

## REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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# TEACHER RETENTION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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*Teacher attrition is a concern in all educational sectors but is of special importance to Catholic schools because of the salary disparity between public and Catholic schools. This review examines the research on teacher retention in general with a view to understanding how this knowledge might inform teacher recruitment and retention strategies in Catholic schools and dioceses. The relationship between salient teacher characteristics - such as job satisfaction and salary - and teacher retention is discussed.*

The ability to develop successful schools is directly related to the ability to attract and retain quality teachers (Goodlad, 1984). Understanding conditions which promote teacher retention, provides educational administrators with pertinent information for developing successful schools. Catholic schools like public schools should be aware of the need to understand the conditions that surround the practices of hiring and retaining qualified personnel.

The retention of teachers in public schools has been a continuing concern for educators in recent years. Significant numbers of teachers leave the teaching force each year. The need to replace large numbers of the teachers at a school has a negative effect on the educational program. The issue of teacher retention becomes even more critical when added to the condition of teacher shortages (Norton, 1999; Shen, 1998).

Catholic schools also face the challenge of teacher shortages and teacher retention. Cimino, Haney, and Jacobs (2000) observe that superintendents and principals in Catholic schools cite the difficulty of finding and retaining high quality teachers as their most difficult challenge.

The Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States constitute the largest independent school system in the world. Over 2.6 million students are currently enrolled in Catholic schools. Problems confronting public school administrators are also found in Catholic schools. Thus, the ability of Catholic schools to retain high quality teachers is an important issue to Catholic school administrators (Groome, 1998; Youniss & Convey, 2000).

## **THE NEED FOR QUALITY TEACHERS**

Teachers and teaching are the most important component in the development of quality schools (Goodlad, 1984; Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1985). Lortie (1975) found that faculty commitment has a favorable influence upon students. The instructional program directly benefits from hiring and retaining superior teachers. This may be the most critical task facing school administrators in their efforts to establish and maintain effective schools (Jensen, 1989). According to Shen (1998), "In addition to the issue of quality, high rates of teacher attrition disrupt program continuity and planning, hinder student learning, and increase school districts' expenditures on recruiting and hiring" (p. 81).

The field of education has become acutely aware of the need to recruit, induct, and retain qualified professionals. The important role of the teacher has been noted in numerous studies aimed at understanding the establishment of excellent schools. According to Chubb and Moe (1990), "An effective school is one characterized by an academic focus, a strong educational leader, a sharing of decision-making, a high level of professionalism and cooperation among teachers, and respect for discipline among students" (pp. 136-137).

Lortie (1975) noted that when students graduate from high school, they have accumulated approximately 13,000 hours with classroom teachers. The ability to influence, challenge, inspire, and alter the thinking of students during this time is the domain of the teacher. Without effective teachers, there are no effective schools. It is possible that we could locate good schools without good educational leaders. However, it is doubtful that there are any good schools without good teachers.

### **TEACHER ATTRITION: WHY ARE TEACHERS LEAVING THE FIELD?**

Schuttloffel (2001) states there are serious concerns over teacher attrition and retention facing both public and Catholic schools today. School administrators and principals are increasingly concerned about filling teaching positions. Norton (1999) commented that the loss of teachers is a condition that continues to plague school districts. Literature on the conditions which contribute to teacher attrition and retention provide valuable insights into this issue. It is estimated that 25% of the students who complete a teacher-training program never become teachers or leave the profession within the first 5 years (Chapman & Hutcheson, 1982; Charters, 1970; Mark & Anderson, 1978). More recent research indicates that 50% of teachers hired in 1994 for service in Catholic schools have left their jobs (Curtin, 2001; O'Keefe, 1999; Squillini, 1999, 2001).

The fear of a teacher shortage increased during the 1980s along with concerns over teacher attrition and retention. Increased student enrollments, an aging teacher workforce, and a decline in graduates majoring in education focused attention on these issues (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Research indicated that academically stronger students were not entering teacher-training programs (Chapman & Holzemer, 1985; Vance & Schlecty, 1982). Additionally, the more academically talented teachers were found to be leaving the teaching profession

at a more significant rate (Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991; Schlecty & Vance, 1981). Vegas and Murnane (1997) indicated that female college graduates during the 1980s with high math and reading scores were less likely to become teachers than those with lower scores. The problem facing the educational community consisted of a teacher shortage involving both quantity and quality.

Conditions can vary greatly from one school district to another. Urban districts and less desirable school systems labor to find qualified teachers (Kozol, 1991). An acute shortage of teachers in urban school districts continues to challenge administrators. A study by Feistritzer (1990) of 3,201 teachers hired since 1985 concluded that only 12% of these teachers would be willing to work in an urban school. This conclusion is significant because the highest teacher attrition rates occur in urban districts (Adams & Dial, 1993). In urban areas, 20% of the teachers leave after the first year and 33% leave prior to the third year (Schwartz, 1996). Jones and Sandidge (1997) report that threats of violence, inadequate funding, and a lack of appropriate training increases the hesitation of teachers to either begin or continue their professional careers in urban districts.

A majority of states have introduced alternative certification methods as a means of filling their classrooms with teachers. According to Feistritzer (1993), between 1985 and 1992, 40,000 teachers were certified through these alternative programs as a means of addressing the issues of teacher shortages, attrition, and retention.

The National Education Association (NEA, 1999) reports the United States is facing a teacher shortage due to several factors. An unusually large number of teachers are expected to retire over the next 10 years. Student enrollments are currently at 52 million and are expected to increase to over 54 million by 2008. The U.S. is projected to need 2.4 million teachers over the next 11 years due to teacher attrition, retirement, and the increases in student enrollment. This projection could grow to 2.7 million teachers when allowances are made for class reduction efforts promised by a number of state legislatures as part of their efforts to improve the quality of education.

