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AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF THE ENROLLMENT DECISIONS OF PARENTS

AND GUARDIANS IN FOUR CATHOLIC URBAN ELEMENTARY

SCHOOLS OF GREATER BOSTON

A Dissertation Presented

by

SHEILA L. KUKSTIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Massachusetts Boston,
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

June, 2011

Leadership in Urban Schools Program

AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF ENROLLMENT DECISIONS OF

PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN FOUR CATHOLIC URBAN ELEMENTARY

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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF ENROLLMENT DECISIONS OF

PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN FOUR CATHOLIC URBAN ELEMENTARY

SCHOOLS OF GREATER BOSTON

June 2011

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As competition from tuition-less local charter and public schools increases, urban parents and guardians have more options for educating their children. Many struggle financially yet still choose to pay tuition for their children to attend an urban Catholic school. This exploratory study looks at the reasons why these parents and guardians choose a Catholic education for their children.

Over the course of six months in 2010, 850 surveys were sent to four Catholic urban elementary schools. One hundred and ninety-six parents and guardians in four urban Boston Catholic elementary schools completed surveys and participated in two focus groups. Two of the school sites had attached parishes and two sites were regional schools without attached parishes.

The study also examined all families' participation in school activities and level of importance they attached to such participation. While religious events were identified as most meaningful, religious events came in last for the type of event attended by

families. These data were also examined for any differences when family income was factored into consideration. The last section of this study examined the responses of only Catholic parents/guardians. For example, while 87% of the Catholic parents and guardians responded that the school's connection to the parish was somewhat or very much important to them, at the same time 56% of these same Catholic parents reported that they attend mass anywhere from never to once or twice a month. The implications for this and other results for the schools and the parishes attached are explored in this study.

Finally, recommendations for future research are offered as a way to continue the work started in this exploratory study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to my family, most especially my husband Paul, who have lived with this work as another family member in our home for seven years.

I am most grateful also to my committee members; Chair Dr. Denise Patmon, Dr. Joseph Check and Dr. Peter Holland without whose guidance and wisdom this dissertation would not be complete. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Molly Pedriali in the Leadership in Urban Schools office for her gifts of patience and diligence.

I am also thankful to the members of the Cohort of 2004 with whom I started this dissertation journey and whose fellowship and camaraderie provided its foundation.

In closing I would like to acknowledge all the Catholic urban elementary schools, past, present and future for their contribution to the education of the children of this country. May their past be recognized, their present be strong and their future be a story to be continued.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"It is arguable that in its urban elementary schools the Catholic Church provides its greatest service to the common good of the nation"(J. M. O'Keefe, 1999).

The history of Catholic schools has been well documented and can be traced throughout the history of education in this country. The first Catholic school in what is now the United States opened about 1600 in the Spanish colony of St. Augustine, Florida (Curtin,1999; Urban and Wagoner, 2004; Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; Hunt, Joseph and Nuzzi, 2004) 36 years before the first publicly funded school in America opened its doors. In the 400 years since, Catholic schools have been a continuous educational presence in this country.

Prior to the early 1980's scant quantitative research had focused on any aspect of their operation. The little research that was done came mainly from religious organizations and communities and focused on the history of Catholic schools.

In 1981, the groundbreaking work of James Coleman and his associates (Thomas Hoffer and Sally Kilgore) examining data from the High School and Beyond (HSandB) study shed a light on the academic effect of Catholic schools on high school students. Although their findings were challenged (Alexander and Pallas, 1983; Goldhaber, 1999) this research opened the door for other researchers to take a closer look at what Coleman and his associates uncovered. During the next two decades, researchers such as Andrew

Greeley, Peter Holland, Anthony Bryk, and Valerie Lee continued to examine the academic achievement of students in Catholic schools.

In the last ten years, though, as the Catholic Church in the United States has faced a dwindling number of vocations to the priesthood, challenges in financing both parishes and schools, parish church and school closings and legal battles surrounding sexual abuse claims, Catholic schools have been affected. The urban Catholic schools in particular are at the highest risk ever of shuttering their doors.

In 1996, Father Joseph O'Keefe from Boston College's Lynch School of Education reported that over the past twenty years urban Catholic schools have been closing at a rate that threatens the survival of urban Catholic education (O'Keefe, 1996). According to 2005-2006 school data provided by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), in that past year alone, while 38 new schools opened, 223 Catholic schools closed or were consolidated, many of them in urban areas (McDonald, 2006).

Table 1.1 School openings and closings/consolidations

Region	Opened			Consolidated/ Closed	
	Elementary	Secondary		Elementary	Secondary
New England	1	0		10	0
Mideast	15	0		83	2
Great Lakes	4	0		65	8
Plains	3	1		26	2
Southeast	5	0		16	0

West/Far West	6	2		10		1
National	35	3		210		13

(McDonald, 2006, p.12)

Over a ten year period (1995-2006) urban elementary schools in 12 urban dioceses- Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles, Brooklyn, Cleveland, St. Louis, Newark, Boston, Cincinnati, New Orleans and Detroit- closed at more than double the rate of their non-urban counterparts.

Table 1.2 Elementary school closures in urban 12 dioceses 1995-2006

	1995-2000	%	2001-2006	%	1995-2006	%
Elementary schools in the 12 urban dioceses	58	-2.8	271	-13.4	329	-15.8
All elementary schools outside of 12 urban dioceses	74	-1.5	266	-5.4	340	-6.8

(2005-2006 excludes New Orleans- the future of 25 schools now closed is undetermined) (McDonald, 2006, p.16)

From 2007- 2010 this trend continued.

Table 1.3 Elementary school closures in urban 12 dioceses 2007-2010

Urban 12 dioceses closures	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total 2007-2010
	84	39	56	46	225

(McDonald, 2010, p.16)

Even with this ominous data, the last ten years has seen very little research that involves Catholic schools and the future of these schools is as uncertain as the Catholic Church in the United States. If the urban Catholic schools are to continue providing an educational service to low income and disadvantaged urban students, more research needs to be conducted and it needs to be done now.

Catholic urban schools have been deemed critical to the achievement of disadvantaged, minority students (Bryk, Lee andHolland, 1993; Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Greeley, 1982). Analysis of data gathered from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, led University of Chicago professor Derek Neal to conclude that, "Catholic schools succeed in communities where public schools fail miserably" (Neal, 1997).

Despite documented success in educating urban students (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Neal, 1997; Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; Peterson and Walberg, 2002), urban Catholic schools have been closing at unprecedented rates over the past twenty years (McDonald, 2006; McDonald, 2005). Shifting demographics, aging school structures and a decrease in the reliance on parish and diocesan subsidies have forced many urban Catholic schools to close their doors.

Just as research into the effectiveness of Catholic schools began an upswing in the early 1980's (Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore, 1981; Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Greeley, 1982), the number of U.S. Catholic schools had already begun to decline. Since the 1965 peak year for the number of U.S. Catholic schools, the number of Catholic schools has declined by almost fifty percent- from a high of 13,500 schools in 1965 to a low of 7,589 schools in 2006. From 1995-2006, 329 elementary schools in the 12 urban U.S. dioceses were closed, representing a 15.8% decline of the urban elementary Catholic schools during this time period and in an overall decline of 44% of Catholic schools since 1965 (McDonald, 2006). According to 2005-2006 school data provided by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), in that past year alone, while 38 new schools opened, 223 Catholic schools closed or were consolidated, many of them in urban areas.

Parents who make the decision to enroll their children in urban Catholic elementary schools today may have different reasons than their counterparts in the past centuries. There is no longer a need for Catholic parents and bishops to worry about their children being steeped in a Protestant ideology during instructional time and bishops no longer dictate that every Catholic parent send their children to the parish Catholic school.

Although most Catholic elementary schools remain parish sponsored, this number is also reducing. According to the 2005-2006 NCEA statistical report, "in the last 16 years, the growth in the number and percentage of elementary inter-parish schools has risen from 8.9% in 1990 to 13.3% in 2006, reflecting the reorganization and consolidation of schools within dioceses"(McDonald, 2006).

In 2005, the Archdiocese of Boston embarked upon a campaign entitled, "Initiative 2010" to address these very issues of declining enrollments and the types of

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sponsorship of Catholic schools. Meitler Consultants, Inc. was hired to gather data and suggest a plan for the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Boston.

Although this ambitious initiative was aimed to assess the future and viability of the Catholic elementary schools, it is noteworthy that in my examination of all the information that I could access from Meitler, nowhere is there any attempt to identify the reasons why parents/guardians choose a Catholic school over a public, private or charter school.

In the Strategic Plan Description provided by Meitler to Catholic school pastors and principals, the only references to parents is included under the sub-heading "Involvement of Parish and School Lay Leaders" in the "Involvement and Communications" heading. This reference reads, "Elementary school parents will be informed about the strategic plan, the process, and the vision for Catholic schools through an established communication program" (Meitler Consultants, 2005).

The methodology of the proposed plan does not include any data gathering from parents of Catholic school children. In *Catholic and Catholic Schooling* (2005), William Sander of DePaul University states, "Although considerable attention has been given to the effects of Catholic schooling on educational outcomes like test scores, less attention has been given to the determinants of why parents choose to send their children to Catholic schools".

The relationship between parents and the Catholic school community that existed pre-1965 at the height of the Catholic school numbers has dramatically shifted. The increase in the number of non-Catholic students enrolled in Catholic schools and the decrease of urban parishes has shifted the student demographics of the schools and, as a

result, possibly the social capital attributed as crucial to the success of the school and the students in the school. No longer are the majority of these parents/guardians part of the parish or neighborhood. It is therefore critical, in my opinion, to assess from these parents/guardians why they have chosen a Catholic school for their child's education and if the existing social capital that is derived from the parish is a factor either directly or indirectly in this decision. Only with this information can the Catholic school leadership go successfully forward with a plan for the future. Without the input of the parents, a critical piece of this puzzle is missing.

Social capital has been defined by various researchers as a social network among the members of a community (Bourdieu, 1985; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). Social capital in Catholic schools had as its core the relationships developed within the bounds of the parish to which the school belonged. For the students of the school, parents, grandparents, friends, neighbors and community and business organizations created a social network through their associations outside the school and within the parish community and neighborhood. These associations translated into a web of relationships and a bank of social capital for the students. As the numbers of Catholics attending weekly services declined, parishes closed, neighborhoods changed and students began to attend school from different areas of the city, the social capital afforded to the students in Catholic schools may also have declined.

Researchers have long recognized the importance of the connection between social capital and successful, effective schools (A. Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; A. S. Bryk, Holland, Lee, & Carriedo, 1984; J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, 1988; J. S. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987; Greeley, 1982). Coleman and Hoffer (1987) noted that

the success of the Catholic schools may be directly attributable to the presence of social capital.

Portes (1998) points out that his review of the social capital literature demonstrates that "The empirical literature includes application of the concept as a predictor of, among others, school attrition and academic performance, children's intellectual development." (Portes, 1998, p. 9).

If one recognizes the importance of social capital in the lives of children and the also the relationship of social capital to the success of Catholic schools, the presence of social capital in Catholic schools would necessarily be an essential ingredient for their future.

If, though, the cornerstone of the creation of social capital in the Catholic schools, namely the presence and integration of the school community in an attached parish community and/or neighborhood, is absent what then distinguishes the Catholic school from its public and private counterparts in the minds of parents as they make enrollment decisions?

With this information in mind, it is critical at this juncture in Catholic school history to examine what then are the reasons that present day parents and guardians choose a Catholic urban elementary school.

<u>Historical Perspective</u>

Catholic schools have been part of the educational history of this country long before the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution or the Battle of Bunker Hill. They have been woven into the fabric of the nation.

Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) recognize three major eras in Catholic history and have divided this history using these divisions- colonial times to 1830; 1830 to 1960; 1960 to present.

During the first period, Catholic schools established their presence in the new country. Urban Catholic schools, in particular, were a strong and continuous presence to the newest members of the country struggling with language and assimilation. The first urban Catholic parish school was opened in Philadelphia in 1782 and established the parish as the foundational structure of the Catholic school. By 1829, American bishops had recommended parish schools to be built in all existing parishes and that Catholic parents send their children to these schools.

The period between 1830 and 1960 saw great growth in the Catholic school system. At the beginning of this period Catholic schools were part of the local school system and were funded with local funds. As late as 1898 some cities continued to fund Catholic schools.

In 1866 the recommendation that each parish build a school became a mandate issued by the Council of Bishops. This mandate to parish pastors was followed in 1884 by another mandate, this time issued to parents, that all parents enroll their children in a Catholic school. The increase of the number of schools was mirrored by the increased number of immigrants in this country, many of them Catholic. By 1960, there were 12,893 Catholic schools with an enrollment of 5,253,000 students (McDonald, 2006).

The election of a Catholic president in 1960 and the outcomes of Vatican II (1962-1965) helped to change the course of Catholic schools in the United States. The election of John Kennedy to the highest elected position in the country signaled an

acceptance into mainstream society for Catholics. A separate school system highlighted a period of time when this acceptance did not exist. Many Catholics during the 1960's enrolled their children not in Catholic schools but in the local public schools. For the first time, the number of schools and students decreased. From 1960 to 1970 the number of schools dropped from 12,893 to 11,352 and enrollment decreased from a high of 5,253,000 in 1960 to 4,367,00 in 1970 (McDonald, 2006). The number of schools and student enrollment has continued to drop since this time.

<center>Problem Statement and Significance of the Study</center>

If the social capital in today's Catholic urban elementary schools has weakened , changed or no longer exists, how has this affected the reasons that a parent or guardian sends a child to the Catholic school of the twenty-first century? NCEA reported that the national average elementary parish school tuition cost for 2005-2006 was $2,607 (McDonald, 2006); by the 2009-2010 school year this national tuition average had risen to $3,383 (McDonald, 2010). Meitler Consulting, Inc's February 2006 report to the pastors and principals of the Archdiocese of Boston reported an average elementary tuition in the Archdiocese of Boston of $3,083 (Meitler Consultants, 2005) by 2009-2010 school year this had risen to $3900. This price tag may be very steep for the low income urban parent with an option of nearby public and charter schools with more academic services.

Family and neighborhood communities create the Catholic parish; the parish, created by the family and neighborhood communities, creates social capital. This social capital from the parish directly translates into the parish school. Student achievement in Catholic schools may be directly attributable to the presence of this social capital created

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by the parish (which comes from the families and neighborhood communities). Removing the parish from the equation would mean removal of the major source of social capital which is one of the direct causes of success in Catholic schools (J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987). It should be noted that it is not just students from the parish who are in the Catholic schools who may benefit from this relationship but all students who attend the school who benefit from the social capital present.

In analyzing the reasons that low income parents/guardians choose to send their children to a Catholic urban elementary school, I theorize that elements directly associated with the presence of social capital will be named.

In spring 2005, while I was a Catholic school principal in Boston I conducted an informal survey among my peers. During a discussion over lunch about registration forms, I questioned a group of Catholic school principals as to whether they had ever asked parents why they were enrolling their children in a Catholic school. None had. My question met with more than one blank stare. As part of the registration process that year, I had included on the registration form a question that asked how parents had heard of my school but I had never asked the parents the question of why they had chosen to enroll in a Catholic school. Perhaps it was arrogance on my part; an assumption that I knew why. Perhaps it was fear, fear that once the reason was articulated I needed to provide what parents expected. Whatever the reason, neither I nor any of my colleagues had the data needed to guide the future of our schools. In terms of St. Andrew the Apostle School, I will never know; my school closed that year.

In the years since asking that first question of my peers, I am more confident than ever that an examination of the parents' response to this question is needed to ask

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whether Catholic elementary schools have a future and, if so, what that future will look like.

As a Catholic school administrator and curious researcher, I am also interested in examining if the type of social capital cited by researchers as critical to the success of Catholic schools still exists. If not, is there is relationship between the change in the social capital in Catholic urban elementary schools and the great drop in enrollment in these schools? I contend that the lack of opportunity for families to develop a social network in the parish churches and neighborhoods may affect student enrollment and success in the urban Catholic elementary schools.

<u>Questions for Research</u>

I proposed the following questions that directed my study:

1. What are the reasons that parents/guardians choose to send their child to a Catholic urban elementary school?

2. What are the effects of parish closings on the choice decisions of parents/guardians and the future of Catholic schools?

3. Are parents/guardians as likely to choose to enroll their child in a regional Catholic elementary school as a parish Catholic elementary school?

4. What role, if any, does social capital play, directly or indirectly, in the choice decisions of these parents?

5. What are the implications of this research on the future of Catholic urban elementary schools?

Definition of Terms

So that there is a clear understanding of the terms used in this study I have defined the following terms for use in my study:

Low Income: I have used the U.S. Department of Education's identification of low-income level in my determination of $40,000 as a baseline for identifying family incomes as low income. The 2009 and 2010 guidelines for low-income identification of a family of five is $38,685. This was rounded up to $40,000. I used a family of five as a model because of my experience in urban Catholic elementary schools and the average family sizes that I encountered. (Education, 2009)

Urban: Those schools within the boundaries of a large city.

Parish: The local Catholic Church community. For my definition in this study, the parish would be that church community that is attached locally to the local Catholic elementary school being studied. There are instances of one or more parish church closing and another local parish assuming the responsibility for the parishioners and the school within the closed parish/es' geographical boundaries. For this study a parish would not include a parish that has assumed control over a Catholic elementary school through a merger of two or more parishes.

Parish School: A Catholic school which is connected to a Catholic parish and may draw financial support and community support from this parish.

Regional school: A school which is not parish-based but draws from more than one Catholic parish in a region.

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Social Capital: That capital which results from the relationships between persons and among persons.

Elementary: Schools with grades that may include up to but not beyond Grade Eight.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The early bishops mandated that each Catholic parish build a parish school and all Catholic parents enroll their children in these schools. The connection between the parish and the school created a natural relationship that fostered the social capital cited by researchers as critical to student success. This connection may no longer exist in most Catholic urban elementary schools. Replicating the social capital linked to the success of urban Catholic schools may be necessary if the urban Catholic elementary schools of today are to continue their success. Analyzing parents/guardians' reasons for enrolling a child in a Catholic school will begin the process of examining the relationship of the presence or absence of social capital in these decisions.

"The implication is that if schools are aware of the advantage which social capital confers on middle- and upper-class children then schools can compensate for this by developing their own support mechanisms to help poor children achieve"(Munn, 2000).

During a very recent review of the literature I discovered that twenty-five years ago, three researchers, James Cibulka, Timothy O'Brien and Donald Zewe, had the same questions that I do today, namely, "Why do low income urban parents choose a Catholic school?" and, "What is it about these schools that attracts low income parents?" Their query led them to research these questions and publish their findings in 1982's, *Inner-City Private Elementary Schools: A Study*.

In critiquing the book written as a result of their study, the authors quote Donald A. Erickson, then director of UCLA's Institute for the Study of Private Schools. Dr. Erickson's response to Cibulka et al's work states, "The sponsors of the study deserve much credit. They have produced an unprecedented body of data on a subject that federal and state educational agencies, universities, and individual education researchers have scandalously avoided"(Cibulka, O'Brien, & Zewe, 1982, p. 15).

In the intervening twenty-nine years the research focusing on urban Catholic schools continues to be sparse enough that it could continue to be characterized as scandalous as Erickson stated back in 1982. Twenty-nine years later, the research is still lacking and Catholic urban elementary schools are becoming an endangered species. If there is to be a future for these schools, the research needs to be conducted now. An analysis of the parents/guardians' reasons why they choose to enroll their children will help by collecting the data to begin the process to create a plan for the future. It is hoped that this research may in turn spur on future Catholic urban elementary schools' research.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

<u>Introduction</u>

The history of Catholic schools in this country is long and rich. Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) divide the history of Catholic schools in this country into time periods:

- Colonial times to 1830

- 1830 through 1960

- 1960 to present

Using these time periods, a brief review of the history of Catholic schools follows.

<u>Colonial times to 1830</u>

The first Catholic schools in the United States can be traced back to the early French and Spanish settlements in present day Louisiana and Florida with early missionaries seeking to recruit young men for the priesthood. Although these schools survived for only a short period, other Catholic schools took their place. Bohemia Manor, founded by the English Jesuits became the foundation for both Georgetown Preparatory School and Georgetown University (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993). The Jesuit order, largely credited with laying the foundation for Catholic education in America (A. Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993), employed a curriculum known as *Ratio Studiorum* -a seven year classical studies program. Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) describe this curriculum as, "focusing on cultural transmission with a heavy emphasis on higher-order thinking skills"

(p.19). This early emphasis on cultural transmission may have helped lay the groundwork for the future path of Catholic schools.

The first parochial schools began in Philadelphia in the mid-1700's and the first parish school of record was in Philadelphia in 1782. The establishment of the primary school at St. Mary's parish in Philadelphia coincided with the embryonic emergence of the elementary school as an institution (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993). Most education at this time still took place in the home. It is important to note, though, the founding of this school because it now established the parish as a foundational structure for the Catholic school. The early schools were "small neighborhood institutions enrolling both boys and girls" (Bryk, Lee and Holland, p. 20). By 1830, the parochial school was well established in most parishes.

The political landscape of the first part of the nineteenth century nurtured what was termed the "common school" movement. Common schooling, as noted by Urban and Wagoner (2004), "was more an ideological slogan of a reform crusade than it was a description of a particular type of formal educational institution." Characteristics of the common school included an early association with New England states; primary school education; a "universal" invitation to all children; and fiscally supported by local taxes. Urban and Wagoner note, though, that the "universal" invitation," did not necessarily include either black children or white children with 'strange' religious beliefs, such as Irish Catholics" (2004). The ideology of the common school was based on Protestant beliefs which created difficulty in those locales where there were members of a religious denomination other than Protestantism. Ironically, researcher James Coleman in his 1987 work, *Public and Private High Schools, The Impact of Communities*, in analyzing the

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effects of family background on the achievement of high school Catholic and public students found that these effects, "suggested that the Catholic schools were functioning to diminish the effects of background, so that Catholic schools more closely approximated the "common school" ideal of American education than did the public (or other private) schools (Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1982a: chap. 6)" (J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987, p. 120).

The father of the common school ideology, Horace Mann, promoted this movement during his tenure as Massachusetts secretary of education (1837-1848). In Massachusetts there was a tradition of local control that allowed for different religious sects to operate based on their particular tenets. As a result, the Catholics in Massachusetts continued to operate neighborhood schools in Catholic districts according to the credo of the Catholic faith never raising an objection to the overall philosophical and ideological beliefs of their secretary of education (Urban and Wagoner, 2004). "Until about 1830, the provision of education was an informal local matter" (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993).

The objective of the public "common school" movement that took shape was to transmit a common body of knowledge to the new nation thereby shaping the nation's culture through its children. Foreigners, especially Catholics, arriving on the nation's shores were seen as a threat by the Protestant majority. In order to ensure that a democratic society would continue even in the midst of those perceived as a threat to the nation, Horace Mann conceived of a broadly humanistic education for all children, embracing the "full intellectual, social and moral development of its citizens"(Bryk, Lee and Holland, p. 24).

Shrewdly, American leaders from Benjamin Rush, Thomas Jefferson, and Horace Mann on recognized that the group of the population with whom it would be easiest to accomplish this feat were the children, and the institutional entity with the leading responsibility was the school (Ravitch and Vinovskis, 1995).

Ultimately, though, the conflict over a common curriculum inculcated in a Protestant ethos caused conflict with the Catholic population. As anti-Catholic sentiment became more pronounced and anti-Catholic rhetoric more common in the public schools, the separation of Catholic and public schools began. In 1829 at the first Council of Baltimore, the American bishops recommended the establishment of parish schools and the use of parish funds to pay teachers.

<div align="center">1830 to 1960</div>

The period from 1830 to 1960 marked great growth in the number of Catholic schools in this country and the manner in which these schools were established. At the start of this time period, Catholic bishops, pastors and parents were unaware that this was the nascent beginnings of a separate school system. Many saw the Catholic schools as part of the local delivery of educational services. Catholic schools in many states, including New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Connecticut and New Jersey continued to receive public financial support late into the nineteenth century. As late as 1898, schools in Poughkeepsie, New York continued to receive local public funding (A. Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

As the Catholic population grew with waves of new immigrants, the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority began to perceive the new immigrants as a threat. The common school movement used the Bible as text to stress moral development. The use of the

Protestant Bible was not acceptable to Catholic parents and a schism developed that helped to set the way for the development of a separate system of schools.

The first Plenary Council of Bishops in 1829 set the tone for future expansion of Catholic education by recommending that each parish build a Catholic school. The next two Plenary Councils (1866 and 1884) continued to stress the importance of this goal. The 1866 Council increased the intensity of the recommendation by mandating that each parish build an adjoining parish school and the 1884 Council commanded Catholic parents to enroll their children in these schools.

During this same time period, the United States was also going through a growth period. Large numbers of immigrants were becoming part of the national landscape. By 1880 there were 2,246 parochial elementary schools educating 405,234 students (Curtin, 1999).

Although this goal of a school in every parish and every Catholic child enrolled in a Catholic school would never be realized, Catholic education was growing steadily in the United States with 5,000 Catholic schools operating by the turn of the century (McDonald, 2006).

Between 1880 and 1914 over nine million immigrants entered the United States. Although assimilation was the ultimate goal of many of the new immigrants, many were more comfortable among those who shared their culture and language while assimilating into the new country. Ethnic Catholic parishes and consequently ethnic Catholic schools accommodated the desires of many immigrants to retain their cultural heritage and to instruct their children in their native language while assimilating into a new culture. Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) describe the ethnic Catholic schools as follows:

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Immigrants valued their ethnic parish school because of its connection to their European past. The school staff shared their ethnicity and religion, with an empathetic understanding of old world ways. Although to some the ethnic school represented a fortress designed to protect a separate Catholic culture, they actually served more as bridging institutions between two different cultures. The use of English grew rapidly, even in schools originally established with a different language of instruction. While Catholic schools consciously sought to preserve Catholic values and ethnic identities, they also facilitated the assimilation of immigrants into American public life. (p. 27).

During this same time period, non-public schooling was challenged and limited in a number of states. The right to a non-public education was in a legal limbo until 1925 with the Supreme Court ruling in *Pierce vs. the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*. In this ruling an Oregon law requiring compulsory public school attendance was ruled unconstitutional. The ruling established the right of parents to decide how and where their children would be educated. The backlash to this ruling was a public perception of a Catholic conspiracy to "create a state monopoly on education" (Bryk, Lee and Holland, p.28). As a result of this criticism an effort was made to include courses in citizenship and patriotism. This movement served two other purposes- it allowed bishops to try to rein in many ethnic schools to become more American and it started the process of creating more of a system of Catholic schools.

Even as the Catholic schools started the process of becoming more of a system, the governance continued to remain with the parishes. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, secondary schools started to be opened by bishops taking a more active role in the education of young Catholics. Diocesan school boards were established and

superintendents responsible to the bishops were appointed. As the number of Catholic secondary schools grew, so did the need for a common philosophical foundation and curriculum. The 1918 *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, published by the National Educational Association became the foundation for public secondary schools with objectives of, "health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure and ethical character" (Urban & Wagoner, 2004). The debate that ensued as to Catholic secondary school curriculum resulted in a curriculum that embraced the study of "classical humanism" and a rejection of a curriculum based on life studies and vocationalism. This is important to note because it supported the earliest Catholic Jesuit secondary school studies of *Ratio Studiorum* and affirmed the Catholic schools as a system that established its own philosophical and pedagogical foundations apart from the public high schools. Close associations with Catholic colleges exerted pressure upon the boys' preparatory and the girls' academies to prove themselves academically worthy. These secondary schools enacted admissions requirement that reflected their academically elite status and ensured an enrollment of students who understood the requirements expected of them.

