The Relationship Between Parental Involvement And Religion Academic Achievement Of Students In The Catholic Elementary Schools In The Diocese Of Fall River

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND RELIGION ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University
2005
ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND RELIGION ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

This study investigates the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement in religion. This correlation study utilizes Epstein's (1995) six categories of parental involvement. Student test scores from a diocesan-wide exam are matched to returned questionnaires from parents of the children in the testing program. Students represent 13 schools in grades three, five, and seven.

The research indicates that there is an association between parental involvement and religious academic achievement. Parents' involvement in volunteering, their own level of religiosity, and their attitudes towards religious education are all good predictors of their children's religious academic achievement. Further research should expand the study to include other grade levels and other dioceses.
DEDICATION

To my loving wife Suzanne and wonderful children Alyssa and Alexandra for their patience and understanding the past two years.

To my mother Alida for her continued support and my deceased father Wilfred who I am sure continues to watch over me.

To Dr. Donna Boyle whose support, friendship, and persistence made this all possible.
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And to my many friends who have encouraged me in my efforts to complete this research.
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CHAPTER I
Introduction

... in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life.

-- Pope Paul VI (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965)

The words of Pope Paul VI reiterate the message of Christ "to go out and teach all men." Throughout history it has been a mandate of the Catholic Church to educate men and women about salvation and the Lord. We refer to this as evangelization or spreading the Word of the Lord. As Pio Cardinal Laghi, the President of the Pontifical Oratory of St. Peter (2001) stated, "Catholic education is an expression of this fundamental mission of evangelization entrusted by Jesus Christ to his church..." (p. 4). This directive is accomplished in various venues both formal and informal. The primary formal curricula exist in religious education programs in various church parishes and within Catholic schools. The focus of this study will be on Catholic schools.

Catholic religious education programs, and in particular Catholic schools, are a part of American history. One of the pioneers in establishing Catholic schools in
America was Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton who formed the Sisters of Charity in 1809. From the beginning "The Sisters of Charity … were most involved in helping to establish the parishial school system in the United States" (LoPresti, 2003). As we look at this time in American history we find, “The initial purpose of the Catholic schools was to provide education untainted with the prevailing Protestant mind-set and to protect the fragile cultural and religious heritage brought to America by immigrants from a number of heavily Catholic countries in Europe” (Hill & Celio, 2000, p. 240). Emanating from this initial purpose, many changes in Catholic education have emerged. However, more drastic changes have occurred since the Second Vatican Council was held in Rome during the mid 60s.

During the 70s through the 90s there has been a constant decrease in the number of men and women entering religious orders in the United States. This phenomenon has resulted in a significant change in the teaching faculties in Catholic schools and in parish religious education programs. Numerous men and women who were in religious teaching orders left their religious communities during this time. This paradigm shift has created lay teaching staffs in most religious education programs and schools. This shift in teaching leadership roles has raised significant concerns. As Jacobs (1997) stated,

The exodus of religious sisters and brothers and priests from Catholic schools, however, is not the most significant issue that must be reckoned with. The paramount issue posed by this exodus concerns how the laity will receive the formation they need in order to preserve and advance the identity of the Catholic school. (p. vi)
When we speak of the laity and their role in Catholic teaching, the role of parents as part of that teaching laity must be examined. Frabutt (2002) stated, “Parents are the primary and principal educators of their children. ... For this reason, it is critical to examine the research interface of parenting and family with Catholic education” (p. 73). Adding to this dilemma is the changing nature of family dynamics in recent years. As is stated by Comer (1986), “Given increasing divorce rates, the growing number of single-parent families and families in which both parents work, and the complexity of modern life, even children of well-educated, middle-class parents can come to school unprepared because of the stress their families are undergoing” (p. 444). When we speak of religious education, the knowledge of the Catholic religion of the parents/teachers is a concern. As McGrath (2002) pointed out,

... shortly after the pre-Vatican II books all became outdated in one afternoon, and if you believe the caricature of those times, all we did was make banners, and sing Kumbaya. Surely it was nowhere near that bad, but it was a time of great confusion and change. When it comes to their role in passing on a living faith, many parents feel a need for remedial help. (p. 16)

Some parents feel that they need remedial help in their own background regarding religious content. McGrath (2002) further mentioned that “...many parents feel beleaguered and at a loss. They're facing all the usual issues of raising kids in a culture that undermines their efforts” (p. 12). The society that we now live in is challenging many of the moral concepts that are a part of Christian morality. The influence of sex and violence permeating our media and culture has certainly had its effect on the youth of
today. As a result of these complex issues, “A lot of families are just drifting. They have no clear sense of why they are here or what their purpose is” (p. 15).

In assessing religious education programs in our schools, it is essential to consider parent concerns and family dynamics as integral to the learning process. There is sufficient research to indicate that parental involvement is one of the dynamics of increased student performance. Ann T. Henderson (1987) indicated that her research showed that if parents showed an active interest in their child’s work, the school achievement of the child increased. Peterson (1989) also stated that, “Parents’ attitudes and expectations toward education can be as important as explicit teaching activities” (p. 13). Therefore, we must look at parental involvement in our religious education programs.

Another aspect to be examined in assessing parental involvement and student achievement in religious education is the motivation that parents have in sending their children to Catholic schools. There have been many surveys taken by the National Catholic Education Association evaluating the reasons that parents send their children to Catholic schools. Over the years there has been consistency in parents’ responses to the reasons why they send their children to Catholic schools. The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) (2003) reported “Numerous studies show that parents place their children in Catholic schools for three reasons: the superior academic achievement of Catholic school students; for their secure and disciplined learning environments and for a total education, which includes growth in religious awareness and an appreciation of morals and values.” The ranking order has remained the same over the years. Academics have been ranked first followed by discipline and then religious
education. Although all three aspects are important to Catholic educational leaders, they would prefer that religious education be the primary reason for attendance.

The religious component of Catholic education has always been at the forefront for Catholic educational leaders. Historically, one of the first Catholic schools opened in America was in St. Augustine, Florida. Kealey and Kealey (2003) stated, “The founding document for this school indicates that it was established to teach religious doctrine, reading, and writing” (p. 4). This philosophy continues today. The primary administrative document utilized by Catholic administrators is To Teach As Jesus Did (1972), which was written and published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Although published in 1972, it is still the primer for Catholic educational leaders. In the document the Bishops stated, “... instruction in religious truth and values is an integral part of the program. It is not one more subject alongside the rest, but instead it is perceived and functions as the underlying reality in which the student’s experiences of learning and living achieve their coherence and their deepest meaning” (p. 29). The Congregation for Catholic Education supports To Teach As Jesus Did in their 1997 document The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium. This document stated, “... the Catholic school should be able to offer young people the means to acquire knowledge they need in order to find a place in society which is strongly characterized by technical and scientific skills. But at the same time, it should be, above all, to impart a solid Christian formation” (p. 31). Curtin (2001), writing for the Department of Chief Administrators of Catholic Education, further added that “Catholic educational and catechetical leaders, then, must ensure that all of their work and effort is centered on the Good News” (p. v).
Pertaining to this study, approximately 25% of the students attending Catholic schools are non-Catholic. Although this does not deter from the mission and curriculum established by the Catholic schools, the parents' involvement in the religious education of the students of non-Catholics could be affected. Nonetheless, a study of both Catholic and non-Catholic students and their parents will be conducted to observe the impact of parental involvement in academic achievement of the newly established curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Fall River. Previous national studies have indicated that the religious involvement of parents directly impacts the religious involvement of children. However, there has been little research completed to align academic achievement of students in religious studies with parental involvement in helping their children with religion homework or the parents' involvement in religious activities in their own lives.

On the other hand, much research has been completed relative to parental involvement and academic achievement in other subject areas. According to Hart (1988), two decades of research show that parental involvement is associated with greater student achievement. Mapp and Henderson (2002) noted that the evidence of familial influence on their children’s school achievement is consistent, positive, and convincing. They added that there is strong and steadily growing evidence that families can improve their children’s academic performance. Coleman (1987) reviewed research data from various studies dealing with parents and their interaction with their children in different manners. The examination of the research indicated that children’s achievement could be increased through parental involvement and parent/teacher interaction.

More subject specific, especially in the area of reading and language arts, Colgan (2002) related that research indicates that parental involvement in activities that support
academic areas is directly correlated with reading achievement and development. In research by Dauber and Epstein (1993), we have learned that school practices that involve parents have important positive effects on both the parents' abilities to help their children and on the students' reading achievement. Evans and Burman (2003) stated that with increased parental involvement, students demonstrated a substantial gain in mastery of reading vocabulary words.

Studies have also been conducted in relation to math and science. Litton (1998) acknowledged that strong partnerships with parents help children become more successful math students. Barber, Parizeau and Bergman (2002) describe the importance of parental involvement in math and science. They offered ways for parents to help their children succeed in math and science.

Since the effect of parental involvement on student academic achievement has been well researched and there has been shown a positive correlation, it is incumbent upon those involved in Catholic education to study this relationship in the context of religious learning outcomes. For the Fall River Diocese this research is a timely study of the new curriculum guidelines approved by the Bishop of the Diocese and implemented by the Catholic School Department of the Diocese of Fall River for the 2003-2004 school year. Since Catholic schools exist for the purpose of spreading the teachings of the Catholic Church, it must be a priority to measure the level of success in this endeavor. Research would indicate that parental involvement must be part of the assessment process.

One of the primary researchers in the area of parental involvement and increased educational outcomes is Joyce Epstein. Epstein (1995) distinguished six types of parent
involvement in education. Her framework includes parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with community. These six types of parent involvement will be used as the rubric for the parent questionnaire used in this research project.

Conceptual Framework

Epstein's (1995) categories of parental involvement are an excellent resource and framework for what Catholic educational leaders consider to be vital components of religious education. Joyce Epstein is a Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University (http://www.esos.jhu.edu/p2000/images/maps_staff/joyce.htm). The use of Epstein's model is appropriate because she incorporates two categories, in particular, which many other studies in parental involvement do not include. These are the categories of collaborating with community and volunteering. The concept of collaborating with community has always been an essential part of Catholic education. Donevan (1997) stated "the sense of joining a community, of becoming part of a family, was integral to the Christian conversion experience from the very beginning" (p. 14). In To Teach as Jesus Did (1972) the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops affirmed, "building and living community must be prime, explicit goals of the contemporary Catholic school" (p. 30).

Volunteering or service to others is a definite component of Catholic education. This should certainly be a measurable component in parental involvement and its effect on student religious education. The Institute for Catholic Education in their book
Curriculum Matters: A Resource for Catholic Educators (1996) stated that "the Catholic schools educate its students in a social responsibility that is counter to the mores of individualism and social indifference that permeate much of our culture. Students are encouraged to contribute to the common good" (p. 25).

The other components of parenting, communicating, learning at home and decision-making are also entrenched in Catholic educational philosophy. Therefore, when looking at student academic performance in religious studies and parental involvement, Epstein's framework is an ideal conceptual tool.

Moreover, the six aspects of involvement categorized by Epstein (1995) can be linked specifically to the research question in this study. Three of the subsidiary research questions which include the direct involvement of parents assisting students with assignments and homework, the parents own involvement in religious activities, and parental attitudes towards religious education can all be viewed and measured in relation to Epstein's categories. It is important to have a framework in which to measure the relationship of parental involvement with student achievement. Although Epstein's framework was established looking at schools in general, it will be an excellent instrument for the purposes of this study regarding Catholic schools and religious education.

Statement of the Problem

This study will investigate the effect of parental involvement on academic achievement of students in religious education in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River. Besides Epstein's (1995) categories of parental involvement, three other aspects of direct involvement of parents will be investigated: (a) direct involvement of parents in
assisting students with the child's religious education, (b) the parents' own involvement in religious activities, and (c) parental attitudes towards religious education. This survey will involve third, fifth, and seventh grade students and their parents. The student population will be taken from fourteen comparable schools from two similar cities in the Diocese of Fall River.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the effectiveness of school-based religious education programs utilizing the newly adopted curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Fall River. The study will investigate the effect of parental involvement on student achievement. The study may be a guide for the inclusion of adult education programs to be coordinated along with student programs.

Specifically, this investigation will address the following research question: To what extent does parental involvement influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education? Subsidiary research questions will include:

1. To what extent does the direct involvement of parents assisting with their child's religious education influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?

2. To what extent does the parents' level of religiosity, or participation in religious activities, affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?

3. To what extent do parental attitudes towards religious education affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?
4. Is there a difference in a child’s religious academic outcomes if the parent(s) are non-Catholic?

5. Is there an association between parental reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school and religious academic outcomes of their child?

6. Is there an association between parental religious academic background and religious academic outcomes of their child?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to augment research on knowledge based achievement in religious education in Catholic schools and its relationship to parental involvement and religious knowledge. The results could influence a change in the coordination of religious education programs in Catholic schools on a diocesan level. Further study could include adult religious education programs to enhance total catechesis of the entire family. This may well incorporate adult religious education into an all-inclusive Diocesan program. Further study could also include coordinating school-based and parish-based religious education programs.

This study is one that could have national implications for Catholic schools. Since the mission of the Diocese of Fall River is consistent with the mission of the National Catholic Educational Association, the results of the study should be of value to all diocesan school officials throughout the country. The depth of this research has not been duplicated, and therefore should add to the knowledge base of the teaching of religion for other diocesan educational leaders. The mission of Catholic schools is to educate our youth about the Catholic faith. The results of this research should have
implications for all Catholic educational leaders as to how Catholic schools can better accomplish that goal.

**Definitions**

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between parental involvement in religious activities, and parental religious involvement in their own lives, with the cognitive religious achievement of their children. The study is limited to children attending Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River. The parameters of this study are further limited by assessing students attending schools only in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, Massachusetts. These cities have populations that are similar in size and economic make-up. They also have similar cultural background and ethnic composition. From this population, only students in grades three, five, and seven will be tested. Participation in this study is not mandatory, therefore some families may choose not to participate.

Other limitations include the fact that teachers' religious background and religious academic preparation will not be considered. Also, the academic ability level of the student will not be measured.

**Definition of Terms**

*Bishop:* A successor of the Apostles who has received the fullness of Christ's priesthood (Tardan, 1980). A Bishop in the United States is the head of a Diocese appointed by the Pope.
Catechesis: That form of ecclesiastical action that leads both communities and individual members of the faithful to maturity of faith (Harden, 1980). It is the use of written and spoken words, plus visual and audio aids, to pass down the Gospel of Christ. It is a lifelong process of conversion.

Catechist: In general, one who teaches the essentials of Christian faith and morals (Harden, 1980).

Catholic School: An institution under the supervision of the Church whose corporate policy is to train the students in the Gospel message of salvation as taught by the Catholic magisterium (Harden, 1980). The Bishop is the traditional head of all schools and religious education programs in his Diocese.

