate being a single-sex school or a coed school influence enrollment direction from 2003–2016. Instead, the findings showed the schools that had the enrollment increase or remained the same had an admissions or enrollment management system in place, money available, and were able to reach students with higher socio-economics. School S-004: A-08 explained, “Our administration met and built our new admissions approach to increase our recruitment within the school and also develop procedures to reach a larger base of prospective students outside the school” (S-004: A-08).

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the findings and analysis of the administrative interviews and the document collection in this research study. The purpose of this study was to determine how secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area sustained enrollment (i.e.: change in admissions approach, school rebranding, new marketing initiatives, changes in school enrollment management) from 2003–2016 and avoided closing, merging, or consolidating. This chapter attempted to answer the research questions for this qualitative study.

The analysis of data in this study resulted in the finding of four themes: community involvement, organizing a team approach, consultation advisement and increased public relations. These themes signify how the schools in this study changed their approach to school enrollment management. The systematic changes by the schools encompassed reaching out to the community, thinking outside the box in admissions, and the inhibited approach to building structure in the school community, led to the advancements in each school’s enrollment management process. While this study found there was no ‘all or only’ approach to enrollment management, schools did not hesitate to assemble teams and initiate new structures to maintain

suitability of their school community. Since 2003, the literature in this study explained how many schools merged, consolidated, or closed nationally but in the Washington, D.C. area, this subgroup of secondary Catholic schools were seemingly unaffected. Despite two schools (S-001, S-003) enrollment declines in this study, each school was still able to modify and restructure their school to sustain enrollment at a favorable level that did not result in closing or merging. The three schools whose enrollment increased adjusted their enrollment practices to sustain the high enrollment numbers they had. These schools (S-004, S-005, S-006) consisted of two single-sex and one coed school. The school whose enrollment remained the same (S-002) was also single-sex and utilized the approach ‘if it’s not broken don’t fix it’ (A-003). Though A-004 (S-002) admits in making changes to keep up with other schools in the Washington, D.C. area, the administrator believed the historical values of their school assisted in their sustainability. Overall, each school adopted some type of change from 2003–2016 that resulted in sustainability of their school and change in their enrollment management process.

Conceptually, schools had to make adjustments from 2003–2016 and each school had to take on some type of “institutional response” (Baker, 2012) in their enrollment. The adjustments in procedures and programs as explained by Baker (2012) is what defined their enrollment management process and resulted in each school’s sustainability.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion**

The purpose of this research study was to determine what procedures and policies secondary Catholic schools used in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that resulted in sustainable enrollment trends from 2003 through 2016. This research study used qualitative and phenomenological research methodology by analyzing results from documents and interviews.

This study adds to the current body of research on enrollment management by conceptualizing Catholic secondary school administrative policies, practices, and procedures used to maintain Catholic secondary school enrollment in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. This study sought to uncover the administrative tools that created sustainable schools that did not merge or close from 2003–2016.

Prior research on enrollment management began with Jack McGuire, Dean of Admissions at Boston College (Hill, 2008). From his research and findings, McGuire created the study and practice of enrollment management that led to the development of the enrollment manager as an independent position and an integral part of the entire admissions process to create school sustainability (Hill, 2008). McGuire proposed the use of research, surveys, and data that formulated the practice of enrollment management (Hill, 2008). Two other researchers, Dr. Lauren Friedman (2015) and Dr. Monique Snowden (2010), created research and findings that piggy-backed those of McGuire and furthered the discussion that enrollment management concentrated on relationship building, decision making, and leadership roles as important pieces of the enrollment management process. The final chapter presents the findings aligned with the research questions, discusses recommendations for Catholic secondary schools, offers suggestions for future research, and summarizes final thoughts for this study.

## **Restatement of the Problem**

The research in this study identified how most of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area schools, 16 out of 19, maintained or increased their enrollment, thus, beating the national trend of enrollment issues from 2003 through 2016. In the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, 19 Catholic secondary schools did not close during the reduction of Catholic school enrollment since the 1990s. The major problem was how the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools as a whole defied the national trend and how they accounted for the variable enrollment experiences among the 19 Washington, D.C. metropolitan area Catholic secondary schools.

## **Research Questions**

How did Washington, D.C.'s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy trends of closings and mergers from 2003 to 2016 that were visible at the national level?