## **DEMAND FOR TEACHERS**

Teaching is beset by an attrition rate which surpasses all normal expectations. Norton (1999) explained that approximately 25% of new teachers leave the profession after only 1 year, and that 50% leave the profession after 5 years. Eubanks (1996) reported that 77% of the 39 largest urban school districts hired teachers with emergency certifications to fill their staffing shortages in 1995. Questions of shortages, attrition, and retention are concerns to school administrators.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the baby-boomer generation increased school enrollments by 25% and fueled an increase in the demand for entry-level teachers to 190,000 by 1971. A significant drop in student enrollment occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s and demand for entry-level teachers fell to about 50,000. Increasing enrollments in the 1990s have again pushed the need for entry-level teachers to about 75,000. These erratic swings in the demand for entry-level teachers demonstrate the need for accurate statistics and prudent

planning by school administrators (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997).

Schools of education are currently facing a demand for more entry-level teachers. Grissmer and Kirby (1997) report that enrollments, which began to rise in the late 1980s, will continue to grow until after 2005. The anticipated increase for elementary and secondary student enrollment is approximately 20%. The increasing demand for teachers is based on student to teacher ratios remaining at current levels. Future decreases in the student to teacher ratio or efforts by state legislatures to promote student achievement through smaller class size, could increase the demand for teachers. The net results of these conditions will be an increase in the demand for new teachers or a return to the classroom of teachers who previously left the profession.

## **TEACHER ATTRITION AND RETENTION**

The ability to recruit, induct, and retain quality personnel is directly related to the success of an organization and its ability to survive and prosper. The cost of seeking and replacing staff is significant. The premature exit of personnel is expensive and depletes an organization of the opportunity to imprint culture and develop a cadre of skilled professionals (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Wanous, 1992).

Teacher attrition rates are highest for professionals early in their careers and again when they approach the retirement-eligible age (McLoone, 1987). Teachers at mid-career status are less likely to leave the profession based on the structure of teacher retirement programs. According to Auriemma, Cooper, and Smith (1992), attractive retirement incentives offered by school systems promote retention of mid-career teachers. Research indicates a growing demand for entry-level teachers along with a "graying" of the current teaching force. Over the next 15 years, a significant number of teachers will enter the retirement-eligible category as the baby-boomers begin to exit the job market. The two fastest growing segments of the teaching force will be entry-level personnel and retirement-eligible teachers. They are also the two groups with the greatest rates of attrition (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992, 1997; Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond, & Grissmer, 1988; Murnane & Olsen, 1990).

Research by Kirby and Grissmer (1993) centered on the concepts of human capital theory. The length of a professional career is directly related to the cost and benefits of entering and remaining in the profession. The ease of entry into the teaching profession could lead to higher rates of attrition. Younger teachers would be more prone to leave teaching than experienced veteran teachers. The research of Lortie (1975) examined the relationship between the easy and casual entry into teaching and the difficulty in retaining teachers, who expended a small amount of human capital entering the profession.

Chapman and Green (1986) conducted a study on 1,591 University of Michigan graduates with teaching certificates. The subjects either taught continuously, were intermittent teachers, left the teaching profession, or never taught. Differences were found in personal characteristics, educational experience, initial commitment, professional integration into teaching, external influences, and overall career satisfaction. They concluded that the roots of attrition began with differences in initial career commitment and early work experiences.

Additionally, Chapman and Green (1986) stressed the importance of work conditions and their relationship to teacher retention. The quality of professional life that new teachers experience can have long-term impact on the careers of those teachers.

Theobald (1990) conducted a study on teachers in the state of Washington from 1984 to 1987. He concluded that teachers are economically rational decision makers. Retention of teachers becomes more difficult when they view their social and financial status as being inferior to that of the surrounding community.

Murnane et al. (1991) conducted extensive research in North Carolina and Michigan to determine why teachers remain in the profession. They reported that attrition rates are highest during the first years of teaching. In Michigan, 21% of new teachers left after the first year and an additional 13% left after the second year. In North Carolina, 11% of new teachers left after the first year and 8% left after the second year. The rate of attrition fell to 4% in each state after 10 years. Mature women, those over 30 years old, remain in teaching longer than young women who tend to leave teaching at much higher rates. With regard to school level, elementary school teachers were found to stay longer than secondary school teachers. The importance of their findings on attrition and retention is underlined by the fact that if just 10% of the nation's teaching force of 2.4 million teachers leave the profession, new hires will number 240,000.

The authors also examined scores on the National Teachers Examination (NTE), which revealed that teachers with higher test scores were less likely to remain in teaching than those with lower scores. Teachers with higher test scores also have greater access to occupations outside of teaching than teachers with lower test scores. These findings remained consistent when comparing teachers with up to 10 years of experience. Their results confirm earlier research by Schlechty and Vance (1981) which found a relationship between attrition rates and teachers with higher test scores.

Murnane et al. (1991) also concluded that teachers in high paying school districts remained longer than teachers in low paying school districts. The condition of salary was found to influence the decision-making process of newly hired teachers. The research by Murnane et al. indicates that salary considerations are most important during the first 5 years of teaching and remain somewhat important during the first 10 years in the profession. An examination of the data reveals the significance of salary with relation to teacher demand. During times of decreasing enrollments and declining demand for teachers, there is no relationship between salary and teacher attrition. Salary plays a larger role when demand for teachers is stable or increasing. This finding becomes more important when we consider current conditions that include increases in both student enrollments and demand for new teachers.

Studies on the teaching of particular subjects found only small differences between the length of career for teachers of science, math, English, or social studies (Bobbit, Faupel, & Burns, 1991; Bobbit, Leich, Whitener, & Lynch, 1994). Several studies found that race does not appear to be a significant factor affecting teacher attrition and retention (Chapman & Hutcheson, 1982; Heyns, 1988; Singer, 1993; Theobald, 1990). However, other studies indicate that African American teachers remain in teaching longer than White teachers and

that African American teachers stay at schools in urban districts longer than White teachers (Bloland & Selby, 1980; Dworkin, 1980; Murnane et al., 1991).