This secondary course of curriculum also fostered a sense of social mobility for the Catholic students and parents. By 1950 the Catholic school system had grown to 11,000 schools and 3.1 million students. Education was a tool to ensure access to higher social positions and greater earning power for Catholics- an important goal for the Catholic population in this country at that time.

<center>1960 to present</center>

Two major events in the 1960's set the stage for a new age of Catholic schools. First, the election of the first Catholic president in 1960 epitomized for Catholics the attainment of social status for Catholics in this country. The election of John Kennedy as president signaled the acceptance of Catholics in mainstream society. This positive event for Catholics may also have signaled that there was no longer a need for a separate school system. Catholics in the United States were now part of mainstream society in all echelons. Participation in public schools recognized this. At the same time, the pronouncements from Rome as a result of Vatican II had explosive responses in the country's Catholic schools. Iconic symbols of Catholic culture, such as nuns in habits and religious statues were gone in most schools. The religious curriculum based in the austere Baltimore catechism was set aside for a more liberal curriculum. The most challenging change to the Catholic schools was the loss of large numbers of religious teachers. The number of religious staff dropped from a high of 112,029 (73.8% of all staff) in 1960 to 5,749 (3.7%) in 2010 (McDonald, 2006) . The Catholic school staff was comprised of an increasing number of lay persons and the school budgets reflected the increased salaries. The exodus of the religious teaching force began a fiscal crisis for Catholic schools. Funding a school with an aging building, high personnel costs and a decrease in enrollment was a major challenge for many Catholic schools.

The Catholic elementary schools of the twenty-first century have metamorphosized from the Catholic schools of the past. Many parishes and schools have closed or consolidated. From 1995-2006, 717 schools closed and there was a 9.8% decrease in Catholic school enrollment. The 1965-1966 year was the peak year for

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Catholic schools with a Catholic school enrollment of 5.6 million students in almost

13,500 schools (McDonald, 2006). The number of students enrolled in Catholic schools

has dropped from the 1965 high of 5.6 to 2.1 million in 2010 (McDonald & Schultz,

2010).

<u>Effectiveness of Catholic Schools</u>

One of the strongest arguments for the continuation of Catholic schools in this

country is their overall effectiveness in the academic achievement of the students they

educate. Although Catholic schools are represented in all socio-economic and

demographic strata, their academic success has been most clearly documented in the

urban Catholic schools where students from predominantly minority and disadvantaged

inner city neighborhoods are educated. Research is clear on the impact these schools have

on the students they serve in urban neighborhoods (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993;

Greeley, 1998; O'Keefe, 1999; Youniss, 2000). According to the 2003-2004 NCES

Private School Universe Survey, released in March, 2006, 46.2% of all private school

students attend a Catholic school, 70% of these students attending elementary schools.

Twenty-one percent of all Catholic schools have more than 50% minority students. Of

the total number of Catholic schools, 50.5% are located in a central city. "Among private

schools, Catholic schools have the highest percentage of minority students, an enrollment

that has doubled over the past 30 years" (Ilg, Massucci, & Cattaro, 2004)

David Baker and Cornelius Riordan (1999) state, "we allow for the fact that

Catholic schools are more effective than public schools among disadvantaged youths" (p.

462). James Youniss (2000), in looking at the achievement of minority urban students

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notes "Indeed, from the perspective of some African American scholars, losing these schools would be a serious loss of human and spiritual capital (Irvine and Foster, 1996)" (p.9).

In many of these urban settings, Catholic students outperform their public school counterparts in academic performance. Johnson (1999) analyzed findings from the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), finding that fourth and eighth grade Catholic school students outperform their public school counterparts in math achievement, and "the typical African-American D.C. eighth grade Catholic school student performed better than 72% of his or her public school peers" (p.2). Cattaro (2002), when examining cases of urban Catholic school achievement, reported that in a Southside Chicago elementary school where 75 % of the population live in poverty, the Catholic school students achieve at a substantially higher rate, "A 1994 report published by the Chicago Public Schools indicated four times as many eighth graders at Holy Angels scored higher than the national average in math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills than did eighth graders attending the area's three public schools"(p.110).

Prior to 1981 little research had been conducted using Catholic school data. In 1981 James S. Coleman, Thomas Hoffer and Sally Kilgore analyzed the results of the High School and Beyond (HSB) study in their seminal report for the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). Among the results of this data set analysis was the controversial finding that even after controlling for social, economic and demographic factors, students in Catholic schools show higher levels of academic achievement than their public school peers. The response to this major study provided a catalyst for increased focus on the effects of Catholic school education.

In 2000, Hoffer, noting the criticism that Coleman's findings garnered, stated that

" A number of critics also made the point that Catholic school students looked better on

the discipline and academic variables because they were primarily academic-track,

college-bound students. If Catholic school students were compared with academic-track

public school students, the difference would disappear" (Hoffer, p.107). Hoffer (2000)

counters this criticism by pointing out that 1987 research that he and Coleman conducted

found that after controlling for certain variables the Catholic school student achievement

was still significant. He states "But when the effects of sophomore achievement scores,

SES, parent expectations, and the other social background variables on program are

controlled for, the 30% sector difference reduces to about 18%, which is far from having

disappeared (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987)" (Hoffer, p. 107).

In the intervening twenty-nine years, much of the research in response to this

study has focused not only on the effects of a Catholic school education, but specifically

the effects on urban students (Greeley, 1982). Using the HSandB data set, Father Andrew

Greeley looked specifically at the achievement of minority students in Catholic schools.

His findings concluded that minority students achieved at greater academic levels than

their public school counterparts and that the higher the level of risk, the greater level of

achievement for minority students in a Catholic school setting (Greeley, 1982).

In 1984, the National Center for Research in Total Catholic Education published

Effective Catholic Schools: An Exploration authored by Anthony Bryk, Peter Holland,

Valerie Lee and Ruben Carriedo. This study, which built upon the work of Coleman and

his colleagues and Andrew Greeley, supported the earlier findings based on HSandB.

While Coleman and Greeley's analysis of HSandB looked at the achievement of high

school students, the National Center for Research in Total Catholic Education's research was not limited to high school students but also focused on elementary students. In examining the results of Catholic elementary school students, Bryk, Holland, Lee, and Carriedo found that in academic achievement, Catholic elementary students outperformed their public school peers in vocabulary, reading, writing and civics, had no significant difference in math and performed more poorly in science than their public school peers (A. S. Bryk, Holland, Lee, & Carriedo, 1984). "In sum, after adjusting for the differences in family background and secondary school factors, we find significant differences in school academic achievement between students who attended Catholic and public elementary schools" (A. S. Bryk, Holland, Lee, & Carriedo, 1984, p. 80).

These findings were again supported by James Coleman in 1987,

Catholic schools are more effective than public or other private schools in raising academic achievement of subpopulations that traditionally achieve at lower levels: blacks, Hispanics, children from families that provide lower levels of parental support, and children from families with lower socioeconomic standing. They are also more effective at increasing achievement of students with less traditional family deficiencies in structure or function. (J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987, pp. 147-148).

Coleman and his colleague's conclusions were not without their critics. Alexander and Pallas (1985), Jencks (1985) and Willms (1985) were among those who disagreed with researchers supporting the Catholic school effect. Alexander and Pallas contend that rather than supporting the Catholic school effect, the HSandB data lead them to two major conclusions. First, that there is no data to support that Catholic students perform better than their public school counterparts between sophomore and senior years and

secondly that in viewing background characteristics, there is no evidence that

demonstrates a difference between Catholic students and their public school counterparts

in test performance (Alexander & Pallas, 1985). The volley of researchers' conclusions

on the same data continued with Coleman, Greeley and Hoffer countering Alexander and

Pappas' conclusions in the April, 1985 volume of *Sociology of Education* citing

methodology flaws in the Alexander and Pappas research. In looking at the Alexander

and Pappas analysis that there are no significant achievement gains for Catholic students

in relation to their race, Hispanic ethnicity and socio-economic status, Hoffer, Greeley

and Coleman note, "How can this be? The answer appears to lie in the "corrections" of

correlations for reliability, which they carried out before any regressions were done. This

operation raised the sophomore-senior test correlations in the public sector to extremely

high levels, leaving little variance to be explained by any other variable. This correction

had a major effect on the results" (Hoffer, Greeley, & Coleman, 1985, p.95). Hoffer,

Greeley and Coleman contend that the Alexander and Pappas results therefore are the

result of flawed methodology and their results that demonstrate that Catholic school

students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do indeed achieve at higher

rate are valid.

The debate on public/private school effectiveness continues. In July, 2006 the

U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), using

2003 data from National Assessment of Educational Progress comparing achievement in

Grades 4 and 8 in reading and mathematics, concluded that,

In grades 4 and 8 for both reading and mathematics, students in private schools

achieved at higher levels than students in public schools. The average difference in

school means ranged from almost 8 points for grade 4 mathematics, to about 18 points for

grade 8 reading. The average differences were all statistically significant. Adjusting the

comparisons for student characteristics resulted in reductions in all four average

differences of approximately 11 to 14 points. Based on adjusted school means, the

average for public schools was significantly higher than the average for private schools

for grade 4 mathematics, while the average for private schools was significantly higher

than the average for public schools for grade 8 reading. The average differences in

adjusted school means for both grade 4 reading and grade 8 mathematics were not

significantly different from zero. (Braun, Jenkins, & Grigg, 2006, p. v).

Following the release of this information, researchers Paul Peterson and Elena

Llaudet at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government challenged these findings based on

what they considered faulty methodology (Peterson & Llaudet, 2006).

The NCES report used Title I participation, free and reduced lunch participation,

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs and special education services in their

research. The methodological objection raised by Peterson and Llaudet centered on the

use of student participation in these federal programs. Peterson and Llaudet contend that

this methodology is flawed because many private schools do not participate at all or only

minimally in these programs. As a result, they argue that the NCES findings may not be

accurate. "NCES's measures of student characteristics are flawed by inconsistent

classification across the public and private sectors and by the inclusion of factors open to

school influence" (Peterson & Llaudet, 2006).

This recent debate between a government agency and an esteemed academic

institution is illustrated here to demonstrate that the case for whether the public or private

schools provide a more effective delivery of services to their students still rages many years after Coleman's initial findings.

Catholic urban schools have been demonstrated as an effective urban educational model (Greeley, 1982; Coleman, 1987;Bryk, Lee and Holland,1993; Neal, 1997). The history of Catholic schools has demonstrated their success in educating students. If the Catholic schools are to continue to educate urban elementary students, more information must be collected as to how to do this best. No longer can the schools expect Catholic parents to dutifully fill the seats of inner city schools. Parishes and schools continue to close as the parish numbers decline and school enrollments drop (McDonald, 2006). As the future of the schools is considered, more research must be conducted to help Catholic educational leaders construct effective schools. The parents /guardians of the Catholic school students may provide insight by sharing the reasons why they have decided to enroll their children in a Catholic school.

The relationship of parents as part of the school community has been well documented in the literature (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Sanders & Epstein, 2000). Catholic schools in particular have provided a unique setting for this relationship to develop. Most urban Catholic elementary schools were attached to a parish. The parents whose children attended the school were likely to know each other through parish and also school interactions. Coleman theorized that this constituted social closure among those in the school community and this closure which included common norms and values translated into students who performed better in school. The creation of this social capital in the Catholic schools, according to Coleman, was the foundation of Catholic

schools' effectiveness and success. A history of social capital theory, its application in

education and in Catholic education in particular follows.

<div align="center">Social Capital Theory</div>

History of social capital theory

The historical origins of the term "social capital" may be debated. Robert Putnam

in his 2000 work *Bowling Alone* points out that the, "term *social capital* itself turns out to

have been independently invented at least six times over the twentieth century" (Putnam,

2000, p. 19). Coleman (1990) in his seminal work, *Foundations of Social Theory*, names

Loury as the first to coin the phrase in 1977; Schuller, Baron and Field in *Social Capital:*

A Critical Perspective, while crediting Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam with introducing

the concept of social capital into the theoretical debate, trace the first use of the phrase to

a 1957 Canadian publication (Schuller, Field, & Baron, 2000); while Putnam (2000)

traces the phrase's origin back to 1916 to educator L.J. Hanafin.

It is useful to examine each of these assertions and those who have been

associated with propelling the use of the term social capital in the literature.

Although not found in any other literature that I examined, Robert Putnam in his

2000 book *Bowling Alone* uncovers a very early use of the term social capital. This early

quote is notable in that it is directly connected to the use of the concept with education.

Putnam (2000) attributes the first known use of this terminology to 1916 when then West

Virginia school state supervisor L.J. Hanafin used the term social capital to make a case

for the importance of community involvement for schools to be successful. Putnam

quotes Hanafin in defining social capital,

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those tangible substance [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit…The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself….If he comes into contact with his neighbors, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors.[12](Putnam, 2000, p. 19).

During the 1960's and 1970's French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu first developed more fully the use of the term social capital. The first use of the term came in Bourdieu's 1970 publication, *Reproduction,* in which Bourdieu uses the term "capital" in association a number of forms of capital. Economic, cultural and social capital were the three forms of capital recognized as primary by Bourdieu with economic capital as that form of capital from which all others emanated and to which all others are reduced (Schuller, Field, & Baron, 2000). Bourdieu made the distinction between cultural capital and social capital by identifying the source of cultural capital as the parental support of the children's growth and the source of social capital as membership in social networks. Bourdieu defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248).

Portes (1998) recognizes economist Glen Loury as another source to whom the modern use of the term social capital is attributable. Loury's use of social capital, according to Portes, is not well developed and is used in connection with capturing, "the differential access to opportunities through social connections for minority and nonminority youth"(Portes, 1998, p. 5). Coleman also credits Loury with an early use of this term to describe," a set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person" (Coleman, 1990, p. 300).

James Coleman developed the use of the term "social capital" further. Coleman expanded Bourdieu's earlier concept of social capital to encompass the educational environment. An influential researcher whose work examining the High School and Beyond (HSandB) data uncovered differences in the achievement levels of private and public school students, Coleman was primarily interested in the connection between academic achievement and social inequality. Coleman's work with HSandB led him to look deeper into the reasons for the discrepancies he found. His development of social capital theory, primarily in the educational arena, was useful in explaining what he and Thomas Hoffer termed the "Catholic school effect", a theory expounded upon later by Bryk, Lee and Holland.

Coleman's primary interests lay in the educational arena. Because of this, much of the empirical evidence he used to create his theory of social capital was drawn from "studies of the social networks, attitudes and influences of schools on pupils" (Schuller, Field, & Baron, 2000, p. 5). Coleman (1990) cites social capital as defined by its function and closely intertwined with physical and human capital, but unlike physical and

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human capital, social capital, "inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons" (Coleman, 1990).

Coleman's expansion of this theory deviates from Bourdieu's class vision of society and expands the theory to fit into his sphere of interest- education- still holding on to the common understanding that social capital exists within the structure of the relationships that human beings have with each other.

Robert Putnam furthered the understanding of social capital by helping to put the term in the vernacular of the everyday man. First published in 1995 as an article in the *Journal of Democracy*, Putnam expanded in *Bowling Alone* (1990). *Bowling Alone* catapulted Putnam to public notoriety, even earning him a discussion with then-President Clinton and a feature in *People* magazine.

Bowling Alone explored the issue of civil disengagement in modern U.S. society. In defining social capital, Putnam writes,

> Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue." The difference is that "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. (Putnam, 2000, p. 19)

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Through his work, Robert Putnam brought the discussion of social capital into the twenty-first century and has assured that the theory of social capital will continue to be examined and generalized into use in common society.

<u>Social capital theory in education</u>

"Social capital matters for children's successful development in life"

(Putnam, 2000, p. 299).

Researchers have long recognized the importance of the connection between social capital and successful, effective schools (A. Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; A. S. Bryk, Holland, Lee, & Carriedo, 1984; J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, 1988; J. S. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987; Greeley, 1982). Portes (1998) points out that his review of the social capital literature demonstrates that "The empirical literature includes application of the concept as a predictor of, among others, school attrition and academic performance, children's intellectual development.." (Portes, 1998, p. 9). While examining the results from the annual Kids Count index, a measure of child well being, Putnam notes, "Indeed, across the various Kids Count indicators, social capital is second only to poverty in the breadth and depth of its effect on children's lives" (Putnam, 2000, p. 297).

The examination of the implications of social capital theory to the educational environment may be seen as a natural extension. When one considers that the foundations of social capital theory are networks created by human interactions with benefits afforded to the members of the group, one can understand the parallels to the school environment. The benefits of social capital may be manifested in different ways. For example, a student may derive benefits by being part of a social network, by having other family members at

the same school, or by having knowledge of the rites and rituals and norms and values within the school environment.

Gilbert Arriaza describes this application in the educational environment as follows:

Social networks operate in schools as collective agents that help or hinder students in negotiating social status and identity. These social networks glue sets of friendship groups and intersect with other social networks in rich and dynamic social hubs that serves as spaces for continuous and multiple socializing processes. These processes take physical form during classroom work, in the hall during passing periods, in the yards and in the cafeteria during lunch or physical education, as well as in the street and neighborhood after school (Arriaza, 2003, p. 73).

Putnam points out that the Social Capital Index is "highly correlated with student scores on standardized tests taken in elementary schools, junior high, and high school, as well as the rate at which students stay in school [9] " (Putnam, 2000, p. 299) and that " astonishingly, social capital was the single most important explanatory factor" (Putnam, 2000, p. 300).

Coleman proposes that bonds are strengthened in what he terms a "functional community" within the school. This functional community encompasses the relationship that parents and family members have with each other and with the community (J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987). Coleman theorizes that the presence of closure in these relationships helps to strengthen social capital. One form of closure is the presence of

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intergenerational relationships. This exists when parents of students from the same school know each other inside and outside of the school environment.

This type of relationship existed more commonly in a generation when mothers more commonly stayed home and neighbors knew each other. Today, it is more common in higher socio-economic communities and in those schools where a common identity is part of the mission of the school, such as Catholic or charter schools.

Pedro Noguera points out that Coleman's use of the concept of closure in his analysis of social capital theory supports the contention that it is only when trustworthiness in the social structures exists- especially in the relationship between parents and schools- that group goals and aspirations can develop and that this congruity in values, " leads to a reinforcement of social norms that promote regular school attendance, conformity to school rules, and concern for academic achievement" (Noguera, 1999).

Coleman was describing what he saw in the Catholic schools he examined and had a negative view on the ability of the public schools to replicate what the Catholic schools exhibited, arguing that public schools did not possess the high social closure of the Catholic schools because of the discontinuity of the values of the schools and the values of the students' homes.

Noguera (1999) in reflecting on the future of urban public schools offers a more optimistic opinion that improvement can be brought to inner-city public schools through social reform.

I believe such an approach must focus centrally on the development of social capital through the improvement of urban public schools. Specifically, the goal must be

to transform urban schools into sources of social stability and support for families and children by developing their potential to 1.) serve as sources of intra-community integration, and 2) to provide resources for extra-community linkages (Noguera, 1999).

Noguera opines that if the public schools develop a clearer sense of stated mission and student and parent expectations and by developing the resources that will facilitate more parent involvement, the public schools can build greater closure and therefore build a more effective model for delivering educational services to urban students.

A case can be made that the recommendations Noguera posits for success in urban public schools have been in place in urban Catholic schools for a number of years. I turn now to an examination study of the place of social capital in the culture of the urban Catholic schools.

Social capital theory in Catholic education

Throughout most of the history of Catholic schools in this country, social capital in these schools has included the elements of closure. Coleman and Hoffer in *Public and Private High Schools- The Impact of Communities* identify the social ties that bind Catholic school students by the relationships that their parents have with each other in what Coleman and Hoffer call "functional communities" as integral to the success of the students and the schools. This type of relationship among those in the community is known as "closure". In 1987 Coleman and Hoffer saw the Catholic schools they studied as examples of communities with a high level of closure.

Coleman and Hoffer argue that the presence of closure in the school community fosters the building of norms and values, rites and rituals within the community. A strong sense of these norms and values, rites and rituals builds the positive social capital in the

school, which in turn fosters greater school achievement and a higher percentage of students who do not drop out of school (J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987). Hoffer (2000) reiterates his earlier stance with Coleman and goes on to say, " The ties among individuals in the functional community can be viewed as "social capital" that parents can draw upon to help steer their children in productive directions" (Hoffer, 2000).

The Catholic elementary schools of the past have been parish schools with the majority of the enrolled students and their parents, extended family and neighbors part of the fabric of the parish. Catholic schools of the past have also included ethnic schools whose students shared a common culture and language other than English. In either case the vast majority of the students shared a common faith that bound them together with the rites and rituals of the faith that shaped their norms and values. This is no longer the case.

The demographics of students in Catholic urban schools have changed over the past twenty years (McDonald, 2006; McDonald & Schultz, 2010). The students of today are less likely to be Catholic and are more likely to come from neighborhoods other than the local school neighborhood. The parents of today's students are less likely to know each other through parish life and neighborhood connections. The development of social capital through the critical element of intergenerational closure is much less likely to happen.

Throughout much of the history of Catholic education in the United States social capital has played a role in the enrollment decisions of parents. Nan Lin argues, though, that closure does not need to be present for social capital to be present:

I believe that the requirement for network density or closure for the utility of social capital is not necessary or realistic. Research in social networks has stressed the

importance of bridges in networks (Granovotter, 1973; Burt, 1992) in facilitating

information and influence flows. To argue that closure or density is a requirement is to

deny the significance of bridges, structural holes, or weaker ties. (Lin, 1999, p. 34).

Catholic schools of the past have counted on the relationships of "functional

communities" to sustain their enrollments. Those involved in Catholic education need to

understand that the loss of "functional communities" in Catholic education may impact

the future of urban Catholic schools. Putnam ominously predicts that," Unfortunately, the

"functional communities" from which Catholic school students benefit have been

eroding, because both the church and the family have lost strength and cohesion. This

trend can be expected to harm kids of all socioeconomic groups, but especially the

disadvantaged"(Putnam, 2000, p. 303).

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

If, as Lin believes, social capital can be built without the presence of the closure

of Catholic schools of the past, attention must be paid to how to do this. Questions such

as these are important to examine:

Do the urban Catholic schools of the 21st century still possess social capital or are

they closer to the urban public schools described above by Noguera as those needing to

develop a clearer sense of mission and parent involvement?

What effect does a parish attached to a Catholic urban elementary school have on

the presence of social capital in the school?

How can social capital be built in today's Catholic schools without the presence

of closure in the establishment of social capital ?

Does social capital still play a part in the decisions of urban parents and guardians to enroll their children in the present day Catholic urban elementary schools?

The answers to these questions may well determine the future of the urban Catholic elementary schools. I propose to investigate these questions by researching the reasons that urban parents and guardians choose to enroll their children in low income urban Catholic schools of the twenty-first century. I believe that this study is critical to plan the direction of the urban elementary Catholic schools of the future.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Having led a Catholic urban elementary school for ten years I am acutely aware of the need for current research directed at these schools. At this moment in their almost 300-year history in the United States, Catholic urban elementary schools face a juncture that will define their future viability.

The Catholic school system relied for centuries on the work of the religious women and men and clergy. However, the percentage of religious personnel in Catholic schools has decreased from 92% in 1920 to 3.7% in 2010 (McDonald, 2006) replaced by a lay personnel whose presence has increased from 8 % in 1920 to 96.3% in 2010. Historically, pastors of parish schools and local bishops have held the authority for planning decisions for Catholic elementary schools. According to the Code of Canon Law, Canon 803, paragraph 1, "A Catholic school is understood as one which a competent ecclesiastical authority or a public ecclesiastic juridic person directs or which ecclesiastical authority recognizes as through a written document." (Beal, Coriden, & Green, 2000). According to Beal, Coriden and Greene, "Parish schools are under the supervision of the pastor who carries out his responsibilities ' under the authority of the diocesan bishop' " (Beal, Coriden, & Green, 2000, p. 958).

Principals of Catholic elementary schools, lay or religious, may have been consulted but the ultimate decision making power rested with pastors and bishops. The

inclusion of the voice of parents in the future planning for these schools is an even rarer occurrence. I believe that it is precisely these lay voices that should help determine the future direction of Catholic urban elementary schools.

It is the goal of my research to include the voices of low income parents/guardians of Catholic urban elementary students by assessing their reasons for enrolling their child/ren in a Catholic urban elementary school. I will examine if the presence of social capital is identified in these enrollment decisions and whether a parish attached to the school plays a part in the development of this social capital.

I believe that this research will add to the literature and will help to inform the leadership of Catholic schools to better plan for the future of these schools.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The following questions directed my study:

What are the reasons that parents/guardians choose to send their child to a low income Catholic urban elementary school?

What are the effects of parish closings on the choice decisions of parents/guardians and the future of Catholic schools?

Are parents/guardians from low-income schools as likely to choose to enroll their child in a regional Catholic elementary school as a parish Catholic elementary school?

What role, if any, does social capital play, directly or indirectly, in the choice decisions of these parents?

What are the implications of this research on the future of Catholic urban elementary schools?

I theorize that the presence of an attached parish to a Catholic urban elementary school fosters social capital in the school. This presence of social capital, I believe, may be a determining factor in the reasons parents/guardians may choose a school. Researching the answers to the above stated questions will, I believe, help to answer those questions posed previously as to how to build social capital in the Catholic schools of the future. These questions may direct future research.

<div align="center">Research Sites</div>

Four elementary (pre-kindergarten – Grade 8) schools in the Archdiocese of Boston are sites for this research. These four schools include two that have a parish attached and two that are regional schools without a parish attached.

<div align="center">Research Participants</div>

Research participants in this study are the parents/guardians whose children attend one of the four Catholic urban elementary schools that are research sites in this study.

<div align="center">Methods of Data Collection</div>

Parent/Guardian Survey

Before the surveys are sent home with the students of the schools, an announcement will be made in each school's weekly or biweekly newsletters. The script of this newsletter announcement will be e-mailed to each principal at least two weeks in advance and is as follows:

>……… School is pleased to be part of a research study being
>
>conducted by Mrs. Sheila Kukstis, a doctoral candidate at the
>
>Leaders in Urban Schools Program at the University of
>
>Massachusetts at Boston. This goal of this study is to identify why

parents/guardians in Catholic urban elementary schools in Boston

choose to send their child/ren to a Catholic school. As part of this

study, Mrs. Kukstis would like to survey our families about why

they have chosen our school. Next week each of the families of …..

School will receive a survey. All surveys are anonymous. Although

all families will receive a survey, no family is under any obligation

to complete the survey.

I will personally deliver the parent/guardian surveys to each school. Surveys will be sent home with the students of the school through the school's communication folder/envelope to their families. All surveys will be anonymous. Each family will be provided a labeled return envelope in which to return the completed survey sealed in this envelope to the school office.

