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Factors at Religious Schools
that Affect Teacher Retention

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requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

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DEDICATION

To my precious family

Munira Lekovic Ezzeldine

Yusuf Omar Ezzeldine

Zayd Omar Ezzeldine

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

**Factors at Religious Schools
that Affect Teacher Retention**

by

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Private schools, most of which are religious, teach 11 percent of U.S. students, yet the costly teacher turnover rates are nearly twice as high as in public schools. Little research has been done about teacher turnover and its causes in private religious schools. Through an in-depth study of a sample of teachers in these schools, reasons are revealed why some plan to leave while others stay. The study focused on key elements that may be related to teachers' reasons for staying, including faith and perceptions of school climate. These elements of school culture are subtle and have implications for ways administrators can use limited resources to retain their best teachers.

This study established the “Inter-faith Council of Religious Schools (ICRS),” a group of religious school administrators who meet periodically to share problems and solutions common to religious schools. The ICRS served as a steering committee (“focus group”) for this research and consists of administrators from ten Orange County schools representing four faiths: Judaism, Catholicism, Episcopalian, and Islam. The sample of teachers was drawn from the teachers in these schools.

This study was conducted in two phases: First a survey of 183 teachers that uncovered basic data about attitudes and perceptions. The second phase was follow-up interviews of eight teachers that examined the participants’ motivations for working in religious schools.

The study found that these teachers are highly committed to teaching but less committed to teaching in faith-based schools. Contrary to some research, this study found retention rates in religious schools similar to public schools. Respondents who were planning to leave wanted more respect from administrators, a greater connection to the schools’ missions to develop meaning, and strong collegial relations.

The results of this study will be disseminated among the broader community of religious schools through national publications. Additionally, they will be disseminated through public media so it may benefit public schools interested in discovering the factors essential to teacher retention.

CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teacher turnover in private religious schools, which educate 11 percent of all school-aged children in the U.S., is relatively unstudied compared to turnover in public schools. Yet turnover rates in private schools nationally, of which 70 percent are religious, are almost twice as high as public schools (Whitener, 1997), especially in schools with fewer than 300 students (Ingersoll, 1995). Teacher turnover is known to be related to low student achievement. While most private school administrators perceive that high teacher turnover is simply a result of the lower salaries paid in private schools (Khaloui, 2002), some research suggests that, while less pay may be related to *turnover*, it may not be related to *retention* of teachers in private schools. Retention has to do with the attractive factors of a school rather than its deficits. The factors that motivate teachers to *remain* in schools are subsumed within the larger topic of school culture. These factors include positive interpersonal relationships within the school, active administrative support and teacher participation in decision-making (Ingersoll, 1999). Ingersoll's analysis of a national survey of over 62,000 public and private teachers identified several factors that could be classified under school culture. Some regional studies offer similar findings (Hammer, Rohr, and Carol, 1992).

While some general factors are available, less known are the deeper reasons that teachers stay in private schools and religious schools in particular. For

religious schools (Catholic and other religions), the teacher turnover rate is twice as high as the turnover rate for public schools (Ingersoll and Rossi, 1995), and nothing is known about the deeper motivations of teachers who choose to *stay*. Retaining good teachers is especially important to religious schools because, unlike many private schools, they are typically financially vulnerable. Unless administrators clearly understand the factors that motivate teachers to *stay* in private religious schools they will be unable to increase retention of teachers in this critical segment of the U.S. educational system.

However, offsetting their financial vulnerability, religious schools – separate from other private schools – have strengths that if better understood may improve teacher retention. Religious schools focus on a mission strongly associated with a particular faith. Teachers who are attracted to religious schools are often motivated by more than a job or position, but rather a spiritual connection that may be referred to as a “calling.” Religious school administrators with whom I am working report that they wish to increase teacher retention and knowing teachers’ true motivations may lead to a better understanding of the problem. However, because there is a scarcity of research on religious schools there is little guidance for religious school administrators; thus, a study on retention issues at private religious schools would certainly shed light on how they may be induced to stay.

While survey data alone does not provide sufficient detail about teacher retention, when combined with qualitative methods a more in-depth understanding about teacher retention emerges. As noted earlier, research on both public and private schools, point to a number of factors as the primary motivators for teachers to remain. These factors include positive interpersonal relationships within the school, active administrative support and teacher participation in decision-making and are subsumed within the larger umbrella of school culture – the collection of shared values and beliefs that guide individuals’ behavior. While research provides some clues to the central importance of school culture, we have very little that directly associates it to retention, particularly in religious schools. The research conducted within a sample of participating religious schools identifies a more detailed and rich description of school culture and how it relates to teacher retention. Because the factors that develop a school’s culture exist beneath the surface of day-to-day life, a study that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods is a better instrument for getting at the connection between school culture and retention.

To begin to understand this connection, we must first understand culture, which has been defined as the accumulation of beliefs and values, some of which are held consciously, others are held unconsciously, that guide the behavior of individuals in a group (Schein, 1989). School culture was examined in three main areas: climate, which is further broken into two parts, involvement of teachers in

decision-making, and a spiritual connection. Edgar Schein sees climate as “the feeling...that is conveyed in an organization by...the way in which members of the organization interact...” (Schein, pg 5, 1989). The interpersonal interactions of students, teachers, and parents are one part of climate and a careful analysis of teacher’ perceptions of these relationships may reveal the deeper reasons behind school climate’s influence on teachers that choose to stay.