### **Sub-Questions**

1. To what extent and in what ways did Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area employ enrollment management strategies to sustain themselves from 2003 through 2016?
  - a. How was admission management used in the overall enrollment management strategy of the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools?
  - b. What retention strategies did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area subgroup use?
  - c. How did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area use research to help in their enrollment management, and what kind of research did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area conduct?
  - d. What kind of marketing strategies were employed by the Catholic secondary schools in

Washington, D.C. during 2003 through 2016, and how was branding used in marketing strategies?

2. From a participant's perspective, what enrollment management or other factors appear to contribute to school sustainability (maintaining corporate identity and staying open)?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to determine what procedures and policies secondary Catholic schools used in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that resulted in sustainable enrollment trends from 2003 through 2016.

This study discussed and addressed sustainable Catholic secondary education and enrollment management policies that influenced secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. According to the National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA, 2012), Catholic school enrollment nationally has dropped tremendously since the 1960s. However, according to the data from the NCEA, these low enrollment trends, about a 14 percent drop, extended to the Washington, D.C. area but reached sustaining levels from the 2003 through 2016 period. Results from this research discussed the enrollment management process and practices that overcame the national trend.

### **Review of Methodology**

The research methodology conducted was a qualitative case study using a triangulation of data sources. A qualitative method was used in this research that gathered the answers to the research questions by using the perceptions, practices, and feelings of leadership professionals to answer questions about the enrollment management and practices of the research subgroup of secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. The research methodology in this study collected different data sources and connected the main ideas to give the researcher a clear idea

of what happened from 2003 through 2016 in the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools.

The researcher interviewed 13 administrators from six different schools in the Washington, D.C. area. Three schools were chosen that saw an enrollment increase, two schools that saw an enrollment decrease and one school whose enrollment remained the same from 2003–2016. From the interview transcripts, the researcher analyzed the data and developed findings that were the themes to answering the research questions.

### **Limitations**

This study outlined the enrollment management practices by administrators and Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. area. This study had several limitations, the first being only choosing 6 of 19 possible research schools as a subgroup. Next was the lack of provided physical documents by the research schools from the 2003–2016 time period. Additionally, there needed to be more research into the division of single-sex and coed schools and how they differ procedurally.

The main construct of this paper evolved around enrollment management and what schools did professionally in enrollment management to sustain their Catholic secondary schools. However, in discussing and researching only enrollment management as a causation to a Catholic secondary school's sustainability, other limitations surfaced in this study because the researcher only looked at enrollment management aspect of sustainability. Schools invest in managing enrollment through many avenues, but when researching exclusively enrollment management as a tool for sustainability, the research showed other venues for which a school can seek sustainability. As a result, the research in this paper concentrated on enrollment management as one factor to school sustainability, yet other factors that produce school sustainability should be researched.

Additionally, the research in the paper provided data that supported procedures and policies Catholic secondary schools took to help sustain enrollment. The findings were based on data produced, but in some instances, respondents also discussed their perception of what worked for enrollment management and ultimately school sustainability.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

In this section, the researcher presented the findings, the four themes and how these four themes answered the research questions of enrollment management. The overarching research question drove the study to further clarify what practices, policies, and procedures Catholic secondary schools took to sustain enrollment.

### **Research Question**

How did Washington, D.C.'s Catholic secondary schools manage to defy trends of closings and mergers from 2003 to 2016 that were visible at the national level?

Answers to the overarching research question in this study derived from the findings and the four themes that emerged from the analysis of data. According to the analysis, Washington, D.C. secondary Catholic schools defied the national trend of closing or mergers by: 1. promoting community involvement; 2. organizing a team development approach; 3. seeking professional feedback/advice; and 4. increased focus on public relations. Each theme answered a corresponding research sub question. The following are the conclusions for each research question.

### **Conclusion and Themes**

*1. To what extent and in what ways did Catholic secondary schools in the Washington, D.C. metro area employ enrollment management strategies to sustain themselves from 2003 through 2016?*



The first research question refers to enrollment management and the strategies applied by Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools. Schools in the study used different approaches to maintain enrollment. Throughout this study, schools identified the need to adjust their enrollment practices by incorporating numerous strategies. Similar to the Maguire's conceptual idea of enrollment management, schools used survey data to define trends in admissions, thus, create an understanding of what they needed to do to evolve their enrollment numbers.

### **Theme: Promoting Community Involvement**

a. How was admission management used in the overall enrollment management strategy of the Washington, D.C. Catholic secondary schools?