There will be a request to complete all surveys in a week. In order to facilitate the survey returns, the surveys may be returned in a variety of ways; they may be returned via the school's communication folder/envelope, the students may bring the surveys back and pass into the classroom teacher who will send it to the school office, the student may pass the returned envelope into the school office himself/herself or the parent/guardian may bring in the completed survey himself/herself. I will provide a box for each school to deposit the completed surveys and will pick up the surveys personally after the first week. After the first week, I will contact the schools by telephone and/or e-mail to inquire about the numbers of new surveys and will pick up newly submitted surveys as needed. After the first week, I will provide reminder notices, printed on bright colored paper for students of each school.

If needed, surveys will be translated into predominant languages of the parents/guardians. This need will be determined by the site principals.

As an incentive, two types of prizes will be awarded: First, a Pizza Party will be given to the classroom in each school that brings back the greatest percentage of parent/guardian surveys (each sibling will be given credit for the returned family survey). Second, two same-numbered tickets have been included with each family survey. These tickets are for a raffle. All those who return the survey to school should return one of the tickets to school with the survey and keep one ticket at home. After the deadline for completing the survey, a raffle will be held at each school with all the returned tickets. The winning ticket will be pulled at the school. Anonymity will be respected by having the principal award the prize to the parent with the correct raffle ticket. The school will announce the winning raffle ticket number. Parents/guardians will check their ticket at home to see if they have the winning ticket. Raffle prizes may be certificates to the local supermarket, a gas certificate or a store such as Target.

In developing the survey instrument I have identified surveys that have been used to ascertain data similar to what I am researching. As this process was unfolding and I continued my reading of relevant literature, I collected questions that may be useful on the survey instrument. I have found one reference that may be particularly helpful. In 1982, Cibulka, O'Brien and Zewe collaborated to write, "Inner-City Private Elementary Schools: A Study". The research on which this book is based is very similar to the research that I am proposing. Although the results are reported in this work, the actual instrument itself, a nine page written questionnaire, was not included in the book. I wrote to Dr. Cibulka, now Dean of the College of Education at the University of Kentucky, and

inquired if he could help me to get access to the original survey. Dr. Cibulka responded very quickly but was unable to provide the survey instrument. He explained to me that he and his colleagues provided the data analysis; the survey was created by researchers from the organization that sponsored the researcher- The Catholic League of Religious and Civil Rights. My inquiry and his response are contained in the Appendix.

I have also found a more recent survey that provides questions directly related to my field of research. This published work, "Primary Trends, Challenges and Outlook- A Report on Catholic Elementary School" was authored in 2006 by Mark Gray and Mary Gautier out of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. I have contacted Dr. Gray and received his permission to use any of the questions from this survey for my own research (see Appendix).

Parent/Guardian Focus Groups

A check-off box will be provided on each parent/guardian survey. This box will allow parents/guardians to choose to be part of the focus group. Two focus groups will be conducted, one from either of the two parish-based schools and one from either of the two regional schools. I will assess which of the schools from each of the two groups (parish-based/regional) will be part of the focus groups by the number of responses received. If there are not enough volunteers from any one school, I will create the focus group from both of the schools (either both parish-based and/or both regional schools).

I am deliberately choosing not to create a focus group using the Parent/Teacher Group. In my fifteen years' experience as a principal, I have experienced that it is a very small group of parents who are involved with the Parent/Teacher Group and not wholly representative of the full parent body. By concentrating only on this group, I would

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contend that a crucial part of the parent population would not be represented thus calling into question the validity of the data gathered.

In the initial invitation I would clearly identify myself, the purpose of the group, a timeline and how I would communicate with the participants the results of the focus group. Questions would be developed in advance of the meeting. Permission to audio/videotape would be solicited ahead of time. Approximately one hour would be devoted to each focus group in order to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons that they choose to send their children to a Catholic urban elementary school than I would be able to glean from just a survey/questionnaire.

Surveys and focus groups will be conducted between October 1, 2009 and March, 2010.

Pilot Study

In April, 2008 I was informed of a local Catholic elementary school who would be hiring a new principal for the 2008-2009 school year and whose pastor was interested in creating a parent survey to assess more information about parent thoughts about the qualities of the future of the school and the qualities of a new principal. I offered to assist by writing, collecting and analyzing the results of a short survey so that I could pilot a survey that may reflect a condensed version of my possible future survey. I met with the pastor on April 21, 2008 to discuss and design the survey. Hard copies of the survey were mailed out Friday, May 16, 2008 to the current school parents/guardians. I have also used Surveymonkey.com to create an on-line version of this survey for posting on the parish/school website. I worked with the parish webmaster, to post the survey on the parish website. The survey was posted Saturday, May 17, 2008. Surveys results were

analyzed on-line for those who participate on-line. Those who choose to take the paper

survey had the option of mailing it back or dropping it at the parish rectory by last week

in May. This experience helped me to identifying possible methodological problems

ahead of the proposed dissertation research. This survey asked the parents/guardians their

reasons for enrolling their child/en at the school. Since this is the first research questions,

this pilot survey also gave me data that could be used as a basis of comparison although

the demographics of the pilot survey site are different than the research sites.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIEW FROM THE HOME- AN ANALYSIS OF PARENT/GUARDIAN VOICES
ON SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CHOICE

Introduction

During the 2009-2010 school year, there were 26,331 students (K-8) in the Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Boston. Of this number, 4,450 students were enrolled in the urban elementary schools and 1,117 enrolled in the four schools in the research sites from this study.

The overall Archdiocesan elementary school enrollment of 26, 331 represents the eighth year in a row that the total Archdiocesan elementary school enrollment had dropped. The goal of this exploratory study is to afford an opportunity to the parents/guardians who make the enrollment choices to have their voices heard and to use these voices to help inform the schools in the Archdiocese of Boston to plan for their future viability.

This chapter is constructed to give an overview of the data collected. The data culled from this study are divided between the parent/guardian survey that was distributed to school families in four school research sites and two parent/guardian focus groups. The survey constitutes the bulk of the data. The parent/guardian focus groups were very limited in the data produced by the small number of parents/guardians who ultimately participated in the groups. Nevertheless, a summary of these groups is

included to provide a small snapshot of more of the parent/guardian voices. When analyzing the data collected the chapter is broken down broadly as follows:

- Results of Parent/Guardian Survey Analysis
  - Personal Information –Questions # 1-9
    - Results of all four sites combined
    - Results of parish-based school sites
    - Results of regionally based school sites
    - Results from Site 1
    - Results from Site 2
    - Results from Site 3
    - Results from Site 4
    - Comparison of all four sites
  - Decision to Enroll (Questions 10-14)
    - Question 10
    - Question 11-14
  - School Activities (Questions 15-18)
  - Parish School Connection (Questions #19-31)
    - Question # 19-24- all survey respondents
    - Question # 19-31- Catholic survey respondents
- Focus Group Results
  - Focus Group 1
  - Focus Group 2
- Conclusion

<u>Limitations of the Data</u>

The data collected in this study contained certain limitations that do not allow the findings to be generalized to a population larger than those who completed the surveys. The averages and percentages reflect the group of parents/guardians who chose to complete the survey. In the following section, data are provided that compare the profile of the respondents to the profile of the school population as a whole in terms of those that are Catholic (Question #3) and those whose children are eligible for free/reduced meals (Question #9). Caution needs to be made in not assuming that the findings presented in this research are able to be generalized to the school populations as a whole or to the Boston Catholic urban elementary schools.

The distribution of the surveys was done by the schools, using the school's weekly or bi-weekly communication folders. Even though parents/guardians were alerted to the survey's distribution a week in advance through the school's newsletter, bias in the distribution of the surveys must be considered. The researcher cannot rule out that some families may not have received the survey. This method of distribution was used for a few reasons. First, school family address lists are confidential and could not be made available so United States Postal Service mailing by the researcher was impossible. To have had the school mail the surveys to maintain confidentiality would have meant asking each school secretary to put labels and stamps on all surveys being mailed. This was rejected because of the amount of time and difficulty on the part of the school personnel. All surveys were in envelopes with a second return envelope attached. Parents/guardians were asked to identify student grades on the return envelopes so that the number of responses per class could be tallied. A prize was given per school to the

class with the largest percentage of responses. Many envelopes were returned with no class identified on them so it is impossible to assess whether surveys were evenly represented among grade levels.

Schools were visited initially with the survey and three more times to pick up surveys, check on progress and to assess whether more surveys were needed. Once the initial period of collection was completed there was no follow-up survey. The return rate of the surveys was 23% of the 850 surveys left at the schools to be distributed. This rate of return is not a high enough rate to be able to form conclusions for the whole school populations. The conclusions here are based on the response to the survey only.

Because the survey was anonymous, it is impossible to know who did and who did not complete the returned surveys. Some evidence of its parallels to the school populations in general can be made using independent data from the schools about the religion of respondents and free/reduced meals eligibility and the general school population (Tables 4.1 & 4.2). These are the only two variables that can be compared. Hence this sample is a convenience sample.

With a survey return rate of 23%, the optimum procedure in a perfect setting would be to try again to reach more families with a second attempt. This was rejected because of the imposition on the schools and the reluctance to try again after the effort given through three weeks of collection of the surveys. It was the opinion of the researcher as both the researcher and a Catholic elementary school principal that further attempts would not yield a better result than the efforts already conducted. Although the return rate of 23% is not enough to make broad conclusions for the Catholic elementary schools in urban Boston, the result from this exploratory data is important in that this is a

field where very little research exists. As the urban Catholic elementary schools across the nation struggle with maintaining viability, addressing efforts to increase enrollment and reverse the trend of the past decade is critical. Only through research will this happen. It is hoped that this small nascent study is the start of more research in this critical area of school sustainability and reform.

Data Collection Process

During the last week in October, 2009, I delivered 867 surveys to four Boston Catholic urban elementary (Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 8) school research sites. So that parents/guardians knew ahead of time that the surveys would be coming, prior to delivering the surveys I sent out text to each building principal for a notice to be placed in the school's newsletter to alert families that the surveys would be coming in the next weeks. I also communicated frequently with the schools' administrative assistants to ensure that if any problems arose I would be contacted. Each principal was electronically sent a copy of the survey and a copy of the focus group questions to review ahead of time. Principals were kept fully informed as to the delivery date of the surveys and the process for collection. In the weeks before the survey delivery, I asked principals for either their teachers' e-mail or permission to speak to the teachers myself for a few moments. Three principals agreed to forward an e-mail to the teachers explaining the process; one principal declined but said that she would speak to the teachers herself. The principals at each school gave me an estimate of the number of families at each school and also added extra numbers in case some surveys were lost or misplaced by families. Between October 27-October 29, 2009 the surveys were sent home by school personnel at each site in each school's weekly or bi-weekly communication folder. I collected

surveys three times in the next four weeks from each site resulting in a final tally of 196 surveys.

Site 1	175 surveys given to school	35 returned	(20%)
Site 2	172 surveys given to school	25 returned	(16%)
Site 3	260 surveys given to school	52 returned	(20%)
Site 4	260 surveys given to school	84 returned	(32%)

Over the course of the next three weeks, I visited each site once a week to collect the returned surveys. I collected 196 surveys in total. It is unclear exactly how many surveys were sent out to families, as each principal reported that they had more than enough surveys and did have surveys left over. An accurate account of families within each site was not obtained; I was given only estimates by the school offices. Using 850 as a reasonable, and maybe generous, number of surveys distributed to families, the return rate of surveys was 23%.

Each survey had two tickets attached. Participants in the survey were instructed in the attached introductory letter (Appendix C) to retain one ticket and return the other ticket with the survey. After all surveys were collected at each site, one ticket was pulled with the owner of the winning ticket receiving a $50 gift card. Parents/guardians were asked to note on the return envelope the classrooms of each child. During the process, I also kept track of the classrooms of the children whose parents/guardians returned the survey. The classroom in each site that had the highest rate of return won a pizza party and "Dress Down Day"- a non-uniform day.

To gain more information about the enrollment decisions of parents/guardians of low-income Boston Catholic urban elementary schools two focus groups were held. On

the survey, parents/guardians were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a focus group (p.3 Survey of Parent/Guardian Enrollment Choices in Catholic Urban Elementary Schools in Greater Boston). Of the 196 returned surveys, 87 respondents among the four sites indicated their willingness to be part of a focus group. Parents/ guardians from two sites, one regional school site (26 affirmative responses) and one parish (18 affirmative responses) school site were each invited to be part of a focus group. E-mails were sent out to determine the day and time that would work best for the group. From the regional school site, a final number of six agreed to meet for a 7:30 am focus group; the parish school site had six parents/guardians who agreed to a 6:30 pm meeting. The parish focus group took place in a meeting room in the church basement and the regional school site participants met in the school cafeteria. Each meeting was confirmed by e-mail and by phone the day before the focus group.

At each meeting, only two of those who agreed to participate attended the focus group. Each focus group lasted approximately 45 minutes.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

This dissertation was guided by five research questions. The key research question is number 1 with the remaining four questions related to this key question.

1. What are the reasons that parents/guardians choose to send their child to a low income Catholic urban elementary school?

2. What are the effects of parish closings on the choice decisions of parents/guardians and the future of Catholic schools?

3. Are parents/guardians as likely to choose to enroll their child in a regional Catholic elementary school as a parish Catholic elementary school?

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4. What role, if any, does social capital play, directly or indirectly, in the choice decisions of these parents?

5. What are the implications of this research on the future of Catholic urban elementary schools?

Each of these questions will be addressed in the following analysis of the data collected through the parent/guardian surveys, focus groups and other pertinent research data.

<u>Results of Parent/Guardian Survey Analysis</u>

The Parent/Guardian Survey was divided into four sections:

1. Personal Information (questions #1-9) Tables 4.7-4.78

2. Making the Decision to Enroll (questions #10-14) Tables 4.79-

3. School Activities (questions #15-18)

4. Parish/School Connection (questions #19-24-all respondents; #19-31 Catholic respondents)

As I examined the survey responses that centered around why parents/guardians chose to enroll their child in a Catholic urban elementary school, it became clear that it was critical to look closely at the profile of who is making these decisions. It should be noted that the analysis of these responses forms a picture of the respondents to the survey only, not necessarily to the school population as a whole. Some outside data were available and comparisons of the respondent profile and the school population as a whole may be made using these data only. Two critical comparisons are made below:

- Table 4.1 shows the percentage of Catholic and non-Catholic parents/guardians in the school versus those that chose to respond to the survey

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- Table 4.2 shows the percentage of students who are eligible for federally funded free/reduced meal programs

Table 4.1: Catholic students per site compared to Catholic parent/guardians in survey

Site	Percentage of Catholic Students in School (2009-2010 NCEA) data	Percentage of Catholic Parent/Guardians in Survey Respondents
Site 1	38%	46.7%
Site 2	59%	48%
Site 3	79%	80.8%
Site 4	67%	66.7%

Table 4.2: Students eligible for free/reduced meals compared to parents' responses

	Percentage of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals from School Data	Percentage of "yes" Response to Survey Question # 9
Site 1	64%	65.7%
Site 2	69%	68%
Site 3	20%	23.5%
Site 4	45%	36.1%

In the first section of the survey (questions #1-9) close scrutiny is given to these responses so that a clear understanding of what factors in the parents/guardians' profile may be considered as part of the decisions to enroll their child/ren. For this reason, the

responses in this first section are looked at from three different perspectives. In the following analyses, the results are divided into these sections:

- First, the four school research sites are looked at as a whole

- Second, the four research sites are divided into two categories

    o   parish school

    o   regional schools

- Third, each of the four sites is looked at as an individual school setting

        ▪   Site 1

        ▪   Site 2

        ▪   Site 3

        ▪   Site 4

 I have looked at the data in this first section in each of these ways in order to give a comprehensive picture of the parents/guardians in these four sites and to analyze whether the specific profile of any of these groupings makes a difference when analyzing the reasons parents/guardians choose a Boston Catholic urban elementary school. Each one of these analyses allows a story to be told behind the numbers.

<u>Personal information (questions # 1-9)</u>

The parent/guardian profiles assessed as the results of the personal information (questions #1-9) provide a portrait of the survey group and also provide information that can be used to cross tab with those questions that look specifically at the reasons for the parents/guardians reasons for enrolling their child/ren in an urban Boston Catholic elementary school. Questions emerged during the analysis such as:

- Is there a difference in who makes the decision to enroll a child in a Catholic school when comparing those whose annual income is less than $40,000 and those whose annual income is above $40,000?

- Are Catholic parents/guardians more likely to assess a higher importance to their child's school being parish-based than those who are non-Catholic?

- Is there a difference between the responses from those in parish and regional schools when assessing the importance of a parish attached to the school?

Having a clear picture of the parent/guardian profiles from each of these perspectives helped to answer these questions and create a deeper understanding of the enrollment choices being made by parents/guardians in these schools.

Research sites.

The research sites are four schools that are located within 6 miles of each other. In a car on a good Boston traffic day one could visit all four schools in less than twenty minutes driving time. Each of the four sites, though, has a distinct school demographic and socio-economic make-up.

Table 4.3: Numbers of students by site and demographic grouping

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	White	Total
Site 1	3	118	53	34	2	210
Site 2	0	155	27	5	0	226
Site 3	43	55	8	11	198	315
Site 4	56	122	51	42	88	366

Table 4.4: Demographics of four sites
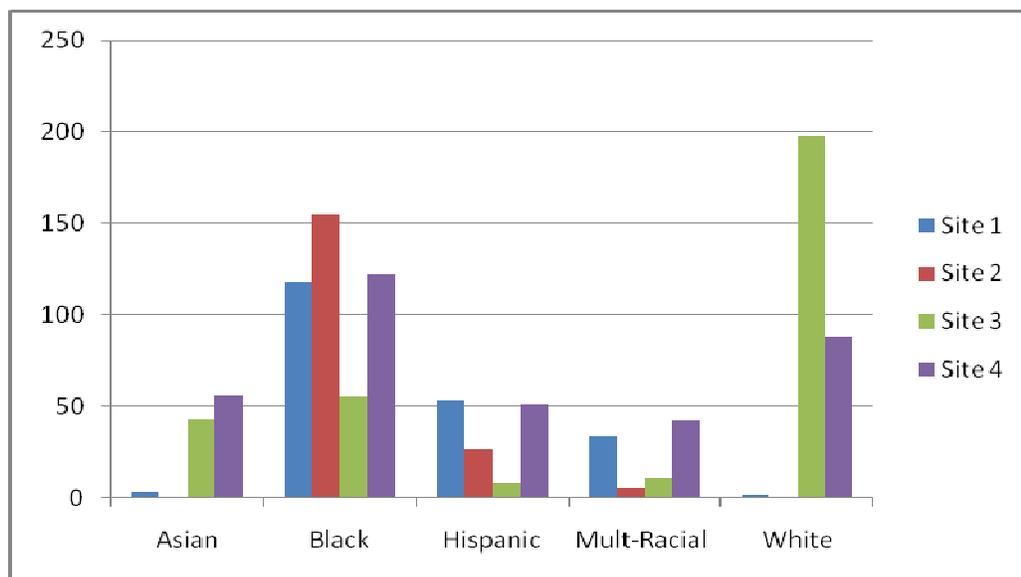
The percentage of survey respondent families receiving tuition based assistance also varied among the four schools:

Table 4.5: Families who have received tuition based assistance

Does your family receive tuition based assistance?		Sites				Total
		1	2	3	4	
No	# of families	4	9	37	57	107
	% within Sites	11.4%	36.0%	71.2%	67.9%	54.6%
Yes	# of families	30	16	15	27	88
	% within Sites	85.7%	64.0%	28.8%	32.1%	44.9%
Not aware of availability	# of families	1	0	0	0	1
	% within Sites	2.9%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.5%
Total	# of families	35	25	52	84	196
	% within Sites	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As illustrated in Table 4.5, overall 44.9% of families among the four research sites receive financial assistance. Among the four sites, though, financial assistance is disproportionately represented. At site 1, 85.7% of families reported receiving financial assistance, whereas at site 3, 28.8% of the families reported receiving financial assistance. Two sites, sites 1 and 2, receive the highest percentage of financial assistance among families- 85.7% and 64.0% with the percentage of families receiving financial assistance at sites 3 and 4, 28.8% and 32.1% respectively. Principals reported that the financial assistance at all four sites is given through the Inner City Scholarship Fund run by the Catholic Schools Foundation. Criteria for eligibility and amount of total financial assistance available to each school are set by the Catholic Schools Foundation; financial assistance decisions and amount of awards are given at the school level.

Question 6 asked families to respond about their combined family income. Again, there are significant differences reported among the four sites.

Table 4.6: Combined family income

Is your combined family income above or below $40,000			Sites				
			1	2	3	4	Total
Below $40,000	# of families		21	15	14	37	87
	% within Sites		61.8%	60.0%	27.5%	44.0%	44.8%
Above $40,000	# of families		13	10	37	47	107
	% within Sites		38.2%	40.0%	72.5%	56.0%	55.2%
Total	# of families		34	25	51	84	194
	% within Sites		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Sites 1 and 2 report respectively that 61.8% and 60.0 % of families have a combined income below $40,000; sites 3 and 4 respectively report annual incomes below $40,000 at 27.5% and 44.0% of families.

This information provides a small window into some of the differences among the families making up these four sites. A closer inspection is given below using each of the questions # 1-9.

The personal information profiles of the families whose parents/guardians completed the surveys are described below first as a whole, using the data from all four research sites. The data are then further disaggregated using the data only from the two

schools that are parish schools and the two that are regional schools, lastly described by the four individual sites.

In each of these sections, questions #1-9 (personal information) from the survey are referred to. These nine questions are copied below.The tables in each section are labeled with the number of the corresponding question and the text of the question is contained in the body of the table.

1. How many children do you have currently enrolled at this school?

2. How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?

3. Are you Catholic?

4. Did you ever attend a Catholic school?

5. If yes, how many years did you attend a Catholic school?

6. Is your combined family income above/below $40,000?

7. Does your family receive financial assistance to pay tuition from the parish, the diocese or some other organization?

8. If financial assistance were not available at your child/ren's Catholic school, would you have enrolled your children?

9. Does your child receive free/reduced lunch and or breakfast at the school?

<u>Results of all four sites combined</u>.

The first set of tables (tables 4.7- 4.15) describes the data from all four sites as an aggregate.

Table 4.7: 4 sites Question 1 Number of children enrolled

# of children enrolled at Catholic school		# of families-all four sites	Percent
	1	148	75.5
	2	34	17.3
	3	10	5.1
	4	3	1.5
	Total	195	99.5
Missing	System	1	.5
Total		196	100.0

No family reported more than four children enrolled at any school site. The mean

number of children from each family enrolled in the four school sites is 1.32 children.

Table 4.8: 4 sites Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school?

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families enrolled this long- all four sites	Percent
	1 month	1	.5
	2 months	7	3.6
	3 months	19	9.7
	1 year	17	8.7
	2	35	17.9
	3	19	9.7

		4	20	10.2
		5	23	11.7
		6	11	5.6
		7	12	6.1
		8	8	4.1
		9	8	4.1
		10	3	1.5
		11	2	1.0
		15	1	.5
		16	2	1.0
		17	1	.5
		Total	189	96.4
Missing	System		7	3.6
Total			196	100.0

The mean number of years that the children of parents/guardians from all four

sites have been enrolled in a Catholic school is 3.959.

Table 4.9: 4 sites Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families-- all four sites	Percent
	No	70	35.7
	Yes	126	64.3
	Total	196	100.0

Table 4.10: 4 sites Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Did you ever attend a Catholic school?		# of parents/guardians-- all four sites	Percent
	No	87	44.4
	Yes	109	55.6
	Total	196	100.0

More than half (55.6%) of parents/guardians attended Catholic schools themselves with a mean average of 8.61 years attendance (below).

Table 4.11: 4 sites Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

Years attended Catholic school		# of families-- all four sites	Percent
	0	3	1.5
	1	2	1.0
	2	5	2.6
	3	3	1.5
	4	12	6.1
	5	2	1.0
	6	7	3.6
	7	6	3.1
	8	13	6.6
	9	6	3.1
	10	3	1.5
	11	2	1.0
	12	33	16.8
	13	6	3.1
	14	1	.5
	16	4	2.0
	Total	108	55.1
	No Response	88	44.9
Total		196	100.0

The mean number of years that parents/guardians among all four sites attended a

Catholic school in this survey is 8.56 years.

Table 4.12: 4 sites Question 6 Combined family income

Combined family income		# of families-all four sites	Percent
	Below $40,000	87	44.4
	Above $40,000	107	54.6
	Total	194	99.0
	No Response	2	1.0
Total		196	100.0

Table 4.13: 4 sites Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?		# of families-all four sites	Percent
	Yes	107	54.6
	No	88	44.9
	Did not know about financial assistance	1	.5
	Total	196	100.0

Table 4.14: 4 sites Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Enrolled without financial assistance?		# of families-all four sites	Percent
	No	45	23.0
	Yes	146	74.5
	Total	191	97.4
	Missing response	5	2.6
Total		196	100.0

Table 4.15: 4 sites Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families-- all four sites	Percent
	No	112	57.1
	Yes	82	41.8
	Total	194	99.0
	Missing response	2	1.0
Total		196	100.0

<u>Results of personal information from parish-based school sites.</u>

Next, personal information (questions #1-9) from the two parish-based school sites is examined in Tables 4.16-4.24.

Table 4.16: Parish-based schools Question 1 Number of children enrolled

How many children enrolled?		# of families with this number of children enrolled- parish based sites	Percent
	1	42	70.0
	2	15	25.0
	3	2	3.3
	Total	59	98.3
	No Response	1	1.7
Total		60	100.0

The mean average at parish-based sites is 1.32 children.

Table 4.17: Parish-based schools Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families enrolled this long- parish based sites	Percent
	3 months	7	11.7
	1 year	7	11.7
	2 years	14	23.3
	3	11	18.3
	4	6	10.0
	5	5	8.3
	6	3	5.0
	7	1	1.7
	8	1	1.7
	9	1	1.7
	10	1	1.7
	16	1	1.7
	17	1	1.7
	Total	59	98.3
	No response	1	1.7
Total		60	100.0

The mean number of years that the children of parents/guardians in parish-based

sites is 3.459 years.

Table 4.18: Parish-based schools Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families- parish based sites	Percent
	No	32	53.3
	Yes	28	46.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 4.19: Parish-based schools Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Did you attend a Catholic school?		# parents/guardians who attended a Catholic school- parish based sites	Percent
	No	32	53.3
	Yes	28	46.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 4.20: Parish-based schools Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

# of years parents/guardians attended a Catholic School		# of parents/guardians-parish based sites	Percent
	0	1	1.7
	1	1	1.7
	2	1	1.7
	3	2	3.3
	4	3	5.0
	5	1	1.7
	6	3	5.0
	7	1	1.7
	8	4	6.7
	9	2	3.3
	10	2	3.3
	11	1	1.7
	12	2	3.3
	13	2	3.3
	14	1	1.7
	Total	27	45.0
	No response	33	55.0
Total		60	100.0

Mean number of years that a parent/guardian in a parish-based school attended a

Catholic school is 7.14 years.