Church: This refers to the equivalent to the Roman Catholic Church headed by the Pope.

Diocese: The territory over which a bishop exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction (Harden, 1980).

Diocese of Fall River: The specific geographic area of Southeastern Massachusetts including the cities of Fall River and New Bedford.

Ecclesiastic: An informal term used to describe a cleric or member of the clergy.

Ecclesiastical: This is a term pertaining to the Church as an organized body, with stress on its juridical and institutional structure (Harden, 1980).

Ecumenical Council: The most solemn and official assembly of all the bishops of the world which, when summoned by the Pope, constitutes the highest teaching authority of the Church.
Education Program: This refers to the curriculum used specific to the Diocese of Fall River’s religious education programs.

Evangelization: The zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and his Church (Harden, 1980). It includes all those activities by which every member of the Church proclaims and preaches the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Good News: This is the whole teaching of Christianity, which those who believe accept with their minds and strive to put into practice (Harden, 1980).

Magesterium: The Church’s teaching authority, vested in the bishops, as successors of the Apostles, under the Roman Pontiff, as successor of St. Peter. (Harden, 1980).

Moral Messages: These are values as understood through natural reason and in accordance with the teaching of Christ as they are revealed through Scripture and Tradition.

NCEA: The National Catholic Educational Association is an organization whose purpose is to provide leadership and support to those in the educational apostolate of the Catholic Church.

Parenting Practices: Set of values used by parents in raising and educating their children.

Parish: Normally, in a diocese, a definite territorial division that has been assigned its own church, a determined group of the faithful, and its own distinct pastor who is charged with the care of souls (Harden, 1980).
Parish Based Religious Education Program: The formal catechetical training of the youth in a specific parish.

Parochial School: These are elementary or secondary schools, supported by the local parish or a group of parishes, that teach not only academics but also the essentials of the Faith.

Pope: This is the title of the visible head of the Catholic Church (Hardon, 1980).

Religious Beliefs: The truths based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Religious Practices: These refer to the application of religious beliefs.

Second Vatican Council: This was the twenty-first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church (Hardon, 1980). The Pope’s stated objectives in calling the Council were to seek the renewal of the Church and to modernize its forms and institutions. The Council began on October 11, 1962 and ended on December 8, 1962.

Spirituality: This refers to the response of an individual to Christ’s ongoing invitation to repent and believe in the Gospel.

Working Parents: Parents whose occupational duties remove them from the home.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature is divided into two distinct areas of concentration. The first area concerns parental involvement and student achievement. The second investigation pertains to religious education. The literature should support the involvement of parents in their children’s religious education and their cognitive achievement of the subject matter.

Parental Involvement

The topic of parental involvement and its relationship to academic achievement has become one of intense concern to educators. Research indicates that family involvement in the education process improves achievement. According to Goodman, Sutton, and Harkavy (1995), the more involved parents become, and the more roles parents play in the education process, the better the outcomes. When looking at school leadership, there is a tendency to believe that many parents' voices are only heard from when they are called to school for discipline issues or special-education placement. Therefore, one of the challenging aspects of school leadership is to develop collective responsibility among parents in the educational process of their children (Lambert, 2003). One's view of education must regard the family and school as interconnected. Leaders must recognize the family as an integral part of the school (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1992).
Carrasquillo and London (1993) stated that there is a wide range of activities in which education takes place in the family. They also declared that if we are to look at family as educator, then we must take into account the continuous process of change and development that takes place in the family. They felt that a student's success depended on several factors: the characteristics of the school, the mental ability of the students, the efforts of the students in performing school work and the parents' involvement in the education of their children. They also stressed that, because of changing times, the input of parents in the educative process is of paramount importance.

Comer (1986) reiterated the need for parental participation in schools. He was concerned with the fact that today's students need more adult help than children did in past years. He spoke about the increasing divorce rate, the growing numbers of single parent families and the families where both parents work. All this has led to a greater complexity of every day life. Even children of well educated, middle-class parents can come to school unprepared because of the stress their families might be undergoing. Therefore, there is a need for a partnering of the school with parents in the education of their children. Comer indicated that programs that effectively involve parents in the school could provide a desirable context for teaching and learning.

Also, as Comer (1986) pointed out, if family structures have changed then we must take all these variables into consideration when looking at parental involvement. At times it may be more beneficial to interpret parental involvement as family involvement. Sanders (1996) wrote about building family partnerships in schools in Baltimore for the purpose of improving education. In doing so it was pointed out that it is important to investigate who has the most interest in the well-being of the child. Sanders indicated
that for the purposes of his study families were defined as grandparents, aunt, uncle, and
even babysitters. To identify the person who really cared about the well being of the
child would open the possibility of achieving success in involving a significant adult in
the child’s education.

As stated above, parental involvement as it pertains to academic achievement has
been an important topic for educators for many years. In looking at the literature review
for parental involvement, it is important to focus on the research studies done in this area.
Certainly it would be appropriate to begin with Joyce Epstein. Joyce Epstein has her Ph.D
in Sociology from Johns Hopkins University and is currently the Director of the Center
on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. She is also the principal research
scientist for the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk
(CRESPAR). Epstein is certainly one of the best known researchers in the field of
parental involvement in schools.

Epstein (1995) stated that, "The way schools care about children is reflected in the
way schools care about children’s families" (p. 701). She affirmed that educators must
view students as children. Then teachers may view parents, schools, and communities as
partners in children’s education and development. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, and
Simon (1997) utilized the framework of six types of involvement created by Epstein
(1995) to help educators develop more comprehensive programs for school and family
partnerships. Epstein and colleagues (1997) identified six types of parental involvement
as the areas necessary to address for a good foundation in creating effective parent,
school, and community programs. Epstein (1995) identified the types of involvement as
the following: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision
making, and collaborating with community. Epstein and colleagues (1997) refine the framework by giving sample practices, challenges, redefinitions and expected results for the six types of involvement. Epstein concludes that just about all families care about their children's achievement and welcome more communication from schools.

In the first type of involvement, parenting, the partnership should help the home in creating an environment that is conducive to supporting children in their studies. Epstein and colleagues (1997) suggested such practices as workshops and videotapes on child rearing, parent education programs, family support programs for health and other services, and even home visits at transition points to preschool, elementary, and high school. Some of the challenges envisioned would be making sure the information was provided to all and that it was clear and user-friendly. The three significant results expected from such parent involvement and partnership would be: expected results for students, expected results for parents, and expected results for teachers. The following would be the anticipated results: students should have a respect for parents, values being taught by the family, and a better understanding of the importance of school; parents should have better confidence in parenting, an awareness of challenges in parenting that other parents also share, and a feeling of support; and teachers should have a better understanding of student diversity and family backgrounds, and a sharing of educational goals with families.

The second type of involvement (Epstein et al., 1997) is communicating, which urges the partnership to design effective communication methods of school to home and home to school. The purpose would be to ensure quality communication about the child’s progress at school and about school programs and activities. Some practical
practices would involve individual conferences with parents, weekly or monthly student progress folders sent home, and clear information on all school policies and programs. The challenges would include ensuring clear and readable communication with non-English speaking parents. This is also important in this research study since some of the parents surveyed speak and read only the Portuguese language. When involving non-English speaking parents, it is essential to assure the communications are a two-way occurrence. The expected results for the students would be a better awareness of their own progress, a better understanding of school policies, and an ownership of their own role in the partnership. The results for parents would be a better understanding of the school programs and policies and a better monitoring of their child’s progress. An optimum result would be more effectiveness in dealing with their child’s problems. The teacher results should include more diversity in communicating with parents and a better understanding of individual family views on the parent’s own child’s progress and programs in the school.

The third type of involvement (Epstein et al., 1997) is that of volunteering. The authors feel the parents should be recruited and organized in order to help and support the partnership. There are many suggested practices that include programs to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents. One suggestion is to provide a parent room for meeting and doing some of the work, along with “telephone trees” for passing on vital information, and even parent patrols to enhance safety at school or at extra-curricular events. The challenges may include ensuring all parents that their various talents are welcome, the ability to have flexible schedules to allow anyone to be able to participate, and to organize the volunteer work to ensure that volunteer efforts are recognized and
that these participants are productive. The anticipated results for the students would be an increase in communication skills with adults and a better awareness of the skills, talents, and contributions of the parents and other volunteers. The projected benefits for the parents would be a clearer understanding of a teacher's job, self-confidence in working with others and in particular the children, and awareness that families are welcomed and valued at the school. A major teacher benefit would come from a better consciousness of parent talents and more readiness to involve families. Teachers might also be able to give more individual attention to students if the volunteers were able to help in the classroom.

Epstein and colleagues (1997) identified the fourth type of parental involvement as learning at home. They identified this task as giving information and ideas to parents about how they could help their child with homework and other curriculum related activities and planning. There were many sample practices for this category which included giving families information on skills required for students in all subjects along with information on homework policies. Also, they suggested regular assignments that required students to discuss and interact with their families. They also suggested the school provide calendars with activities for students and parents to do. There should also be family participation in setting educational goals for the student each year along with family math, science, and reading activities. The projected challenges would include designing and organizing interactive homework giving students responsibility for discussing with their families the important things they are learning in school. Another challenge may be in linking family homework activities when a student has several teachers. Reasonable expected results for students should include better homework
completion, and a more positive attitude towards their work. An optimum student outcome would be to view parent and teacher as co-educators, and home and school as equal centers of learning. An important result for the parents would be a better understanding of how to help and encourage their child at home in their schoolwork. It would also give the parent a better understanding of the curriculum, an appreciation of teaching skills, and awareness of their child as a learner. Teachers could anticipate a better design of homework assignments and a respect of family time along with more satisfaction as a result of family involvement and support.

The fifth type of involvement for a comprehensive partnership program involves decision-making (Epstein et al., 1997). For a strong partnership, parents should be included in some of the school's decision-making process, and the development of parent leaders and representatives should be cultivated. The sample practices outlined would certainly include an active parent organization for parental leadership and participation. Parents could become advocacy groups for school reform or improvements at the district or even state level. A network in order to link all parents to the representatives could be established. The anticipated challenges include the training of parent leaders from all the differing racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups. It is necessary to include students in the decision-making groups. The positive results anticipated for the students would include the awareness of parental and student involvement in the decisions made at school. The students would also feel their rights are being protected. A two-fold parent benefit would include having input into school policies that affect their children and a feeling of ownership in the school. Such a partnership would also give parents a better understanding of the school, district, and state regulations. Involving parents in the
process of development would result in heightened teacher awareness. Such an involvement by parents would allow teachers a unique view of parental perspective in the child’s education.

The sixth type of involvement identified by Epstein and colleagues (1997) is that of collaborating with the outside community. The authors define collaborating with the outside community as a process of identifying and integrating resources and services from the outside community into the school. The purpose of this collaboration is to strengthen programs and family practices along with student learning and development. Sample practices would gather and disseminate information for students and parents on community health, cultural, recreational, and social support programs and services. There should also be service integration through partnerships involving the school and outside agencies and businesses. Service to the community by students and families along with the participation of alumni in school programs should also be part of the partnership. A major challenge would be to avoid any turf problems that could involve responsibilities and funding sources. Another major challenge would be the reciprocal matching of community contributions with school goals. The expected benefits for the students could include a better awareness of possible future careers and options. A further benefit could be an increase of skills and talents of the students enriched by community developed educational programs. Parental benefits would include a better knowledge and use of local resources for their child and their families. It would also give them more interaction with other families in the community and a better awareness of the school-community relationship in their city or town. Teacher results may be that the teacher would have a better sense of the community resources available to them to enrich their curriculum and
teaching. An added benefit for teachers would be access to community-based referrals of children and families to needed services.

Epstein was involved in several studies utilizing the six types of parental involvement. One study conducted (Sanders & Epstein, 1998) was a research study involving twenty-two educators, parents and students from two middle schools and two high schools. The results indicated the importance of family participation in the education of the students. The participants who were interviewed responded that family connections with the school were essential for the student's personal and educational success.

Many school districts have used Epstein’s model for parental involvement. Warner (2002) urged the use of Epstein’s model for the state of Illinois. Investigating the challenges facing school systems with the Federal Act, “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” Warner views parental involvement as a key component in raising student achievement levels. She has some interesting components to her proposal to take hold. The first would be to make parental involvement a practice in every school in the state. The second proposal is to have parental involvement training a component of teacher and administrator preparation programs.

Warner (2002) definitely feels that state government, or state support, is vital if there is to be successful programs throughout the state. She believes that state policy makers should incorporate the important roles of families and communities when developing a vision for improved student achievement. The state should also provide resources to assist schools and communities. The state could then hold educational leaders accountable for ensuring increased parental involvement in the schools.
In a follow-up study, Sanders, Epstein, and Connors-Tadros (1999) saw results which indicated that different types of school practices resulted in different types of parental involvement practices. Therefore, they concluded that good programs should include different types of involvement, which would in turn encourage greater family involvement both at school and at home. This information would lead us to also look at other models of parental involvement.

Anne T. Henderson has also been instrumental in investigating the issue of parental involvement in schools. In her book, Beyond the Bake Sale (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986), she noted in the forward that a child’s education is greatly affected by the relationship between home and school. The writers (1986) stated that any parental collaboration for school improvement must strengthen the roles that parents have in education. The authors have identified five roles for parents. The first role is parents as partners. This begins with the fact that parents, at birth, become the first and primary educators. This truth is evident even if we look at the most basic skills of walking and talking. When parents send their children to school, the parents now have a partner in education. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage that partnership since the child now does not only continue to learn at home, but also increases their learning at school.

The second role is that of parents as collaborators and problem solvers (Henderson et al., 1986). In this role parents can encourage and reward achievement and behavior. They can be instrumental in reactions to absence, truancy, and completed homework. Parents can also themselves reinforce learning by providing enrichment activities at home. A major aspect of collaboration can take place when parents are involved with school personnel in problems dealing with a child’s learning or behavior.
Developing successful problem solving techniques with parents can certainly benefit the child, however, studies indicate that it is an area that is often neglected by schools.

The third role parents play is that of parents as audience (Henderson et al., 1986). An example of this audience participation happens when parents attend back-to-school rights or attend school activities such as plays, concerts or athletic events. Although the parents’ role in this case is primarily passive, parents can gain information about school faculty and staff and receive a more personal knowledge of the school. In these situations, students also usually feel good about the parents’ interest in the school.

Parents as supporters is the fourth role identified (Henderson et al., 1986). Volunteering is one of the components of this role. Volunteering can be done by either an individual volunteering at the school or by various parental organizations helping to promote the school. Parents may also support other parents by creating carpools, phone trees for information sharing as well as in sponsoring talks or workshops that help parents understand child development and/or problems that may develop with their own child.