In the first research sub question, there was a correlation to admission management and enrollment. The strategies employed by the school involved how they promoted their school to the community. In the first theme, promoting community involvement, schools not only marketed to their school community but also to the surrounding communities. The goal of the schools was to be more socially active with the community promoting events, open houses, and facility usage. The administrators felt doing this would encourage families locally come to the school. Once at the school, families would see what the school offered and how that would benefit their children. Schools also believed issuing surveys to parents who, visit gaining feedback from these families and current families, they would be able to draw conclusions and develop strategies in their enrollment approach. In the research schools in the study confirmed, the more they reached out to the community and listened to what they were seeking in education, the more they were able to make the adjustments necessary to sustain enrollment.

### **Theme: Organizing a Team Development Approach**

b. What retention strategies did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C.

area subgroup use?

The schools in the research study noticed and identified the need to have a full community buy-in in the admissions process. School administrators developed strategies that had students take active roles in the community when students visited the schools. These students also provided feedback to administration about the programs and activities they enjoyed at the school. It was believed having students take ownership of their school increased the likelihood prospective students would want to come. It was believed that if parents who were involved in the admission process, at least were asked for feedback about the school and their experiences in the admissions process, it would help the enrollment process.

Schools in the study utilized professional development and faculty meetings to build a larger stakeholder base. According to the research, much of the training was about the admissions process and how important it was that each individual in the school understood what it involved to recruit students and sell the school. Most of the administrators saw the importance in full community relationships to the admissions process. The development of the team approach expanded school vision and how to retain students.

**Theme: Seeking Professional Feedback/Advice**

c. How did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area use research to help in their enrollment management, and what kind of research did the secondary Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area conduct?

d. What kind of marketing strategies were employed by the Catholic secondary schools in Washington, D.C. during 2003 through 2016, and how was branding used in marketing strategies?

Consulting firms were used by the schools in the research study. The objective of the

administrators was to share ideas with the firm and seek guidance on the strategies they wanted to employ. Schools used the consulting firms through the 2003–2016 period. Many schools used the firm to reshape the mission statement and figure out a new way to brand the school. Schools also requested feedback from parents, alumni, students, and faculty. Like the consulting firm, these groups provided feedback about practices that work. Unlike the consulting firm, these groups experienced the school at one level or another and provide direct feedback. Schools used the different committee feedback to build, increase or dissolve school programs. They also learned what types of school events were popular and better ways to offer more opportunities to prospective students.

**Theme: Increase Focus on Public Relations**

*2. From a participant's perspective, what enrollment management or other factors appear to contribute to school sustainability (maintaining corporate identity and staying open)?*

School administrators discussed the need to publicly reach out to the community to sell the school programs. Around and shortly after 2003, schools began to use social media as a public relations tool. The increase in community relations was a result of the increase and advancement in social media tools. As a result, website usage increased and people began to feel more connected. Administrators found it easier to advertise to the community as well as allow community partners to advertise through the school website. Schools felt public relations was about creating partnerships with everyone in the community. Building relationships proved to be advantageous for schools when advancing their enrollment. Schools saw an increase in attendance at open houses, school events, and in facility sharing. Building community public relations was an important building block in the community and a tool that seemed easily extended among the research schools.

## **Research Questions and Enrollment Management**

Enrollment management, as defined by Baker (2012), incorporates many aspects of admissions practices to include admission management, retention, research, and marketing. The multiple layers of admissions come together to become the enrollment management process (Baker, 2012). Conceptually, enrollment management is the study and use of multiple processes to follow a school's enrollment trend. The research questions and findings in this study indicated how enrollment management was used by the research schools to sustain their enrollment. Each research question investigated an aspect of enrollment management. The data, findings, and themes provided the different layers of enrollment management and how they were performed to create sustainable schools from 2003 through 2016. The schools in this study went through a transformation in their admissions process, ultimately changing admission practices to increase their enrollment. Schools reached out to different committees and groups to expand their retention of students and utilized new marketing and research practices, which are all components of enrollment management.

## **Recommendation for Policy**

This study examined administrative leadership and how different schools enlisted different enrollment management practices to sustain their school enrollment. This study's findings demonstrated the different models of success by the schools to sustain enrollment and avoid closing or merging from 2003 through 2016. The administrators of these schools, regardless of whether their enrollment increased, decreased, or remained the same, managed to defy the national trends of secondary Catholic schools.

## **Recommendation for Catholic Secondary Schools**

1. Secondary Catholic schools should develop internal procedures that encompass school

wide community involvement.