## **THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING WORKFORCE**

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) promoted public awareness about the quality of education and also predicted dire future conditions unless drastic steps were taken. The proclaimed deficiencies in the American educational system were not as significant as the public was led to believe. Berliner and Biddle (1995) have documented improvements in teaching and the quality of the teaching force in the United States. Current teachers are better educated than their predecessors. The United States Department of Education (1994) states that less than 1% of all teachers have not earned a bachelor's degree and a majority of teachers have advanced degrees. They also concluded that the minimum requirements to become a teacher are similar throughout the United States. The female teacher population has increased and the teaching force has also become older and more ethnically diverse. They also state that public and private schools are hiring more first-time teachers. First-time teachers have lower salaries, less experience, and a higher attrition rate.

Pyszkowski (1991) noted that a decline in the talent pool for teachers was associated with an increase in employment opportunities outside of teaching. The ability to seek employment in other fields has given first-time teachers and reentrants additional options outside of education. Increasing opportunities in the marketplace for prospective teachers is another condition which promotes concerns over a teacher shortage and related issues of attrition and retention.

## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Prior to 1960, the majority of teachers in Catholic schools were members of a religious community. Sisters, priests, and brothers occupied over 90% of the teaching positions. Since 1960, there has been a dramatic reversal of this condition. Lay teachers comprised 85% of the teaching force in Catholic schools in 1990, which increased to 93% by the year 2000 (McDonald, 2001). Unlike their religious counterparts, who were assigned to a position indefinitely, Catholic lay teachers choose to teach in Catholic schools and are free to terminate their employment at their discretion. School stability is directly related to the stability and experience of the educational staff. Due to increases in lay faculty, issues of teacher attrition and retention are important to Catholic school administrators (Yeager, Benson, Guerra, & Manno, 1985).

Catholic schools have made a significant contribution to education in America since Colonial times. During the 1700s and early 1800s, the Catholic school was not viewed as an educational system but as individual schools seeking to instill the teachings and values of the Roman Catholic Church. Even as a public school system began to develop in the 1800s, Catholic schools received public funding in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Connecticut, and New Jersey. The schools flourished because of large waves of Catholic immigrants from Europe and the rise of anti-Catholic sentiment. The desire to attend schools with a

Catholic philosophy rather than public schools, where core Protestant values were advanced, was an additional motivation for the development of Catholic schools. The American Catholic Bishops recommended and reconfirmed their belief in Catholic schools at the Councils of Baltimore in 1829, and again in 1866 (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

The Third Council of Baltimore in 1884 called for the establishment of a Catholic school near each church and for parents to send their children to Catholic schools. This mandate, although never fully realized, greatly increased the number of Catholic schools found throughout the United States (Bryk et al., 1993; Groome, 1998).

In the early part of the 20th century, Catholic schools grew in numbers and prospered under the governance of religious communities. Sisters, priests, and brothers dedicated their lives to the Catholic Church and received a small stipend for their service to Catholic schools. In 1904, the creation of the Catholic Educational Association, which would later become the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), enhanced the national scope and identity of Catholic schools (Buetow, 1970). With a reliance on religious personnel, Catholic schools provided education to increasing numbers of students.

*The Code of Canon Law* (Canon Law Society of America, 1983) contains specific requirements for a school being classified as a Catholic school. It states that a school may bear the title Catholic only with the written consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority. The education must be based upon the principles of Catholic doctrine, teachers are to teach correct doctrine and have integrity, and supervision of the school must be under the guidance of a proper ecclesiastical authority. *The Code of Canon Law* does not require that teachers be religious personnel.

Catholic schools grew from 10,000 schools and 2.5 million students in 1930 to 11,000 schools and 3.1 million students in 1950. Growth in both the number of schools and student enrollments continued until 1965. At its peak, Catholic schools numbered over 13,000 schools and 5.5 million students. This would represent about 12% of the total American elementary and secondary students. The Catholic school system prospered because of an abundance of religious men and women who worked for room, board, and a modest stipend. The significant decline of religious vocations in the 1960s led to an increased reliance on a lay teaching force. The financial burdens on schools resulting from the loss of sisters, priests, and brothers forced school closings and the introduction of higher student tuition (Bryk et al., 1993; Buetow, 1985; Harris, 2000).

Important changes in the Catholic Church paralleled this period of peak school growth. Pope John XXIII was elected in 1958 and within months he called for the convening of the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II was in session intermittently between 1962-1965. This assembly, which called the bishops of the Catholic Church to Rome, had a profound effect on the role of the Church and Catholic schools. The results of Vatican II were revolutionary in many respects. Vatican II promoted involvement of the Church in the modern world, an embracing of other religions through an ecumenical movement, and an activism towards creating a more just society. The Latin Mass was replaced with the local vernacular, clergy attire embraced a more modern appearance, and the lay community assumed a more prominent role in both the Church and schools.

The call for a more active and involved laity coincided with the challenge of staffing Catholic schools as they faced a shortage of sisters, priests, and brothers (Bryk et al., 1993; Buetow, 1985; Youniss & Convey, 2000).

Several important church documents relating to education were issued as a result of Vatican II. In 1965 *The Declaration on Christian Education* defined a more active and humane role for Catholic schools. The doctrinaire approach mandated by earlier directives on education was replaced by a challenge to make schools respond to the spirit of freedom and charity (Abbott, 1996).

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) issued the pastoral entitled, *To Teach as Jesus Did* (1972). In this document, they stated that schools were to be agents of social change and they were expected to promote social justice. The message of this document on education articulated a three-part mission for Catholic schools. Schools were to teach the message of hope contained in the Gospels of Christ, create a sense of Christian community, and foster a life of service to mankind.