Parents as advisors and co-decision makers is the fifth role that parents have in education (Henderson et al., 1986). Although there are some states that have state-mandated accountability or advisory boards, the authors feel that real power-sharing most likely occurs when parents are elected to school governing boards. Part of the problem occurs when the board consists of a small number of parents who serve in these advisory and decision-making roles. However, this is an area where individual principals and schools have made parental involvement go beyond what is normally required. These principals and schools have established advisory committees. These committees are
actively involved in collaboration with the administration. Another good policy at this level is to provide training for the parents in this role as an advisor or decision-maker.

Although Henderson and colleagues (1986) have identified five distinct roles that parents play with regard to their children’s education, they realize that there are many other models that have been researched and utilized. However, they feel usually there is a two-part distinction: those models that involve parents in activities that benefit their own particular child, and those models which only indirectly involve the parents’ own children. Since the authors feel, as most other studies reveal, that all aspects of parental involvement are important, then programs must not downplay the importance of the second, or indirect, type of involvement. The authors also recognized that there are some practical barriers to parental involvement such as lack of time, lack of transportation, neighborhood safety, other children to care for and the like. Nevertheless, these obstacles should not be barriers to a working relationship with schools and parents. One recommendation made is to place more emphasis on school-family relationships in teacher training and in-service programs.

In a follow-up study, Henderson (Henderson & Berla, 1994) once again reported the research indicating the importance of parental involvement. In the introduction to the report she stated, “When parents are involved in their children’s education at home, their children do better in school. When parents are involved at school, their children go farther in school, and the schools they go to are better” (p. 1).

Finn (1998) also researched various components of parental involvement. However, he stated that not every type of parental involvement has given empirical data that student achievement improves when parents are involved. He suggested that there is
data showing that specific parenting practices are related to a student’s academic achievement. He felt that the most important parental involvement takes place in the home environment. Finn’s study shows that researchers have identified three types of parental involvement contributing to the enhancement of school performance. First, parents should actively organize and monitor a child’s time; second, they should help with homework; and third, that parents should discuss school matters with their children. Much of this discussion could be centered on homework. Making sure homework is completed helps organize and monitor time and task. At times, parents can also serve as tutors. Beyond this, checking homework gives the opportunity to discuss what is being taught along with other issues that are taking place at school.

There is continuing research that investigates new models and components of parental involvement. Recently Berger (2004) wrote about seven levels of parental involvement. The first level addresses the parent who is an active partner or educational leader both at home and at school. The second level names the parent as decision maker in the school decision-making process. The third and fourth levels include parents advocating for the school in various ways and the parent acting as a volunteer. The fifth level denotes the parent acting as a liaison between school and home for the purpose of supporting the learning process with such things as homework and awareness of school activities. The sixth level of involvement suggests that the parent become the recipient of educational programs themselves through the school. The final level is the supporting of the educational goals of the school and encouraging their children to study even though as parents, they may not be actively involved with the school.
Looking at various parental involvement models from Henderson (1986) to Epstein (1995) and further to Berger (2004), we can see the similarities in their components. There are also research studies upon research studies identifying the needs and effectiveness of parental involvement in a child’s educational process. However, there still remain some uncertainties. As Hill and Craft (2001) stated, “Although the positive impact of parent-school involvement on achievement is well documented, the mechanisms through which this process occurs are less well understood” (p. 74).

Continuing in this vein, some factors appear to be more significant than others in helping parents assist their child achieve higher levels of learning. There are many research answers to address this concern. A study by Edwards and Allred (2000) indicated that not only was parental involvement important, but parental attitudes toward their involvement was a key to success. Research by Trivette and Anderson (1995) indicate that parental aspirations for children’s education was the highest significant predictor for parental involvement and student achievement. This study was revisited and affirmed by Pelco, Ries, Jacobson, and Melca (2000). They stated since there are many models it is difficult to ascertain exact results from any one model, although the positive results were significant.

Another issue emerging from parental involvement indicates that many times there is little attempt by the school or the parents to communicate in meaningful ways for the betterment of the child. One side can easily blame the other for a lack of cooperation or attempt at promoting meaningful involvement. Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2001) found that many times school officials blame parents as being disinterested, incompetent, or preoccupied to participate in meaningful school programs. As a result, instead of
working on programs or methods to increase parent participation there is a sense of resolve that nothing can be accomplished in this area. On the other side of the issue, Crozier (1999a) stated that parents view the school as separate from their everyday world and they see the parent-teacher role as one of a division of labor more than as a cooperative effort. He further remarks that although teachers may argue that they attempt to engage parents, it is often on their own terms. This concept, in turn, gives the parents the impression of teachers as being superior and distant from them in the educational process.

Today's world of technology adds another dimension to the parental involvement arena. The outcomes of its use for the purposes of parental involvement are factors that will be sources of fertile research in the future. One such study already done by Bestell, Sinagub, Lee & Schumm (2003) indicated that a program integrating technology initiated in South Florida did in fact increase parental involvement. Once again, as in many research projects, not all forms of parental involvement that might be studied in most parental involvement models were included in this research. Although the study is not all encompassing, it does give us hope that some aspects of parental involvement can be increased by technology.

Student Achievement, Grade Level, and Parental Involvement

Most research would indicate that there is increased student academic achievement with an increase in parental involvement. However, much of the research involves elementary and inner city students. There are some who believe that parental involvement is not the answer for success in all circumstances. There seems to be some
concern in the United Kingdom that increased academic achievement related to parental involvement may be overstated. Brain and Reid (2003) in referring to Crozier (1999b) state that parental involvement is only effective at an early age and beyond this there is little evidence to support parental involvement increases school achievement. They also feel that parental involvement is more effective whenever the parents themselves are better educated and have better financial circumstances than other parents.

Edwards and Alldred (2000), writing in the British Journal of Sociology of Education, are concerned that the emphasis on parental involvement does not consider children as participants in the process. They discuss the fact that the child’s role in the home-school relationship must be considered for an effective program. Focusing solely on the parents’ role can lead to resistance or a lack of self-esteem for the child. By not including the student perception on parental involvement programs, Edwards and Alldred stated, “… parental involvement in education risks riding roughshod over children’s and young people’s privacy boundaries generally, and narrowing their ability to creatively and complexly manoeuvre and respond to shades of parental involvement in their education” (p.14).

In analyzing parental involvement and academic achievement, studies can be grouped by grade level categories. We will first investigate pre-school and early adolescent years. One study was the Chicago Longitudinal Study; Meidel and Reynolds (1999) reported on this research project. The study focused on parental involvement in pre-school and kindergarten parental involvement and the effects on reading achievement in the eighth grade, retention rates and years spent in special education. One of the unique features of this study was the fact that it used the parents reporting as the
measurement for the amount of parental involvement occurred with their own child. Many other research studies in this area focus on the information received from teachers while others utilize both teachers and parental information. There was also a distinction made between the frequency of parental involvement and the number of parent activities a parent participated in.

Meidel and Reynolds (1999) used a hierarchical regression analysis for the frequency of parental involvement and background variables and specific associations were determined. What was discovered was that the number of different parent activities had a more specific effect on eighth grade reading scores than just the frequency of parental involvement. Both frequency and number of activities had an effect on kindergarten reading achievement. However, frequency had a marginal effect on eighth grade scores, whereas the number of activities parents were involved in was significantly associated with higher eighth grade reading scores.

In observing retention rates through age fourteen, the research indicated that both frequency of parental involvement and number of parent activities lead to lower retention rates. Children whose parents were involved on a weekly basis or more were 38% less likely to be retained. Students whose parents were involved in at least six activities were 30% less likely to be retained by age fourteen.

In regards to special education, however, once again there was a difference between frequency and number of different activities. Using logistic regression analysis, the study indicated that frequency of parental involvement did not significantly effect special education placement. Frequency only marginally effected the time a child spent in special education. Also, using logistic regression, the study indicated that although the
number of parental activities did not significantly effect special education placement, it is significantly associated with the decrease in a child’s years spent in special education.

Meidel and Reynolds (1999) conclude that parent involvement is an important component of early childhood programs. They are concerned that although there has been an increase in funding for preschool and kindergarten programs, the parental involvement component has not been adequately addressed.

Marcon (1999) presented a three cohort study on parental involvement at a meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association in Savannah, Georgia in March of 1999. The study focused on the impact of parental involvement on preschoolers’ early development and mastery of basic skills. Data was collected from 49 public schools. The degree of parental involvement was obtained from 62 teachers representing 708 randomly selected preschoolers. Teachers were asked to evaluate the extent of parental involvement they had with each of the child’s parents. The findings indicated that there was a positive impact on achievement based on parental involvement. The greatest association between parental involvement and achievement occurred when parents who were not involved became involved even minimally. The report stated, “Getting parents to do just “a bit more than nothing” can have a significant impact on young children’s development and academic performance” (p. 9).

Stevenson and Baker (1987) conducted research, using a nationally representative sample of American households, on parental involvement. They investigated three different aspects of family dynamics. First, they investigated the educational status of the mothers of the children; they looked at the mothers since they stated that mothers are involved most often in the day-by-day school activities of a child in a two-parent
household. Also, 90% of children in single parent households reside with the mother. Therefore, the mother is likely to be the one more involved in parental involvement issues. The research indicated that the higher the educational status of the mother, there was a corresponding higher involvement of parental involvement.

The second finding from the research indicated that the younger the age of the child, the more parental involvement was ascertained. The final research issue was the effect of parental involvement with academic performance. In accordance with other similar research, it was determined that the students whose parents were more involved in schooling achieved at a higher level than those students whose parents were less involved. What is interesting in this study is the fact that the mother’s educational status could not be linked by itself to an increase in a child’s academic achievement. The study indicated that the mother’s educational status led to increased parental involvement that in turn resulted in better school performance.

Shifting from lower elementary grades to middle school age children, Epstein and Dauber (1991) conducted a large scale study of elementary and middle school teachers, parents and students concerning parental involvement. A result of the study indicated that teachers who themselves initiated parent involvement rated all parent groups as being helpful in the area of parent involvement with the education of the children. This was particularly true when teachers were faced with less educated, poor, or single parents. The study went on to report that teachers who did not involve parents very often were prejudicial and made judgments that tended to be stereotypical of parents in relation to less educated, poorer, and single parents. Therefore, the attitude of the teacher was
definitely a factor in the amount of parental involvement that occurred with that particular teacher.

Continuing with the middle grades, an interesting study was conducted by Ho Sui-Chu and Willms (1996). The data was taken from a national longitudinal study. One of the purposes of the study was to investigate whether the socioeconomic status of the parents was a factor in parental involvement and whether this affected eighth grade achievement. The study indicated that although it is widely assumed that there is a higher amount of parental involvement with higher socioeconomic status, the research provided little support to indicate that parents with low socioeconomic status were less involved with their children's schooling. There was a variance on the amount of parental involvement associated with volunteering and attendance at parent meetings, but there was little variance with involvement associated at the home level.

The important aspect of the research indicated that parental involvement was indeed a factor in student achievement. However, it was the home aspect of parental involvement that was the key issue. The key factors being home supervision, discussion of school related activities, and parent-teacher communication. The study went on to report that it was not the effects of parental background that affected student achievement. It was the amount of parental involvement at the home level that explained the variations in student achievement.

Looking at parental involvement at the high school level, Catsambis (1998) researched the effects of parental involvement on high school academic success. Catsambis analyzed the data from the parent and students components of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1998. Catsambis' findings conclude that there are
positive effects of parental involvement on academic achievement through the twelfth grade. She stated that high levels of expectations and consistent encouragement are two of the ways by which families influence the educational achievements of high school students. Surveys indicated that most parents attempt to influence their child's educational achievements through their last year of high school.

Catsambis (1998) concluded that although parental involvement does affect high school achievement, it does weaken from year to ascending year. It is parental educational expectations along with encouragement that affects achievement to the greatest degree. And it is encouragement for postsecondary education that has the strongest positive effect. However, the support and family practices that support learning activities at home are also effective. Catsambis concluded that high levels of parental involvement in the high school years do in effect make a difference. She encouraged schools to sustain levels of parental involvement through the twelfth grade.

Crosnoe (2001) linked parental involvement to student academic orientation at the high school level. He noted that research indicates that parental involvement does in fact have a positive affect on student achievement. However, he researched a different approach that linked parental involvement and student academic orientation. For Crosnoe, academic orientation is measured by students feeling committed to their educational system and the belief by the student that education is the key to success as adults. The results of the study indicate that there is a positive link between parental involvement and their child's academic orientation.

Crosnoe (2001) looked at tracking trajectories. What the study indicated was that there is a difference in both student orientation and parental involvement related to the
track of the student. The higher tracked students have a higher sense of academic orientation and there is a corresponding higher amount of parental involvement. However, the level of both academic orientation and parental involvement diminish at a higher rate for students in the higher track than students in other tracking areas. Parents of college preparatory students tend to diminish their amount of parental involvement as the years increase. This trend occurs in such areas as helping their child with schoolwork, participation in school activities, and staying knowledgeable about academic progress. Crosnoe stated that this is due to the fact that the success of the child allows the parent to give them more personal independence. He also stated that these parents may have turned their attention to the next level of schooling. Crosnoe brings attention to a paradox related to this study. Although parental involvement may improve academic performance, the improved performance may in turn diminish the amount of parental involvement.

While we could continue to investigate many of the problems that exist with any model of parental involvement, they are not germane to this study. The plethora of research indicates that parental involvement, in general, produces higher academic achievement in children.

**Religious Education**

Since the time of the Second Vatican Council... the Catholic school has had a clear identity, not only as a presence of the Church in society, but... as a genuine and proper instrument of the Church. It is a place of evangelization, of authentic
apostolate and of pastoral action—not through complementary or parallel or extracurricular activity, but of its very nature: its work of educating the Christian person. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)

As the above quotation indicates, it is the role of Catholic schools by their very nature to evangelize or teach about the Catholic religion. Since the Catholic schools in America were founded for this purpose, this role is certainly not a new concept. It is important, however, that the changes Vatican II invoked did not deter the purpose of Catholic education. In fact, the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988), which technically began in 1588, established by Pope Sixtus V, proclaimed that Catholic schools form an evangelizing and educating partnership with parents.

If parental involvement is so widely researched in the core subject areas of language arts, math, and science in public education, then parental involvement must be treated with equal importance in the academic outcome expectations in religion in Catholic schools. In fact, since the expectations of the teaching of the Catholic faith has the understanding that this knowledge will impact behavior, then it is essential for parents to become involved. Dunlap (1999) related, “We might be able to teach children to memorize the definitions of faith, hope and charity, but they have a much better chance of understanding the meaning of these virtues if they experienced them at home” (p. 26). Johnston (1999) stated that, “Children, as all Catholics, have a right to receive a suitable human and authentically Catholic education” (p. 23). Johnston continues to say that the
parents have the responsibility to provide this education. Therefore, he reiterates the importance of parental involvement in Catholic education.