Table 4.21: Parish-based schools Question 6 Combined family income

Family income above/below $40,000		# of families- parish based sites	Percent
	Below	36	60.0
	Above	23	38.3
	Total	59	98.3
	No response	1	1.7
Total		60	100.0

Table 4.22: Parish-based schools Question 7 Financial assistance

Family receive financial assistance?		# of families- parish based sites	Percent
	0	13	21.7
	1	46	76.7
	3	1	1.7
Valid	Total	60	100.0

Table 4.23: Parish-based schools Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial

assistance

Enrolled without financial assistance?		# of families- parish based sites	Percent
	No	22	36.7
	Yes	37	61.7
	Total	59	98.3
	No response	1	1.7
Total		60	100.0

Table 4.24: Parish-based schools Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families- parish based sites	Percent
	No	20	33.3
	Yes	40	66.7
	Total	60	100.0

Results of personal information from regionally-based school sites.

After examining the results from questions # 1-9 at the parish-based school sites,

we now turn to the results from the schools that are regionally-based. As above, the

results from each question is illustrated in the accompanying tables. Tables # 4.25 – 4.33

show the data from questions #1-9 of the regionally-based schools.

Table 4.25 Regionally-based schools Question 1 Number of children enrolled

# of children enrolled at Catholic school		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	1	106	77.9
	2	19	14.0
	3	8	5.9
	4	3	2.2
	Total	136	100.0

The mean number of children in regionally-based schools is 1.32.

Table 4.26: Regionally-based schools Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	1 month	1	.7
	2 months	7	5.1
	3 months	12	8.8
	1 years	10	7.4
	2 years	21	15.4
	3	8	5.9
	4	14	10.3
	5	18	13.2
	6	8	5.9
	7	11	8.1
	8	7	5.1
	9	7	5.1
	10	2	1.5
	11	2	1.5
	15	1	.7
	16	1	.7
	Total	130	95.6
	No response	6	4.4

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?	# of families- regional sites	Percent
1 month	1	.7
2 months	7	5.1
3 months	12	8.8
1 years	10	7.4
2 years	21	15.4
3	8	5.9
4	14	10.3
5	18	13.2
6	8	5.9
7	11	8.1
8	7	5.1
9	7	5.1
10	2	1.5
11	2	1.5
15	1	.7
16	1	.7
Total	130	95.6
No response	6	4.4
Total	136	100.0

The mean number of years that the children of parents/guardians in regionally-

based schools have been in Catholic schools is 4.185 years.

Table 4.27: Regionally-based schools Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families-regional sites	Percent
	No	38	27.9
	Yes	98	72.1
	Total	136	100.0

Table 4.28: Regionally-based schools Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Attend a Catholic school?		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	0-No	55	40.4
	1-Yes	81	59.6
Valid	Total	136	100.0

Table 4.29: Regionally-based schools Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

How many years did you attend a Catholic school?		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	0	2	1.5
	1	1	.7
	2	4	2.9
	3	1	.7
	4	8	5.9
	5	1	.7
	6	4	2.9
	7	5	3.7
	8	9	6.6
	9	4	2.9
	10	1	.7
	11	1	.7
	12	31	22.8
	13	4	2.9
	16	4	2.9
Valid	Total	80	58.8
	No response	56	41.2
Total		136	100.0

The mean number of years that parents/guardians in regionally-based schools attended a Catholic school is 9.06 years.

Table 4.30: Regionally-based schools Question 6 Combined family income

Family income above/below $40,000		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	Below	51	37.5
	Above	84	61.8
	Total	135	99.3
	No response	1	.7
Total		136	100.0

Table 4.31: Regionally-based schools Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	No	94	69.1
	Yes	42	30.9
	Total	136	100.0

Table 4.32: Regionally-based schools Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Enroll without financial assistance?		# of families- regional sites	Percent
	No	23	16.9
	Yes	109	80.1
	Total	132	97.1
	No Response	4	2.9
Total		136	100.0

Table 4.33: Regionally-based schools Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families- regional sites	Percent
Valid	0-No	92	67.6
	1-Yes	42	30.9
	Total	134	98.5
	No Response	2	1.5
Total		136	100.0

Results of questions #1-9 from school site #1.

Tables 4.34-4.42 illustrate the responses from the surveys from school site 1.
School site 1 was the site with the fewest responses and the was remarkable in its
difference from the others in the number who received financial assistance and would not
return without financial assistance.

Table 4.34: Site #1 Question 1 Number of children enrolled

How many children enrolled?		# of families- Site #1	Percent
	1	24	68.6
	2	9	25.7
	3	2	5.7
	Total	35	100.0

The mean number of children parents/guardians have enrolled at site 1 is 1.37

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Table 4.35: Site #1 Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families enrolled this long- Site #1	Percent
	3 months	5	14.3
	1 year	4	11.4
	2 years	7	20.0
	3	8	22.9
	4	4	11.4
	5	3	8.6
	6	1	2.9
	7	1	2.9
	9	1	2.9
	17	1	2.9
	Total	35	100.0

The mean number of years that the children of parents/guardians at site 1 have been enrolled in a Catholic school is 3.24 years.

Table 4.36: Site #1 Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families- Site#1	Percent
	No	19	54.3
	Yes	16	45.7
	Total	35	100.0

Table 4.37: Site #1 Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Did you attend a Catholic school?		# parents/guardians who attended a Catholic school- Site # 1	Percent
	No	19	54.3
	Yes	16	45.7
	Total	35	100.0

Table 4.38: Site #1 Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

How many years did you attend a Catholic school?		# of families- Site #1	Percent
	0	1	2.9
	1	1	2.9
	3	1	2.9
	4	4	11.4
	5	1	2.9
	6	1	2.9
	7	1	2.9
	8	1	2.9
	9	1	2.9
	10	1	2.9
	12	2	5.7
	13	2	5.7
	Total	17	48.6
	No Response	18	51.4
Total		35	100.0

The mean number of years that parents/guardians at site 1 attended a Catholic school is 6.76 years.

Table 4.39: Site #1 Question 6 Combined family income

Family income above/below $40,000		# of families- Site #1	Percent
	Below $40,000	21	60.0
	Above $40,000	13	37.1
	Total	34	97.1
	No Response	1	2.9
Total		35	100.0

Table 4.40: Site #1 Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?		# of families Site #1	Percent
	0-No	4	11.4
	1-Yes	30	85.7
	3- Parent/ Guardian did not know about availability of financial assistance	1	2.9
	Total	35	100.0

Table 4.41: Site #1 Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Enroll without financial assistance?		# of families- Site #1	Percent
	No	14	40.0
	Yes	20	57.1
	Total	34	97.1
	No Response	1	2.9
Total		35	100.0

Table 4.42: Site #1 Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families- Site #1	Percent
	No	12	34.3
	Yes	23	65.7
	Total	35	100.0

Results of questions #1-9 from school site #2.

Tables 4.43- 4.51 display the results from questions #1-9 at site #2.

Table 4.43: Site #2 Question 1 Number of children enrolled

How many children enrolled?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	1	18	72.0	75.0
	2	6	24.0	25.0
	Total	24	96.0	100.0
	Missing	1	4.0	
Total		25	100.0	

The mean number of children of parents/guardians in site 2 enrolled in a Catholic school is 1.25.

Table 4.44: Site #2 Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families enrolled this long-site 2	Percent
	3 months	2	8.0
	1 year	3	12.0
	2	7	28.0
	3	3	12.0
	4	2	8.0
	5	2	8.0
	6	2	8.0
	8	1	4.0
	10	1	4.0
	16	1	4.0
	Total	24	96.0
Missing	System	1	4.0
Total		25	100.0

The average number of years a child is enrolled at site 2 is 3.775 years.

Table 4.45: Site #2 Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families- Site #2	Percent
	0-No	13	52.0
	1-Yes	12	48.0
	Total	25	100.0

Table 4.46: Site #2 Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Did you attend a Catholic school?		# parents/guardians who attended a Catholic school-Site # 2	Percent
	0_No	13	52.0
	1-Yes	12	48.0
	Total	25	100.0

Table 4.47: Site #2 Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

How many years did you attend a Catholic school?		# of families- Site #2	Percent
	2	1	4.0
	3	1	4.0
	6	2	8.0
	8	3	12.0
	9	1	4.0
	10	1	4.0
	11	1	4.0
	14	1	4.0
	Total	11	44.0
Missing	System	14	56.0

How many years did you attend a Catholic school?		# of families- Site #2	Percent
	2	1	4.0
	3	1	4.0
	6	2	8.0
	8	3	12.0
	9	1	4.0
	10	1	4.0
	11	1	4.0
	14	1	4.0
	Total	11	44.0
Missing	System	14	56.0
Total		25	100.0

The mean number of years parents/guardians attended a Catholic school at site 2 is 7.73 years.

Table 4.48: Site #2 Question 6 Combined family income

Family income above/below $40,000		# of families- Site #2	Percent
	0-Below	15	60.0
	1-Above	10	40.0
	Total	25	100.0

Table 4.49: Site #2 Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?		# of families Site #2	Percent
	No	9	36.0
	Yes	16	64.0
	Total	25	100.0

Table 4.50: Site #2 Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Enroll without financial assistance?		# of families- Site #2	Percent
	No	8	32.0
	Yes	17	68.0
	Total	25	100.0

Table 4.51: Site #2 Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families- Site #2	Percent
	No	8	32.0
	Yes	17	68.0
	Total	25	100.0

The following tables, Tables # 4.52- 4.60, illustrate the data from those survey responders at site # 3. Site # 3 stood out from the other research sites particularly in questions # 3, 4 & 6.

Table 4.52: Site # 3 Question 1 Number of children enrolled

How many children enrolled?	# of families- Site #3	Percent
1	41	78.8
2	8	15.4
3	2	3.8
4	1	1.9
Total	52	100.0

The mean number of children that parents/guardians enroll at site 3 is 1.29.

Table 4.53: Site # 3 Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families enrolled this long-Site #3	Percent
	2 months	7	13.5
	3 months	2	3.8
	1 year	5	9.6
	2 years	8	15.4
	3	1	1.9
	4	6	11.5
	5	7	13.5
	6	5	9.6
	7	2	3.8
	8	1	1.9
	9	1	1.9
	10	1	1.9
	11	1	1.9
	15	1	1.9
	Total	48	92.3
	No response	4	7.7
Total		52	100.0

The mean number of years a student is enrolled at site 3 is 3.792

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Table 4.54: Site # 3 Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families- Site #3	Percent
	No	10	19.2
	Yes	42	80.8
	Total	52	100.0

Table 4.55: Site # 3 Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Did you attend a Catholic school?		# parents/guardians who attended a Catholic school- Site # 3	Percent
	No	18	34.6
	Yes	34	65.4
	Total	52	100.0

Table 4.56: Site # 3 Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

How many years did you attend a Catholic school?		# of families- Site #3	Percent
	0	1	1.9
	2	1	1.9
	4	3	5.8
	6	2	3.8
	7	1	1.9
	8	5	9.6
	9	2	3.8
	12	15	28.8
	13	2	3.8
	16	3	5.8
	Total	35	67.3
	No response	17	32.7
Total		52	100.0

The mean number of years that parents/guardians at site 3 attended a Catholic school is 9.86 years.

Table 4.57: Site # 3 Question 6 Combined family income

Family income above/below $40,000		# of families- Site #1	Percent
	Below	14	26.9
	Above	37	71.2
	Total	51	98.1
	No response	1	1.9
Total		52	100.0

Table 4.58: Site # 3 Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?		# of families Site #3	Percent
	No	37	71.2
	Yes	15	28.8
	Total	52	100.0

Table 4.59: Site # 3 Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Enroll without financial assistance?		# of families- Site #3	Percent
	No	6	11.5
	Yes	44	84.6
	Total	50	96.2
	No response	2	3.8
Total		52	100.0

Table 4.60: Site # 3 Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families- Site #3	Percent
	No	39	75.0
	Yes	12	23.1
	Total	51	98.1
	No response	1	1.9
Total		52	100.0

Results of questions #1-9 from school site #4.

This section examines the responses from those at site # 4 in Tables # 4.61- 4.69.

Table 4.61: Site #4 Question 1 Number of children enrolled

How many children enrolled?		# of families- Site #4	Percent
	1	65	77.4
	2	11	13.1
	3	6	7.1
	4	2	2.4
	Total	84	100.0

The mean number of children attending a Catholic school from parents/guardians at site 4 is 1.35.

Table 4.62: Site #4 Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic school

How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?		# of families enrolled this long- Site #4	Percent
	1 month	1	1.2
	3 months	10	11.9
	1 year	5	6.0
	2 years	13	15.5
	3	7	8.3
	4	8	9.5
	5	11	13.1
	6	3	3.6
	7	9	10.7
	8	6	7.1
	9	6	7.1
	10	1	1.2
	11	1	1.2
	16	1	1.2
	Total	82	97.6
	No response	2	2.4
Total		84	100.0

The mean number of years that children at site 4 attend a Catholic school is 4.416 years.

Table 4.63: Site #4 Question 3 Identification as Catholic

Are you Catholic?		# of families- Site #4	Percent
	No	28	33.3
	Yes	56	66.7
	Total	84	100.0

Table 4.64: Site #4 Question 4 Attended Catholic school

Did you attend a Catholic school?		# parents/guardians who attended a Catholic school- Site # 4	Percent
	No	37	44.0
	Yes	47	56.0
	Total	84	100.0

Table 4.65: Site #4 Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

How many years did you attend a Catholic school?		# of families- Site #4	Percent
	0	1	1.2
	1	1	1.2
	2	3	3.6
	3	1	1.2
	4	5	6.0
	5	1	1.2
	6	2	2.4
	7	4	4.8
	8	4	4.8
	9	2	2.4
	10	1	1.2
	11	1	1.2
	12	16	19.0
	13	2	2.4
	16	1	1.2
	Total	45	53.6
	No response	39	46.4
Total		84	100.0

The mean number of years that parents/guardians at site 4 attended a Catholic school is 8.44 years.

Table 4.66: Site #4 Question 6 Combined family income

Family income above/below $40,000		# of families- Site #4	Percent
	Below $40,000	37	44.0
	Above $40,000	47	56.0
Valid	Total	84	100.0

Table 4.67: Site #4 Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?		# of families Site #4	Percent
	No	57	67.9
	Yes	27	32.1
	Total	84	100.0

Table 4.68: Site #4 Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Enroll without financial assistance?		# of families- Site #4	Percent
	No	17	20.2
	Yes	65	77.4
	Total	82	97.6
	No response	2	2.4
Total		84	100.0

Table 4.69: Site #4 Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Child/ren receive free/reduced meals?		# of families- Site #4	Percent
	No	53	63.1
	Yes	30	35.7
	Total	83	98.8
	No response	1	1.2
Total		84	100.0

Comparison of questions # 1-9 by tables, using valid percent.

In this last section, a comparison of the results of all the previous sections is made. Tables 4.70- 4.78 contain the data from questions 1-9 for these comparisons.

Table 4.70: Question 1 Number of children enrolled

Sites	Mean number of children enrolled
All 4 Sites	1.32
Parish-based schools	1.32
Regionally-based schools	1.32
Site 1	1.37
Site 2	1.25
Site 3	1.29
Site 4	1.35

Table 4.71: Question 2 Length of enrollment in Catholic schools

Sites	Mean number of years children have been enrolled in a Catholic school
All 4 Sites	3.959
Parish-based schools	3.467
Regionally-based schools	4.185
Site 1	3.243
Site 2	3.775
Site 3	3.792
Site 4	4.416

Table 4.72: Question 3 Identification as Catholic

	Yes	No
All 4 Sites	64.6	35.4
Parish	46.7	53.3
Regional	72.1	27.9
Site 1	45.7	54.3
Site 2	48	52
Site 3	80.8	19.2
Site 4	66.7	33.3

Table 4.73: Question 4 Attended Catholic school

	Yes	No
All 4 Sites	55.4	44.6
Parish	46.7	53.3
Regional	59.6	40.4
Site 1	45.7	54.3
Site 2	48	52
Site 3	65.4	34.6
Site 4	56	44

Table 4.74: Question 5 Years attended Catholic school

	Mean number of years
All 4 Sites	8.61 years
Parish	7.14
Regional	9.06
Site 1	6.76
Site 2	7.73
Site 3	9.86
Site 4	8.44

Table 4.75: Question 6 Combined family income

Income above/below $40,000	Above	Below
All 4 Sites	54.9	45.1
Parish	39.0	61.0
Regional	62.2	37.8
Site 1	38.2	61.8
Site 2	40	60
Site 3	72.5	27.5
Site 4	56	44

Table 4.76: Question 7 Financial assistance

Receive financial assistance?	Yes	No	Didn't know about it
All 4 Sites	45.1	54.9	.5
Parish	76.7	21.7	1.7
Regional	30.9	69.1	
Site 1	85.7	11.4	2.9
Site 2	64	36	
Site 3	28.8	71.2	
Site 4	32.1	67.9	

Table 4.77: Question 8 Enrollment based on available financial assistance

Still enroll w/o financial assistance?	Yes	No
All 4 Sites	76.8	23.2
Parish	62.7	37.3
Regional	82.6	17.4
Site 1	58.8	41.2
Site 2	68	32
Site 3	88	12
Site 4	79.3	20.7

Table 4.78: Question 9 Receiving free/reduced meals

Receive free/reduced meals?	Yes	No
All 4 Sites	42	58
Parish	66.7	33.3
Regional	30.9	67.6
Site 1	65.7	34.3
Site 2	68	32
Site 3	23.5	76.5
Site 4	36.1	63.9

A picture emerges of the profiles of the schools' families.

- The regional schools have more Catholic parents/guardians who have higher incomes and fewer students who receive financial assistance and free/reduced meals than the school sites identified as parish schools.

- In parish schools, 46.7% of parents/guardians are Catholic; 72.1% are Catholic in regional site schools. One regional site has 80.8% Catholic parents/guardians as contrasted with 45.7% and 48% of parish schools.

- In parish schools, 3.3% of these parents/guardians stated they had 12 years of Catholic education; 22.8% of regional school parents/guardians stated they had 12 years Catholic schooling

- One parish site has 85.3% of students receiving financial assistance (overall average of all four sites was 45.1%); 39.4 % of these parents said they would NOT enroll without this assistance.

- In parish schools, 66.7% of the students receive free/reduced meals; in regional schools this is 31.3%.

- Two years length of time enrolled in the school is the mode for each site but the mean for each of these sites varies. Overall, the mean number of years enrolled is 3.964 with a mean of 3.459 years in parish schools and a mean of 4.185 in the regional schools. The number of years enrolled seems to drop off at seven years; this could be explained by the presence of exam schools and two Catholic private schools in Boston that start at Grade 7. Two years as the mode for all sites may be explained by either parents/guardians who haven't been in the school very long

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filled out surveys in higher numbers or that the highest averages students stay in

Catholic urban elementary schools of Greater Boston is two years.

Decision to enroll- survey questions # 10-14

Having reviewed the profiles of the parents/guardians, I turn now to the results of

the heart of this study, why parents and guardians decide to enroll their child/ren in

Catholic urban elementary schools.

Question 10.

This section began by with the question of who made the decision to enroll the

child in a Catholic school. When the results were viewed for all four sites, both parents

were identified as the ones making the decision to enroll a child at the highest rate

(38.8%). When broken down, though, between the regional sites and the parish sites a

different picture emerges. In the regional sites, the percentage of both parents who

reported making this decision jumps from an overall average among all four sites of

38.8% to 47.6% and the parish schools drops from 38.8% to 22.9%. There is also a

marked difference between the parish and regional schools when looking at the

percentage of times it is the mother alone making the decision; over all four sites the

mother is making the decision alone 29.6% of the time; in the regional schools it is 24.4%

and in the parish schools this increases to 41.5%. This may be interesting to note when

this is cross tabbed for income. Eighty-seven (45%) of the 193 parents/guardians who

answered this question identified themselves as earning below $40,000; 106 (55%)

identified themselves as above $40,000. Of those identified as below $40,000, 68

answered the question as to who made the decision to enroll; 90 of those self-identified as

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earning above $40,000 answered this question. When this cross tab was performed, the
results were as follows:

	Above $40,000	Below $40,000
• Mother and father made the decision	60%	31%
• Mother alone made the decision	28%	47%

This seems to correlate that in those schools whose overall parent income is
below $40,000, it is likely that it may be mothers alone making the decision to enroll
their child in a Catholic school. When each of the four sites is viewed in terms of
percentages of parents/guardians self- identified as earning either above or below
$40,000, there is a noted difference among the four sites.

Table 4.79: Annual combined income above or below $40,000

Annual combined income above or below $40,000		Sites					All 4 sites
			1	2	3	4	
	Below $40,000	% of families	61.8%	60.0%	27.5%	44.0%	44.8%
	Above $40,000	% of families	38.2%	40.0%	72.5%	56.0%	55.2%
Total # families			34	25	51	84	194

Table 4.80: Who made decision to enroll?

Who made decision to enroll?	Mother	Mother and Father
Site 1 (61.8% below $40,000)	56%	33%
Site 2 (60% below $40,000)	56%	28%
Site 3 (27.5% below $40,000)	27%	60%
Site 4 (44% below $40,000)	30%	49%

Two other variables- income and whether the parents/guardians are Catholic-were examined to see if there was any correlation in the decision to enroll.

Parents/guardians were asked to identify whether their income was above or below $40,000. For the purposes of this examination, below $40,000 is identified as low income and above $40,000 as high income. When the reason for enrollment was cross tabbed with income, the standard error ranged from a low of .063 (availability of financial assistance for tuition and other school costs) to a high of .073 (a connection to parish life; safe environment; an up-to-date library). Availability of school lunch/breakfast program (.069/.068) was one other reason for enrollment whose standard error deviated from the average standard errors of .071 and .072. The conclusion seems to be that most of the reasons that parents/guardians have for enrollment cannot be explained by the income of parents/guardians. Only when looking at tuition assistance

and free/reduced meals does the standard error start to approach a measure that may be correlated to income.

Questions 11-14.

Questions 11-14 examined factors that were important to the decision to enroll and factors that were a problem or concern to enrolling. The results of these questions proved much more straightforward than the analysis of the parents/guardians profiles. Once the data were inputted, the results were very clear. The top three reasons that parents/guardians choose to enroll students in Catholic schools remain consistent whether it is viewed as a composite of all four sites, viewed only as parish schools, viewed as regional schools or viewed individually by school site.

The top three reasons are:

1. Quality academic instruction
2. Discipline and order
3. Safe environment

The following three charts illustrate what parents/guardians in all four research sites chose as their first (12a), second (12b) and third (12c) top reasons for choosing to enroll their child/ren in a Catholic school.

Table 4.81: Primary reason to enroll

Q12a
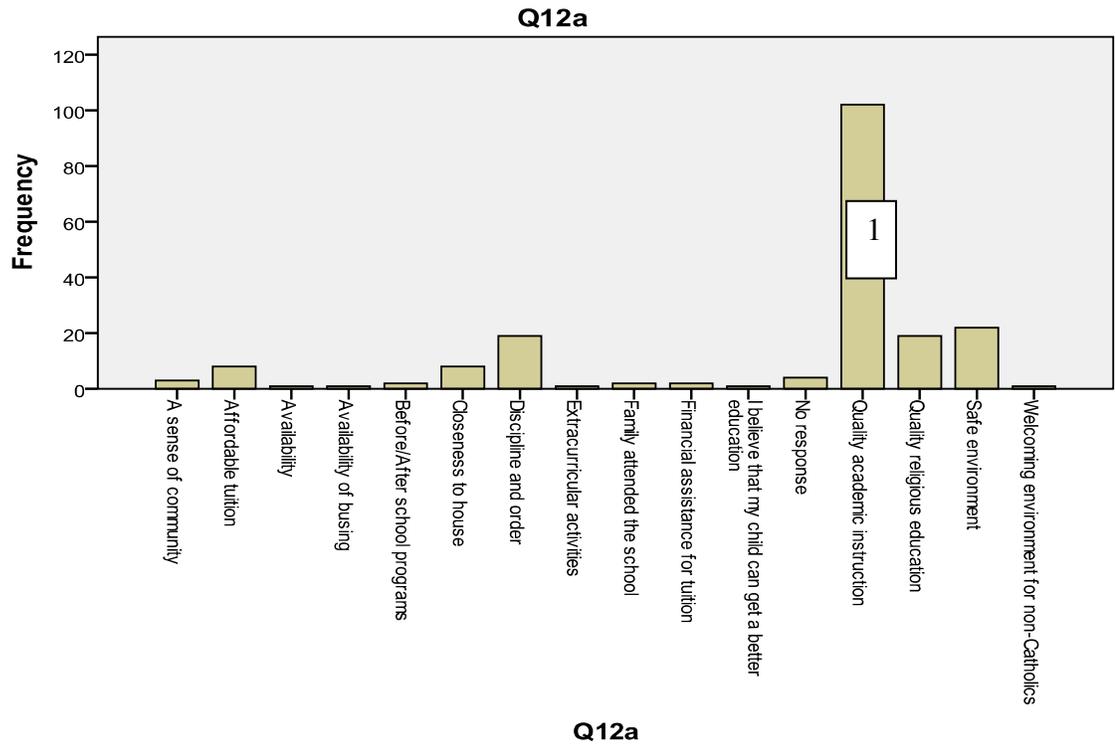
Table 4.82: Secondary reason to enroll