In 1977, the Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE) published *The Catholic School*, which further defined the mission of schools in the post Vatican II period. Catholic schools were to be viewed as communities with a goal of providing service to society. Prior to Vatican II, Catholic schools were viewed as depositories of doctrine that was transmitted to the faithful. *The Catholic School* explained the importance of building up the Kingdom of God through a commitment of service and participation in the ecumenical movement. Students were urged to understand the role of religion and how it permeates their education and personal development. An appreciation of cultural diversity and pluralism were also lessons contained in *The Catholic School*. The dignity of the person was reaffirmed and the school becomes a place where religion can permeate all aspects of student life. Within this context, teachers were given the opportunity to practice their profession and participate in the moral, spiritual, and intellectual development of the students. Therefore, the role of lay teachers in Catholic schools took on additional significance with the publication of *The Catholic School* (Bryk et al., 1993).

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997) reminds parents of their responsibility for “seeing to the Christian education of their children” (p. 239). Catholic schools have undertaken this mission and responsibility with the support and cooperation of the Church and parents. Today, the Catholic schools in the United States are the largest independent and privately funded system of education in the world. The American Catholic schools have been built and continue due to the commitment and support of parents who made significant sacrifices for the Christian education of their children (Buetow, 1985; Groome, 1998; Youniss & Convey, 2000).

## THE STUDENT POPULATION

The National Center for Educational Statistics (1994) reported that there were approximately 26,093 private elementary and secondary schools in the United States based on the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). These non-public schools serve an estimated population of about 4,974,548 students. The non-



public schools are serving around 10% of the nation's elementary and secondary school students.

The largest number of non-public students and schools are under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1965-1966, Catholic schools accounted for 87% of private elementary and secondary enrollment. By 1985-1986 the enrollment in Catholic schools accounted for 60% of the students in non-public schools. Catholic schools enroll over 2.5 million or 52% of all non-public school students (McDonald, 2003). Catholic schools are also facing issues of teacher attrition and retention. According to Polansky (1999), the much documented and discussed teacher shortage found in the nation's public school systems has serious implications for Catholic schools.

## CATHOLIC LAY TEACHERS

Until the mid-1960s, 95% of the teaching in Catholic schools was under the direction of sisters, priests, and brothers. The Catholic identity of the schools was assured through the significant presence of the religious community. The steep decline in religious vocations led to the establishment of a lay teaching staff, which approached 95% in a majority of schools by the mid-1990s. The movement from a religious staff to a lay staff did not translate into a loss of Catholic identity in the schools. The lay faculties have developed a strong spiritual vision and commitment to the Catholic identity of the schools (Groome, 1998). The retention of a dedicated lay teaching staff is of paramount importance to administrators intent on maintaining a strong Catholic identity in the schools.

On September 12, 1987, Pope John Paul II addressed the National Catholic Educational Association in New Orleans. The Holy Father expressed his gratitude and support for Catholic schools and lay teachers in Catholic schools:

In recent years, thousands of lay people have come forward as administrators and teachers in the Church's schools and educational programs. By accepting and developing the legacy of Catholic thought and educational experience which they have inherited, they take their place as full partners in the Church's mission of educating the whole person and of transmitting the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to successive generations of young Americans. Even if they do not "teach religion," their service in a Catholic school or educational program is part of the Church's unceasing endeavor to lead all to profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head.

For a Catholic educator, the Church should not be looked upon merely as an employer. The Church is the Body of Christ, carrying on the mission of the Redeemer throughout history. It is our privilege to share in that mission, to which we are called by the grace of God and in which we are engaged together. (pp. 13-14)

The importance and need for lay teachers in Catholic schools has increased since the 1987 address of Pope John Paul II. Guerra (1991) found that "teachers

are the heart and soul of all effective schools. Schools need teachers who see their work as something more than a job, and Catholic schools apparently are blessed with an extraordinary number of such teachers" (p. 18).

Chubb and Moe (1988) report that teachers in Catholic schools are more committed and collegial than their counterparts in public schools. They also enjoy greater job satisfaction and have better relationships with their principals. Hannaway and Abramowitz (1985) and McMillen (1988) explained that lay teachers in Catholic schools believe they have greater input with regard to school policy and decisions regarding curriculum. Literature on teachers in Catholic schools reports that they have a better understanding of the goals of their schools and are in agreement with those goals. Catholic school educators also promote a sense of educational community and a school culture in which learning is valued and there are fewer disciplinary problems (Chubb & Moe, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; Greeley, 1982).

Commentary by Hawker (1985) explains that Catholic schools have distinctive qualities and teachers are expected to promote the values of a Catholic education. Hawker states that lay teachers can be either Catholic or non-Catholic, the only restriction on the non-Catholic members of the staff is a prohibition against the teaching of religion. All lay members of the teaching staff are invited to participate in the faith community of the school. There are many non-Catholic teachers providing Catholic schools with outstanding service. Hawker believes that they are valuable members of the teaching force and they should be recognized for their efforts to promote the finest traditions of Catholic education.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) recognized the changing condition of teaching staffs in Catholic schools when it issued the document entitled, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*. Although teaching staffs were changing from sisters, priests, and brothers to lay persons, the vital mission and purpose of Catholic education was reaffirmed. Proclaiming the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and developing the mental, spiritual, and physical attributes of students would continue to be the essential mandate of Catholic schools.

Cook (1983) and Bleich (1984) cited a sense of service and ministry to the Church as reasons for teaching in a Catholic school. Other factors attracting teachers to work in a Catholic school included a school culture with discipline, respect, orderly behavior, and a reliance on values. Sisters, priests, and brothers had created schools centered on the traditions of the Catholic Church. These schools were noted for their spiritual development and academic achievement. The decline in the number of religious vocations and the subsequent decline in religious personnel teaching created an opportunity for lay teachers to enter the formerly exclusive domain of the clergy (Convey, 1992). The synergy of the post Vatican II period and the need for greater lay involvement prompted many lay teachers to accept positions in Catholic schools. In a period of less than 50 years, the percentage of lay teachers in Catholic schools had changed from a minority to a majority. Convey (1992) and Wittberg (1994) noted that Catholic schools could not have continued to exist without a significant reliance on lay teachers. The rise in importance of a lay faculty created a need to better understand the issues surrounding teacher retention.

## CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Schaub (2000) reports that Catholic schools employ a workforce that is 91% female in elementary schools and 53% female in secondary schools. Ninety-six percent of elementary teachers have a bachelor's degree and 24% have a master's degree. In secondary schools, 99% have a bachelor's degree and 51% have a master's degree. Schaub states that teachers in Catholic schools are somewhat less educated than their public school counterparts, but more educated than teachers in other non-public schools. These trends are also reflected in the number of teachers certified by state boards, with Catholic school teachers ranking behind public school teachers but ahead of teachers in other non-public schools.

The National Catholic Educational Association (McDonald, 2000) reported there were 157,134 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff in Catholic elementary and secondary schools for the school year 1999-2000. Lay teachers accounted for 146,123 or about 93% of the total teaching population while sisters, priests, and brothers accounted for 11,011 or about 7%. The student population in the 8,144 Catholic schools totaled 2,653,038. There were 2,013,084 elementary school students in 6,923 schools, and 639,954 secondary school students in 1,221 schools. Minority enrollment rose to 656,393 students, which is 24.7% of the total enrollment. Non-Catholic enrollment was listed at 354,628 students, which is 13.4% of the total enrollment. To summarize the statistical analysis of Catholic schools would indicate a significant reliance on lay teachers and schools in which minority students and non-Catholics play an important role. Influences of cultural and religious diversity could attract teachers looking for opportunities to practice their profession in schools where pluralism is practiced.

Lortie (1975) indicated a number of reasons for the choice of teaching as a profession. Primary motivations for choosing and remaining in a teaching career included an interpersonal theme, service theme, continuation theme, material benefits, and time compatibility. Teachers enjoy working with people and feel the need to provide service to the community. The condition of continuation is associated with the desire to keep working in an educational setting. Areas of salary, benefits, and status were associated with the material aspects of teaching. Time compatibility was directly related to the number of vacations and holidays associated with teaching. Weekends, summer vacations, and extended holiday breaks were valued and important to teachers.

Goodlad (1984) supports the work of Lortie (1975). Research indicates that the majority of public school teachers tended to show characteristics of being idealistic and altruistic and would again choose teaching as a career. Goodlad believes that monetary benefits are not a primary reason for choosing a career in teaching; however, they become important when conditions of retention are examined. Educational professionals desire financial rewards for years of experience and service. The belief that teaching is a noble and worthy profession and the sincere desire to be of service to others continue to be important motivators in the selection of teaching as a career.

Teachers choose Catholic schools because of a sense of commitment and dedication. They are motivated by their love of teaching, the desire to teach in a quality environment, and view teaching as a form of ministry. The motivations for teachers in Catholic schools are predominately intrinsic and spring from a

sense of service (Bleich, 1984; Ciriello, 1987; Guerra, 1991).

Catholic schools promote the belief of high expectations for students. The Catholic Church holds high expectations for teachers because of their influence on the faith and moral development of students (Barrett-Jones, 1993). Frequently, teachers in Catholic schools refer to their choice of teaching as either a ministry or mission. Buetow (1988) explains that teachers in Catholic schools have a vocation. Their vocation promotes contributions that are not just the fulfillment of a job, but rather, a commitment to the Christian development of students and a spirit of generosity, which provides an enthusiastic fullness of life.

## **COMMUNITY, COMMITMENT, AND VALUES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Convey (1992) noted a number of reasons for working in a Catholic school. Reasons include a love of teaching, enjoyment of working with students, the practice of a faith ministry, school environment, and support of Catholic education. Schaub (2000) observed that teachers in Catholic schools expressed general job satisfaction despite salaries lower than those offered in public schools. Schaub also noted that almost 8 of 10 Catholic schoolteachers would teach in these schools again, if given the opportunity to start over.

Significant satisfaction with working conditions and the work environment has important implications for issues of teacher retention. Catholic school culture promotes both the spiritual and intellectual. Hawker (1985) observes,

The school can and must be a community of faith in which an evangelizing and catechizing ministry is being fulfilled. The Catholic school can and must be a truly pastoral setting in which all of the participants – adults and students, Catholics and non-Catholics – are comforted and challenged, enriched and encouraged, refreshed and renewed, strengthened and supported. (p. 17)

The importance of schools becoming communities is stressed by Sergiovanni (2000) when he states, “Communities are defined by centers of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of ‘we’ from the ‘I’ of each individual” (p. 65). The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) explained the importance of Catholic school culture. Visitors as well as students at Catholic schools should experience the feeling that they have entered a totally unique environment when they enter the school. It is an environment with characteristics permeated by the Gospel’s spirit of love, freedom, and faith. “The prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community” (p. 13). The Congregation further stated that the community should include teachers, administrators, auxiliary staff, parents, and students.

Literature on Catholic schools is rich in reference to the school as community. The Catholic school is not created for the sole purpose of dispensing academic wisdom. The purpose of the school community is to nurture and develop

all of its members. The spirit of community is a very significant characteristic for attracting and retaining teachers. Teachers in Catholic schools have a proclivity for involvement and are expected to participate in the development of the faith community. The need to develop a faith community is even more important with the increase in lay faculties and continual teacher turnover. Despite great diversity in Catholic schools, the development of a faith community establishes a common element found in all schools (Wojcicki & Convey, 1982).

Catholic education is often referred to as being value driven. McDermott (1985) explains, "Catholic schools are not neutral. They propose many Christian values to the students, above board and out in the open, in subject area and in co-curricular activities, in liturgies and other religious celebrations" (p. 50). McDermott further explains that the primary values espoused by Catholic schools would include the practice of, "community, faith, hope, reconciliation, courage, service, justice, and love" (p. 53).