Although there are many aspects of catechesis involved in teaching a child or person about the Catholic religion, the knowledge of the Catholic faith is essential to a successful learning program. Therefore, beyond parental involvement Catholic schools must incorporate all other critical aspects of teaching. As Cook and Hudson (2003) have indicated, it is important that steps be taken to professionalize the teaching of religion. Much has been accomplished in the area of professionalizing the teaching of religion throughout the United States but the process must continue. Noll (1997) raises the concern in the area of learning outcomes and assessment. He indicates the necessity of assessment and describes strategies for designing learning outcomes and performance assessments in religious education classes.

Further review of the literature as it pertains to religious education finds the family once again at the forefront as the primary educator. In linking family dynamics to the problems faced with the education of children, McGrath (2002) investigated five major challenges to families. The first obstacle mentioned indicated the lack of sufficient time to do all that needs to be done. He investigates today’s working parents and the complexity of societal issues. This phenomenon detracts from time parents are able to devote to their children’s needs. The second area of concern is the omnipresence of the media. McGrath investigated the moral messages that are sent via the media and their impact. The greatest impact seems to be the time spent on media medium, particularly
television. The third area he identified was the lack of clarity about our mission concerning spirituality and learning. He stated that the family must spend more time speaking about religious values at home. A fourth dynamic is the parents' lack of knowledge of the faith. Since he feels many parents are not well versed in the teachings of the Church, adult education is a necessity. The fifth concern he identified was insufficient joy through lack of intimacy. McGrath links this lack of intimacy to overwork, over scheduling, distraction by the media, confusion about our roles and failure to see life's sacredness. He did see hope in the future. He felt that parents are beginning to realize that the current societal norms are no longer acceptable. Parents need to create new habits, behaviors, and routines to bring spirituality back into family life.

The undue influence of the media on children has become a constant worry of Catholic educators. When speaking to American religious leaders in education, Pio Cardinal Laghi (2001) raised several concerns about the media. In fact, he regarded the mass media as among the foremost challenges to Catholic education. Cardinal Laghi called it a parallel education, which he felt frequently undermined or negated the Catholic teachings concerning fellowship and morality. He looked at two strategies that should be employed to alleviate the problem. The first strategy to be employed is that the Church should help schools and families develop media literacy. Furthermore, the Church needs to help parents, children, and families utilize the media properly. He suggests as a means to this end that the Church instruct its constituency to use techniques, which will allow them to distinguish acceptable media from unacceptable media. Secondly, Cardinal Laghi stated that catechists, teachers, and administrators must know how to implement
the advances in technology. These advances have created new opportunities for us in spreading our own Christian message in exciting ways.

Colbert (2000) and Raiche (2000) both representing the National Catholic Education Association, wrote about religious education and assessment of programs. Colbert stressed that religious instruction should be a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigor as other disciplines. He emphasized that a key part of a Catholic educator's job, or vocation, is catechesis. Colbert stated that Catholic school teachers and parish religious education volunteers must see themselves as catechists. Raiche added to this by stating that we must have an assessment of our religious education programs. However, she noted that many catechetical leaders object to assessment because they fear their students will not perform well. She then differentiated between assessment for religious education and the assessment used for secular subjects. Each school and parish, under Diocesan leadership, needs to articulate its rationale and testing strategies for its own assessment needs.

Convey and Thompson (1999) stated that youths who talked to their parents about problems and religion were much more likely to say that religion, and Christ in particular, made them feel better about themselves. These youths were also more likely to pray regularly, and to affirm that their religious beliefs made a difference in the way they thought and acted. The authors also concluded that parents and peers have a more critical influence on academic performance in religion than does the school or religious education program environment. On a cognitive level, they concluded that the stronger the family life of the student, the more likely students would be to answer religious
knowledge questions correctly. A strong family life also allowed youths to affirm their religious beliefs and to participate in traditional religious practices.

Convey and Thompson (1999) investigated the relationship between religious practice and religious knowledge. This research showed that religious practice is a more important indicator of religious knowledge than religious knowledge is of religious practice. This research concludes that knowledge contributes to increased practice but the evidence is clear that practice contributes even more to knowledge. Finally, it is also clear that parental religious practice is the greatest indicator of their children’s religious practice.

Summary

There are four discernible themes that are derived from the review of literature. The first theme is the general involvement of families in the education of their children. Goodman and colleagues (1995) indicate that parental involvement increases academic outcomes. Whereas, Lambert (2003) and Slavin and colleagues speak about the family as an integral part of a school. Carrasquillo and London (1993) emphasize the family as educator and the continuous process of change that takes place in a family. Finn (1998) indicates that there are three important types of parental involvement: (a) the organizing and monitoring of a child’s time, (b) helping with homework, and (c) discussing school matters with the child. All the authors stress the importance of the parents and family in the process of education and the positive results that occur.

The second theme stresses partnerships of parents with schools. Comer (1986) reiterates the fact that families are changing and therefore there is an increased need for
school/family partnerships. Sanders (1996) adds that the family who cares for the child is not necessarily the mother or father, but could be grandparents or other persons who take responsibility for the child's education.

Henderson and colleagues (1986) stress that to create partnerships, schools must strengthen parental roles in education. The authors emphasize the parents as primary educators. They identify five primary roles of parents for schools to consider when looking at partnerships. The five roles are: parents as partners, parents as collaborators in problem solving, parents as audience, parents as supporters, and parents as advisors and co-decision makers.

Joyce Epstein (1995) created six types of parental involvement. She identifies the types as: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. In a later study, Epstein and colleagues (1997) refine the framework by giving sample practices, challenges, redefinitions and expected results for the six types of parental involvement. In a follow-up study, in which Epstein collaborated (Sanders et al., 1999), it was concluded that good programs should include different types of involvement to encourage greater family participation.

The advances in technology could add other dimensions to parental involvement and partnerships with schools. A study by Bessell, Sinagub, Lee, and Schumm (2003) indicates that a program integrating technology did in fact increase parental involvement. This area requires further research as schools are now able to communicate with parents in a whole different milieu.

The third theme in the literature review involves parental involvement and student achievement. In different studies by Edwards and Alldred (2000), Pelco (2000), and
Trivette and Anderson (1995), the results indicate that parental attitudes towards involvement in their children’s education is a key to academic success. These attitudes are enhanced by parental aspirations for their children’s academic achievement. The research by Trivette and Anderson (1995) indicates that parental aspirations of their children’s education are the highest significant predictor of student achievement.

Grade level is also considered in the third theme of parental involvement and student achievement. Studies of early childhood education by Meidel and Reynolds (1999) and Marcon (1999) indicate that there is a positive impact on achievement based on parental involvement. On a constructive note, research conducted by Stevenson and Baker (1987) ascertains that there is more parental involvement with younger children than with older children. However, in the study by Edwards and Alldred (2000), the authors warn that programs that focus solely on the parents’ role can lead to resistance or a lack of self-esteem for the child. The child’s role in the home-school relationship must be considered for an effective parental involvement program.

In the middle school age group, Ho Sui-Chua and Willms (1996) conducted research which indicates that parental involvement at this level is indeed a factor in student achievement. The study also states that the home aspect of parental involvement is the key to improved success. Epstein and Dauber (1991) also conducted parental involvement research at the middle school level. This study indicates that the teacher is an important element in the parental involvement aspects of a child’s education. The attitude of the teacher towards parental involvement is key to the amount of involvement that exists in a particular classroom.
Studies on the high school level also indicate a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. However, studies by Catesamis (1998) and Crossnoe (2001) both indicate that parental involvement tends to lessen from year to ascending year and also decrease more rapidly among the higher academically tracked students.

The last theme in the literature review involves religious education of the parents and the students. Studies by Cook and Hudson (2003), Johnston (1999), and Noll (1997) indicate the need for Catholic education, the concern about the professionalism of the teaching of religion, and the designed learning outcomes of the religion curriculum. Colbert (2000) and Raiche (2000) also write about the learning outcomes and assessment of religious education programs. They stress the importance that religious education must be studied with the same rigor as other disciplines.

McGrath (2002) writes about the family involvement and religious education. McGrath has concerns about the changing family dynamics and the effects of the media on values that are counter-productive to religious values. Pope Cardinal Laghi (2001) also has concerns about the media and he regards mass media as among the foremost challenges to Catholic education.

Convey and Thompson (1999) also link their investigation of religious education with family dynamics. Although they concern themselves more with religious practice than religious academic outcomes, both of these issues are incorporated into a comprehensive religious education program. Their research concludes that the stronger the family life of the student, the more likely students would be to answer religious knowledge questions correctly.
Conclusion

Catholic education is an important part of the educational system in the United States. President Bush (2004) recently made the following statements:

It's (religion) an important part of the fabric of America. By teaching the Word of God, you prepare your students to follow a path of virtue and compassion and sacrifice for the rest of their lives. And by insisting on high standards for academic achievement, Catholic schools are a model for all schools around our country.

If Catholic schools are models for all schools around the country, it is incumbent that Catholic schools provide the best education possible. The literature and research confirm that parental involvement is a key element in the education of our youth. Therefore, parental involvement must be an intricate part of Catholic education. This is even more evident in the responsibilities Catholic parents have to their children. As Fr. Gnana Pragash Suresh (2004) stated, "Catholic parents have, more than ever before, a grave obligation to educate their children in the faith" (p.3). He continues by saying, "This is a grave obligation for every Catholic parent." (p. 3). If parents send their children to Catholic schools for the faith education of their children then Catholic schools become more than religious educators, they become partners with parents in this most serious obligation.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

This document was an association study using the knowledge-based test measuring the curriculum guidelines established by the Diocese of Fall River for religious studies. Variables examined were determined by the responses to a parent questionnaire. An assessment was administered to the students in all twenty-three elementary (grades K-5) and two middle (grades 5-8) schools in the Diocese. The assessment of the curriculum guidelines is a mandate from the Bishop of the Diocese of Fall River. Since the Bishop approved the curriculum guidelines, it was important for these documents to be implemented and assessed by the Diocesan Catholic School Department. This assessment instrument measured the core curriculum guidelines taught to the students.

Population and Sample

Although all 1,431 elementary students in grades three, five, and seven were assessed, there were thirteen specific parish K-8 Catholic elementary schools in the Fall River Diocese that were selected for this study. The thirteen schools are situated in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. These specific schools were chosen because the cities in which they are located have populations that are similar in size and economic make-up. They also have similar cultural background and ethnic composition. All
thirteen schools are also parish schools, which have the same administrative structure. Parish schools differ from diocesan schools in administrative structure. Students in grades three, five, and seven were administered the test. The parents of these selected students were surveyed.

Data Sources
The assessments (Appendices A, B, C) were developed by an educational testing consultant, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum for the Diocese of Fall River, several elementary school principals, a group of third, fifth, and seventh grade teachers from Catholic schools not included in the research, and two parish religious education coordinators. Except for the consultant, all members of the committee were familiar with and using the curriculum guidelines that were evaluated. A parent questionnaire was developed by an educational consultant, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel for the Diocese of Fall River, a group of Catholic elementary principals and parents. Two parents who have children in Catholic schools were added to the panel. The questionnaire was evaluated for validity by the same expert panel evaluating the test.

Data Collection
The Bishop of the Diocese of Fall River was asked, and he granted permission to utilize the test results of the selected schools' students. He also granted permission to survey the parents of these students (Appendices D, E). The test scores of the selected students were taken from the diocesan-wide testing results.
Since individual parent questionnaires had to be evaluated in relation to the parent's own child's test results, these questionnaires were sent home with the students. A letter of explanation accompanied the questionnaire. Since the selected schools are located in two cities that have significant Portuguese populations, the parent letter and questionnaire were issued in both English and Portuguese (Appendices F, G, H, I). This was not necessary at the testing level since the Portuguese-speaking students are bilingual; they also speak English.

The letter to the parents explained the nature and reason for the study. These parents were also informed of the Institutional Review Board policies and the confidentiality of their responses. Participation in the study was voluntary and was not held against the student if the family did not wish to participate. Since the questionnaires were matched with the parent's own child, the parent had to sign the questionnaire. The letter to the parents explained that an independent researcher would collect the data. The parents were assured that once the questionnaires were matched with the student test scores, by the independent researcher, the names would be eliminated from both the test results and the questionnaires to ensure anonymity of the participants in the study. The parents were asked to have their child return the survey to their teacher in a sealed plain envelope. The independent researcher collected the returned envelopes from the teachers. The data collected from the independent researcher was then correlated into an anonymous format by the researcher and was then utilized for the study.
Reliability and Validity

The assessment instrument was evaluated for validity by a panel of experts comprised of two Catholic School Superintendents from other Dioceses, two practicing Catholic school principals, two directors of parish religious education programs, and the Bishop of the Diocese. The use of an expert panel is appropriate since they have the ability to discern the content validity, as defined by Luzerne Community College (2005), "The ability of a test to measure what it purports to measure." Colorado State University (2005) defines validity as: "The degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure." Since the expert panel evaluated the grade level tests based on specific curriculum guidelines, their expertise enabled them to concur that the tests were valid.

The assessment instrument was also pilot-tested for reliability. The population for the pre-test was selected from schools with multiple sections of grades three, five, and seven. One section of each grade level was designated for the pilot-test with the remaining sections being used in the system-wide testing. The students were from two schools similar to those to be tested in the research project. The students were tested and then re-tested two weeks later to compare the scores for reliability. The data was analyzed utilizing Statistical Analysis for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A total of 104 students were tested and re-tested. The results indicate the three distinct grades and the comparison of means between the two tests.

With a Pearson Correlation of .892 and p < .05 for grade three, a Pearson Correlation of .893 and p < .05 for grade five, and a Pearson Correlation of .784 and p < .05 for grade seven, it was determined that the instrument was reliable. A coefficient
alpha scale was also calculated with the result of an Alpha of .8613; this indicated a high internal consistency within this assessment.

The remaining students were then evaluated in all 23 elementary schools in the Diocese. All students were evaluated, as this was a system-wide assessment of the implementation of the Religion curriculum guidelines approved by the Bishop of the Diocese of Fall River. There were a total of 1,481 students assessed. The scores were then taken from the thirteen schools that were part of the research project. This represented a total of 678 students. Following the testing, a parent questionnaire was sent home with the students. There were 289 surveys returned from a total of 678 parents. This was a return of 42.0%, which was a very good response from the parents. Some parents had children in more than one grade level. If a parent had a child in more than one of the grades tested, the results were recorded for each child and that is the reason for using the number 678 to indicate all the parents.

The questionnaire was evaluated for validity by the same expert panel evaluating the design of the instrument. The questionnaire has been pilot-tested for reliability with parents of the students from schools who were not a part of the research. SPSS was used to determine the reliability of the scales on the survey. A coefficient alpha scale was calculated with the result of an Alpha of .8953; this indicated a high internal consistency in this assessment.