Q12b
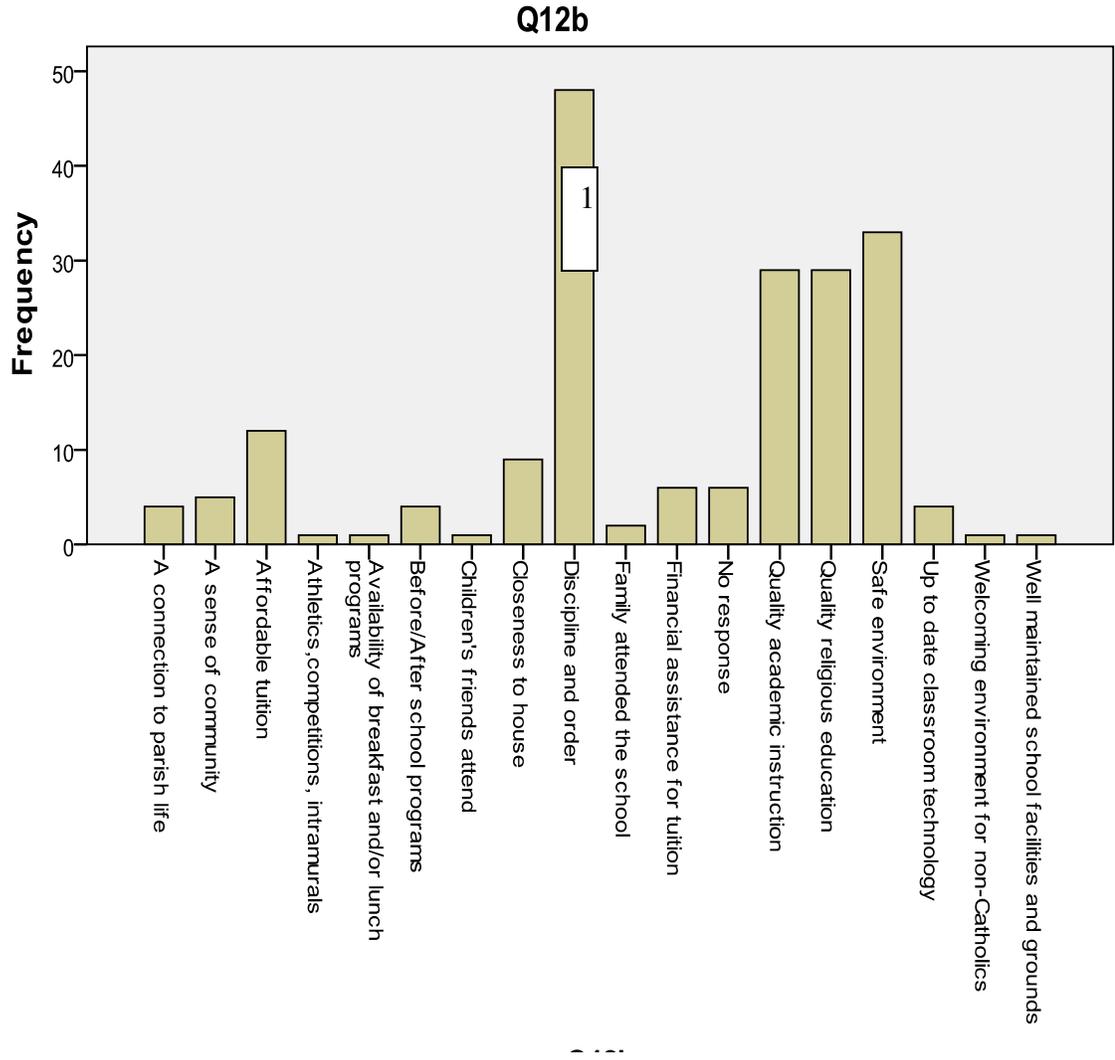
Table 4.83: Tertiary reason to enroll
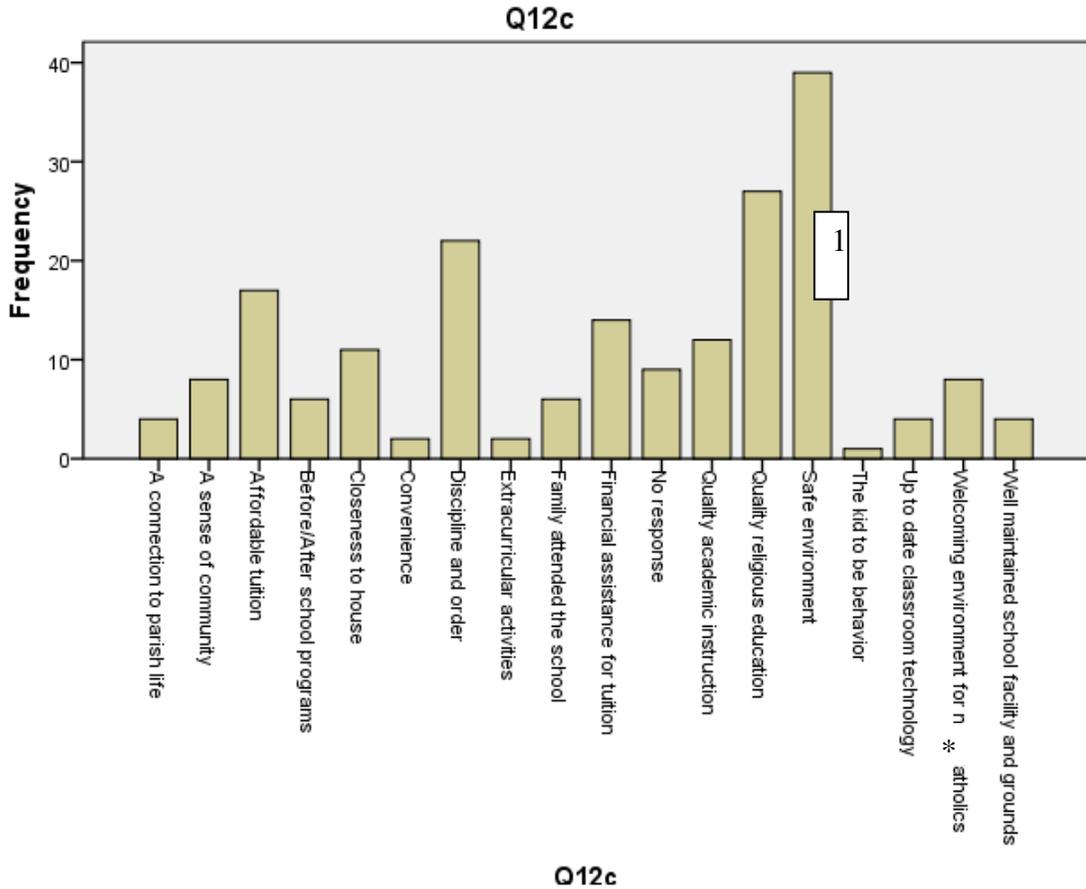
*This was a written response from a parent/guardian. Although it is a response that does not fit with the others, it is included here to maintain the integrity of all the responses.

Just as clear in the data was what is NOT important to parents/guardians in their decision to enroll their children in an urban Catholic elementary school. Parents/guardians in this survey were clear that the availability of busing did not play a role in their decision, and 34% of those surveyed stated that free/reduced lunch programs were "not at all" an important factor in their decision.

When this is disaggregated by parish/regional school and then by individual sites differences occur.

When the reasons for enrolling are cross tabbed for Catholic/ non-Catholic parent/guardian status, three differences emerge. When examined they are easily understood. The first is a quality religious education. As shown below 69% of Catholic parents/guardians identify a quality religious education as "very much important" as opposed to 41.4 % of non-Catholic parents/guardians while there were no Catholic parents/guardians who identified that a quality religious education was "not at all important" as opposed to 8.6 % of non-Catholic parents/guardians who chose that this factor was "not at all important" in their decision to enroll in a Catholic elementary school.

Table 4.84: How important is a quality religious education?

How important is a quality religious education?		Catholic?		
		No	Yes	Total
Not at all	Percentage	8.6%	0%	3.1%
A little	Percentage	10.0%	4.0%	6.1%
Somewhat	Percentage	40.0%	27.0%	31.6%
Very	Percentage	41.4%	69.0%	59.2%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The second reason for enrollment that demonstrates a difference between Catholic and non-Catholic parents/guardians is "a connection to parish life". Thirty-seven point one percent of non-Catholic parents/guardians say this is "not at all important" while 2.4% of Catholic parents say that this is "not important at all" while 48.8% of Catholic

parents say "a connect to parish life" is "very much important" to them and 12.9% of

non-Catholic parents say that this is "very much important" to them.

Table 4.85: How important is a connection to parish life when considering enrollment?

How important is a connection to parish life when considering enrollment?			Non- Catholic	Catholic	Total
	No response	Percentage	.0%	.8%	.5%
	Not at all	Percentage	37.1%	2.4%	14.9%
	A little	Percentage	24.3%	9.6%	14.9%
	Somewhat	Percentage	25.7%	38.4%	33.8%
	Very much	Percentage	12.9%	48.8%	35.9%

The third difference between Catholic and non-Catholic parents/guardians in

reasons for enrolling is "a welcoming environment for non-Catholics". This is "very

much important" to 75.7% of non-Catholic parents/guardians, while 36.5% of Catholic

parents identify this as "very much important". In contrast only 4.3% of non-Catholic

parents/guardians say that this is "not at all important" while 23.8% of Catholic

parents/guardians say that a welcoming environment for non-Catholics is "not at all important."

Table 4.86: How important is a welcoming environment for non-Catholics?

How important is a welcoming environment for non- Catholics when considering enrollment?			Catholic?		
			No	Yes	Total
	No response	Percentage	1.4%	.8%	1.0%
	Not at all	Percentage	4.3%	23.8%	16.8%
	A little	Percentage	7.1%	14.3%	11.7%
	Somewhat	Percentage	11.4%	24.6%	19.9%
	Very much	Percentage	75.7%	36.5%	50.5%

Question 12 asked the respondents to list the three most important reasons for enrolling in a Catholic elementary school. In looking closely at the answers about the top three factors that parents/guardians considered when making the decision to enroll, certain factors did not appear at all in the top three factors listed on any of the 196 surveys.

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- Not listed as one of the top three reasons for enrollment on surveys from all four sites were:

  - Up-to-date library

  - Opportunities for students to volunteer within the community

- Not listed as one of the top three reasons for enrollment on surveys in 3 of the 4 sites were the above listed factors and:

  - Availability of busing

  - Children's friends attend

  - Availability of breakfast and/or lunch program

  - Athletics, competitions, intramurals

Interestingly, at the biggest parish school no parent/guardian listed" a connection to parish life" among their top three choices for enrollment. Two of these factors also stood out in Question 11 for the high percentage of parents/guardians who assessed the factor with a "Not at all" important answer when making the enrollment decision. Sixty-six point eight (66.8%) of parents/guardians said the availability of busing was not all important and 34.2% said that the availability of breakfast and/or lunch programs was not all important when making the decision to enroll.

It is also important to look at the factors that may cause a parent/guardian to consider NOT enrolling their child/ren in a Catholic school. Question 13 poses this to those filling out the survey. The question read, "To what extent were each of the following a **problem or a concern** when making your decision to send a child to a Catholic elementary school?"

Looking specifically at a high percentage of the bottom two choices of "Somewhat" and "Very much" a problem or concern gives a glimpse into the factors that may impede enrollment.

Table 4.87: To what extent were each of the following a **problem or a concern** when making your decision to send a child to a Catholic elementary school?

a. Limited or no space at the school; waiting list at school

Not at all   65.3%

A little   10.7 %

Somewhat   16.8%

Very much   7.1%

No response

b. Tuition costs

Not at all   14.8%

A little   24.0%

Somewhat   33.7%

Very much   27.6%

No response

c. Insufficient tuition assistance

Not at all   41.8%

A little   20.4%

Somewhat   23.0%

Very much   14.8%

No response

d. Lack of transportation and/or busing

    Not at all   74.0%

    A little   11.2%

    Somewhat   9.7%

    Very much   4.6%

    No response

e. Competition from local public schools

    Not at all   74.0%

    A little   10.2%

    Somewhat   9.2%

    Very much   6.1%

    No response   .5%

f. Competition from local charter school

    Not at all   63.8%

    A little   16.3%

    Somewhat   14.8%

    Very much   4.6%

    No response   .5%

g. Competition from local non-Catholic independent school

    Not at all   72.4%

    A little   12.2%

    Somewhat   11.7%

Very much   3.1%

No response   .5%

h. Faith education

Not at all   54.1%

A little   9.7%

Somewhat   19.4%

Very much   15.8%

No response   1.0%

i. Location of the school

Not at all   60.7%

A little   7.7%

Somewhat   11.7%

Very much   18.9%

No response   1.0%

j. Turnover of teachers at the school

Not at all   58.2%

A little   16.8%

Somewhat   12.2%

Very much   12.2%

No response   .5%

k. Lack of before and/or after school care programs

Not at all   75.5%

A little   10.2%

Somewhat   6.1%

Very much   7.7%

No response   .5%

l. Lack of extracurricular activities

Not at all   57.7%

A little   15.8%

Somewhat   12.8%

Very much   12.8%

No response   1.0%

m. Perceived quality of the academic program

Not at all   45.4%

A little   10.7%

Somewhat   16.3%

Very much   25.5%

No response   1.5%

n. My child wanted to attend a different school

Not at all   82.7%

A little   5.1%

Somewhat   5.1%

Very much   5.1%

No response   2.0%

o. School cannot meet needs of students with special education needs

Not at all   73.1%

A little   6.2%

Somewhat   6.2%

Very much   10.4%

No response 4.1%

School activities-questions # 15-18

As part of the Parent/Guardian Survey, parents/guardians were asked about the

school traditions that each school had and which of these traditions were important to

them. Many of those who responded to this question responded with two or more

traditions. One hundred and ten of 196 (55.8%) responded to this question. These

answers were then coded in 1 of 7 categories:

1. Religious activities

2. Academic activities

3. Family activities

4. Religious and family activities

5. Religious, academic and family activities

6. Religious and family activities

7. Family and academic activities

For example, class masses were coded (1) as religious activities and "family day"

coded (3) as family activities. Science Fair was coded as an academic activity (2); a

response of first Friday mass and social fundraisers was coded (6) religious and family.

When analyzed among all 4 sites, religious activities (1) were the type of activities that

most parents/guardians identified as those most meaningful to them. This was followed

by family activities and then religious and family activities.

Table 4.88: Frequency of activities by type identified as important/meaningful
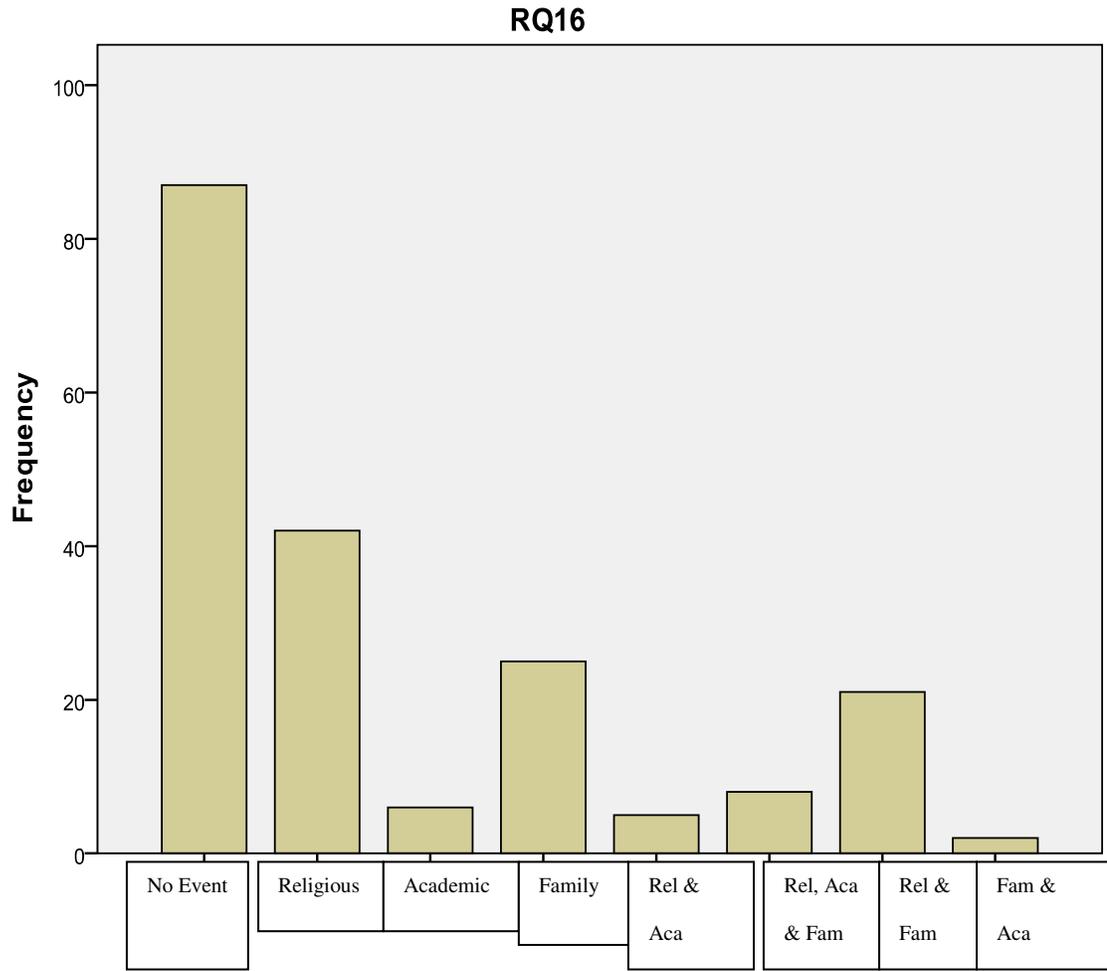
The chart below illustrates the percentages of responses that were identified school events as:

1. Important/meaningful to parents/guardians

2. Events parents/guardians attended each year

This chart includes in the percentage when no response was given by a parent/guardian.

Table 4.89: Comparison of activities as those rated important/meaningful and those attended-with "no event identified"

Type of event	RQ16- Percentage by type identified as events **important/meaningful**	RQ18- Percentage by type identified as the events **attended** each year
0-No event identified	44.4	49.0
1-Religious	21.4	.5
2-Academic	3.1	.5
3-Family	12.8	32.7
4-Religious and Academic	2.6	0
5-Religious, academic and family	4.1	1.5
6-Religious and family	10.7	7.7
7-Family and academic	1.0	8.2

Eighty-seven of those who completed the survey did not identify any events as important/meaningful. When one removes the consideration of these 87 responses, 109 of those surveyed responded by identifying certain events as important/meaningful. One hundred parents/guardians identified events they attended each year with 96 of those who

completed the survey not identifying any response to what type of events did they attend each year.

If only the responses given that identify types of events are considered, the chart below illustrates the percentages of the types of events that are identified as important/meaningful and those that are identified as events that parent/guardians attend each year. The results when only responses are considered are even more striking.

Table 4.90: Comparison of activities as those rated important/ meaningful and those attended- without "no event identified"

Type of event	RQ16- **Events important/meaningful-** Percentage without considering "No event identified"	RQ18- **Events attended-**Percentage without considering "No event identified"
1-Religious	38.5	1
2-Academic	5.5	1
3-Family	22.9	64
4-Religious and Academic	4.5	0
5-Religious, academic and family	7.3	3
6-Religious and family	19.2	15
7-Family and academic	1.8	16

Although parents/guardians identified religious events as those most meaningful to them, it is the family, not religious events that parents/guardians identified as attending. It may be thought that there may be a higher number of family events offered therefore a higher number attended. When the data for types of events is examined, though, there are as many religious events identified as school traditions/rituals and traditions/rituals that are meaningful to the parents/guardians at the schools.

When these data were looked at in terms of income level, the data show that those who identified themselves as earning above $40,000 annually named traditions that involved family in higher numbers than those who were self-identified as earning below $40,000. In the converse, those earning below $40,000 named only those traditions that were religious in nature at a much higher rate than those who earned above $40,000.

Table 4.91: Type of events identified as most meaningful/important by income level
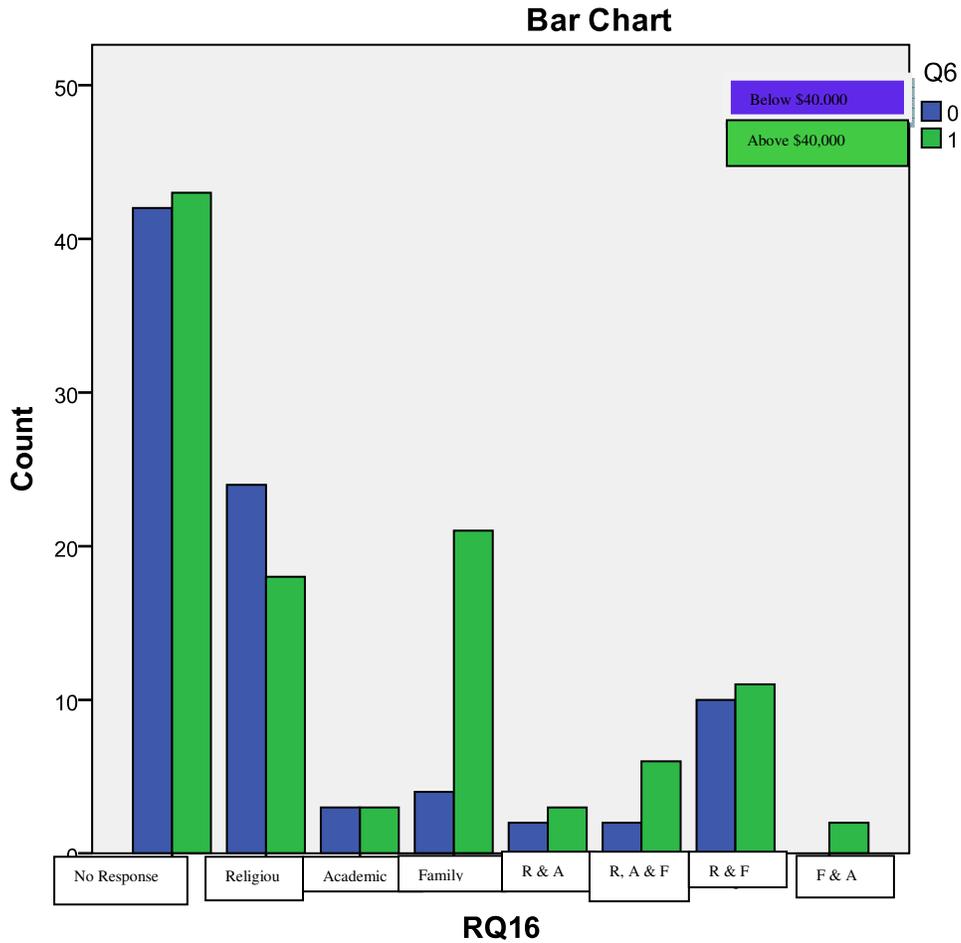
In the chart above, "R & A" is religious and academic; "R, A & F" is religious, family and academic; "R & F" is religious and family; and "F & A" is family and academics.

Question # 17 asked survey participants to state about how many school events they attended each year. This question was left open and did not have a set number, for example "1-3, 4-6, and 7-10", thus many responders answered with non-quantitative answers such as "all", "most" and "99% of the time", making an average of number among those responding difficult to gauge. If only the quantitative answers (89 responded

with a quantitative number) were averaged, the average number of events that parents/guardians participate in yearly would be 2.9 events per year. When these events that parents/guardians listed as those events that they attend over the course of the year (64.0%) they named family events as the most attended. This was followed by religious and family events (15.0%) and family and academic events (16.0%). No respondents identified a religious and academic event as an event that they attended over the course of the year. When types of events were examined, there were events identified in this category as ones that were important/meaningful to parents/guardians, none were identified as ones that parents/guardians attended.

Table 4.92: Type of events attended ("no response" excluded)

Types of events		Percentage
	Religious	1
	Academic	1
	Family	64
	Religious, academic and family	3
	Religious and family	15
	Family and academic	16
	Total	100

Respondents named religious events most often as the ones most meaningful to them, but family events most often as the ones that they attend most. Because some parents surveyed from each of the four sites listed monthly school masses as events that

they do attend, it is surmised that all four sites do plan monthly masses. Monthly masses would number 8-10 per year thus making these events a high percentage of the total number of school events each year. Parents/guardians, though, named school masses in only four responses overall. In one school, school mass was named in one response with peace games receiving five responses.

Parish/school connection (questions 19-24 all parents/guardians; 19-31 Catholic parents/guardians)

Survey questions # 19-24 asked participants to answer questions about the school/parish connection. Two of the school research sites had once been attached to parishes. In 2007 these two schools became regionalized schools, no longer administratively attached to a parish, but under the administration of a regional board. A parish church still exists in close proximity to the two school sites but does not operate as part of either school. Twenty-seven per cent of those who completed the survey are from parish schools and 73% from regional schools.

Results- questions 19-24 only.

Question 19 asked "Is there a parish attached to your school?"; out of 196 respondents, 7 did not answer the answer, 11 answered "no" and 176 answered "yes" and two respondents qualified their answers. Overall, 93% of those who answered this questioned responded in the affirmative that there was a parish attached. Of the two respondents who qualified their answers the first circled yes to this question but wrote "physically, emotionally lost some of the connection" next to yes and "not any more since the change. We still refer the school as (former school name)" next to no. The

second respondent wrote," unsure (school name) is next to the church but separate from the parish".

Table 4.93: Is there a parish attached to your school?

Is there a parish attached to your school?		Frequency	Percent
	No response	8	4.1
	No	11	5.6
	Yes	175	89.3
	physically, emotionally lost some of the connection, not any more since the change. We still refer to the school as (school).	1	.5
	unsure, (school) is next to the church but separate from the parish	1	.5
	Total	196	100.0

The physical proximity to the church seems to many who answered to equate to being attached to the school. 88.1% at one regional school (no parish attached to the school) and 84.6% at the second regional school site answered that there was a parish attached to their school.

At one of the parish sites, 8% of the respondents said that there was no parish attached to their school. At the other parish school site all surveyed did know that there was a parish attached. At the first parish site, where 8% said that there was no parish attached to the school, the parish church is located a few streets over from the school and

not within view. At the second site, the parish church is very large and is within a few yards of the school. Parents/ guardians may equate physical proximity to a parish church, whether or not the parish pastor has any canonically administrative power over the school, as "attached" to the school.

In the chart below, sites 1 and 2 are schools with a parish attached, sites 3 and 4 are regional schools with no parish attached to the school. As illustrated in the chart, the great majority of those in sites 3 and 4 still identify their school as being attached to a parish although they now are not attached canonically.

Table 4.94: Is there a parish attached to your school (responses by site).

Q19: Is there a parish attached to your school?	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Total
No Response	.0%	.0%	7.7%	3.6%	3.6%
No	.0%	8.0%	5.8%	7.1%	5.6%
Yes	100.0%	92.0%	84.6%	88.1%	89.8%
Physically, emotionally lost some of the connection, not any more since the change. We still refer to the school as (school name)	.0%	.0%	1.9%	.0%	.5%
Unsure, (school) is next to the church but separate from the parish	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.2%	.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Question 20 asked parents/guardians "If your school has a parish attached, are you aware of any joint/ school activities?" This question was answered by 183 out of 196 surveyed. Of those who answered this question, 59.6 % said they were aware of joint school/parish activities and 39.9% said they were not aware of these activities.

Table 4.95: If your school has a parish attached, are you aware of any joint school activities?

If your school has a parish attached, are you aware of any joint school activities?		Frequency	Percent
	No	73	37.2
	Yes	109	55.6
	No parish attached	1	.5
	Total	183	93.4
	No Response	13	6.6
Total		196	100.0

Question 21 asked what some of the parish/school activities were that parents/guardians were aware of. The majority of answers given could be categorized into two major groups- liturgical celebrations and youth activities. When those surveyed were queried as to about how many of these activities their families attended each year (Question #22), some of those responding answered with a qualitative, not quantitative

answer, "many, all, not too many, etc." Of those who did answer quantitatively, the average number of activities attended was 1.5 activities per year.

Interestingly, of those who identified themselves as non-Catholic, six parents/guardians said they participated in one activity, three said they participated in one to two activities, two said they participate in two parish/school activities a year, one said four activities, another said "very few". One non-Catholic participant said their family participates in all parish/school activities.

Question 23 asked parents/guardians if they would continue to enroll their child if the school if the parish were no longer opened. One hundred and eighty-three responded to this question, 166 of those or 91% responded that they would continue to enroll their child in the school if there was no parish attached. Thirteen did not answer the question, 4 qualified their answer and 13 said no.

Table 4.96: Would you continue to enroll your child in the school if the parish were no longer opened?

Would you continue to enroll your child in the school if the parish were no longer opened?	Frequency	Percent
No response	13	6.6
No	13	6.6
Yes	166	84.7
maybe/uncertain	1	.5
N/A	1	.5
unsure	1	.5
would depend	1	.5
Total	196	100.0

When broken down in terms of those who are Catholic and those who are non-Catholic, of the Catholic parents/guardians, nine did not answer the question, of those who did answer 80.2% of Catholics said they would continue to enroll their child if the parish attached to the school were no longer open, two parents/guardians indicated they were uncertain and one said the question was not applicable. One non-Catholic parent who responded to this question said he/she would not enroll without a parish attached and all others who responded (65) indicated that they would continue to enroll their child in a school if the parish attached closed with 84.7% of parents/guardians answering that they would continue to enroll.