Although individual states differ in the amount and type of aid that Catholic and other private schools can receive, most Catholic schools are tuition-driven, with parents paying taxes to support public schools they do not use, and tuition to support their Catholic school of choice. After the Supreme Court rejected various forms of financial assistance to parents in non-public schools, the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) wrote "A Statement in Support of Catholic Schools" (1983). The bishops urged the Catholic community to reexamine and renew their commitment to Catholic schools and he also spoke of the values inherent in a Catholic education. They commented that

We are in an age in which our nation seems to be adrift in waters where the guiding lights of a sound moral code and values are frequently obscured. Those natural and supernatural virtues on which a healthy society are rooted are often poorly understood and poorly practiced. Obedience to law, respect for the rights of others, honesty in public and private life, reverence for the right to life of the young and old, truthfulness, concern for the less fortunate...how are young people to find their way in a world in which people so frequently operate without regard for these and other important values. (USCC, p. 375)

The bishops spoke to the essence of Catholic schools when they stressed the importance of values. The literature on Catholic schools makes reference to academic achievements and accomplishments; however, the primary emphasis of a Catholic education is on the values found in its culture and teachings (Groome, 1998). Educators, who choose Catholic schools, place a high degree of importance on the teaching and transmission of values.

The literature on teachers in Catholic schools frequently makes reference to commitment. Ciriello (1987) conducted a study on teachers in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC. Data from 655 teachers were reported. Ciriello found a majority of the teachers (about 54%) were influenced by the faith dimension in the selection of their school. The lay teacher population in the study accounted for 85% of the teaching force in the Catholic elementary schools responding to the survey on conditions of commitment, attachment, and

satisfaction.

Squillini (2001) conducted a study on 339 lay teachers in the Archdiocese of New York on the characteristics of job satisfaction that lead to commitment and longevity in the Catholic school system. The study noted that 63% of the teachers in Catholic schools rated the opportunity to be an active member of a faith community as being very important to their job satisfaction. Catholic school teachers are expected to make a commitment to the philosophy and principles promoted by the Catholic Church for education.

Research by Lortie (1975) and Rosenholtz (1989) affirms the importance of intrinsic motivation for teachers. Additional work by Bryk et al. (1993) affirms the importance of the relationship between community and commitment of teachers in Catholic schools. Their observations on the distinctive atmosphere of Catholic schools centers on the existence of a community shared by both the students and the adults. Teachers in Catholic schools appeared highly committed, took on numerous additional duties, and were very satisfied with their work.

Bryk et al. (1993) explained that when a school develops a feeling of community, important consequences result for both teachers and students. Working in a school community allows educators greater opportunity to realize the intrinsic rewards vital to the satisfaction of teachers. An increase in enjoyment, efficacy, and morale could result from membership in a school community. Teachers working in a Catholic school community report greater student participation, fewer disciplinary problems, and a more attractive work environment. The establishment of an ethic of caring is typical of a communally organized school (Noddings, 1988). Teachers in Catholic schools frequently make reference to their ministry and teaching in a school community. Powerful intrinsic forces can promote the retention of teachers in Catholic schools.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF SALARY ON TEACHER RETENTION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Teachers in Catholic schools are more likely to leave their positions than teachers in public schools. This condition is found at every age level, however the greatest rate of attrition takes place prior to age 40. The salary comparison between Catholic and public school teachers indicates a significant difference at every level of experience (Cimino et al., 2000; Schuttloffel, 2001).

The 1993-1994 average teaching salaries for public school elementary and secondary teachers were \$33,116 and \$34,387 respectively. The 1993-1994 average teaching salaries for Catholic school elementary and secondary teachers were \$17,926 and \$25,089 respectively (Schaub, 2000). Guerra (1991) observed that salary schedules for Catholic schools are historically lower than public schools. Guerra also commented that it is customary to find salary and job satisfaction linked together. Teachers in Catholic schools usually cite their desire to teach in a quality environment, a love of teaching, and teaching as a faith ministry as the most important reasons for teaching in a Catholic school. Salary and benefits are usually ranked lower in a review of motivations (Convey, 1992). However, Guerra notes the importance of salary and the relationship between

lower salaries and the tendency of many lay teachers in Catholic schools to leave within 5 years. This high rate of turnover does not provide the school with an experienced staff capable of transmitting the culture and traditions of the school. Potential problems for Catholic schools include an imbalance between a large number of young inexperienced teachers prone to attrition and a declining number of more experienced teachers committed to the school's history and purpose.

Squillini (2001) found salary to be the only job characteristic viewed as dissatisfying in a survey of 339 lay teachers in the Archdiocese of New York. Of the 27 issues presented on the survey questionnaire, only salary was viewed as dissatisfying by over 50% of the teachers. Improving salary was viewed as an important step in encouraging teachers to remain in the school system. Although there are a number of conditions that promote employee turnover, the importance of salary should not be discounted (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

Salaries at Catholic schools have undergone significant changes in the past 50 years. The Catholic school system had been built on the dedication of sisters, priests, and brothers who received a stipend or reduced salary. Their religious communities supplied the material needs of the religious staff. The decline of the religious teaching force and the rise of a lay teaching force had significant implications for Catholic schools. School budgets skyrocketed in the years after 1967 as the number of lay teachers in Catholic schools increased (Bryk et al., 1993).

## **COST OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Prior to 1967, tuition was low or nonexistent in Catholic schools. Low labor costs allowed most schools to be supported by a parish church and a small tuition charge. Tuition costs in 1967 averaged \$203 per child. The average per child tuition had increased to \$1,875 by 1988. This significant increase in tuition was implemented while teaching salaries were still considered much lower than those offered in public schools (Bryk et al., 1993). Tuition increases have become the norm as Catholic schools struggle to pay teachers a just and fair wage. The average Catholic school tuition in 1992 was \$2,800 reflecting increases at both the elementary and secondary school level (Guerra, 1995).