The parent questionnaire utilized Epstein's (1995) six types of parent involvement in education as a framework. In the construction of the parent survey, a cross-reference table was used. The table was utilized to make sure that the survey not only utilized Epstein's six types of parental involvement, but that the other research variables to be
used in the subsidiary research questions were also included. This would ensure that the full range of parental involvement as theoretically proposed by Epstein was captured in the measurement of how parents in the study were involved in their children's education, as it pertained to religious study. Table 1 allowed for a minimum of each survey question to be significant in at least one of the types of involvement paired with at least one of the variables. The research variables used in the table were: (a) direct involvement of parents assisting with their child's religious education, (b) the parents' own involvement in religious activities, and (c) the parental attitudes towards religious education.

Each of the three variables has a minimum of nine questions pertaining to that variable with a high of fourteen questions. The questions from the survey were constructed to be appropriate for each of Epstein's categories. The numbers in Table 1 correspond to the numbered statements from the parent questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Descriptive research was appropriate for the study because the primary intent was to explain the nature of the relationships in the data and not to determine cause and effect.

Different statistical analytical methods were utilized using SPSS Version 11.5 software. Multiple regression was used to answer the primary research question. The question is: "To what extent does parental involvement influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?" The first, second, and third subsidiary questions used simple regression since the twenty-four questions from the parent survey were also utilized for these variables. Subsidiary question 1 asks: "To what extent does the direct
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct involvement of parents assisting students with the child's religious education</th>
<th>The parents' own involvement in religious activities</th>
<th>Parental attitudes towards religious education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>1, 3, 4</td>
<td>1, 3, 5</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>6, 8, 9</td>
<td>6, 7, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10, 11, 13</td>
<td>11, 12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning at Home</td>
<td>14, 15, 16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>17, 18, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21, 22, 24</td>
<td>23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Involvement of parents assisting with their child's religious education influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education? Subsidiary question 2 inquires: “To what extent does the parents' level of religiosity, or participation in religious activities, affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?” Subsidiary question 3
asks: “To what extent do parental attitudes towards religious education affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?”

The fourth subsidiary question used a simple comparison of means. Question 4 queries: “Is there a difference in a child’s religious academic outcomes if the parent(s) is non-Catholic?” The fifth subsidiary question utilized a univariate analysis for the question: “Is there an association between parental reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school and the religious academic outcomes of their child?” The final and sixth subsidiary question uses a Chi square analysis for the question: “Is there an association between parental religious academic background and religious academic outcomes of their child?”
CHAPTER IV
Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the effectiveness of school-based religious education programs utilizing newly adopted curricular guidelines. The study investigated the effect of parental involvement on student achievement.

Specifically, this investigation addressed the following research questions: To what extent does parental involvement influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education? There were six subsidiary research questions to be answered:

1. To what extent does the direct involvement of parents assisting with their child’s religious education influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?

2. To what extent does the parents’ level of religiosity, or participation in religious activities, affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?

3. To what extent do parental attitudes towards religious education affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?

4. Is there a difference in a child’s religious academic outcomes if the parent(s) are non-Catholic?

5. Is there an association between parental reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school and religious academic outcomes of their child?
6. Is there an association between parental religious academic background and religious academic outcomes of their child?

The study was conducted in order to augment research on knowledge-based achievement in religious education in Catholic schools and its relationship to parental involvement. The results could influence a change in the coordination of religious education programs in Catholic schools on a diocesan level. The results may influence the way religious education is taught and organized on a parish education level, along with the incorporation of adult religious education into an all-inclusive diocesan program.

This study is one that could have national implications for Catholic schools and parish religious education. Since the mission of the Diocese of Fall River is consistent with the mission of the National Catholic Education Association, the results of the study could be of value to all diocesan school officials throughout the country. The mission of Catholic schools and parishes is to educate our youth about the Catholic faith. The results of this research should have implications for all Catholic educational leaders as to how Catholic schools and parishes can better accomplish that goal.

As stated in Chapter III, this study used descriptive research to explain the nature of the relationships in the data and not to determine causal relationships. Different statistical analytical methods were utilized using SPSS to determine the predictive power of the elements of Joyce Epstein’s framework for parental involvement as determinants of academic outcomes in the subject of religion. The use of varied statistical techniques allowed the researcher to assess the relationship between the dependent variable of the student Religion outcome grades and selected independent variables that were based on Epstein’s (1995) framework for parental involvement.
Response Rate

Following the diocesan wide testing, a parent questionnaire was sent home with the 678 students from the thirteen schools in the research study. There were 289 surveys returned from the total of 678 parents. Some parents had more than one child in grades three, five, and seven. If a parent had a child in more than one of the grades tested, the results were recorded for each child. With 289 surveys returned, this was a 42.6% return, which is excellent for the purposes of this research.

Comparison of Means

Since only the test scores of those students whose parents returned the survey would be used for the research, a comparison of means was utilized. A random sample of twenty percent of the entire diocesan-wide test scores were utilized. Twenty percent was used, since this number approximated the number of students whose parents returned the survey. A comparison of means indicated that the mean scores from the students whose parents returned the survey were almost identical to the mean scores of the entire Diocesan student population represented by the twenty percent random sampling. These results can be seen in Table 2. Therefore, Table 2 indicates the student mean scores taken from the students whose parents responded to the survey were typical of the overall students from the rest of the Diocese of Fall River. This comparison is important to ascertain that there were no unforeseen variances in the student test scores utilized in the study from those of the entire results of all students tested.
Table 2

Comparison of Means for the Student Test Scores in the Research and the Final

Diocesan-Wide Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Research Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Diocesan Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>10.197</td>
<td>84.71</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1.107</td>
<td>10.730</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>76.37</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>9.318</td>
<td>76.07</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1.054</td>
<td>10.430</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>77.05</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1.104</td>
<td>19.235</td>
<td>77.07</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.970</td>
<td>9.849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of the Survey

The survey was designed to answer the primary research question and the six subsidiary research questions. The first section of the survey asked the parents to rank in descending order, beginning with the number one, the reasons why they sent their child to a Catholic school. The responses to this section were used to answer the fifth subsidiary research question: "Is there an association between parental reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school and the religious academic outcomes of their child?" The next section asked if the person completing the survey if they were Catholic or non-Catholic. These responses were used to answer the fourth subsidiary research question: "Is there a difference in a child's religious academic outcomes if the parent(s) is non-Catholic?" The next section of the survey asked the respondent to list the number of years that they attended either a Catholic school or a parish religious education program. These
responses were used to answer the sixth subsidiary research question: "Is there an
association between parental religious background and religious academic outcomes of
their child?"  

The last section of the survey asked the parents to answer twenty-four individual
questions utilizing a Likert Scale. The twenty-four responses were utilized to address the
main research question along with the first, second, and third subsidiary questions. The
primary research question was: "To what extent does parental involvement influence the
academic outcomes of students in religious education?" The first subsidiary question
was: "To what extent does the direct involvement of parents assisting with their child's
religious education influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?"
The second subsidiary question was: "Is there an association between the parents' level
of religiosity, or participation in religious activities, and the religious academic outcomes
of their child?" The third subsidiary question was: "Is there an association between
parental attitudes towards religious education and the religious academic outcomes of
their child?"

In measuring parental involvement in a child's religious education, this study took
into account Epstein's six dimensions of parental involvement: parenting,
communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with
community. The researcher wanted to ensure that the full range of parental involvement
as theoretically proposed by Epstein was captured in the measurement of how parents in
the study were involved in their children's education as it pertained to religious study.
The utilization of mapping allowed the subsidiary research questions one, two, and three
to be answered in conjunction with Epstein's categories. The expert panel (please refer
to Chapter III for a detailed explanation) that constructed the survey according to Epstein’s six categories of parental involvement was also cognizant of the subsidiary research questions. The expert panel therefore created questions that would not only be relevant to the six categories of parental involvement, but would also incorporate the concerns of the subsidiary questions. The questions in the parent survey are utilized in more than one research question. Therefore, the categories were not mutually exclusive categories.

Research Question

The main research question asked: "To what extent does parental involvement influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?" Regression analysis was used to answer this first question. The dependent variable is the student test scores. The independent variables are represented by Epstein’s (1995) six categories of parental involvement. The parent survey was developed to include various questions pertaining to each of the six categories. Therefore, independent variables were constructed for the six categories based upon the specific statements written for each category. The assumption was that there would be a correlation between the amount of parental involvement of the parents and the religious academic outcomes of their child.

Questions one, two, three, four, and five were constructed for the first category called parenting. Questions six, seven, eight, and nine measured the category of communicating. Questions 10, 11, 12, and 13 are for volunteering. Learning at home utilized questions 14, 15, and 16. Questions 17, 18, 19, and 20 measured decision making, and questions 21, 22, 23, and 24 measured collaborating with community.
The dependent variable of student test scores was regressed upon the six
independent variables taken from Epstein’s (1995) categories of parental involvement.
There were 289 questionnaires recorded and correlation. Table 3 indicates the Pearson
correlation values. In Table 3 the Epstein categories are listed as: Var. 1 = parenting,
Var. 2 = communicating, Var. 3 = volunteering, Var. 4 = learning at home, Var. 5 =
decision-making, and Var. 6 = collaborating with community.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Test scores</th>
<th>Var. 1</th>
<th>Var. 2</th>
<th>Var. 3</th>
<th>Var. 4</th>
<th>Var. 5</th>
<th>Var. 6</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test scores</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.104*</td>
<td>.181*</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.100*</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var. 1</td>
<td>.605*</td>
<td>.285*</td>
<td>.700*</td>
<td>.495*</td>
<td>.625*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var. 2</td>
<td>.368*</td>
<td>.528*</td>
<td>.541*</td>
<td>.513*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Var. 3</td>
<td>.177*</td>
<td>.394*</td>
<td>.401*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>.487*</td>
<td>.509*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.443*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var. 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
In Table 3, all of the Pearson correlation values are positive. This would indicate a positive relationship among all the variables. Assuming that a Pearson value > .50 indicates a moderate positive relationship, the table indicates that parenting has a moderate relationship with communicating, learning at home, and collaborating with the community in this correlation analysis; they are all statistically significant with $p < .05$. Communicating has a moderate relationship with learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with community, and they are all statistically significant with $p < .05$. Learning at home has a moderate relationship with collaborating with the community, and it is statistically significant with $p < .05$.

Because there is a problem of multicollinearity between variable one and variables 2, 3, and 4, the variable of parenting was eliminated from the model. The regression analysis indicated an $r$ square of .036 for the model which indicates that 3.6% of the variance of test scores is explained by the variables. Although this is a low percentage, any change that affects the academic outcomes of the students is important for the study.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the model is indicated in Table 4. In Table 4, the ANOVA analysis indicates that the model is not statistically significant with $F(5, 288) = 2.098$, $p > .05$. Therefore, the model of the parent responses to the six aspects of Epstein's parental involvement, approaches being a good predictor of their child's religious academic achievement.

The Beta allows the researcher to determine the relative contribution of each of the independent variables in predicting the religious academic performance of the students. Table 5 assesses the Beta values for each of the variables. Table 5 indicates that the strongest positive predictor of religious academic performance is volunteering.
Table 4

Analysis of Variance for the Extent of Parental Involvement Influencing the Academic Outcomes in Religious Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Involvement Variables</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.998</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td></td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Beta for Epstein’s Six Categories of Parental Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.990</td>
<td>3.418</td>
<td>21.942</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>2.510</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning at Home</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with Community</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>-.545</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is also the only predictor that is statistically significant with a Beta of .169, a t value of 2.510 and p < .013. The Beta of .169 indicates that an increased level in the volunteering of the parents will increase the level of student academic achievement or test scores.

Subsidiary Research Question # 1

Subsidiary research question 1 asks: "To what extent does the direct involvement of parents assisting with their child’s religious education influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?" It was determined that statements 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, and 23 relate to this research question. Once again, these questions were mapped to Epstein's six categories of parental involvement. In this regression, the dependent variable is the student test scores and the independent variable will be the above-mentioned statements.

Before analyzing the regression model, a frequency chart will give further insight into this research question. What is important here is the frequency chart for the combined questions for this particular research question. The frequency responses for these questions are recorded in Table 6. Table 6 is very interesting; the number and percentage cells on the extremities are almost identical, just as the two middle cells are equally matching. The results of the table indicate that parents have definite opinions about direct parental involvement with their child's religious education.
Table 6

Direct Involvement of Parents Assisting with Their Child's Religious Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>7245</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Always</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4046</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simple Regression Model for Subsidiary Research Question #1

The dependent variable of student test scores was regressed upon the independent variable of direct involvement of parents assisting students with the child's religious education. This independent variable was created using statements 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, and 23 from the parent questionnaire. The $r$ square of .006 indicates that only .6% of the variance in the test scores is explained by the independent variable which is a very minimal result. The analysis of variance is shown in Table 7. Table 7, which shows the ANOVA table, indicates that the model is not statistically significant with $F (1, 287) = 1.661, p < .05$. Therefore, direct involvement of parents assisting with their child's religious education is not a good predictor of their child's religious academic achievement.
Table 7

Analysis of Variance for the Extent of Direct Involvement of Parents Assisting with Their Child’s Religious Education on Student Religious Academic Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Parental Involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.661</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td></td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsidiary Research Question # 2

Research question 2 asks: “To what extent does the parents’ level of religiosity, or participation in religious activities, affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?” Regression analysis will once again be used to answer this question, since the independent variable will consist of statements from the parent questionnaire. Statements 1, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13, 21, 22, and 24 relate to this research question. These questions were taken from the mapping that was done with Epstein’s six categories of parental involvement. Before analyzing the regression model, a frequency chart will further help the investigation of the research question. Table 8 is a model summary of frequencies. The frequency chart in Table 8 indicates there is a fair amount of involvement in the parents’ level of religiosity, or participation in religious activities. The frequencies show
that 66% of the parents responded usually or almost always to the nine statements used in this research question.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Always</td>
<td>1461</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3468</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Simple Regression Model for Subsidiary Research Question #2**

The dependent variable of student test scores was regressed upon the independent variable of the parents' own involvement in religious activities. Once again, the statements mapped for this particular independent variable were # 1, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13, 21, 22, and 24. The $r$ square of .014 indicates that 1.4% of the variance of the test scores is explained by the independent variable of the parents' own involvement in religious activities. Table 9 indicates the analysis of variance for this simple regression. The ANOVA results in Table 9 indicate that the model is statistically significant with $F(1,287) = 3.951, p < .05$. Therefore, the parents' own involvement in religious activities is a good predictor of their child's religious academic achievement.
### Table 9

**Analysis of Variance for the Parents' Own Involvement in Religious Activities**

*Influencing the Academic Outcomes in Religious Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents Own Involvement in Religious Activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.951</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Beta determined the relative contribution of this independent variable in predicting the religious academic performance of the students. Table 10 gives the Beta for this variable.