Table 4.97: Would you continue to enroll your child in the school if the parish were no longer opened- Catholic and non-Catholic?

Would you continue to enroll your child in the school if the parish were no longer opened?			Catholic?		
			No	Yes	Total
	No response	# of responses	4	9	13
		Percentage	5.7%	7.1%	6.6%
	No, not enroll	# of responses	1	12	13
		Percentage	1.4%	9.5%	6.6%
	Yes, continue to enroll	# of responses	65	101	166
		Percentage	92.9%	80.2%	84.7%
	maybe/uncertain	# of responses	0	1	1
		Percentage	.0%	.8%	.5%
	Not applicable	# of responses	0	1	1
		Percentage	.0%	.8%	.5%
	unsure	# of responses	0	1	1
		Percentage	.0%	.8%	5%
	would depend	# of responses	0	1	1
		Percentage	.0%	.8%	.5%
Total		# of responses	70	126	196
		Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.98: Would you continue to enroll if parish attached closed- Catholic and non-Catholic?

Q#23- Continue to enroll if parish attached closed?	Overall	Catholic 126	Non-Catholic 70
Yes	84.7%	80.2%	92.9%
No	6.6%	9.5%	1.4%
No Response	6.6%	7.1%	5.7%

Question 24 asked if parents/guardians would enroll their child in a school that did not have a parish attached. Out of the 176 who answered this question quantitatively, 133 (76%) responded they would enroll their child in a school without a parish and 43 (24%) said they would not enroll their child in a school without a parish attached.

Table 4.99: Would you enroll your child in a school that did not have a parish attached?

Would you enroll your child in a school that did not have a parish attached?		Frequency	Percent
	No response	15	7.7
	No	43	21.9
	Yes	133	67.9
	don't know	1	.5
	maybe	1	.5
	maybe/uncertain	2	1.0
	Not applicable	1	.5
	Total	196	100.0

When this is disaggregated between Catholic and non-Catholic parents/guardians, 6.6% of non-Catholic parents said they would not enroll their child at a school without a parish attached and 15.3% of Catholic parents said they would not enroll their child in a school without a parish attached.

Table 4.100: Would you enroll your child in a school that did not have a parish attached-Catholic and non-Catholic?

Would you enroll your child in a school that did not have a parish attached?		Catholic?		
		No	Yes	Total
	No response	2.6%	5.1%	7.7%
	No	6.6%	15.3%	21.9%
	Yes	25.5%	42.3%	67.9%
	don't know	.5%		.5%
	maybe	.5%		.5%
	maybe/uncertain		1.0%	1.0%
	Not applicable		.5%	.5%
Total		35.7%	64.3%	100.0%

Results- questions # 25-31.

Questions # 25-30 were answered by Catholic parents/guardians only. Question 3 in section 1 asked if those completing the survey were Catholic or not. With one respondent not answering this question, 64.3% were identified as Catholic and 35.7% non-Catholic. One hundred twenty-six out of 196 identified themselves as Catholic. As part of this research, I wanted to assess the importance to parents/guardians of a parish affiliation with their child's school and also the parents/guardians' involvement not only in their parish events but also their mass attendance. I asked these questions to assess

whether there is a link between those parents/guardians who are more actively involved
in the church activities and the enrollment of their children in Catholic schools.

Questions # 19-24 provided a first glance at this. As shown above, overall
Catholic and non-Catholic parents 89.8% (176) of those who answered this questioned
responded in the affirmative that there was a parish attached. I cross tabbed question 19
with question 3 (Are you Catholic?). Of the Catholic parents who answered the question
of whether there was a parish attached to their child's school, 111 of the 126 (92%) said
there was a parish attached.

Table 4.101: Is there a parish attached to your school (Catholic and non-Catholic)?

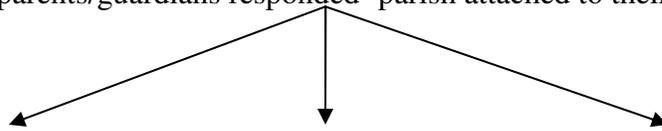|	Is there a parish attached to your school?					
Are you Catholic?	No Response	No	Yes	1- physically, emotionally lost some of the connection, not any more since the change. We still refer to the school as (school name)	Unsure (school name) is next to the church but separate from the parish	Total
No	2	3	65	0	0	70
Yes	5	8	111	1	1	126
Total	7	11	176	1	1	196

Of this 92%, or 111 Catholic parents/guardians, said there was a parish attached
(in addition to this 111, five parent/ guardians did not answer the question, eight said

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there was no parish attached and two provided a qualitative answer that conveyed uncertainty).

Question 25 then took this one step further and asked Catholic parents/guardians, "If your school has an attached parish, do you belong to this parish?" Fifty-two percent (64) said that they did belong to the attached parish and 48% (47) did not belong to this parish. Question 28 asked parents/guardians if they belonged to a parish if their school did not have a parish attached. A discrepancy arose here. Of the 126 Catholic parents/guardians, 111 said that they had a parish attached to the school, yet in question 25 that begins, "If your school has an attached parish, 123 responded as if they did have an attached parish and only one person responded that there was no parish attached. Question 28 asked "If your school does not have a parish attached and you are Catholic do you belong to another parish?" Sixty-nine responded to this question. There appears to be confusion among parents/guardians as to whether schools do have or do not have attached parishes. In review of the data and with knowledge of the sites, 60 of those who responded to this survey belong to schools with attached parishes. One hundred and thirty-six have children enrolled in schools without attached parishes. This may speak more to the perception of parents/guardians that if a church is in proximity, it is attached in terms of the school but not in terms of their belonging as a parishioner. Eight Catholic parents/guardians said they did not have a parish attached to the school when asked in question 19, yet 69 Catholic parents/guardians answered Question 28.

In Question 28, 50 answered that they did belong to another parish; (19) answered that they did not belong to another parish.

196- Catholic and non-Catholic parents/guardians survey respondents

126- Catholic parents/guardians responded- parish attached to their school

111- Say parish attached to school   10- no parish attached   5- no answer

Yet, question 25, "If your school has an attached parish, do you belong to the parish?"

124 Catholic Parents/guardians answered this question signifying they thought there was a parish attached to their school

64- Belong to attached parish   59- Do not belong to attached parish   1-No parish attached
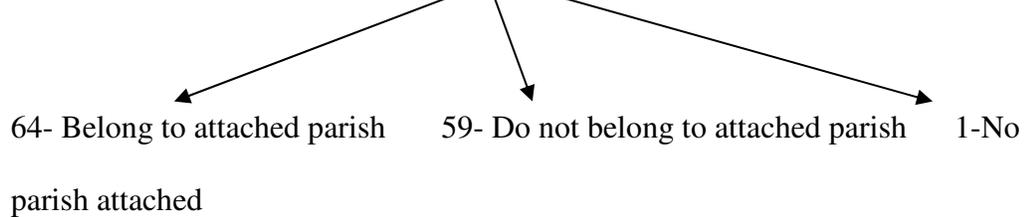
And, question 28, "If your school does not have a parish attached, and you are Catholic, do you belong to a parish?"

69 Catholic parents/guardians answered

50- Belong to another parish   16-Do not belong to another parish 3- Qualified answers
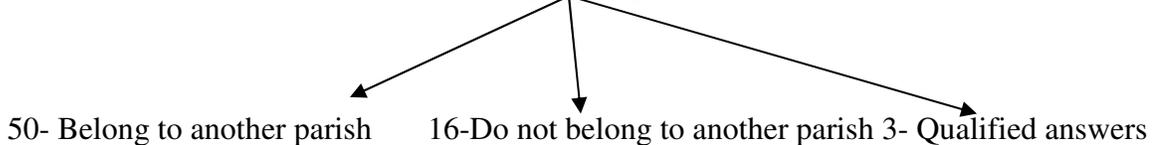
The three qualified answers gave reasons why the parents/guardians did not belong to a parish but were answers that conveyed their non-enrollment in any parish. That leaves 19 Catholic parents/guardians out 126 or 15% who do not belong to any parish.

More telling in these responses is that the Catholic parents/guardians answer differently on multiple questions as to whether they think there is a parish attached to

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their school. Question 19 has 111 Catholic parents/guardians saying there is a parish attached to their school; question 25 starts with "If your school has a parish attached.." and 124 Catholic parents answered this question; question 28 starts, "If you do not have a parish attached" and 69 out of the 126 Catholic parents/guardians responded (leaving 57 who did not answer this question, assuming they are the parents/guardians who DO have a parish attached to their school). Three questions with three different numbers of parents/guardians responding in reference to whether there is a parish attached to the school or not. This points to uncertainty on the parts of parents/guardians as to the status of a parish being attached to the school.

Question 26 asked parents how important the school's affiliation with the parish was to them; 122 responded to this question. The response choices to this question were:

Table 4.102: How important the school's affiliation with the parish was to you-all sites.

How important the school's affiliation with the parish was to you?		Percent
	Very much important	45.1
	Somewhat important	42.6
	Not important at all	12.3
	Total	100.0

A cross tab of this question with the four sites reveals that the responses are fairly consistent among the four sites, with a slight increase at sites 3 and 4 (15.4% and 16.7%) in the response that a parish's affiliation is "Not important at all" and a more marked decrease in site 2 (5.0% vs. 13.3%, 15.4% and 16.7%), concluding that parish affiliation

is important to 95% of Catholic families at site 3. At site 2 "Somewhat important" was

somewhat decreased when compared to the other sites but when "Very much important"

and "Somewhat important" are taken together, the difference is minimal.

Table 4.103: How important is the school's affiliation with the parish to you (by site)?

How important the school's affiliation with the parish to you?			Sites				
			1	2	3	4	Total
		Very much important					
		Percentage	46.7%	53.8%	50.0%	38.9%	45.1%
		Somewhat important					
		Percentage	40.0%	30.8%	45.0%	44.4%	42.6%
		Not important at all					
		Percentage	13%	15.4%	5.0%	16.7%	12.3%
Total		Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Interestingly, at site 3, 23.9% of the families also report that they attend mass

"Rarely or never" or "A few times a year" with 15.8% reporting mass attendance at

"Every week" or "More than once a week". With 95% of this site's families reporting

that parish affiliation is important to them while at the same times 23.9% report little

mass attendance, the question then arises why the parish affiliation is important to these

families. Forty-two families from this site reported being Catholic, 30 of these 42

Catholic parent/guardians answered the question "Why or why not is the school's

affiliation with a parish important to you?" The answers given are in the chart below:

Table 4.104: Why or why not is the school's affiliation with a parish important to you?

Why or why not is the school's affiliation with a parish important to you?	Frequency	Percent
A parish doesn't have to be there for a child to receive a good Catholic education, the values are still there and so are the expectations	22	42.3
Because I have been going to Catholic school all my life and wanted my kid to attend too	1	1.9
Because it does not directly affect the education my children receive	1	1.9
Because it reinforces the sense of community	1	1.9
Because you need faith and God	1	1.9
Child's education, whether introducing and developing Catholicism is less of priority	1	1.9
Closeness of community	1	1.9
Community	1	1.9
Emphasis on religion	1	1.9

For the community involvement	1	1.9
Having a parish and community is the reason for sending your child to Catholic school	1	1.9
Keeps the community connected	1	1.9
I am not sure, I have not attended church in some time but plan to go regularly since child attends	1	1.9
I like that the church is close enough that the school can participate in mass on holidays, during Lent. etc. but it would not change my decision to enroll	1	1.9
I think it is very important for children to have that connection with church and school	1	1.9
Important for child to have Catholic instruction and values	1	1.9
It brings a sense of community to all and reinforces what they are learning school	1	1.9
It brings the two together	1	1.9
It is important because it enhances our Catholic education. I like having the priests teach and participation in my children's education	1	1.9

It is not important because we are all members of another parish. As it turns out however, that it is an excellent parish and we may change	1	1.9
My wife wants them to understand faith	1	1.9
Reinforces Catholic education and belief	1	1.9
Sense of community and belonging	1	1.9
Sense of community- belonging	1	1.9
Sense of complete community. Go to school, church with those who are invested in the neighborhood	1	1.9
The extra support the school gets from the parish. There is a strong sense of community since most students also attend the same parish.	1	1.9
The kids get to participate in mass; they get prepared to do their first communion	1	1.9
The values of the Catholic church	1	1.9
We belong to a parish other than the one affiliated with the school	1	1.9
We don't live in Boston	1	1.9
Total	52	100.0

Of the 30 responses given by these parents/guardians answers, seven (32%) indicated that parish affiliation was not important to their reasons for enrolling a child in the school, while of the remaining 15 answers, 11 (73% of positive response, 50% of answers overall) responses used the word "community" in the response. When all four sites were examined for their responses (82 responses total), 16 of the 82 responses referenced "community". Overall, "community" was referenced in 20% of the responses- both negative and positive responses for parish affiliation, yet "community" was referenced in 73% of site 3's responses- the site with the lowest number of respondents who said that parish affiliation was "Not important at all" and had the highest response rate to parish affiliation with the school being "Very important" and "Somewhat important" (95%). Is there then a connection between a high response rate to the importance of parish affiliation and "community"? When the response rate of question # 11c – "In making the decision to send a child/ren to a Catholic elementary school, how important was "A sense of community"?, it was only site 1 that showed any marked difference. Each of the other three sites responded between 98.8% to 100% with "somewhat" or "very much" important to this question. Site 1 responded with 88.2% to these with the "somewhat" and "very much" responses. Question 11e asked about the importance of "A connection to parish life". Site 3 stands apart again from the other three sites on this response within the "Not at all" response (3.8%), indicating that parish affiliation is "somewhat "or "very much" (78.8%) important to them.

Table 4.105: How important was connection to parish life when enrolling child (Site 3).

How important was a connection to parish life when enrolling your child? Site #3	# of responses	Percent
Not at all	2	3.8
A little	9	17.3
Somewhat	19	36.5
Very Much	22	42.3
Total	52	100.0

Table 4.106: Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend Mass (Site 3)?

Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend Mass? Site 3		# of responses	Percent
	No response	13	25.0
	Rarely or never	3	5.8
	A few times a year	8	15.4
	A few times a year due to the baby in the house and work hours	1	1.9
	A few times a year - I'm a phobic	1	1.9
	Once or twice a month	4	7.7
	Once or twice a month (son attends weekly!)	1	1.9
	Almost every week	13	25.0
	Every week	7	13.5
	More than once a week	1	1.9
	Total	52	100.0

In the previous section, in response to question 23, 84% of Catholic parents said they would continue to enroll their child in the school if the parish attached to their school closed; in question 24, 76% of these same Catholic parents said they would enroll their child if there were no parish attached. This seems to indicate that Catholic parents do feel that an attached parish (in close proximity) is important but if there were not a parish attached they would still enroll their child in a Catholic school. In section II, all

parents/guardians, Catholic and non-Catholic, were asked to review specific reasons for

enrollment and assess each reason according by choosing one of four values- "not at all,

a little, somewhat and very much".

Responses to how important enrollment reason "e"- "A connection to parish life"

was to all parents/guardians are displayed below:

Table 4.107: How important is a connection to parish life in your decision to enroll?

How important is a connection to parish life in your decision to enroll?		# responses	Percent
	No response	1	.5
	Not at all	29	14.8
	A little	29	14.8
	Somewhat	67	34.2
	Very much	70	35.7
Total		196	100.0

Table 4.108: How important is a connection to parish life in your decision to enroll (Catholic and non-Catholic)?

How important is a connection to parish life in your decision to enroll?			Catholic?		Total
			No	Yes	
	Ne	# of responses	0	1	1
		Percentage	0%	.5%	.5%
	Nol	# of responses	26	3	29
		Percentage	13.3%	1.5%	14.8%
	A e	# of responses	17	12	29
		Percentage	8.7%	6.1%	14.8%
	Sot	# of responses	18	49	67
		Percentage	9.2%	25.0%	34.2%
	Veh	# of responses	9	61	70
		Percentage	4.6%	31.1%	35.7%
Total		# of responses	70	126	196
		% of Total	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%

One hundred and ten of 126, or 87%, of Catholic parents/guardians answered this question of the importance of the connection to parish life that it is "somewhat" or "very much" important.

Question 27 in section IV asks these same Catholic parents about how important is this affiliation to parish life. Eighty-two Catholic parents/guardians responded to

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question 27 – "Why or why not is the school's affiliation with a parish important to you?" In analyzing the responses, 22 of the responses indicated that a parish affiliation was not important. Responses such as "It's not", "A parish doesn't have to be there for a child to receive a good Catholic education" and "has nothing to do with the type of educational environment or education I am looking for my child" made up 25% of the answers, yet in Section II, 87% of Catholic parents/guardians indicate that a connection to parish life is somewhat or very much important to them.

Among the 60 Catholic parents/guardians who answered question 27 that the affiliation with parish was important, certain words were used in greater frequency. The words "community, connection, relationship and belonging" were used in 22, or 37%, of the 60 positive responses. Parent/ guardians cited children going to mass/church during the school day in 13 of the 60, or 22%, of the positive responses.

Question 28 queried Catholic parents/guardians if their child/ren's school does not have a parish attached, do they belong to a parish? Sixty-nine Catholic parents/guardians answered this question with 50, (72%), responding that they do belong to another parish.

Question 29 asked how about the frequency with which Catholic parents/guardians attend mass. The responses that my data showed are contrasted with an earlier study that also examined the mass habits of Catholics. This study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, Primary Trends, Challenges and Outlook- A Report on Catholic Elementary Schools (CARA, 2007) surveyed 1,419 respondents. Parents in this survey were self-identified Catholics with at least one child 18 years old or younger with a child in elementary school during 2000-2005 or parents who had considered where they might send a child that had yet to reach

elementary school age. The data that I found about Catholic parent/guardian mass

attendance in my surveys are contrasted below with the data from the CARA Primary

Trends survey.

Table 4.109: Mass attendance frequency

	My data	Primary Trends data
Rarely or never	9%	27.2%
A few times a year	30%	28.2%
Once or twice a month	17%	11.9%
Almost every week	19%	15.6%
Every week	19%	15.4%
More than once a week	6%	1.7%

(CARA, 2007)

My data reported a higher percentage of Catholic parents/guardians attending

mass and a lower percentage of those that rarely or never attend mass than is reported on

the CARA Primary Trends Report whose data were collected in the years 2000-2005. A

2008 study done by Trinity College, American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS),

reports the percentage of Catholics in the Massachusetts had fallen between 1990 and

2008,

At the same time the proportion of Catholics was eroded in other parts of the

country, mainly in the Northeast Region, where Catholic adherents fell from 43 percent

to 36 percent of the adult population. New England had a net loss of one million

Catholics. Big losses in both the number of Catholic adherents and their proportion

occurred also in Massachusetts, and in Rhode Island, the nation's most heavily Catholic

state where the proportion of Catholics dropped from 62 percent to 46 percent. (Kosmin & Keysar, 2009)

Although the findings from the ARIS report do not address mass attendance but only self-identification by religious denomination, it does show that the number of Catholics in Massachusetts is dropping while those self-identified Catholics in my surveys report a higher mass attendance rate than what was reported in the 2005 Primary Trends report. One possible hypothesis is that the demographics in urban Boston may contain a higher percentage of immigrant populations that may be more committed to mass attendance. More research would need to be done to examine the reasons for the discrepancy in the reported mass attendance and may be a topic for further study.

Question 30 asked how many parish activities, such as parish council member, church lector, etc. the family is involved in. One hundred parents/guardians answered this question; 82 answered with a numerical answer that could be computed; 18 answers with answers that were not able to be computed into a total because of the general way in which this question was answered e.g. "many, rarely, several, etc.". The average reported was 1.5 parish activities per year that the family is involved in.

Question 31 asked how many events, such as cookouts, parish celebrations and fundraisers, the family is involved in over the course of the year. With the shift to more social events, 106 responded to this question. Eighty-six of those responses were given in a numerical value that could be used. Again, as in the previous question, those answers that could not be used were those such as, "many, almost every one of them, none and not a lot". The average number of parish social events attended each year was 2.9. Question 30 asked about events that centered around parish leadership and ones that necessitated

the respondent's direct involvement in liturgical activities - parish council, Eucharistic ministry and church lecturing; Question 31 asked about activities that were more social in nature and family-centered- cookouts, fundraisers, parish celebrations, etc. Respondents indicated that they attended almost twice as many social activities (1.5 to 2.9).

In Section IV, when parents/guardians were asked how many and what types of school activities that they attended each year, the number of activities attended paralleled exactly the number of parish social events that Catholic parents attended each year (2.9 school activities). The types of activities that families attend also echoed what was reflected in questions 30 and 31- 65% of the events were family events, followed by 15% religious and family events and

15 % religious and academic events (30% total). These findings are supported by the responses given by the focus group participants in the two focus group sessions. In the following section, an analysis of the results of the two focus group sessions is given.

<u>Focus Group Results</u>

On the survey, parents/guardians were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a focus group (p.3 Survey of Parent/Guardian Enrollment Choices in Catholic Urban Elementary Schools in Greater Boston). Of the 197 returned surveys, 87 respondents among the four sites indicated their willingness to be part of a focus group. Parents/ guardians from two sites, one regional school site (26) and one parish (18) school site, were each invited to be part of a focus group. E-mails were sent out to determine the day and time that would work best for the group. From the regional school site, a final number of six agreed to meet for a 7:30 am focus group, the parish school site had six parents/guardians who agreed to a 6:30 pm meeting. The parish focus group took

place in a meeting room in the parish church basement and the regional school site

participants met in the school cafeteria. Each meeting was confirmed by e-mail and by

phone the day before the focus group. At each meeting, only two of those who agreed to

participate attended the focus group. Each focus group lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Focus group process and guiding questions.

- Introduce myself and ask the members to introduce themselves.

- Explain reason for the group and my interest in exploring enrollment
  decisions. Talk about how I struggled with paying tuitions and the decisions
  our family had to make. I imagine that many of participants may be in the
  same position our family was.

- Focus Group questions:

    1. Parents/guardians in the city of Boston have many choices for their child's
       education- public, charter, private and Catholic- Why did you decide to
       enroll your son or daughter in a Catholic school?

    2. If you had the opportunity to enroll your child at a neighboring charter
       school that had the same academic curriculum and behavioral expectations
       as …. School would you consider enrolling your child there?

    3. Has your child ever been enrolled in a school other than a Catholic
       school?

    4. If yes, why did you decide to move your child to a Catholic school?

    5. There are other Catholic schools in Boston, tell me a little about what
       makes ………….School in particular important to you.

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6. In the surveys that were filled out the top three reasons cited for enrolling in a Catholic school were

    i. Quality academic education

    ii. Discipline and order

    iii. Safe environment

    Would you agree or disagree with these?

7. Are there any factors that may have caused you to consider NOT enrolling your child in a Catholic school?

8. I'd like to review a list of factors and ask if any of these caused you to consider NOT enrolling your child at …. School.

9. Are there any circumstances that would cause to consider taking your child out of ….. School?

10. If so, what would they be?

11. What do you think a Catholic School offers your child that a non-Catholic school does not?

12. If you had a sudden emergency and could not pick up your child from school, what would you do?

13. Would you call another parent/guardian at the school to care for your child?

14. Are the majority of your child's friends from …………………School or from other schools?

15. Would you call another parent/guardian at the school to care for your child?

16. Do you socialize outside of school with any other families from the school?

17. If yes, about how many families?

Now I'd like to talk about the parish school community.

18. Are you aware of any joint parish/school activities?

19. If yes, what are some of these activities; do you take part in these activities?

20. About how many of the school's events, either during or after school hours, would you say that your family attends each year?

21. What traditions (rituals- yearly, monthly events) are important/meaningful to you?

22. Why are these traditions important meaningful to you?

23. Would you share a bit about why you decided to volunteer to be part of this group?

Focus group 1.

The first focus group took place at 6:30 in the evening. Eighteen of 35 parents/guardians from this research site indicated on their school survey that they would like to participate in a focus group. All 18 were contacted and of these 18, six agreed to meet on the date and time that worked best for each of them. Although, each of the six was called and confirmed by phone and an e-mail the day before the focus group only two of the six attended the focus group. One participant was a sister who had custody of her brothers and sisters the other a mother.

After an introduction of myself and a brief explanation of my research, I asked each participant why they chose to send her child/ren to a Catholic school. Both were asked what were the most important reasons for sending their child/ren to this school. The first volunteered that "Well, for me, there was some key things that was important.

Environment, safety, quality of the education was really important" and that when her sister was in a public school, "I wasn't happy with the quality of the education… for her to have a good foundation, education had to be number one." The second participant began her answer with a story of her background.

Originally from Africa, she ran away from her village with her husband to the city. Her husband went to school at night and taught her while encouraging her to go to school. War broke out in her country and they were refugees with their daughter in Ghana where the mother started to go to school. They moved with their child to the United States and she was encouraged by other women she met to take night classes through her work. She stated that, "Since I did not get quality education, I would look around to see what I could send my child for the quality education that he would be more better than I am." But thought about Catholic schools, "but I was thinking it was too expensive. Excuse me to say it, maybe they were only for white people." Her second reason for enrolling, although, "I am not so particular about what religion it is" was that religion was in school and the third reason was a Catholic school, "where he would be restricted, he would be disciplined."

The top three reasons for enrolling:

Participant 1	Participant 2
• Environment	Education
• Safety	Religion
• Quality of education	Discipline

When asked about the competition from charter schools, one participant said the difference for her was the presence of religion in Catholic schools to "build her foundation in God as well."

When asked about school activities that they participate in, one stated that although acknowledging being invited to many activities," I keep my schedule so tight that mostly I don't attend most of it" .." but rather enjoyed, the ones I've come to attend." The second participant mentioned activities such as:

- Math activities the kids do together

- Peace Games

- Potluck

- Presentations such as presenting poems

- Science Fairs

These parents/guardians were also questioned about the importance of parish/school activities. One participant stated that, "It's not that important. I mean I'm okay with her participating in it, but it's not that important" and the other stated, "I guess we thought of it as school character and he had to partake in it."

This supports the data from the survey. At this site, 18 responded to Question 22 , "About how many parish/school activities would you say that your family attends each year?" Twelve of these responses were numerical. Using these twelve responses, an average of .54 activities were attended each year. As with the survey results, parish/school activities are not ones that parents/guardians are naming as ones that they attend. The number of school activities that parents/guardians from this site attend is 2.6 activities per year, with an overall attendance of parish/school activities at less than one

(.54%). It is clear that families attend school activities at a much higher rate than parish/school activities.

When asked for any reason that either parent/guardian would withdraw her child from the school, three reasons emerged from the focus group.

Both participants were clear that that tuition and tuition assistance was a factor that may cause withdrawal.

"If the tuition we didn't have -- if assistance in the tuition, that would be a cause for me taking my kid out of the school. And if the tuition begins to go up every time, I will want to consider taking my kid out of the school."

"In the insufficient tuition assistance, I know that for me personally, because of my income constantly going up, the tuition assistance has dropped dramatically, so the fact that -- the fact that it dropped, that again, does hold another challenge for me to kind of figure out. OK, I -- how important for me is it to continue her at (school name) and what would I need to kind of shift around, maybe not do, so that I have the means to continue to have her go to this school. So that was another challenge. That was a problem that I had to consider."