Data from the National Catholic Educational Association (McDonald, 2003) report tuition rates for both elementary and secondary schools. Elementary school tuition averages \$2,178 per pupil, while secondary school tuition averages \$4,075. The need to increase lay teacher salaries will impact future tuition increases, as will the rising costs of educating each student. Church support, endowments, foundations, and contributions will offset differences between tuition and costs (Guerra, 1995).

The current financial model of a Catholic school includes a heavy reliance on tuition. The need to cover rising lay teacher costs has resulted in an escalation of tuition and dependence on additional sources of revenue. The past financial model of relying on church subsidies and cheap religious labor is no longer viable. The transformation to a predominately lay faculty has significant implications for family finances. A Catholic family with one child in elementary and one in secondary school face a tuition bill between \$5,000 and \$6,000. Tuition has grown from about 3% of annual family income to over 11% of annual fam-

ily income (Harris, 2000). The financial implications on teacher retention are an important part of this equation. Higher salaries result in tuition increases. The added drain on family incomes could result in a loss of students and subsequent reductions in the teaching force. Teachers in Catholic schools are faced with the reality of accepting lower pay or placing the solvency of the school in jeopardy. Public schools are not faced with the financial constraints of tuition and the higher salaries offer an attractive option to Catholic educators during times of teacher shortages. The issue of salary difference between public and Catholic schools is vital to the question of teacher retention.

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALARY AND TEACHER RETENTION**

Murnane et al. (1991) investigated the influence of teacher salaries on the retention of teachers. Evidence clearly indicates that teachers who are paid more will stay in the profession longer and the impact of higher salaries was greatest during the first years on the job. Teachers with below average salaries were one and a half times more likely to leave after 1 year than a teacher in the above average salary category.

Murnane et al. (1991) noted that after 10 years, the effect of salary on teacher attrition is minimal. There are two explanations for this condition. Changing occupations after a number of years becomes less attractive an option, as teachers with experience acquire skills which make the practice more enjoyable and less difficult. Additionally, those who would have left because of low salary have usually exited the system by this time.

Goodlad (1984) reports that money ranks low as a motivation for entering the teaching force. However, salary ranked second as a motivation for leaving the teaching force. Intrinsic motivators may lure teachers to the profession, but economic reality can cause enough distress to abandon the profession. It is estimated that a teacher at retirement makes approximately twice the salary of a beginning teacher. This dose of economic reality could give young teachers serious second thoughts about continuing in a teaching career. Goodlad indicates that only 2% to 4% of elementary and secondary teachers choose the profession for economic reasons. He further notes that 18% to 25% of teachers claim low salaries were a major reason for leaving the profession. The starting salaries of teachers are among the lowest of all professions and the rate of growth is one of the slowest. The salary conditions for Catholic school teachers are even more discouraging (Byrd, 1999).

A study by Murnane et al. (1991) of teachers in North Carolina and Michigan found that teachers who are paid more were more prone to remain in the profession. The implication for the retention of teachers in Catholic schools is important and underlines the importance of salaries. Research examining teacher attrition and retention has discovered compelling evidence that school district spending has a direct relationship on the decisions of teachers to remain with a school system (Grissmer & Kirby, 1992; Murnane & Olsen, 1989, 1990; Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1989; Rickman & Parker, 1990).



Buetow (1985), Radecki (1987), and Squillini (2001) discussed the relationship between salary and teacher retention in Catholic Schools. Pyszkowski (1991) claims the attraction of higher salaries in the marketplace affects both first-time teachers and those considering a return to the profession. A study by Gritz and Theobald (1996) of the career histories of 9,756 teachers in the state of Washington, found that female teachers remain in a teaching position longer when salaries increase relative to salaries available in other areas of employment. Salaries are also important when initially choosing a teaching position among competing school districts. The methods school districts use to spend their resources does make a difference.

Schaub (2000) explains that the salaries of Catholic school teachers are 20% to 60% lower than those of their colleagues in public schools. Significant differences are noticed for beginning teacher salaries and the differences in salary increase with additional years of experience. Teachers in Catholic schools may start off earning 20% less than their public school counterparts. This trend continues over the course of a career with an eventual disparity approaching 60%. Differences in salary between Catholic and public school teachers are greater at the elementary level than the secondary level.

There is great disparity between salaries of public and Catholic school teachers. These differences grow as teachers gain years of experience. The issue of salary differences that increase with years of experience has important implications for retention of teachers in Catholic schools. Schaub (2000) commented that:

Catholic schoolteachers clearly make significant financial sacrifices to teach in these schools. As the faculty moves toward a fully lay corps of teachers, there is a range of implications of these salary levels for sustaining high-quality personnel. Teacher recruitment and retention may become significantly more difficult in the face of large salary disparities. Most important, teacher quality could be diminished as the most qualified and experienced teachers are attracted to higher-paying jobs. (p. 77)

Retention of teachers in Catholic schools may also include compensation beyond salary considerations. A study by Squillini (2001) involving a random sample of 600 teachers in Catholic schools, examined issues of job satisfaction, commitment, and longevity. The importance of salary diminished as years of experience are gained; however, there appears to be an increase in the importance of working benefits. Young teachers may be more influenced by salary, but veteran teachers pay particular attention to the issues of compensation benefits. Since retirement becomes more of a reality with age, retention of experienced teachers may be more difficult without an adequate benefits package. Catholic schools may not offer enough retirement benefits to provide their teachers with sufficient resources to cover acceptable living expenses.

A recent review of benefits offered in Catholic schools reveals 91% offer health insurance, 89% offer a retirement plan, 63% offer life insurance, 66% offer unemployment compensation, and 61% offer a dental plan (Cimino et al., 2000). It is important to note that the mere existence of a plan does not denote

its quality. Comparisons with public schools have found a comparable number of benefits, but the cash value of these benefits has not been determined. Retention of experienced teachers in Catholic schools may be directly related to the offering of an attractive benefits package (Schaub, 2000).