### Table 10

**Beta for Parents Own Involvement in Religious Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>74.319</td>
<td>2.650</td>
<td>28.048</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Own Involvement in Religious Activities</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>1.988</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 indicates that the parents own involvement in religious activities impacts positively religious academic performance. The Beta of .117 indicates that an increase in the parents' own involvement in religious activities will have an increase on student academic achievement or test scores. This predictor was also statistically significant with \( p < .05 \).

Subsidiary Research Question #3

Research question 3 asks: "To what extent do parental attitudes towards religious education affect the religious academic outcomes of their child?" Once again, regression analysis will be used to answer this question. The statements were mapped with Epstein's model for parental involvement and questions 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 23, and 24 were appropriate for this particular independent variable. A frequency table of combined questions will give further insight into this particular research question. Table 11 indicates these frequencies. Frequency Table 11 indicates a moderate amount of parental involvement with 57.5\% of the parents responding either usually or almost always.

Simple Regression Model for Subsidiary Research Question #3

The dependent variable of student test scores was regressed upon the independent variable of parental attitudes towards religious education. The \( r \) square of .017 indicates that 1.7\% of the variance in the dependent variable of student test scores is explained by the independent variable of parental attitudes towards religious education. The analysis of variance is described in Table 12.
Table 11

Parental Attitudes Towards Religious Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Always</td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2601</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

Analysis of Variance for the Parental Attitudes Towards Religious Education Influencing the Academic Outcomes in Religious Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Attitudes Towards Religious Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.974</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 12 ANOVA indicates that the model is statistically significant with $F(1, 287) = 4.974, p < .028$. Therefore, parental attitudes towards religious education are a good predictor of their child’s religious academic achievement.
The Beta allowed the researcher to determine the contribution of this independent variable in predicting the religious academic performance of the students. Table 13 assesses the Betas for each of this independent variable.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>73.16</td>
<td>2.909</td>
<td>25.151</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Attitudes Towards Religious Education</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>2.208</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 indicates that parental attitudes towards religious education are a positive predictor of student religious academic performance. Also, this predictor is statistically significant with a Beta of .129, a t value of 2.208, and \( p < .028 \). The Beta of .129 indicates that an increase in the parental attitudes towards religious education will increase student academic achievement or test scores.

Subsidiary Research Question # 4

Research question 4 asks: “Is there a difference in a child’s religious academic outcomes if the parent(s) are non-Catholic?” A comparison of means is appropriate for this research question. Since there were only 13 non-Catholic parents who responded to
the questionnaire compared to 276 Catholics, it will be necessary to use random sampling for the Catholic parent variable. Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Ten Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Catholic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>80.58</td>
<td>2.431</td>
<td>8.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>79.52</td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td>10.494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% of Catholics</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>78.45</td>
<td>2.295</td>
<td>12.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% of Catholics</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>78.74</td>
<td>3.616</td>
<td>14.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores from Table 14 indicate that there is not much significance whether the parents are Catholic or non-Catholic regarding a child’s success in religious academic achievement.

Subsidiary Research Question # 5

Research question 5 reads: “Is there an association between parental reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school and religious academic outcomes of their child?”

An SPSS univariate analysis was used to analyze this question. The first data considered was the reasons why parents sent their children to Catholic schools. Tables 15, 16, 17
indicate the three main reasons stated on the questionnaire: religion, academics, and discipline.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17

**Ranking of Reasons why Parents Send Children to Catholic Schools: Discipline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>97.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Tables 15, 16, and 17, the parents were asked to rank order the reasons why they chose to send their child to a Catholic school with 1 being their first choice, 2 being their second choice, etc. Although there are three categories listed, there were four ranking numbers, since some parents indicated other reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school. That, at times, made one of the three named categories the fourth choice. In each category, the number of first, second, third, and fourth choice answers are listed. Some parents listed more than one category as a one, which explains the discrepancy in the fact that there are 360 number one answers. However, the individual breakdown of categories equals the 289 respondents in each category.

Since some parents did not follow the directions and listed multiples for first, second, or third choice, the variables were obtained from those parents who followed the correct procedure. A One way ANOVA was performed with the new data. Table 18 indicates the number of parents who listed only one particular response as a first choice.
Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>80.52</td>
<td>10.628</td>
<td>1.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78.50</td>
<td>10.314</td>
<td>1.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline/Safe Environment</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>79.88</td>
<td>11.606</td>
<td>1.236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 was not statistically significant with $F(3,297) = .520, p = .596$ or $p > .05$.
Therefore, there is not a significant association between reasons parents have for sending their child to a Catholic school and religious academic outcomes.

Subsidiary Research Question #6

Subsidiary research question 6 asks: “Is there an association between parental religious academic background and religious academic outcomes of their child? A crosstabs Chi-Square test was utilized to analyze the data. Four crosstabs were created for the analysis. There was a crosstab constructed for those parents who had attended a Catholic elementary school, another crosstab was for those who attended a Catholic high school, and there was a crosstab created for those parents who attended a Catholic college or graduate school. Finally, there was a crosstab formulated for those parents who attended parish religious education programs, or Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes, as they were called.
For the crosstabs, the test results from the children were placed into quartiles. The test scores for the first quartile ranged from 42.9 to 73.3. The second quartile scores were from 73.4 to 80.0, the third quartile was from 80.1 to 86.7, and the last quartile was from 86.8 to 100.

Using quartile test scores from the children and creating three parent groupings created the first crosstabs for those parents attending Catholic elementary schools. The first group consisted of parents who had not attended a Catholic elementary school, and that number totaled 139. The second group of 26 considered those parents who attended Catholic elementary school from one to four years. And the last group consisted of those parents who attended a Catholic elementary school for five or more years.

The first crosstabs in Table 19 was constructed using the student test score quartiles and three groupings of parents. There were those parents who did not attend a Catholic elementary school, those parents who attended from one to four years, and those parents who attended from five to nine years. Table 19 was not statistically significant with a Pearson $r$ square value of 3.181 and a $p > .05$. What was interesting to note, however, was the fact that in all three parental groupings there were a higher percentage of students in the first, or lower, quartile of test scores. It might have been assumed that if a parent had five to nine years of formal training in a Catholic elementary school that their child might have scored at a higher level. However, for those parents who had five to nine years of training, 25.8% of their children were in the lowest quartile with only 19.4% scoring in the highest quartile.
Table 19

Chi-Square Test for Parent Catholic Elementary School Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Quartile Test Scores</th>
<th>Parent Catholic Elementary School Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>did not attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.9 – 73.3</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.4 – 80.0</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.1 – 86.7</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.8 – 100.0</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second crosstabs in Table 20 was constructed using the student test score quartiles and two groupings of parents. There were those parents who did not attend a Catholic high school and those parents who did attend.
Table 20

**Chi-Square Test for Parent Catholic High School Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Quartile Test Scores</th>
<th>Parent Catholic High School Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>did not attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.9 – 73.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.4 – 80.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.1 – 86.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.8 – 100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 was not statistically significant with a Pearson chi-square value of 3.183 and a \( p > .05 \). Looking at the individual cells for the chi-square, it was interesting to note that 32% of the children’s scores were in the lowest quartile for those whose parents did not
attend a Catholic high school. For those children whose parents did attend a Catholic high school, 22.5% of the scores were in the lowest quartile.

In the third crosstabs in Table 21 there were two parent groupings. There were those parents who did not attend a Catholic college and those parents who attended a Catholic college from one to six years. Table 21 was not statistically significant with a Pearson chi-square value of .704 and a $p > .05$. Looking at the individual cells, the children from parents who never went to a Catholic college had 28.5% of their scores in the lowest quartile and 21.3% in the highest quartile. On the other hand, the children of parents who attended a Catholic college had 34.6% of their scores in the lowest quartile and just 15.4% of their scores in the highest quartile. This result would encourage further study about these outcomes.

The fourth crosstabs in Table 22 was constructed for those parents who attended parish religious education programs. Once again the student test score quartiles were utilized and there were four groupings for the parents. The parents were grouped into those who never attended a parish religious education program, those parents who attended from one to four years, those who attended for five to eight years, and those parents who attended for 9-15 years. Table 22 was not significant with a Pearson chi-square value of 4.110 and a $p > .05$. The percentages in the individual cells appeared normal. Once again a possible exception may be in the parent group with the most religious education training. The children of parents who had the most parish religious education training scored 32.8% in the lowest quartile and only 20.7% in the highest quartile. Once again, as in the scores of the children whose parents attended a Catholic
college, there appears to be an inverse result on the test scores in regard to the amount of formal religious education on the part of the parent.

Table 21

*Chi-Square Test for Parent Catholic College Attendance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Quartile Test Scores</th>
<th>Parent Catholic College Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>did not attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.9 – 73.3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.4 – 80.0</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.1 – 86.7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.8 – 100.0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 22

**Chi-Square Test for Parent Parish Religious Education Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Quartile Test Scores</th>
<th>Parent Parish Religious Education Attendance did not attend</th>
<th>1-4 yrs</th>
<th>5-6 yrs</th>
<th>6-10 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42.9 – 73.3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.4 – 80.0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.1 – 86.7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.8 – 100.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Within Group</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The analysis of the data shown indicated that the research question was not statistically significant with $F(5,288) = 2.098, p < .066$. The research question asks: “To
what extent does parental involvement influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?" The research question utilized Epstein's (1995) six categories of parental involvement. However, the research study shows an association between parental involvement and student religious academic outcomes.

The Epstein category of parental volunteering was a positive predictor of student religious academic achievement ($\beta = .170, p < .012$). The other five categories were not statistically significant. Two of the subsidiary research questions were also statistically significant. The second subsidiary question of the parents own involvement in religious activities ($\beta = .117, p < .048$) was another positive predictor of student religious academic achievement. The third subsidiary question of parental attitudes towards religious education ($\beta = .129, p < .028$) was also a positive predictor of student religious academic achievement. There was no statistically significant association with the other subsidiary questions with student religious academic outcomes.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of parental involvement on the academic achievement of students in religious education in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River. The intention was to describe and analyze the effectiveness of school-based religious education programs utilizing the newly adopted curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Fall River.

The primary research question stated: "To what extent does parental involvement influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education?" In order to answer this question the researcher had a 24-item questionnaire developed by a panel of experts. The panel formulated questions for the survey based on Epstein’s (1995) six categories of parental involvement. The purpose of the survey was to examine correlations between any of the six types of parental involvement and student religious academic achievement. Six hundred seventy-eight questionnaires were sent home with the students and 289 questionnaires were returned.

The survey collected data not only from Epstein’s (1995) six categories of parental involvement, but also from other subsidiary research questions. Analyzing this data would further enhance the study of parental involvement and its effect on student religious academic outcomes. Therefore, the parent questionnaire was the instrument used to investigate the major research question and the six subsidiary research questions.
Research Question

The main research question investigated the extent to which parental involvement affects religious academic outcomes of the child. Based on the categories established by Epstein (1995), the research showed there was a correlation between parental involvement and religious academic outcomes that approaches statistical significance. The category of parenting was eliminated from the regression model because there is a problem of multicollinearity between aspects one and two, four, and six. The regression analysis indicated that the five categories of parental involvement accounted for 3.6% of the variance of test scores. Although this is a small percentage, the number approaches statistical significance and does show an association between parental involvement and religious academic outcomes. What is important for Catholic education is the fact that it is essential to develop any demonstrated method of improving religious academic achievement. Since parental involvement approaches statistical significance, it is imperative that schools further develop this aspect of a student's educational program.

Two issues emerged from the results of the regression model used to analyze this research question. The first issue indicates parental volunteering as a significant predictor of student academic achievement in religion. Although the model containing these six variables of parental involvement is not statistically significant, the category of volunteering is statistically significant as a predictor in the model. The other five categories were not statistically significant. Volunteering is also the strongest positive predictor. What this phenomena appears to indicate is that actions are stronger than words. Those parents whose priority is volunteering have an effect on their child’s religious academic outcomes. Perforning some of the expected responsibilities
associated with the Catholic religion, such as attendance at weekly Mass, do not seem to be good predictors of religious academic outcomes. Those students who witness their parents going beyond the required responsibilities of their faith, scored higher in the test measuring religious academic outcomes.

The second issue indicated that parenting and home instruction are not statistically significant as predictors in this model. In fact, the variable of parenting actually had a negative Beta value. This finding is not inconsistent with other research conducted in this area. Catsambis (1998), referenced in Chapter II, indicated that there were some negative effects of parents' involvement on students' achievement associated with parents' close supervision of homework. An earlier study by Desimone (1993) found that parents helping with homework actually associated negatively with student achievement. Desimone suggested that helping children with their homework everyday might lead to decreasing maturity growth. This behavior could also be considered developmentally inappropriate and actually lead to negative outcomes.

The survey questions for parents used in this research study had direct references to parents helping their children with their religion homework. Epstein's (1995) categories of parenting and learning at home address this issue. In fact, all of the questions used for both of these sections could be related to parental help. The parents indicated, whether directly or indirectly, they assisted with materials taught in school. All of these factors relate to parental assistance with the child's homework. This information allows for measurement of literal or implied parental involvement. The important research issue, however, relates to the research question itself. According to this particular research study, there is evidence indicating that parental involvement does in
fact influence the academic outcomes of students in religious education. Epstein's (1995) model of parental involvement is a good predictor of religious academic outcomes. The model was statistically significant.

Subsidiary Research Question #1

The subsidiary questions were created in order to include different types of parental involvement. This inclusion would assure that the topic of parental involvement was researched using different approaches. This particular variable was created using the parent questionnaire and was mapped to Epstein's (1995) categories of parental involvement. This first subsidiary question examined the extent to which direct involvement of parents influenced the child's religious academic outcomes. Regression analysis was used and it indicated that this variable was not statistically significant. Therefore, direct involvement of parents assisting with their child's religious education is not a good predictor of religious academic outcomes.

The fact that this subsidiary question is not statistically significant is consistent with the Epstein (1995) categories of parenting and learning at home. In the mapping process, one-half of the questions utilized for this variable were mapped with the Epstein categories of parenting and learning at home. The parent survey questions that were linked with this variable from Epstein's parenting and learning at home categories included some questions indicating direct parental involvement with their child's homework. Therefore, the research indicating negative results due to parental involvement with their child's homework might be expected. Both Epstein's (1995) variable and the subsidiary research question confirm these findings.
Subsidiary Research Question # 2

This research question also used the parent questionnaire to create a variable to investigate this subsidiary research question. The question investigated the extent to which the parents’ level of religiosity, or participation in religious activities, affected the religious academic outcomes of their child. Regression analysis was utilized to indicate its significance as a predictor of religious academic outcomes. This variable was found to be a good predictor because it was statistically significant. The $r$ square indicated 1.4% of the variance in the test scores. This variance is explained by this variable. Although 1.4% of the variance is not a high percentage, the level of parents’ participation in religious activities does positively affect student test scores.