Other factors identified as reasons for withdrawal were:

"If the quality of education were compromised" and "If the faith were forced on the children"

One parent/guardian also mentioned that she struggled with a lack of transportation when her daughter was no longer eligible to ride the bus and she did not have a car to transport her. She was able to work this out but stated that if she hadn't she would have had to withdraw her daughter. This is notable because this factor was the

lowest percentage of factors when considering factors important to enrollment with 66.8% overall saying this was not all important to the decision to enroll and 14.3% indicating this was very much important. At this site, 57.1% said this was not important at all with 20% saying this was very much an important factor when considering enrolling.

Focus group 2.

In the second focus group, 26 of 52 parents/guardians who returned the survey from this site indicated on their surveys that they would be willing to be part of a focus group. As with the first focus group all were contacted and, again as with the first focus group, six agreed to meet. Confirmation was done by phone and e-mail and, again, only two actually attended the focus group.

The two attendees were both mothers who were non-Catholic. I started the focus group with an introduction and with a review of the purpose of my study. I asked questions that covered the scope of my survey.

The first part of the focus group covered how the enrollment was made and the factors that influenced this decision. Factors identified by the participants as the reasons for enrolling were:

- Curriculum
- Safety
- Diversity

The top two reasons cited by these parents were in the top three reasons in the survey results. Not named by either of these parents was discipline and order. Diversity

was not one of the factors for enrollment in question 11 a-s; question 11t does ask for any other reasons not mentioned. Fifty-three parents/guardians responded to this question and five of the 53 (9%) cite diversity and a diverse student body as a factor for enrollment. This is notable because this site has the highest white population among all four sites.
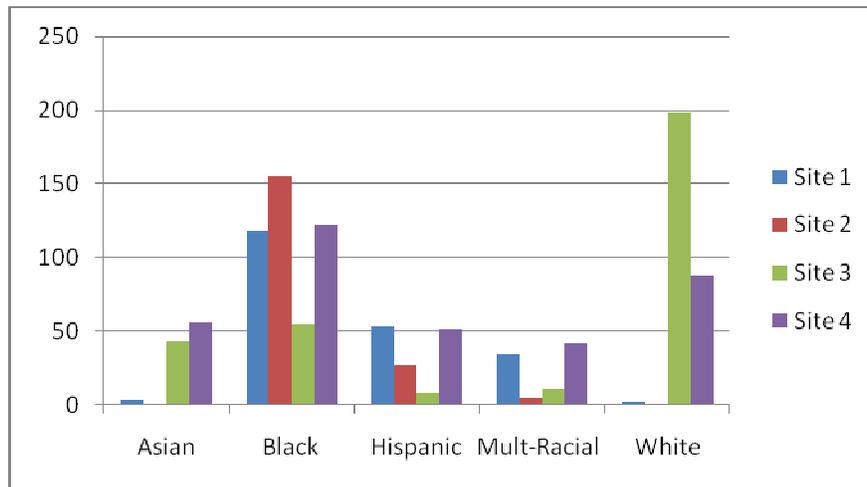
Site 1- .01%

Site 2- 0%

Site 3- 63%

Site 4- 24%

Table 4.110: Site student demographics

When expounding on her reason for enrollment at this school, the first participant said that her daughter's former school (non-Catholic) closed and she did research and sent her daughter to a Catholic school on the North Shore. It was "very engaging" and when she moved it seemed like "second nature" to choose a Catholic school. The second participant stated that,

" And the area, the schools -- the public schools around there weren't to my expectations. So that I decided to look for a private, Catholic school in Dorchester,

which is (school name) for my first child. And I really like -- really -- (inaudible)
teacher's curriculum, and I really liked the -- just the diversity from the school, and safe -
- safety for my child."

The words "engaging" and "engaged" were used a total of 21 times and
"community" nine times during the course of this focus group. By comparison, during
the first focus group these terms were used "engaged" and "engaging" were used a total
of two times and "community" was also used two times. The concept of community and
engagement was brought up by both parents in this focus group early in our discussion
and continued through the discussion. When asked to explain more what was meant by
community and engagement, events such as the following were cited:

- Mother/daughter book club

- Being part of the curriculum process

- Father and son events

- Mother and son events

When asked how many events they attend at the school during the school year
both parents responded with two. Survey results identified 2.9 school events as those
attended per year by parents/guardians.

Participants were asked if they attended any parish events during the school year
and each responded that they were not Catholic and did not attend any parish events.
Although this school research site did not have a parish attached, this question was asked
because survey results showed that 84.6% of parents/guardians overall responded that
there was a parish attached to their school and seven of eight non-Catholic
parents/guardians responded that there was a parish attached to their school.

In the analysis of the survey results of all parents/guardians, Catholic and non-Catholic, social events like those mentioned in this focus group were identified as the ones most attended.

Table 4.111: Comparison of events identified as important/meaningful and those events identified as attended

Type of event	RQ16- Percentage by type identified as events **important/meaningful**	RQ18- Percentage by type identified as the events **attended** each year
No event identified	43.9	49.0
1-Religious	21.4	.5
2-Academic	3.1	.5
3-Family	12.8	32.7
4-Religious and Academic	2.6	0
5-Religious, academic and family	4.1	1.5
6-Religious and family	10.7	7.7
7-Family and academic	1.0	8.2

When asked what events they would be likely to attend during the school year, the parents in this focus group identified the following:

- School concerts

- Christmas and spring concerts

- Halloween dance

- Water day

- Parent story time

- Puppet show put on by parents

- Read-a-thon

- Helping to paint the school

This supports the survey results (chart above) that demonstrated family events as being the ones that parents attended most. It is interesting to note how often that the parents in this focus group used the word engaging and also stated clearly from the start of the focus group that both wished for more engagement yet also said that they attended only two school events during the year. A comment was made,

I really find that like currently, like now it's not well engaged. I know they have a PTO here. I haven't had the opportunity to really have a chance to (inaudible) at one of the meetings of whether it's that engaging."… "I think that they're not asking the parents, and if they are, maybe they're only asking the PTO parents. And there is a whole other group of parents out there that are not being asked these questions that are creating these decisions for our children.

One parent admitted, "I had my new baby—it could be more engaging, it could be me that's pulling out a little bit."

Reasons that may have caused these parents not to enroll were identified during the focus group as:

- Tuition

- Lack of extracurricular activity (one parent –yes; one parent-no)

- School cannot meet the needs of special education students

At this site, tuition costs were identified as "very much" or "somewhat" a problem in 57.2% of those surveyed. "Lack of extracurricular activities" was cited by 22.9% of this school's parents/guardians as "very much" or "somewhat" a problem and 65.7% saying that this was "Not at all" a problem. This is a big difference in what the focus group participants stated and what the results of the survey from the same school. This was consistent also with the third reason that focus group parents stated may have caused a problem in enrolling. In the survey results from this site, only 17.7% identified," School cannot meet the needs of special education students" as "Very much" or "Somewhat" a problem and 73.5% identified this factor as not a problem at all. These differences may probably be attributed to the small size of the focus group.

The focus group concluded with both parents again reiterating their wish to be involved with the school.

Parent 1- For me, I really would like to -- really for parents, for their -- this is a welcoming chance for us because I haven't been asked to give my input at this place -- at this school. So this is a very welcoming chance, and I think that this is something that's needed.

Parent 2- These -- again, it's so important about the parents outreach. And just communicate with the parents, and I know like she said a little before that her -- all parents can't put any 100% participation on one of the examples of the (inaudible). But I would just love to be involved in many different aspects.

This was similar to the conclusion of the first focus group, one participant stated, "when I think about the Catholic schools, I think there's a great sense of community, there's a great sense of building the students up…..Like the mission drives there that it's about that child and growing that child up to be responsible, disciplined, full of character, bringing out the best in that person. "

Both focus groups, qualitative in nature, seemed to concentrate more on the community aspects that brought them to a Catholic school. The sense of safety and discipline with academic were expressed in both focus groups as reasons for enrolling; tuition as a factor mentioned in both groups that may stand in the way of enrollment and also the threat of withdrawal if the academic standards fell.

Conclusions

The data are clear- there are three main reasons that parents/guardians from low-income Boston Catholic urban elementary schools identify as why they choose a Catholic school:

1. Quality academic instruction
2. Discipline and order
3. Safe environment

Factors that did not weigh heavily in the decision to enroll were:

- Up-to-date library
- Opportunities for students to volunteer within the community
- Availability of busing
- Children's friends attend
- Availability of breakfast and/or lunch program

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- Athletics, competitions, intramurals

Just as clear were the reasons that parents may not choose a Catholic school. The number one reason that parents/guardians identified was tuition cost, followed by perceived quality of the academic program and insufficient tuition assistance.

The survey data also demonstrate that the parents/guardians identify that school traditions/rituals are meaningful to them but that they do not participate in great numbers in these activities. Although the focus group participation was limited, the conversations in both focus groups supported this. Parents/guardians seem to live busy lives that do not include much time set aside for school activity participation. Without this participation, the question arises if parents/guardians in these Catholic urban elementary schools are able to create the relationships among each other. Among the questions that I wished to examine in this research were:

- Do the urban Catholic schools of the 21st century still possess social capital or are they closer to the urban public schools described above by Noguera as those needing to develop a clearer sense of mission and parent involvement ?

- What effect does a parish attached to a Catholic urban elementary school have on the presence of social capital in the school?

- How can social capital be built in today's Catholic schools without the presence of closure in the establishment of social capital ?

- Does social capital play a part in the decisions of urban parents and guardians to enroll their children in the present day Catholic urban elementary schools?

Robert Putnam ominously predicted in "Bowling Alone" (Putnam, 2000) that, " Unfortunately, the "functional communities" from which Catholic school students benefit have been eroding, because both the church and the family have lost strength and cohesion. This trend can be expected to harm kids of all socioeconomic groups, but especially the disadvantaged" (Putnam, 2000, p. 303). Ten years later Putnam's conjecture may be closer to reality in urban Catholic schools. There have been indications in the last ten years that point to a loss of strength in the church. The number of families attending mass and participating in parish related activities is low both according to my data and to recent reports (CARA, 2007; Kosmin & Keysar, 2009; Wangness & Lang, 2010).

My survey data show that the parents/guardians are not participating in the majority of events, both school and parish related, that would build social capital when we consider Bourdieu's definition of social capital as " membership in social networks"(Bourdieu, 1985). If Bourdieu's definition of social capital as "membership in social networks" is one that we accept, then parents/guardians in Catholic urban elementary schools are not currently recipients of social capital and the schools may lose this strength of parents/guardians who are bringing this social capital into the school environment. Coleman proposes that bonds are strengthened in what he terms a "functional community" within the school. This functional community encompasses the relationship that parents and family members have with each other and with the community. Coleman theorizes that the presence of closure in these relationships helps to strengthen social capital. This exists when parents of students from the same school know each other inside and outside of the school environment (J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987).

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Recognizing that researchers (A. Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; A. S. Bryk, Holland, Lee, & Carriedo, 1984; J. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, 1988; J. S. Coleman & T. Hoffer, 1987; Greeley, 1982) have cited the importance of the connection between social capital and successful, effective schools, how then do the Catholic urban elementary schools of today continue to build this critical element of success with parents/guardians participating in an average of 2.9 social activities and 1.5 parish/school activities per year even though a large number and variety of events were named by those surveyed as occurring over the course of the year?

The outlook may not be so bleak if Noguera's definition of social capital is considered. Noguera suggested that social capital in schools is built by having a "stated mission and student and parent expectations and by developing the resources that will facilitate more parent involvement"(Noguera, 1999). The Catholic urban elementary schools are in a position by their very nature to foster the conditions necessary to meet these criteria stated by Noguera. Catholic urban elementary schools are able to be vessels that provide a clearly stated mission, student and parent expectations that are transparent and understood by all in the school community and opportunities that encourage family involvement in an environment that is supportive and inviting.

Recognizing the reality of the small number of activities that parents/guardians identify they participate should not deter schools from continuing to offer these opportunities. Students may be the instrument that schools use to reach the families. Family activities were the ones identified by parents/guardians as the activities that they are most likely to participate in. Active student involvement in these activities may encourage more family participation which would in turn benefit the families as a whole

and the school strengthening the "functional communities" that Coleman identified as critical to the development of social capital and successful, effective schools.

Neither the survey data nor the focus group results suggest a connection between an attached parish and the presence of social capital in the school. An average of 1.5 school/parish activities were identified as the number per year that parents/guardians attended. Focus group participants also stated that participation in parish/school activities was not important to them - "it's not that important. I mean I'm okay with her participating in it, but it's not that important" and "I guess we thought of it as school character and he had to partake in it."

The survey data do suggest though that the great majority of families, Catholic and non-Catholic, do want a religious presence at school and that Catholic families want a religious presence at school and indicate that parish activities and affiliation are meaningful to them. The data, at the same time, indicate that these same Catholic families are not as interested in participating in the religious activities at as high a rate as they participate in the family/social activities and that if there is not a parish associated with the school, that would not gravely impact their decision to still enroll their children in the school. The Catholic religious traditions of many Catholic children may now be learned more through the school rather than through the family.

This can be surmised by the mass attendance rate in response to question # 29- "Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend mass?" Of those who answered this question, 56% of those Catholic parents/guardians surveyed reported that they attend mass rarely or never, a few times a year or once or twice a month, and 54% reported attending mass almost every week, every week, or more than once a week. The

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number of parish activities and events that Catholic parents/guardians reported attending was 1.5 liturgical (mass) activities that involved direct participation- parish council, Eucharistic minister, church lector- and 2.9 events that were more social in nature (cookouts, parish celebrations, parish fundraisers).

In 2009, researchers at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut published the American Religious Identification Survey which studied religion trends in Americans. "The decline of Catholicism in the Northeast is nothing short of stunning," said Barry Kosmin, a principal investigator for the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) (Kosmin & Keysar, 2009).

On July 21, 2010 *The Boston Globe* newspaper reported on a new campaign by the Archdiocese of Boston to attract back Catholics that have fallen away from the Catholic Church. Responding to the Church's annual count that showed, "weekly Mass attendance has plunged from 376,383 in 2000 to 286,951 last year" the Archdiocese has begun the campaign to address this drop. In its coverage, *The Boston Globe* reporters interviewed some of the Catholics whose profile demonstrated one of reduced mass attendance. One of those interviewed, a self-identified lapsed Catholic, stated, "If the church would offer more social events and show that they actually care about one another, I would check it out,'' and that," organizing get-togethers to bring inactive Catholics back to the fold sounded like a step in the right direction". The data from my research mirror these statements. In my research Catholic respondents were twice as likely to attend parish social events as they were to participate in other parish events that would necessitate mass attendance, such as being a Eucharistic minister or church lector or taking part in a parish leadership position, such as parish council. These figures are

supported also by the data that were reported in Question 29 about the rate of Catholic

parents/guardians' mass attendance:

9%- Rarely or never

30%- a few times a year

17%- once or twice a month

19%- almost every week

19%- every week

6%- more than once a week

What does this have to do with enrollment choices these parents/guardians make

in the Catholic schools? In his 2005 article, "Catholics and Catholic School", William

Sander reports:

One of the additional implications of this study is that part of the

selectivity in Catholic schools is a result of parents' religiosity. The

key issue in estimating the effects of Catholic schooling on variables

like test scores and educational attainment is in identifying the

effects of Catholic schooling from unobserved variables like

parents' religiosity. The results in this paper indicate that Catholic

religiosity, usually an omitted variable in studies on Catholic school

effects, is an important factor that affects selectivity in Catholic

schools.(Sander, 2005)

In a reference to an earlier study, "The Search for Common Ground" conducted in

1997 Hinges, Hoge, Johnson and Gonzales reported a "less committed" and a

"disconnected" Catholic population of young adults aged twenty through thirty-nine

(Dinges, Hoge, Johnson, & Juan L. Gonzales, 1998) as reported by James Davidson.

In his own response to his own 1999 study, Davidson reported in a 1999 cover

story for *The National Catholic Reporter*:

> Our 1999 survey contains lots of good news for church leaders.
>
> For example, we find that American Catholics tend to value "core"
>
> aspects of their faith, such as the sacraments, the church's role in
>
> helping the poor and belief that Mary is the Mother of God.
>
> At the same time, however, our findings point to an area of real
>
> concern, namely the declining significance of the institutional
>
> church in the lives of American Catholics. Using the same questions
>
> at three points in time (1987, 1993, and 1999) we learn that the
>
> laity's attachment to the church has waned in the last 12 years.
>
> Fewer Catholics report that the church is an important part of their
>
> lives. Fewer say they would never leave the church. Fewer attend
>
> mass on a weekly basis.(Davidson, 1999)

It is clear that Catholic schools can no longer count on a mandate from a bishop

or a parish priest's call from the pulpit to fill the seats in Catholic schools. The majority

of Catholic school parents/guardians in the urban schools are increasingly non-Catholic.

Catholic parents/ guardians in Catholic urban schools report less active involvement in

their parish church as evidenced through surveys data showing low participation in parish

events and activities and low mass attendance. With evidence of a declining engagement

on the part of Catholic parents in their parishes in both mass attendance and involvement

in the life of the parish, Catholic school administrators cannot count on faithful Catholics showing up at their doors to enroll students and these administrators must look at alternative ways of marketing and attracting students. Parents/guardians overwhelming indicate that the way to attract them is by offering programs that demonstrate academic excellence, and by maintaining a school that is strong on discipline and safety.

Catholic schools have long maintained a tradition of educating urban minority students well. To continue to provide this service, Catholic schools of today must operate with a new model. No longer can the urban Catholic schools count on a parish to support them financially and to fill their seats with the children of the parish. Parishes are shuttering and budgets are drying up. Parents/guardians have spoken clearly in what they are looking for in the urban Catholic school of the Twenty-first century and the Catholic school administrators must listen. For the four hundred year old mission of Catholic education to continue, new eyes must see and set the vision, new ears must hear a new song and new hearts must have the courage to move forward.

'Now is not the time to weather the storm; rather it is time to chart a new course.'

(J. M. S. O'Keefe, 2010)

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Catholic elementary schools in the archdioceses and dioceses across the nation are at a crossroads that may well determine their viability as a school system. Following Vatican II, the labor force in Catholic schools shifted from primarily professed religious (i.e. sisters, brothers and priests) to one that is largely lay, (non-religious). This change dramatically altered the financial structure of these schools. Religious teachers and administrators drew a very small salary in return for living expenses covered by the parish. Once the religious were replaced by a largely lay staff, school budgets had to absorb the salaries and benefits of these new lay teachers and administrators. This change necessitated tuition increases to cover expenses; this coupled with a decrease in the number of students from the parish and demographic shifts as Catholics moved to the suburbs have created a perfect storm that has resulted in precipitous drops in urban enrollment.

Five major areas became obvious during this research and would benefit from further study. They are:

1. Use of the data to develop effective, targeted marketing plans

2. Examine the impact of tuition assistance on sustained enrollment

3. Use of data to examine the role of the attached parish and the implications of the loss of social capital

4. Expand the research in this study by conducting future focus groups and expanding the survey to more Catholic urban elementary schools to continue to assess parent/guardian enrollment reasons

5. Use of data to study the impact on Catholic school enrollment as a result of the shift in Americans who no longer claim religious affiliation

Use of data to develop effective, targeted marketing plans

Marketing of Catholic elementary schools is a concept that has surfaced over the past few years as critical to sustainability. School leaders, in order to attract and retain students in a market that has a finite student base, must communicate strengths of their school to potential parents/guardians. This marketing should take into account the reasons that current parents and guardians identify why they have enrolled in a Catholic urban elementary school. More research is needed on strategies that have been successfully employed to attract new families to Catholic urban elementary schools. This research could then assist school leaders to craft a marketing strategy using the data.

In analyzing the enrollment choices of parents/guardians, the factors that are important to this choice as well as the factors that do not play a role in enrollment decisions are revealed. Both of these factors may be used to drive marketing plans helping school leaders understand and focus marketing strategies to address areas specific to urban schools.

Examine the impact of tuition assistance on sustained enrollment

The research in this study focused specifically on parent/guardians reasons for enrollment. The flip side of student enrollment is student retention. Schools need to both understand the reasons for parent/guardian enrollment choices and create a plan to retain

these students once enrolled. Student retention is an area along with student enrollment that would benefit from further study.

Tuition assistance is one area that benefits student retention rates. How and when to apply tuition assistance (financial aid) is another area that would benefit from further research. A preliminary analysis done in conjunction with this research reveals that the parents/guardians who have had child/ren enrolled in the school for two years receive financial aid at the highest rate and that there is a substantial drop between the length of time enrolled in the school between five and six years. Further research needs to be conducted to determine whether this data suggest that parents/guardians in Catholic urban elementary schools in Boston who receive financial aid bottom out at six years because of a movement of students to Boston exam schools, charter schools and other Catholic schools that start at Grade 7.

The research in this dissertation shows that two years is the most common amount of time that parents/guardians who receive financial aid have been in the school (see chart below). Questions raised by this information:

- Should financial aid be used to attract new families or should financial aid be restricted to families who have already invested time in the school?
- Should schools give financial aid to students in preschool programs?
- Regarding students who receive financial aid:
  - How long do these students stay in a Catholic school?
  - Do these students receive financial aid for their full time in a Catholic school?

- Would students stay in a Catholic school with reduced or eliminated financial aid?

- What is the impact of tuition assistance on the number of years parents who receive tuition assistance stay in the school?

- How long have parents been in the school when they receive tuition assistance?

Table 5.1 Length of time parents/guardians have had a child in a Catholic school
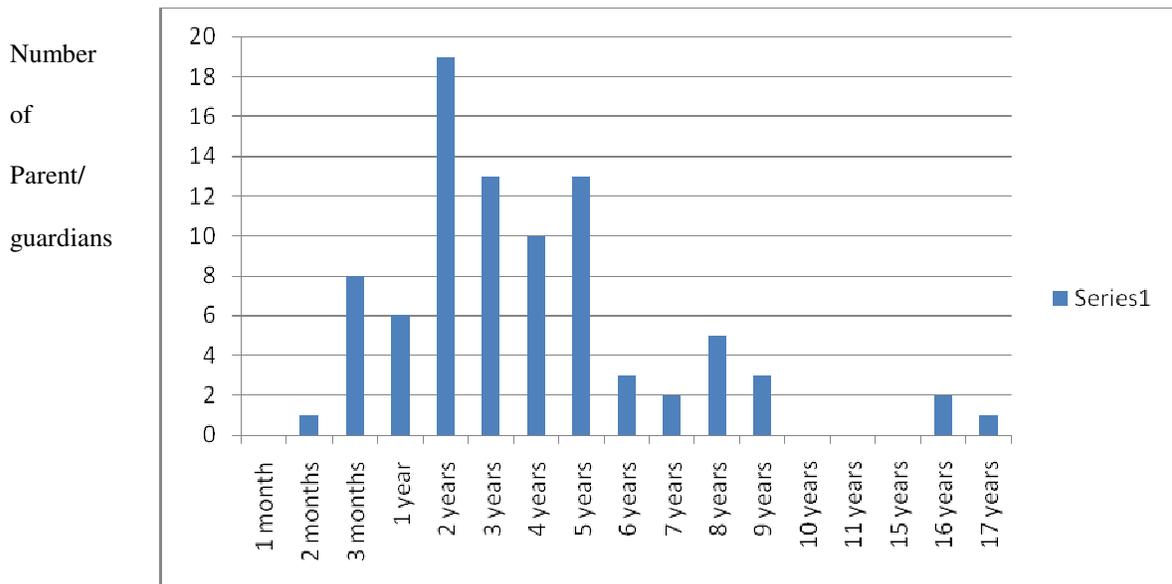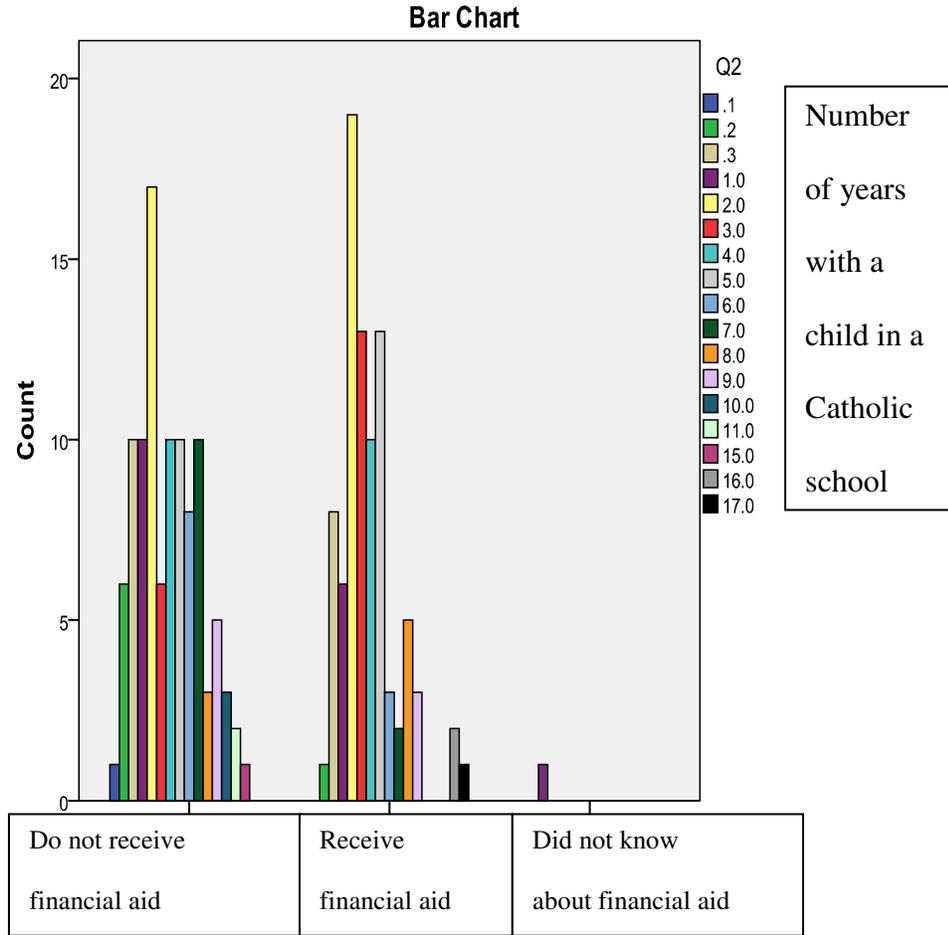
Number of Parent/ guardians

Table 5.2: Number of years enrolled and financial assistance vs. no financial assistance

This is a cross tab of the number of years students have been in Catholic schools and whether parents/guardians receive financial assistance. The notable point here is that those who receive financial assistance drops off significantly after five years. Further research needs to be done to examine why students receiving financial assistance drops off so dramatically after five years in the school. Those not receiving financial assistance appear to retain their numbers until eight years in the school.

A second consideration that deserves more in depth research is the use of financial assistance for students at the preschool level. A recent Boston Globe article spotlighted the growth in the preschool populations in Catholic schools. This increase in

preschool enrollment may signal a strong feeder group for Catholic kindergarten classrooms. More research needs to be done to ascertain whether parents/guardians are enrolling students in Catholic preschool programs with the intention of using just the preschool program or if these preschoolers' enrollment continues beyond the preschool. With a limited amount of financial aid available to urban schools, a decision must be made whether providing financial assistance to parents/guardians for preschool program enrollment translates into students' enrollment into the school's elementary program. Tracking these numbers is essential. A strong preschool program may help to boost school enrollment. If, on the other hand, parents/guardians withdraw preschool students without continuing enrollment, a decision must be made as to whether granting financial assistance to parents/guardians for preschool programs is a wise use of limited resources.