## STRATEGIES FOR RETENTION

Attrition rates for teachers in Catholic schools are higher than attrition rates for teachers in public schools. A lack of tenure for experienced teachers combined with lower salaries are cited as possible causes for higher attrition rates in Catholic schools (Bryk et al., 1993). Catholic schools must be attentive to the issue of low salaries especially when public schools are facing teacher shortages and offering higher salaries.

A study by Shen (1998) involving 4,761 teachers examined conditions that promote teacher retention. He found that teachers with less experience tend to leave, that salary is positively correlated with teacher retention, and that an appreciation of the intrinsic merits of the teaching profession promotes retention.

Murnane et al. (1991) support a retention strategy that includes reimbursement to teachers for courses taken that would enhance and promote good practice. Studies by Adams and Dial (1994) on the career paths of 2,327 teachers, indicates there is a relationship between graduate studies and teacher retention. Results demonstrate that teachers who pursue graduate studies remain with school districts longer than teachers who do not pursue graduate studies. Encouragement and support from the administration could prove vital in the implementation of this retention strategy.

Kestner (1994) noted that effective teacher induction programs and a collegial atmosphere are helpful to the retention of both new and experienced teachers. The involvement of the entire faculty promotes a spirit of school community, which can assist in eliminating feelings of isolation. Effective induction programs can also promote higher expectations, standards of quality, and greater potential for teacher retention.

Benson and Guerra (1985) and Ciriello (1987) found commitment and a sense of ministry are major motivations for teachers who choose to work in a Catholic school. Schuttloffel (2001) completed a study on 200 teachers in Catholic schools. Findings from her survey supported the importance of sharing the faith through the ministry of teaching.

A study by Radecki (1987) on 330 teachers in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, found merit-pay, career ladders, and advancement opportunities as factors that could increase teacher retention. Barrett-Jones (1993) supports the importance of salary and benefits as conditions that affect teacher retention in a study of 177 teachers in the Catholic schools of Indiana. The importance of the school environment, support from the administration, and issues of salary and benefits were listed as factors promoting teacher retention in a study on 339 Catholic schoolteachers by Squillini (2001).

The need to attract and retain qualified professionals will continue to place significant demands upon Catholic school administrators. Additionally, teach-

ers who are age 25 or younger are leaving positions at Catholic schools at rates that exceed attrition rates at public schools. A lack of new teachers who are retained can have negative consequences. Schools could find their faculty dominated by a core of experienced teachers and a number of inexperienced teachers who are not retained. The resulting imbalance of experienced and inexperienced teachers could result in instability or stagnation of the faculty (O'Keefe, 1999).

The importance of establishing effective hiring practices is reinforced by current conditions relating to teacher employment. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) estimates that over half of the teachers who will be teaching 10 years from now will be hired during the current decade.

A study conducted by Caruso (2002) compared the successful hiring practices of the Disney Company and their implications for Jesuit higher education. The author stressed the importance of identity and mission values in attracting the most successful employees. Catholic schools have both an identity and mission values that could be used to effectively seek the most qualified teaching candidates. Matching prospective teachers' qualifications with the identity and mission values of Catholic schools could significantly benefit school administrators during the hiring process.

Church documents related to Catholic education have also supported the importance of mission in the lives of Catholic school teachers. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (CCE, 1997) maintains that teaching in a Catholic school is a form of vocation or ministry that involves participation in the mission of the Catholic Church.

This sense of mission is further enhanced by the development of the school as a community. Church leaders have indicated that one of the basic goals of Catholic schools is to build a community involving the entire staff and students (Drahmann, 1985). The Second Vatican Council declared in *The Declaration on Christian Education* that the school should move from a role of educational institution to one of school community that promotes a spirit of liberty, charity, and the message of salvation (Abbott, 1996). Teachers seeking to practice their profession within a school community may find Catholic schools meet their expectations in an area that may promote a greater degree of job satisfaction.

The importance of mission and community to teachers in Catholic schools is confirmed through research conducted by Barrett-Jones (1993) and Squillini (1999, 2001). Their studies indicate that teachers are motivated to remain teaching in Catholic schools due to the existence of intrinsic motivators that include the mission and community conditions found in Catholic schools.

The creation of a Catholic teacher service corps has the potential to attract recent college graduates to teaching opportunities in Catholic schools. The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) was founded in 1993 at the University of Notre Dame. This program sends approximately 160 recent graduates to teach in Catholic schools each year. A majority of the ACE graduates continue to teach after completion of their program. The development of a Catholic teacher service corps as a means of attracting college graduates to teaching positions in Catholic schools could prove to be a successful teacher recruitment

option (Hunt, Joseph, & Nuzzi, 2002).

Research still indicates that concerns over low salaries and a lack of benefits are major obstacles to the retention of teachers in Catholic schools (Hunt et al., 2002). These areas must be addressed, especially when the pool of available, quality educational professionals is being absorbed by public schools that can afford to meet the extrinsic motivators that applicants are seeking.

Traviss (2001) reports that there is no national plan currently in place to assist a diocese with its teacher recruitment needs. Diocesan officers, like individual schools, suffer from the same problems that plague teacher recruitment efforts. There is a shortage of expertise, time, and money. Issues of better salaries and benefits, especially retirement benefits, are central to the retention of teachers in Catholic schools. Unless improvements in these areas take place, Catholic schools will continue to lose teachers to the neighboring public school systems.

Buetow (1988) explains that there should be opportunities for teachers as good as those found in businesses. Teachers in Catholic schools should have a career ladder that provides them with increasing responsibilities, including the ability to exercise innovation and experimentation in their professional development. He further states, "Very importantly, the Church as well as other institutions, must learn what keeps teachers happy and act upon it" (p. 267).

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) asked a simple question, "What do people want from their jobs?" (p. 107). It was a valid question in 1959 and is still relevant as strategies to promote greater teacher retention are explored. The authors explained that workers desired to be happy in their employment. Happiness includes both the intrinsic and extrinsic conditions of their position. Providing teachers with greater opportunities to be successful and happy in their profession could promote greater teacher retention.

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