It is noteworthy to observe the relationship of this variable to Epstein’s (1995) category of volunteering, which was statistically significant. Three of the four questions from the parent survey were created for the category of volunteering. These questions were utilized for this variable. This subsidiary question of parent participation in religious activities also lends credence to the statement that actions speak louder than words. This research indicates that students viewing their own parents participating in religious activities affect them in a positive fashion concerning their own religious academic outcomes.

Subsidiary Research Question # 3

This question asked the extent to which parental attitudes towards religious education affected the religious academic outcomes of their child. The appropriate questions were used from the parent questionnaire to create a variable utilizing a simple
regression model. The results indicated that in fact parents’ attitudes towards religious education accounted for 1.7% of the variance in the student test scores. This 1.7% variance was also statistically significant.

This finding coincides with the other two statistically significant variables of volunteering and the parents’ own involvement in religious activities. This finding is significant in determining the effect of parental involvement on student religious academic achievement. This category extends beyond ordinary practices of parental involvement in their own religion. Attitude is such an important part of the learning process that it is predictable to observe that the parents’ attitudes affect the child. Therefore, when parents are involved in behaviors that indicate a good attitude towards religious education there is a corresponding positive effect on the child’s religious academic outcomes.

**Subsidiary Research Question # 4**

The fourth question was a simple correlation. The purpose of this question was to determine whether the Catholicity of the parent(s) had an effect on religious academic outcomes of their child. The results indicated that it did not matter whether the parents were Catholic or non-Catholic. The mean scores were similar at all three grade levels tested. However, since only 13 non-Catholic parents returned the survey, the results could be skewed. The researcher therefore utilized the total population of Catholic respondents, a 10% random sampling of Catholic respondents and a 5% random sampling of Catholic respondents. The random sampling was utilized to ensure a more accurate comparison of means. In all cases the mean scores were almost identical.
The percent of non-Catholic parents responding to the survey is not indicative of the school population. The schools average approximately 13% of the population as non-Catholic. Since only 13 of the 289 returned surveys were from non-Catholics, this represented only 4.5% of the parents. The researcher could infer different causes for this low response rate. One explanation could be that some of the questions were related explicitly to the Catholic religion. Therefore, since some of the questions did not apply to non-Catholics, there could have been hesitation about completing the survey.

However, another explanation might be that religion is not a priority for non-Catholic parents sending their child to a Catholic school. Therefore, these non-Catholic parents did not want to complete the survey. Evidence of this fact could be inferred from the thirteen non-Catholics who completed the survey. When asked to rank the reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school only two, or 15%, of the non-Catholic responders ranked religion as the number one reason. This number of responses is half of the percentage of the ranking derived from the total responses. The results of the entire population indicated a 30% response rate naming religion as the number one choice for sending their child to a Catholic school. This factor should not compromise the results of the subsidiary research question, since the ranking of religion as the third reason for sending their child to a Catholic school is consistent with Catholic parents.

Whatever the reason might be for the low percentage of non-Catholic responders, there does not seem to be a correlation between children whose parents are either Catholic or non-Catholic.
Subsidiary Research Question # 5

This question researched whether there was an association between parental reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school and the religious academic outcomes of their child. One of the findings of note was that the survey of this parent population mirrored the latest nation-wide survey of parents of Catholic school children. The national survey had parents ranking discipline/safe environment as the primary reason for sending their child to a Catholic School. These parents listed academics as their second choice and religion as the third reason. The parents in this research study also ranked discipline/safe environment first, academics second, followed by religion as the third reason.

There were 289 total survey responses, however, some parents ranked more than one category with the same number. After eliminating these duplicated survey results, there were a total of 200 surveys that followed the directions and ranked the reasons in the correct manner. Of these proper responses 44.5% of the parents ranked discipline/safe environment as their first choice for sending their child to a Catholic school. There were thirty-four percent of the parents who listed academics as their first choice, and only 21.5% listed religion as their first choice.

The important issue for this research was whether the reasons for sending their child to a Catholic school affected the academic outcomes of their child. Although there were some slight differences in mean scores, the ANOVA analysis indicated that the comparison of variation was not statistically significant. Therefore, there was no significant association between reasons parents have for sending their child to a Catholic school and the religious academic outcomes.
Subsidiary Research Question # 6

The sixth subsidiary question was used to research whether there was an association between parental religious academic background and the religious academic outcomes of their child. Chi-Square tests were constructed for different categories of parental religious education background. The test scores were grouped into quartiles.

Since some of the parent categories contained very few numbers, the length of time spent in Catholic schools or parish religious education programs were also grouped. Four different Chi-Square tests were conducted examining parental background in Catholic education. There were three levels of Catholic school background: elementary, high school, and college. There was one variable for those who attended parish based religious education programs. None of the Chi-Square tests were statistically significant and therefore there is not substantial evidence to conclude that there is an association between the parent’s religious academic background and their child’s religious academic outcomes.

Although none of the Chi-Square tests were statistically significant, there are some notable observations. In all four test results, there was a higher percentage of students who tested in the lowest quartile than those who tested in the highest quartile. This observation might have been an expected result for those students whose parents had no formal religious education background. However, it could have been speculated that the children of those parents with significant formal religious training would have scored at a higher level than was evidenced. This finding would lend further credence to the fact that the Chi-Square tests were not statistically significant and that the religious education
background of the parent is not associated with the religious academic outcomes of their child.

Conclusions

... in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life.

-- Pope Paul VI (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965)

Conclusions of the study can only be significant by returning to the introduction of this research study. The words of Pope Paul VI are as important to the conclusions drawn from the study as they are to the introduction of the topic. Once again, the primary purpose of Catholic schools is to teach the Word of the Lord to the students who enroll in those schools. Therefore, the underlying reason for conducting the study was to improve the religious academic outcomes of the students in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River.

The stated purpose of the study was to describe and analyze the effectiveness of school-based religious education programs utilizing the newly adopted curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Fall River. The stated problem was to investigate the effect of parental involvement on the academic achievement of students in religious education in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River. The effects of parental involvement on religious academic achievement was chosen because of the plethora of research showing strong evidence that parental involvement does have a positive effect on student
academic outcomes in *general*. Therefore, it was important to investigate whether parental involvement also had a positive relationship in the specific subject area of religion.

The research concludes that parental involvement does have a positive effect on a child's religious academic outcomes or test scores. This conclusion was reached using a parental survey utilizing Epstein's (1995) six categories of parental involvement. The survey questions were also mapped to three other variables in order to enhance the research on parental involvement. The research indicated that the scope of influence is consistent only in the areas where the parents extend themselves in their own lives in relation to their own religiosity. It appears that actions speak louder than words. The implications are that children's test scores are associated with their parents' outward actions. Students' academic religious outcomes are affected by observing their parents volunteering, praying on their own or with the family, discussing their religious beliefs, and other such outward signs of religious parental values.

It is also important to note that a child's religious academic outcomes are not associated with the parent's religion. Since the Lord told us to go forward and teach all men, then we should not limit ourselves to having schools strictly for students who have Catholic parents. The children of non-Catholic parents are succeeding in the area of religious academic outcomes.

Research also indicated there was no significant association with parents assisting students with the religious education and the religious academic outcomes of their child. There was no significant association with reasons for sending a child to a Catholic school
and the student’s test results in religion. There was also no association with the parents’ religious education background and the children’s test results in Religion.

Recommendations

As long as there are Catholic schools in existence, it is essential that they remain true to their mission. From the very beginning, Catholic schools were established in the United States to teach students the tenets of the Catholic religion. Therefore, it is imperative to continue to research the most productive methods of achieving that goal.

Since this study was limited in many areas, further research should be conducted in the area of parental involvement and the effect on the religious academic outcomes of their children. Studies should be conducted to investigate the current religious academic programs that exist in our Catholic elementary schools. These studies could also be expanded to include secondary school religious studies.

The following are recommendations for further research. These recommendations should enhance this study in order for the dioceses to make further judgments concerning their religious education programs:

1. This study was conducted without considering the diagnostic academic abilities of the students. It is recommended the study be repeated with the ability levels of the students identified as a factor in comparing test results.

2. This study was conducted without consideration of teacher demographics. That is, the experience, religious academic background, and classroom management
skills of the teachers. It is recommended that the study be repeated with the teacher demographics considered as one of the variables.

3. It is recommended that the research be repeated for the fifth grade students when they are in the seventh grade. The research should also be repeated for the third grade students when they are in the fifth and seventh grades. These results will provide data for a longitudinal study.

4. Since there was a minimal response from non-Catholic parents, future research should focus on attempting to illicit a better response from the non-Catholic population.

5. It is recommended that a future study incorporate student responses as to why they value, or do not value, Religion as an academic subject.

6. It is recommended that a future study incorporate student responses to the value they place on the involvement of their parents in helping them in the area of religious education. This study should include the influence the students feel their parents have on their religious development with particular emphasis on the impact exerted by the parent’s own religious involvement and activities.

7. It is recommended that a future study be conducted with other dioceses to increase sample size of the population used in this study and to further enhance the research.
The aim of this study was to improve Catholic education in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River. The diocesan mission for Catholic education recognizes and supports the parent as the primary educator. Parental involvement was chosen because of the significant amount of research that indicated that parental involvement improved student learning. The research in this study supported the fact that parental involvement is associated with increased religious academic achievement. Although the association was not as strong as one might expect, the results still show a positive relationship. Therefore, parental involvement is an area to be pursued to further religious education.

This study should therefore encourage increased parental involvement in our schools in relation to religious education. Programs should specifically target areas of parental involvement in relation to volunteerism. These programs should encourage the parents to be involved in religious activities in the school. These two areas of volunteerism and parental involvement in religious activities were specifically statistically significant in the study. When initiating local educational programs, the schools should target these specific areas of increased parental involvement in school activities as well as volunteerism.

This study should impact parish religious education programs. Parental involvement at this level might be more significant. Since there is a grade on the students' report card at the school level, there is justification to do well in the subject of Religion. Students may study the subject of religion in the Catholic schools for the report card value. Parish religious education programs in the diocese do not test or grade the students. Therefore, it could be of significant value to do a research study on this parish
population to compare that research to the research in this particular study, which relates strictly to Catholic schools. The findings could result in more effective programs not only in the schools, but also in parish religious education programs.
REFERENCES


DC: National Catholic Education Association.


critical to student achievement. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.


Appendix A
Grade 3 Test
1. We pray to Mary when we say the Rosary.
2. During the Mass the bread and wine is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.
3. Mary is the Mother of God.
4. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive Jesus.
5. The Holy Spirit came to the Apostles on Pentecost.
6. Jesus' life is an example of how we should live.
7. There are nine Sacraments.
8. The symbol of the Holy Spirit is the Rosary.
9. The Mass was first said at the Last Supper.
10. Baptism welcomes a person into the Christian Community.
11. Holy Water is a symbol used during Baptism.
12. We meet Jesus in a special way in the Sacraments.
13. It is all right to go to Mass only on Easter and Christmas.
14. Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit.
15. All people are deserving of respect.
16. Christians only have to take care of other Christians.
17. When we give to the poor, we are doing God's work.
18. Jesus wants us to pray from our hearts.
19. Prayer is anytime we talk to God.
20. Reconciliation celebrates God's forgiveness.
21. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are the three persons of the Holy Trinity.
22. We gather as a community on Saturday evening or on Sunday morning to worship God.
23. The day the disciples received the Holy Spirit is called Easter.
24. The Gospels can be found in the New Testament.
25. We listen to stories from the Bible at Mass.
26. Jesus sinned just like us.
27. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation Jesus forgives our sins.
28. St. Peter was the first to offer the Eucharist to the apostles.
29. Saying hurtful words on purpose is a sin.
30. Jesus loves sinners.
Appendix B

Grade 5 Test
1. "Go in peace" begins the celebration of Mass.
2. A Catholic marriage is a covenant between a man, a woman, and God.
3. A person can receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick more than once.
4. A person seriously injured in a car accident may receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
5. A woman may receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
6. Anointing is part of the baptismal celebration.
7. Anointing of the Sick is the only Sacrament of Healing.
8. As Catholics we believe that the Sacrament of Matrimony is a lifelong commitment.
9. At Confirmation we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
10. Baptismal promises are renewed during the celebration of Confirmation.
11. Cheating on a test is an example of a bad choice.
12. Confirmation completes the sacraments of Initiation.
13. Confession means your sins have been forgiven.
14. Informal prayer is talking to God in your own words.
15. It is okay to make fun of a person if the person laughs about it.
16. Jesus was baptized by St. Francis.
17. Laying on of Hands is one of the signs of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
18. Matrimony is one of the Sacraments of Service.
19. Olive oil is used to anoint the candidate at Confirmation.
20. Only babies can be baptized.
21. Original sin was cleansed at Baptism.
22. Psalms are given out on the Sunday before Easter.
23. Roman Catholic priests can get married.
24. The gospel is read during the liturgy of the Eucharist.
25. The gospel story of the ten lepers relates to the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.
26. The host and wine become the body and blood of Jesus during the Prayer of Consecration.