Use of data to examine role of attached parish and implications of loss of social capital

Questions in this study looked closely at whether the role of the parish played a part in the decisions that parents/guardians made to enroll their child/ren in an urban Catholic elementary school. The mission of urban Catholic schools has been one with a documented history of servicing low-income immigrant students. As more and more urban parishes and schools are shuttered, the affect on the urban low-income student is still to be determined. Further research on the affects of these closings on some of the neediest families may well determine the course of the future of Catholic urban education. Some of the findings from this study that may help direct future research are examined in the following observations.

As the data from this exploratory study were examined, it was noted that the number of non-Catholics was shown higher at parish schools than at non-parish based

schools. The survey data were clear that those who responded demonstrated that in parish schools in comparison to the regional Catholic schools surveyed:

- Were higher in non-Catholics numbers

- Have more than two times as many students receiving free/reduced

  meals

- Have far less parents/guardians who completed 12 years of Catholic education

- Have more students receiving financial assistance

When one considers that the attached parish was once the backbone of the parish school, that the non-Catholic students outweigh their Catholic peers at urban parish schools is a significant fact. Parish schools are not relying on the attached parish for their student base, indeed these schools seem to be attracting a higher percentage of non-Catholic families that have a greater financial need. Why non-Catholic parents/guardians appear to choose urban parish schools over their regional counterparts may be as simple as the central location of the urban parish schools that were research sites in this study or may be indicative of another conclusion. Further research may uncover that the non-Catholic families choosing urban Catholic parish-based schools may be looking for a strong connection with a parish. It is hoped that with further research schools may benefit and continue to attract students who will continue the rich history and mission of the urban Catholic schools.

As the data from the survey were analyzed another surprise was the lack of involvement in church activities that was indicated by Catholic parents in the both parish and non-parish based schools. Question #26 asked Catholic parents/guardians how important the school's affiliation with the parish was to them. Only 12.3 % of Catholic

parents/guardians reported that the parish affiliation was "not important at all" to them. That leaves 87.7% of the parents/guardians reporting that the parish affiliation was very much or somewhat important to them yet these same parents/guardians reported being involved in an average of 1.5 parish liturgical activities over the course of the year and 2.9 parish social activities over the course of the same year. The parish as a component of the "functional community" that encompassed the school by providing the intergenerational community and the network of families between the school and parish has eroded and no longer provides this critical piece on which much social capital of the past was built. With the parents and guardians of the students in Catholic urban elementary schools working full-time jobs and many mothers no longer staying at home during the day, the community networks at schools that were created by stay at home moms no longer exist or are very weak at best. This was demonstrated through the survey by the small number of activities that parents/guardians identified they attended each year.

Without these parish/school networks and without of the presence of stay at home parents in the school community the basis of support and social capital has been lost. Where, then, may the Catholic urban schools of the future look to create the functional communities described by Coleman as critical in building social capital? One area of future research that is recommended is the investigation of the creation of on-line functional communities where parents and guardians may meet in virtual communities to discuss issues, trade ideas and generally be the "parking lot" and parent volunteer groups of the past. The development of dedicated virtual spaces through the use of social media

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sites where the school community can gather may enable the parents and guardians to participate in and contribute to the life of the school.

Question 23 asked all parents/guardians if their school no longer had a parish attached, would they continue to enroll their child/ren in the school. Eighty-four point seven per cent of all parents said they would continue to enroll their child/ren in a school without a parish attached and only 6.6%. said they would not enroll in a school without a parish attached. When the no responses were removed, 99% percent of non-Catholic parents/guardians and 91% of Catholic parents/guardians said that they would continue to enroll their child/ren in a school without a parish attached. Clearly the days of the school's dependence on the parish church as a source of a feeder group of students no longer exist. Rather, it appears that the parish may benefit more as a feeder from the school of potential new parishioners rather than the school benefit from the parish as a feeder source of students.

Expand research in this study by conducting future focus groups and including more Catholic urban elementary schools to continue to assess parent/guardian enrollment

As a follow-up to this research study additional focus group sessions using the same group type of questions in Boston urban elementary schools is also recommended. When the research for this study was done, two of the school research sites were in their second year of the new regional model. The data from additional focus groups at a later date would be helpful to ascertain whether the opinions of the parents/guardians in these schools had changed since the first focus groups. This additional data may help to direct other schools potentially moving from the parish to regional models.

The research in this dissertation was limited to four Catholic urban elementary school sites in Greater Boston. It is recommended that this survey be expanded to more Catholic urban elementary schools in order to obtain more data from a greater pool of parents/guardians. The data from a greater sample will may help to create a fuller picture of the enrollment decisions made by parents/guardians.

Study impact on Catholic school enrollment of Americans who no longer claim religious affiliation

Parents/guardians indicated in this study that religious traditions and rituals are important to them and, at the same time, indicate that they do not participate a great deal in parish liturgical functions. The school is a source of what may be the primary religious training for the children of the school. A potential exists for the attached parish or supporting church to market to the school families. Preliminary data from this study indicate that parents/guardians participate more in social activities than in liturgically based activities. Our Catholic churches, whose membership is declining, may benefit from this data by creating welcoming programs for non-church participating families that start with church social activities. This study indicates that further research may uncover that the families attending local Catholic schools may yield a source for Catholic churches to invite back to the church.

The recent American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) done by Trinity College showed that number of self-identified Catholics is dropping nation-wide. Although the findings from the ARIS report does not address mass attendance but only self-identification by religious denomination, it does show that the number of Catholics in Massachusetts is dropping.

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Further research is needed to assess what the impact that this decline in adults reporting no religious affiliation and the decline in the number of self-identified Catholic adults in Massachusetts may have on the enrollment at Catholic urban elementary schools such as the ones in this study.

In 2005, William Sander reported, "Catholic schools have already experienced large declines in enrollment and many have closed. As Catholic schools decline, an important institution for preserving Catholic culture also declines" (Davidson *et al*, 1997; Greeley and Rossi, 1966: Sander, 2001). The reason for this is that Catholic schooling has important effects on Catholic religiosity. Indeed part of the decline in Catholic religiosity might be attributed to the decline in Catholic schooling."(Sander, 2005)

As Sander notes, the presence of Catholic schools in the lives of the students may well affect the future of the church and the religiosity of the future generations of Catholics. As the parents of these children continue to demonstrate a decreased tendency toward mass attendance, the inculcation of the Catholic values to the children of these parents may well fall to the Catholic schools.

As the number of Catholic elementary schools across the nation is winnowed down, research for successful strategies to preserve and strengthen those that survive are critical. Catholic schools have a proven track record of success, especially with urban students of color. The mission of the urban Catholic schools must continue to be one of social justice that reflects the church's commitment to the education of the poor and the needy. The schools and the students educated in them may well reflect the future of the church.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY COMMUNICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT

RESEARCH

From: Sheila Kukstis [mailto:kukstis@comcast.net]

Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2007 8:51 PM

To: skfitzsimons@abcso.org

Subject: introduction

<div align="center">

Sheila Kukstis

9 Seventh Avenue

Scituate, MA 02066

781-545-6103

</div>

Dear Sister Kathleen Fitz Simons,

    I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Sheila Kukstis. From 1995-2005 I was principal of St. Andrew the Apostle School in Jamaica Plain. After St. Andrew closed in June, 2005 I became principal of a public elementary school in Taunton.

    From 2004 I have also been part of the Leaders in Urban Schools doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Although I am no longer a Catholic school administrator I am still very interested in the future of Catholic schools. I have decided to do my dissertation work in the area of Catholic urban elementary schools. My qualifying paper identified a focus area on the reasons

low income urban parents decide to enroll their children in urban Catholic elementary schools.

As I start the process of designing my research I would like to request a meeting with you to tell you a bit more about my ideas and discuss the possibility of using a sample of Boston urban elementary schools in my future study. I understand I may be a bit premature in my request but I would like to have the opportunity to speak with you as early as possible so that I may listen to your thoughts on this subject.

Because we have not had the opportunity to be introduced yet, if I may, I would suggest either Tom Deffly or Vittoria DeBenedictis from St. Francis in Braintree as two people who may be able to speak to you on my behalf. Tom was a colleague and then a supervisor during my tenure at St. Andrew. Vitt and I are enrolled in the doctoral program together and have become dear friends during this time. I am confident that either Tom or Vitt will be able to answer any questions that you may have.

I look forward to hearing from you and perhaps having the opportunity to meet you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Sheila Kukstis

COMMUNICATION WITH RESEARCHERS JAMES CIBULKA AND

MARK GRAY

From: Sheila Kukstis [mailto:kukstis@comcast.net]

Sent: Sunday, April 22, 2007 9:09 AM

To: Cibulka, James

Subject: urban Catholic elementary school parent surveys

Dear Dr. Cibulka,

My name is Sheila Kukstis. For ten years I was a principal of an urban Catholic

elementary school in Boston. The school closed in 2005 and I am now a public

school principal. I am currently a doctoral student at the University of

Massachusetts/Boston's Leadership in Urban Schools program.

 I am preparing to submit my dissertation proposal this spring. I have identified as

my area of research the reasons why low income parents choose to send their

child to an urban Catholic elementary school. The questions I wish to research

are:

a.   What are the reasons that low income parents/guardians choose to send their

child to a Catholic school?

b.   What are the effects of parish closings on the choice decisions of parents/guardians and the future of Catholic schools?

c.   Are low income parents/guardians as likely to choose to enroll their child in a regional Catholic elementary school as a parish Catholic elementary school?

d.   What role, if any, does social capital play, directly or indirectly, in the choice decisions of these parents?

e.   What are the implications of this research on the future of Catholic urban elementary schools?

After working on my literature review I was a bit discouraged that not much research was done on the elementary schools. I was so pleased to recently find your book," Inner-City Private Elementary Schools: A Study" cited in a piece I was reading. I picked it up from the library yesterday. It is fascinating that the issues you raise for Catholic urban elementary schools in 1982 are still relevant today, twenty-five years after its publication. I am very curious if you know how the Catholic school systems in the eight cities surveyed received the findings of your research and what changes may have been proposed or may have been made as a result.

As a very novice researcher, I am just beginning to form in my mind questions for a parent survey and would like very much to review the questions that you and your colleagues decided to use on your survey. In reading through each chapter I see the results of the surveys used but not the survey instrument itself. Would you know if there is any place that I could locate the original survey used ?

Even though I no longer work in a Catholic school (closing St. Andrew the Apostle School was one of the most difficult things I have done), I care passionately

about the urban Catholic elementary schools and believe in their mission; so much research focused on high schools and not on the elementary schools where children spent the largest part of their formative and academic lives. This may sound naive but I cannot tell you how gratified I was to find your book and have confirmed that others shared the same concern and interest in these schools.

I know that it has been a long time since this book was published and certainly will understand if you cannot assist me.

Thank you, though, for your 1982 work.

Sincerely,

Sheila Kukstis

From: Cibulka, James [mailto:cibulka@uky.edu]

Sent: Sunday, April 22, 2007 3:37 PM

To: Sheila Kukstis

Subject: RE: urban Catholic elementary school parent surveys

Sheila: I and my colleagues Tim O'Brien, a political scientist, and Donald Zewe, a sociologist, were responsible for the analysis but did not collect much of the data. The surveys had been designed by researchers at the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. I doubt that it would be possible to obtain them any longer, so I am sorry that I cannot help you. In response to your questions concerning the policy advocacy emerging from the study, this, too, was the responsibility of the League. I know efforts were made, and our study did get quite a lot of press at the time. Also, I did deliver some papers in academic and

policy meeting such as the National Catholic Education Association. However, I am not sure how much impact we had. Many closure decisions were dictated by financial considerations or by decisions of officials that these schools were no longer a priority, unfortunately.

I am sorry that I cannot be more help. Good luck on your study.

With best wishes,

James Cibulka

From: Sheila Kukstis [mailto:kukstis@comcast.net]

Sent: Sunday, April 22, 2007 4:25 PM

To: Cibulka, James

Subject: RE: urban Catholic elementary school parent surveys

Dear Dr. Cibulka,

Thank you so much for your quick response and your kindness in taking the time to inform me. You have helped me. That your study did not carry a larger impact is another piece of information that confirms everything else I have read so far yet still puzzles me- why wasn't this information used to create policy and improve the viability of the schools?

I, too, believe that the many closures that I have seen and been part of in the last few years have indeed been dictated by financial constraints of the parishes and a lack of subsidizing on a diocesan level. I agree with you that with so many other

concerns, I do not think the urban elementary schools are always a priority on a diocesan level.

 I truly believe that the loss of these schools will have an impact on many children's lives and on the urban Catholic church.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Sheila Kukstis

I agree with you that their closing has been and will continue to be very regrettable, particularly for low-income children living in the central city.

James Cibulka

Hello Sheila,

CARA has a policy to release as much as we can to students doing graduate-level research. You are welcome to use any questions from our school study. Just please cite us. That's all we ask. If you need anything else, let us know.

Hope all is well,

Mark Gray
CARA Research Associate
202-687-0885
mmg34@georgetown.edu

-------- Original Message --------

Subject: Primary Trends, Challenges and Outlook: A Report on Catholic
Elementary Schools 2000-2005
Date: Mon, 12 Nov 2007 13:10:58 -0500
From: Sheila Kukstis <kukstis@comcast.net>
To: CARA@georgetown.edu
CC: 'Joseph Check' <Joseph.Check@umb.edu>

November 12, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sheila Kukstis and I am currently a doctoral student at the University
of Massachusetts at Boston's Leadership in Urban Schools program. My
dissertation proposal subject is "The Enrollment Decisions of Low Income
Parents in Catholic Urban Elementary Schools in Greater Boston".

During my research I discovered the report conducted by CARA, authored by
Mark Gray, Ph.D. and Mary L. Gautier, Ph.D. and published by NCEA entitled,
"Primary Trends, Challenges and Outlook: A Report on Catholic Elementary
Schools 2000-2005". Many of the survey questions in the various questionnaires
would be useful in the questionnaires I am currently developing. I am requesting
permission to use relevant questions in my work. CARA would be cited as the
original source of any questions used from your questionnaires. If CARA or the
report's authors wish, I would also send a list of all questions used and any results
from my work.

I may reached by e-mail at kukstis@comcast.net or by phone at
781-545-6103 (h); 617-510-0823©; 508-821-3216(w).

Dr. Joseph Check(Joseph.Check@umb.edu) at the University of Massachusetts,
Boston may be contacted to verify the above statements.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Sheila Kukstis

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CONSENT FORMS

UMASS BOSTON INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

University of Massachusetts Boston

Department of Leaders in Urban Schools

100 Morrissey Boulevard

Boston, MA. 02125-3393

Consent Form For "Enrollment Choices of Parents/Guardians in Low-Income

Catholic Urban Elementary Schools of Greater Boston"

Principal Investigator: Sheila Kukstis

Introduction and Contact Information

You are asked to take part in a research project that examines enrollment choices

in Catholic urban elementary schools of greater Boston. My name is Sheila

Kukstis and I am the researcher for this study. I am a doctoral candidate in the

Leaders in Urban School department of the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have further questions

later I would be happy to discuss them with you. My telephone number is 781-361-4036.I am working with academic advisor Dr. Denise Patmon who may be reached at 617-287-1234 or by e-mail: Denise.Patmon@umb.edu.

Having led a Catholic urban elementary school for ten years I am acutely aware of the need for current research directed at these schools. At this moment in their 400-year old history in the United States, Catholic urban elementary schools are facing a future that looks very different from the past. At one time not too many years ago there were many more Catholic schools in the city of Boston. My goal is to try to figure out what attracts parents/guardians to Catholic schools so that I can help keep these schools around for all the children of the future.

It is the goal of my research to include the voices of parents/guardians of Catholic urban elementary students by surveying their reasons for enrolling their child/ren in a Catholic urban elementary school.

I believe that this research will help the leadership of Catholic schools to better plan for the future of these schools.

Description of the Project:

Participation in this study will take place any time from September,2009 through January, 2010. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in any or all of the following: a written survey; parent/guardian focus group.

Parent/Guardian Survey Questionnaire

The attached survey is being sent home with all the students of the school. All surveys will be anonymous. Each family is provided a return envelope to be returned the survey to the school office.

Your help with this is much appreciated. In order to show appreciation for your time completing the survey two prizes will be given:

- First, a Pizza Party will be given to the classroom that brings back the greatest percentage of parent/guardian surveys (each sibling will be given credit for the returned family survey).

- Second, two same-numbered tickets have been included with each family survey. These tickets are for a raffle. All those who return the survey to school should return one of the tickets to school with the survey and keep one ticket at home. After the deadline for completing the survey, a raffle will be held at school with all the returned tickets. The winning ticket will be pulled at the school. Anonymity will be respected by having the principal award the prize to the parent with the correct raffle ticket. The school will announce the winning raffle ticket NUMBER. Check your ticket at home to see if you have the winning ticket. Raffle prizes may be certificates to the local supermarket, a gas certificate or a store such a Target.

Risks or Discomforts:

You may speak with Sheila Kukstis to discuss any distress or other issues related to study participation.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

This study is designed to be **anonymous**. That is, the information collected will not include information that specifically identifies you such as your name or telephone number. After you return the research materials, there will be no way of linking your identity to the data collected unless you agree to be contacted for the parent/guardian focus group. The focus group will be confidential, that is any information shared will not be directly linked to you by name.

Voluntary Participation:

The decision whether or not to take part in this research study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you should contact Sheila Kukstis directly by phone (781-361-4036) or by e-mail (Kukstis@comcast.net) Whatever you decide, your involvement, or lack thereof, in this research study will in no way affect your status as a parent/guardian at this school or involve any loss of benefits such as financial assistance or re-registration of your child/ren.

Rights:

 You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study. You can reach Sheila Kukstis by phone at 781-361-4036 or by e-mail at kukstis@comcast.net. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached at the following address: IRB,,

Quinn Administration Building-2-080, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100

Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. You can also contact the Board

by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5370 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN

ANSWERED. MY RETURNING THIS SURVEY INDICATES THAT I CONSENT

TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I AM 18 YEARS

OF AGE OR OLDER.

Please check this box if you are willing to be contacted to be part of a

parent/guardian focus group. The focus group will have between 4-7

parents/guardians. It will take approximately one hour. I will ask the group

questions about your enrollment choice similar to the ones that you answered

on the survey. Because I will not be able to remember everything that is said,

the session will be audiotaped so that I can go back later and write down

what everyone said. The focus group will give you an opportunity to

communicate more about your choices and will give you the opportunity to

speak and listen to others in a group of parents/guardians who have made

the same choice.

Name:_____

Phone #_____ **Best time to reach you** _____

Email:_____

Thank you!

CONSENT TO AUDIOTAPING and TRANSCRIPTION

Consent Form for "Enrollment Choices of Parents/Guardians in Low-Income

Catholic Urban Elementary Schools of Greater Boston"

Principal Investigator: Sheila Kukstis

University of Massachusetts Boston

Department of Leaders in Urban Schools

100 Morrissey Boulevard

Boston, MA. 02125-3393

This study involves the audio taping of your interview with the researcher.

Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with

the audiotape or the transcript. Only the researcher team will be able to listen to

the tapes.The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the

transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be

reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that

result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information

(such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products

resulting from the study.

Immediately following the interview, you will be given the opportunity to have the tape erased if you wish to withdraw your consent to taping or participation in this study.

By signing this form you are consenting to

☐
aving your interview taped;

☐
o having the tape transcribed;

☐
se of the written transcript in presentations and written products.

By checking the box in front of each item, you are consenting to participate in that procedure.

This consent for taping is effective until the following date: June, 2010.

On or before that date, the tapes will be destroyed.

Participant's Signature _____

Date_____

APPENDIX D

PARENT/GUARDIAN FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Thank you for your willingness to be part of this group. Your presence here lets me know that you are willing to share further your thoughts about your child/ren's enrollment at this school. My goal is to give you the opportunity to share these thoughts with me.

1. Would you share a bit about why you decided to volunteer to be part of this group?

2. Tell me a little about what makes ………….School important to you.

3. Who made the decision to enroll your child in a Catholic school?

4. What were some of the reasons that you decided to enroll your child/ren at this school?

5. Did you make a choice not to enroll in a public school?

6. What is important to you in a Catholic school?

7. What are the factors in a Catholic school that influenced you to enroll your child?

8. What do you think a Catholic School offers your child that a non-Catholic school does not?

9. Are you aware of any joint parish/school activities?

10. If yes, what are some of these activities?

11. If you had a sudden emergency and could not pick up your child from school, what would you do?

12. Would you call another parent/guardian at the school to care for your child?

13. Are the majority of your child's friends from …………………School or from other schools?

14. About how many of the school's events, either during or after school hours, would you say that your family attends each year?

15. Do you socialize outside of school with any other families from the school?

16. If yes, about how many families?

17. What are some of the school's traditions?

18. What traditions (rituals- yearly, monthly events) are important/meaningful to you?

19. Why are these traditions important meaningful to you?

PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

Section I: Personal Information

1. How many children do you have currently enrolled at this school?
   _____

2. How long has your child/ren been enrolled in a Catholic school?
   _____ year(s)

3. Are you a Catholic?
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. Did you ever attend a Catholic school?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. If yes, how many years did you attend a Catholic school?
   _____ years

6. Is your combined family income above/below $40,000?
   Above
   Below

7. Does your family receive financial assistance to pay tuition from a parish, the diocese or some other organization?
   Yes
   No
   I am not aware of any financial assistance programs

8. If financial assistance were not available at your child/ren's Catholic school, would you have enrolled your child/ren?
   Yes
   No
   Financial assistance did not figure into my decision to enroll

9. Does your child receive free/reduced lunch and or breakfasts at the school?
   Yes
   No

Section II- Making the decision to enroll

10. Who made the decision to enroll your child in a Catholic school?

    _____

11. In making the decision to send a child/ren to a Catholic elementary school, how **important** were the factors listed below?

a. Quality academic instruction
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

b. Quality religious education
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

c. A sense of community
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

d. Discipline and order
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

e. A connection to parish life
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

f. Quality extracurricular activities
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

g. Safe environment
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

h. Availability of busing
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

i. An up-to-date library
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

j. Up-to-date classroom technology (e.g. computers, science equipment)
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

k. Well maintained school facility and grounds
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

l. Athletics, competitions, intramurals
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

m. Opportunities for students to volunteer within the community
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

n. An affordable tuition
   Not at all
   A little

Somewhat
Very much

Important Factors in Enrollment Decision…

o. Availability of financial assistance for tuition and other school costs
    Not at all
    A little
    Somewhat
    Very much

p. A welcoming environment for non-Catholics
    Not at all
    A little
    Somewhat
    Very much

q. Closeness to house and/or convenience
    Not at all
    A little
    Somewhat
    Very much

r. Availability of before/after school programs
    Not at all
    A little
    Somewhat
    Very much

s. Availability of school lunch/breakfast programs
    Not at all
    A little
    Somewhat
    Very much

t. Other reasons (please write in any other reason not mentioned above)

    _____

    _____

Quality academic instruction   Quality religious education

Discipline and order	A connection to parish life
Children's friends attend	Extracurricular activities
Availability of busing	Up-to-date library
A sense of community	Family attended the school
Up to date classroom technology	Athletics, competitions, intramurals
Affordable tuition	Well maintained school facility and grounds
Financial assistance for tuition	Welcoming environment for non-Catholics
Closeness to house/convenience	Before/After school programs
Safe environment	
Availability of breakfast and/or lunch programs	
Opportunities for students to volunteer within the community	

12. From the list above (those factors listed in Question 8), please list the three most important reasons for your decision to enroll your child/ren in a Catholic elementary school.

    _____

    _____

    _____

13. To what extent were each of the following a **problem or a concern** when making your decision to send a child to a Catholic elementary school?

a. Limited or no space at the school; waiting list at school
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat

Very much

b. Tuition costs
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

c. Insufficient tuition assistance
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

Problem or Concern….
d. Lack of transportation and/or busing
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

e. Competition from local public schools
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

f. Competition from local charter school
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

a. Competition from local non-Catholic independent school
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

g. Faith education
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

h. Location of the school
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

i. Turnover of teachers at the school
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

j. Lack of before and/or after school care programs
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

k. Lack of extracurricular activities
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

l. Perceived quality of the academic program
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

m. My child wanted to attend a different
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

n. School cannot meet needs of students with special education needs
   Not at all
   A little
   Somewhat
   Very much

o. Other reasons that may have posed a problem or concern (please write in any
   other reason not mentioned above)
   _____

_____

Limited or no space at the school   Tuition costs

Insufficient tuition assistance   Lack or transportation and/or busing

Competition from local public schools   Competition from local

charter schools

Faith education   Location of school

Teacher turnover   Lack of after before and/or after

school care

Lack of extracurricular activities   Perceived quality of the

academic program

Child wanted to attend another school

School cannot meet needs of special education students

14. From the list above (those factors listed in Question 10), please list the three
     most important reasons for your decision to enroll your child/ren in a Catholic
     elementary school.

     _____

     _____

     Section IV- School Activities
15. What are some of the school's traditions (for example, May Procession,
     spaghetti supper, etc.)?

     _____

     _____

16. What traditions (yearly, monthly and/or weekly events) are
     important/meaningful to you?

     _____

     _____

17. About how many of the school's events, either during or after school hours, would you say that your family attends each year?
   _____

18. If yes, what are some of these activities?
   _____

   Section V- Parish/School Connection

19. Is there a parish attached to your school?
   Yes
   No

20. If your school has a parish attached, are you aware of any joint parish/school activities?
   Yes
   No
   No Parish Attached

21. If yes, what are some of the parish/school activities?
   _____
   _____

22. About how many of these parish/school activities would you say that your family attends each year?
   _____

23. If your school has a parish attached- would you continue to enroll you child/ren in the school if the parish were no longer opened?
   Yes
   No

24. Would you enroll (or have you enrolled) your child/ren in a school that did not have a parish attached?
   Yes
   No
   If you are Catholic, please answer questions #25-31 on the next page. If you are not a Catholic, please skip this final page (questions # 25-31).

Thank you!

If you are a Catholic Parent/Guardian, please answer the following:

25. If your school has an attached parish, do you belong to this parish?
a. Yes
b. No
c. Our school does not have an attached parish

26. How important is the school's affiliation with the parish to you?
Very much important
Somewhat important
Not important at all

27. Why or why not is the school's affiliation with a parish important to you?
_____

_____

_____

28. If your school does not have a parish attached and you are a Catholic, do you be belong to a parish?
Yes
No

29. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend Mass?
a. Rarely or never
b. A few times a year
c. Once or twice a month
d. Almost every week
e. Every week
f. More than once a week

30. Not including Sunday Mass, about how many parish activities would you say that your family is involved in over the course of a year (e.g. parish council member, Eucharistic minister, church lector, etc)?

_____

31. Not including Sunday Mass, about how many parish events (cookouts, parish celebrations, fund raisers, etc.) would you say that your family is involved in over the course of a year?

_____

Thank you

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