2. Administrators from all Catholic secondary schools need professional development training focused on school strategic planning and admissions policies and practices.

3. Faculty and staff should engage in professional development that discusses ways to build inclusivity and community building exercises.

4. All schools should provide their faculty, staff, parents, and students handbooks that discuss all aspects of the school community.

5. Administrators of schools should review school mission statements, branding, and marketing strategies that reach new demographics and geographic areas of prospective students.

### **Recommendations for Practitioners**

1. Leadership must schedule workshops at the beginning of the year faculty meetings. These workshops, in part, need to address a plan, strategy or theme for the year. This will help the faculty understand expectations.

2. Throughout the year, leadership, with the assistance of the directors of admissions, need to follow up with faculty to review statistics of current applications and keep faculty informed about changing admission practices.

3. Create a director of enrollment position that works with the director of admissions. This director of enrollment position will track enrollment trends and recommend new recruitment strategies for the admissions department. This position will develop a plan to retain students, create an internal student review system, and design exit interviews as well as alumni surveys to track post-graduation feedback.

4. Leadership should issue school climate surveys to make sure everyone is sharing one common vision throughout the year.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

Several limitations surfaced during the study that can be used to further the research. There were only six schools out of a possible 19 that could have been used. A researcher should increase school participation that covers a greater geographical and demographical area. This is instrumental in increasing data results. In this study, there was also a limited number of single-sex and coed schools used for research. Future researchers could form different subgroups that would be independently studied among those specific groups. That would mean investigating the enrollment practices only associated with all male or female schools. In researching only single-sex schools, comparisons can be made only in the differences in procedures single-sex schools use for enrollment. Similarly, only researching coed schools would produce comparison results between the coed schools and how each coed school used enrollment management to sustain their schools. It would also be prudent to a researcher to create subgroups that reflect only the increase or decrease in enrollment trends. It is possible, but not studied yet, that schools who only had an increase or only had a decrease in enrollment performed differently in their admissions and enrollment practices. The following suggestions for future research is based on the research findings from this study. Research in this study focused on enrollment management practices and what practices were needed to sustain secondary Catholic schools. Below are additional suggestions to further research in this study:

1. Investigate other practices of school sustainably.
2. Investigate the influences on geographical locations of Catholic schools.
3. Further research school choice and enrollment management.
4. Research a school's new admissions process and track the progress of that new process on schools that have unstable enrollment trends.

5. Study the effects of the enrollment manager position on an existing admissions process.
6. Discuss the differences in demographic and geographic influences on enrollment.
7. Research suburban versus rural enrollment trends.
8. Research how the school sustainability is influenced by being an independent secondary Catholic school and an archdiocesan school.
9. Investigate high socioeconomic community enrollments and influences on school sustainability.
10. Replicate this study but investigate further, single-sex versus coed secondary Catholic school influence on student enrollment and sustainability.

## **Conclusion**

Enrollment management is an important factor to sustaining Catholic secondary schools. Prior research, which was explained in Chapter II, suggested the key to sustainable Catholic schools is through structural changes. In the late 1990s Catholic secondary schools implemented the president/principal model. Leaders in the Catholic community felt this model was the best way to sustain Catholic schools (*The Journal on Catholic Education*, 2013). Catholic leaders suggested the split leadership role allowed concentrated efforts in two key areas to unfold, thus creating opportunities for each leader to build the structure they needed to grow a school. It was felt that part of the reason Catholic schools were struggling was the leadership role had become too great and attention needed to be spread between various educational needs. Schools saw each role as a different link to school sustainability.

The next theory Catholic school officials felt was a key to sustaining Catholic schools was downsizing the schools. With the declining enrollment, loss of free labor with clergy, it was

felt the next option to sustain Catholic schools was through structural changes (Wisniewski, 2013). This meant consolidating and merging different schools into one school model. With struggling enrollment and a decrease in available faculty, many school officials felt schools had no option but to make changes (Kramer, 2018; Pena, 2015). During an era of what seemed desperate times, school officials in many areas of the country looked for help in bringing two neighboring schools together (Kramer, 2018). This proved to be a good financial move for parishes but it did not increase or sustain individual school enrollment. Rather, it resulted in a lower number of schools to choose from, increasing competition between all school choices (NCES, 2010).