27. The Mass is the greatest prayer of the Church.

28. The Responsorial Psalm follows the first reading.

29. The three kinds of ordained ministries are deacon, priests, and lectors.

30. The white garment received in Baptism is one of the sacramentals.

31. There are five types of prayer: petition, adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and sacramental.

32. There are four kinds of mysteries of the Rosary: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous.

33. We use the Commandments to examine our conscience.

34. You can date other people when you are married.

35. You can only pray at Church.

36. You only receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation once.
Appendix C
Grade 7 Test
Grade 7 Test

1. Jesus used Old Testament statements to prove he was the Son of God.
2. Joseph was Jesus' natural father.
3. Oral tradition is a body of stories that has been passed down by word of mouth. Before the Apostles wrote the Gospels, people told stories about God and all he did for them.
4. Passover is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the Jewish people's escape from Egypt.
5. Jesus experienced temptation but he did not sin.
6. Jesus was both human and divine.
7. Asking God to forgive our sins is a sign of our love for God.
8. Jesus performed the miracle at the wedding of Cana at the request of Elizabeth.
9. Jesus was a prominent figure of the Old Testament.
10. Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel who told her she was chosen to bear the son of God.
11. The "Triduum" refers to three days: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil).
12. The Ascension is the celebration of Jesus' rising from the dead.
13. The Gospels tell us exactly what Jesus looked like.
14. The Sermon on the Mount consists of teachings that Jesus gave his followers including the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer.
15. When Jesus was young, he went with Mary and Joseph to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication.
16. Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.
17. Savior, a title for Jesus, means "anointed one."
18. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.
19. Jesus' first miracle was the miracle of the loaves and fishes.
20. The miracles were manifestations of Jesus' divinity.
22. The Good Samaritan parable teaches us that all people deserve our respect and love regardless of race, religion, and culture.
23. Prayer is a gift that connects us to God.
24. The devil tempted Jesus by promising him all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus overcame this temptation by praying.
25. The Gospels were a collection of prayers written by Saint Paul.
26. “Thou shalt not kill” is an example of a Beatitude.
27. Cheating on a test is wrong only if you are caught.
28. Community service involves helping people who are more fortunate than we are.
29. Evangelization is the spreading of the Gospel. Only priests are called to evangelize.
30. Jesus believed only the Jewish people could be the followers of God.
31. When we help others we should expect something back.
32. Jesus taught the Apostles the “Our Father.”
33. Jesus welcomed sinners to his home.
34. The Paschal Mystery is the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.
35. Through his birth Jesus freed us from the power of sin and death.
36. Grace is God’s life within us. We earn grace.
37. Jesus cured people of leprosy to show his love for all people.
38. Jesus often prayed the psalms with his Jewish friends and followers.
39. Jesus taught that the 10 Commandments were no longer important.
40. Redeemer is a title for Jesus that expresses our belief that he freed us from the power of sin.
41. The “Kingdom of God” is in heaven.
42. The “Our Father” asks God for forgiveness of sins.
43. The Pharisees were Jewish High Priests.
44. The Resurrection took place on the 40th day after Easter.
45. When I make an important decision, I should only consider how it affects me.
Appendix D

Letter to Bishop
April 10, 2004

Dear Bishop Coleman,

I am writing to ask permission to use the test results from our Diocese wide testing program from the fourteen elementary schools in Fall River and New Bedford. I will be using the 3rd, 5th, and 7th grades scores from the students in these grades. Although we are testing the students in all our schools, I am using the cities of Fall River and New Bedford because of their similarities in ethnic make-up and similar economic conditions. As you know, the grade level tests were based on the curriculum guidelines that you approved. You were also a member of the committee to review the tests for validity after the tests had been constructed by an expert panel.

I am also asking permission to survey the parents of these students. You were also a member of the panel who reviewed the survey for validity. As you are aware, I am researching the relationship between parental involvement, parental religious background and parental religious involvement with the test scores. The parents will sign the surveys so they may be linked with their own child’s test score. However, an independent researcher will collect the data and retrieve the names before I receive the data so as to protect the anonymity of the parent and student. We will be following the guidelines of the Seton Hall Institutional Review Board. I will give you a summary report of the results once the research has been completed.

Sincerely,

George A. Milot
Superintendent of Schools
Appendix E

Letter from Bishop
Mr. George A. Milet  
Superintendent of Schools  
Catholic Education Center  
423 Highland Avenue  
Fall River, MA 02720

Dear Mr. Milet:

I hereby give you my permission to use the test scores from our diocesan religion testing program for the students in grades 3, 5, and 7 of the Catholic schools in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. It is my understanding that you will use these test results in connection with the research for your dissertation project. I also give you permission to send surveys to the parents of these students.

With best wishes for the successful completion of your research, I am

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

[Signature]

Bishop of Fall River
Appendix F

Letter to Parents in English
Dear Parent of an Elementary School Child,

I am the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Fall River and a doctoral candidate in education administration in the Department of Administration and Supervision in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

I earnestly need your help in completing a major study for my degree and for use in our Diocese. The study seeks to understand the background, opinions and involvement of parents who have enrolled their elementary school age child in one of our Catholic schools and the effect this has on the learning outcomes of their child. I am looking at student achievement in the specific subject area of Religion. I am specifically researching the 3rd, 5th and 7th grade students and parents in the fourteen Catholic elementary schools in both Fall River and New Bedford.

Your involvement would be to complete a survey and return it to the school. The survey should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete. There are no correct or incorrect responses, only your much-needed responses.

The enclosed survey should be completed and your name printed on the bottom. Please place the completed survey in the enclosed envelope and seal the envelope. Completed surveys should be returned to the school. I have retained the services of an outside independent researcher, Mr. Ty Brennan from Iona Regina University, to collect the survey responses. He will match the parent surveys with the appropriate student test score from the system-wide test that was administered in all schools the first week in June. The independent researcher will then remove both the parent and student names from the test scores and surveys. He will then intermix all the data so that when the completed information is given to me, for the research I will have no way of identifying either parent or student participants. The research is not concerned with individual responses. This is a general study of our schools and the effect of parental involvement on student achievement in Religion.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary on your part. There are no known risks or benefits to participation. Also please know that a decision not to participate will not in any way affect your child’s education or the services he or she currently receives in school.

All responses will be treated confidentially and will in no way be traceable to any individual respondent. As explained above, when I receive the data all names will have been removed by the independent researcher.

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D Program
Tel: 973-777-2288
400 South Orange Avenue - South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2005
All surveys and test scores received will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home for a minimum of five years to maintain confidentiality. Also, a reminder that my information will not contain any names or either the test scores or surveys for the purposes of confidentiality of the research.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2977 or 311-6314.

Your completion and return of the survey indicates your understanding of the project and your willingness to participate.

Should you need to contact me about the survey or test, feel free to call me at the Diocesan Catholic Education Office at (908) 676-2825.

I thank you in advance very much for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

George A. Milot
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Fall River

APPROVED

NK 28 2004

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
Appendix G

Letter to Parents in Portuguese
Caros Pais de estudantes da Escola Elementar,

Eu sou o Superintendente das Escolas do Diocese de Fall River e um candidato doutoral em administração educacional no Departamento de Administração e Vigilância no College of Educação e Serviços Humanos na Universidade de Seton Hall em South Orange, New Jersey.

Eu procuro vosso ajuda em completando um estudo sobre pais e menores e por isso em nosso Diocese. O estudo procura entender o futuro, os opinar e os envolvimentos dos pais cujas matrículam os nossos estudantes de idade da escola elementar em um dos nossas escolas Católicas e o efeito que este envolvimento dos pais tem no resultado de aprender dos nossos estudantes. Eu estou considerando a prova dos estudantes no sujeito específico de Religião. Estou considerando especialmente os estudantes e pais nos terceiro, quinto, e sétimo graus em os catorze escolas elementares de Fall River e New Bedford.

Vosso envolvimento é de completar um estudo e devolver a escola. O estudo deve tomar ao 10-15 minutos para completar. As respostas não são correctas nem incorrectos, mas são muitos necessários.

O estudo incluído deve de ser completado e o vosso nome impresso no final. Faz o favor de postar o estudo completado no envelope incluído e selar a envelope. Estudos completos deve voltar à escola. Eu já obtive os serviços de um investigador independente, o senhor Ty Brennan da Universidade de Salve Regina, para coletar as respostas do estudo. Ele vai conferir os estudos dos pais e com o grau de exame de cada estudante tomar o exame de todos os sistemas que foi administrados em todas as nossas escolas durante a primeira semana de Junho. Ele depois tinha também os nomes dos pais e dos estudantes fale dos grau e estado. Ele depois interveio todos os dados da mesma de quando o exame completa é dado a nós para o investigação, eu não vou ter mais uma decisão de identificar pais ou estudantes quais participaram. O investigação não está interessado com respostas individuais. Isso é um estudo geral de nossos escolas e o efeito de envolvimento dos pais ao processo dos estudantes na Religião.

Participação neste projeto é completamente a sua vontade. Não têm riscos nem benefícios de participação neste estudo. Também faz o favor de saber que um decisão para não participar em nenhuma maneira afeta a educação de vossa estudante na os serviços que ele ou ela recebe agora na escola.

Todas as respostas serão tratado com confiança e de nenhuma maneira pode-se descobrir quais indivíduos respondo. Como já explicou em cima, quando eu recebo os dados, o investigador independente já os tinha tirado todos os nomes.

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D Program
Tel: 973.273.2728
400 South Orange Avenue - South Orange, New Jersey 07079-3445
Todos os estudos e gruas dos exames que recebem fio do tranco dentro de um armário na minha casa por cinco anos ou mais para o fim da consulta de documentos. Também, lembra-se que meu informante só tem nome de modo algum nos gruas dos exames ou estudos propósitos da consulta deste consideração.


Vosso acabamento e revolvimento do estudo indica vosso entendimento do projeto e vontade de participar.

- Obrigado em avanço para vossa ajuda com este projeto.

Sinceramente,

George A. Milot

Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Fall River

APPROVED

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Appendix H

Parent Questionnaire in English
Parrot / Guardian Name

Son / Daughter Name(s) ____________________________

Son(s) / Daughter(s) School ____________________________

Son(s) / Daughter(s) Grade(s) in School ____________________________

REMINDER: This section will be detached from the survey before the survey results are given to the researcher. This is to ensure that your responses are confidential and anonymous.

Background Information:

Please rank the following reasons why you send your child to a Catholic school. Please use the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 using 1 to indicate the most important reason, 2 the second most important and so on.

___ Religious Training

___ Academics

___ Discipline / Safe Environment

___ Other — Please specify ____________________________

Who is completing this survey?  ____ Father  ____ Mother  ____ Legal Guardian

Are you a Catholic?  ____ Yes  ____ No

Indicate the number of years of schooling you had in each of the following setting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Catholic elementary school, Grades 1-8</th>
<th>Catholic high school, Grades 9-12</th>
<th>Catholic college</th>
<th>Parish Religious Education Program / CCD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please place a 1, 2, 3 or 4 in each space in front of each question using the following chart.


1. You pray at home with your child, for example, before meals, at bedtime, or in times of sorrow or need.

2. You regard the religion mark on the report card with the same regard given to other subjects.


5. Your family observes Church-recommended practices, such as rice bowls in Lent, Advent wreaths, displays of religious symbols in the house, etc.

6. At parent/teacher conferences, you discuss the religion curriculum with the teacher.

7. You attend school meetings and volunteer suggestions for change in the religion curriculum and/or activities held in the school.

8. You participate in your child's religious development.

9. You would make teachers or administrators aware of the concerns that might affect your child's religious development.

10. You or your spouse serve your parish or school as a lector, an usher, a Eucharistic minister, choir member, etc.

11. You presently, or have in the past assisted teachers in preparing students for the sacraments.

12. Your ever served as a Catholic school volunteer.

13. You have previously assisted or are currently assisting the school or parish with religious education, (for example, CCD).

14. You teach your child to pray.

15. You ask to see assignments for religion, go over religion homework, or review tests.

16. You explain your faith, or the practices of your faith, to your child.

17. You have discussions with the other parents about the religion curriculum and activities.

18. You want a more active role offered to parents in determining the religion curriculum and in designing religious activities.

19. You are active in the school/parent organization.

20. You monitor your child's choice of television, movies, activities based on the teachings of the Church.
21. You attend Mass—that is, Sundays and Holy Days, unless prohibited by illness or other serious factors.

22. You observe other important dates, such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday.

23. You encourage your child to participate in activities or ministries in the parish.

24. You think of your parish as an important part of your family life.

Thank you ever so much for completing the survey. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Once again, your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous, so that your answers will not be able to be traced back to you or the school.
Appendix I

Parent Questionnaire in Portuguese
Pai ou Mãe / Guardião

Nomes dos Filhos / das Filhas

Escola dos Filhos / das Filhas

Grau na Escola dos Filhos / das Filhas

REMINDER: Esta seção será solicitada em estudo antes que os resultados da escola sejam dados ao investigador. Isso é para garantir que suas respostas sejam confidenciais e anônimas.

Informação do Fundo:

Faz o favor de classificar os ramos seguintes porque você mandou o/ a) seu filho ou a) sua filha á uma escola Católica. Faz o favor de usar números 1, 2, 3, e 4 usando 1 para indicar o ramo mais importante, 2 para o ramo segundo em importância e assim por diante.

___________ Ensino em Religião ________ Acadêmicos ________ Disciplina / Lugar Seguro ________

Outro – Faz o favor de especificar ____________________________________________________________________________________________

______ Qual está a completando este estudo? __Pai ______ Mãe ______ Guardião

Você é Católico? ______ Sim ______ Não

Indica o número de anos da escola que você veve em cada um desses cursos:

ANOS

Escola Católica básico, Graus 1-8 ______

Escola Católica alta, Graus 9-12 ______

Colégio Católico ______

Programa de Educação Religiosa (Paróquia / OCD) ______
Pai ou Mie / Guardião

Nome dos Filhos / das Filhas

Sexo dos Filhos / das Filhas

Grau na Escola dos Filhos / das Filhas

REMANDER: Esta seção será destinada a estudar antes que os resultados da escola sejam dados ao investigador. Isso é para garantir que suas respostas são confidenciais e anônimas.

Informação do Fundo:

Faz o favor de classificar as razões seguintes porque você mandou o/ a seu filho ou a sua filha de uma escola Católica. Faz o favor de usar números 1, 2, 3, e 4 usando 1 para indicar o motivo mais importante, 2 para o motivo segundo em importância e assim por diante.

- Ensino em Religião
- Acadêmico
- Disciplina / Lazer Seguro
- Outro - Faz o favor de especificar

Quem está o completando este estudo? — Pai — Mãe — Guardião

Você é Católico? — Sim — Não

Indique o número de anos de escola que você teve em cada um dos cantos:

anos

- Escola Católica elementar, Graus 1-8
- Escola Católica alta, Graus 9-12
- Colégio Católica
- Programa de Educação Religiosa na Paróquia / OCM
Faz bem favor de meter 1, 2, 3, ou 4 em cada espaço em frente de cada pergunta usando a carta seguinte:

1. Quase sempre  2. Como de costume  3. Por ocasião  4. Raríssimo

1. Você ressalta em casa com a esposa criança, por exemplo, antes da classe, na hora de dormir, ou em tempos de tristeza ou necessidade.

2. Você considera a marca de Religião na carta da escola com a mesma consideração dada aos outros assuntos.


4. Você regularmente olha para o livro de Religião da sua criança.

5. Vossa família observa práticas manda da Igreja, como fiéis de cruz em Quaresma, Coroas de Advento, exposição de símbolos Religiosos em casa, etc.

6. Em conferências entre pais com um professor, você discute os ensinos Religiosos com o professor.

7. Você frequentemente encontra nas escolas e oferece sugestões para mudanças em estudo Religioso e / ou atividades Religiosas acontecendo em escola.

8. Você participa em o desenvolvimento Religioso da sua criança.

9. Você assegura-se que os professores ou administradores sabem das inquietações que podem atentar o desenvolvimento Religioso da sua criança.

10. Você ou seu esposo / esposa assiste às missas próprias nas escolas, ou assiste em leituras, um momento, um ministro de Comunhão, um membro de caso, etc.


13. Você assistiu antes ou está assistindo na escola ou ao pôr- lhos com educação Religiosa, (por exemplo, CCD).

14. Você ensina a sua criança a rezar.

15. Você prega as leis de Religião, passo cima do trabalho Religioso da escola, ou revista os exames.