Finally, leadership felt a change in admissions practices and increasing new student populations was the key to sustaining schools. School officials wanted to create new markets for Catholic schools. It was believed that opening the doors to the Latino community was an answer to school sustainability (Marcus, 2015). Many Catholic leaders saw a need for change in the admissions process to reach these new demographics and with the “fastest rising population in America,” the “Latino community is the answer for Catholic schools” (Chesnut, 2018). While this new outlook for admissions and enrollment was good in theory, there were many hurdles schools and communities needed to overcome and as a result, schools were not prepared to broaden their admissions approach. Though the Latino population is the largest growing Catholic population, only 2.3 percent are enrolled in Catholic schools (Ospino et al., 2016).

These initiatives are quick-fix solutions, not sustainable long-term policies and procedures. Based upon the research and findings presented in this study, the only way to sustain school enrollment is to invest in enrollment management practices that are designed to enhance each school. The research in this study suggests sustainability, not closing or merging



secondary Catholic schools, is possible through designed strategies by administrators and school officials. Long-term and calculated policies and procedures are the only way to sustain a school enrollment. Changing structure in school leadership, though important for school functionality, was not the answer to the falling enrollment trends. Catholic secondary schools have to look into their admissions process and make the adjustments to maintain the enrollment so the school can operate. Sometimes administrators have unrealistic expectations of what they feel is the appropriate enrollment numbers of a school. As indicated in this study, some schools need to downsize and revisit their operations. Although a rise in enrollment is a good sign for a school, some schools simply need to refine their school operations to create a stronger enrollment base. Schools can thrive at different enrollment numbers; each school has to design the plan that matches their school. All the schools in this study had strong historical values that created a belief system among the school community. As a result, schools understood that making changes at any level was necessary to keep their doors open. Sustainability is not always about avoiding a school closing or merger; as found in this study, sustainability is finding the right formula for what works in a particular school which be obtained through strong enrollment management practices as well as addressing the four criteria of enrollment management: admissions management, retention, research, and marketing (Baker, 2012).

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## Appendix A

### Consent to Interview Participant Form



#### Consent to Interview Participant Form

This qualitative research study will investigate what enrollment management practices were used in the Washington D.C. area from 2003 through 2016 to sustain each Catholic secondary school enrollment numbers. The interview questions in this study are designed to answer the research questions about enrollment management and Catholic school sustainability. Your participation in this study will ultimately help Catholic schools both locally and nationally.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please carefully read through this consent to interview form. If you agree to be interviewed, please sign the bottom and return to me by \_\_\_\_\_.

Please understand that participation in this research study involves a personal interview and is entirely voluntary.

Also, please understand that if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequence.

Also, please note the following:

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview at any time after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research and that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that, in any report of the results of this research, my identity will remain confidential and coding will be used to protect my name and any details of this interview.

I understand that if I inform the researcher that I may be or someone else may be at risk of harm, a report may have to be filed to the relevant authorities.

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.

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, David Gardiner at david.gardiner@student.shu.edu or faculty advisor Dr. Martin Finkelstein, Ph.D., (973) 275-2056. 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 consideration.

Signature of Consent: \_\_\_\_\_

College of Education and Human Services  
Executive Ed.D. Program  
Tel: 973.275.2306 • Fax: 973.275.2484  
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

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## Appendix B

### Approval of Institutional Review Board



May 29, 2019

David Gardiner  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Gardiner,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board office has reviewed and approved as submitted under expedited review your research proposal entitled "Sustainability of Catholic Secondary Schools in the Washington, D.C. Area from 2003 through 2016."

Enclosed for your records is the signed Request for Approval form.

Reflecting the process for federally funded research, there will be no longer be a continuing review. Informed Consent documents and recruitment flyers will no longer be stamped.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Martin Finkelstein

Please review Seton Hall University IRB's Policies and Procedures on website (<http://www.provost.shu.edu/IRB>) for more information. Please note the following requirements:

**Adverse Reactions:** If any untoward incidents or adverse reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to immediately notify in writing the Seton Hall University IRB Director, your sponsor and any federal regulatory institutions which may oversee this research, such as the OHRP or the FDA. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending further review by the IRB.

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, please communicate your request in writing (with revised copies of the protocol and/or informed consent where applicable and the Amendment Form) to the IRB Director. The new procedures cannot be initiated until you receive IRB approval.

Office of Institutional Review Board  
Presidents Hall • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, NJ 07079 • Tel: 973.313.6314 • Fax: 973.275.2361 • [www.shu.edu](http://www.shu.edu)