The second part of climate is administrative support, which is similar to a positive climate among co-workers. Teachers report more satisfaction in a job where they feel supported by their administrators (Whitener, 1997). An example of administrative support may include openness to innovative ideas such as school projects that may require administrative approval. Another example may be administrators who support their teachers even-handedly in the event of a parent complaint. Administrators who take the extra effort to respect both the parent and the teacher will most likely create a climate that teachers find attractive.

The second subset of school culture that was examined is teachers’ engagement in decision-making in the school. Private schools, especially religious private schools are small and close communities in and of themselves. Schools that encourage their teachers to participate in decision-making are shown to have higher teacher retention (Ballou and Podgursky, 1998), perhaps because including teachers in decision-making develops a tighter bond between them and the school.

The third and much less known subset of school culture that may have a profoundly important effect on teacher retention is a spiritual connection that teachers may feel toward their schools. Schools that are ideologically and spiritually homogeneous may induce a strong spiritual connection with teachers. This connection may contribute to teachers' retention, especially when the connection is strong. One way of studying this connection is through a careful examination of the statements of teachers who chose to work in religious schools. By interviewing teachers, one may discover a perceived spiritual connection between the teachers and their schools.

The Questions

Among the questions this study seeks to answer is why teachers choose to remain in religious schools. Also, what are the elements of a religious school's culture that may lead to better teacher retention? Is it possible to ascertain whether teachers choose religious schools because of a calling or because of an attitude of "this is just a job?" Will understanding these deeper dimensions of school culture help increase teacher retention?

The Study

I located this study in a sample of private religious schools in Orange County, a developing area where a diverse array of religious schools are plentiful. I conducted a survey and then followed up with interviews that supported the survey data in order to determine teachers' primary motivations for remaining in their

respective schools. I developed a list of reasons why teachers stay in religious schools for the purposes of guiding administrators who wish to improve retention. The data may even be extended to offer new insights to the current strategies *public schools* use to increase retention. I will report these findings initially in private school literature - local and national - but then eventually extend it into mainstream media such as newspapers to increase an interest in this relatively unstudied area in education.

This study required a commitment from the participating schools. Participants were expected to share feelings and personal opinions regarding the reasons they chose to work in their particular schools and the reasons they give for choosing to stay. The study did not seek primarily to uncover negative sentiments about the schools or administrators, but rather the positive aspects of school culture that may motivate teachers to return year after year.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This project seeks to understand the problem of low rates of retention among teachers in private religious schools, which enroll a significant proportion (11 percent) of all students in the U.S. While extensive studies have focused on retaining teachers in public schools (and some cover private schools), no formal studies examine the reasons that some teachers keep working in religious schools despite the well-known problem of low pay.

The reasons teachers have for remaining may lie embedded within the organizational culture of religious schools and they may include the feeling of a spiritual connection between teachers and these schools, including, but not limited to, the school mission. A careful analysis of religious school culture, the accumulated beliefs and values of the organization that guide interactions among its members and create a sense of community, may help identify the factors that induce teachers to remain. The results from this study were organized into specific strategies that administrators may use to develop a school culture that improves the retention of teachers.

This chapter is intended to help the reader understand research on the topic of teacher attrition, retention and on the related topics of organizational culture and school management. I examine some of the key concepts in which this study is

grounded and indicate where this study is located in the larger body of work to demonstrate its unique contribution.

The discussion begins with attrition and retention. It then moves to organizational structure to identify common principles that may affect retention within schools. In the discussion of school culture, I provide some examples of how the principles of organizational culture are reflected in schools. I then identify three aspects of school culture: interpersonal relationships, also known as “school climate;” management styles that engender a greater sense of community; and spiritual beliefs and values. I will present the evidence that suggests these three aspects of school culture may induce teachers to stay. The degree to which individuals are a comfortable part of organization might be described as organizational fit. I then summarize the research on organizational fit, in particular how it relates to the retention of teachers in religious schools.

Attrition

Teacher attrition in public schools has been studied in an effort to identify the reasons almost 50 percent of teachers that enter the teaching field leave within the first 5 years (Fox, Certo, 1999; Natale, 1993; Hardy, 1999). These data include trends and predictors to attrition (MacDonald, 1999) as well as “...creative and strategic ways ... as a deterrent to attrition” (Easley, pg 52, 2000). According to this research on attrition, the most common reasons teachers decide to leave a

school are low salaries, student behavior, unsupportive parents and unsupportive administration.

According to The National Center for Education Statistics, 1.7 – 1.9 million teachers will be needed by 2008-2009 and an additional 568,000 are needed for private schools (Hussar, 1999). These newly hired teachers will be needed to replace those leaving the profession and to match an increase in enrollment.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1998), the number of teachers needed is 3.8 million; however, the BLS includes all pre-primary academic institutions and training facilities. This discrepancy can be explained further by the NCES's report of a much lower number in the teaching profession (3 million) as of 1996 than the BLS's (3.8 million). The data that were analyzed by the NCES came from the School and Staffing Survey (SASS, 1994) and made predictions to attrition nationally based on three scenarios. The first scenario assumed a constant ratio of teachers to students. According to 1993-94 SASS, private schools have a ratio of 5 fewer students per teacher. The second scenario assumed that the number of teachers remained the same, requiring newly hired teachers only for increased enrollment. The third scenario used projection data to assume a decline in teacher-student ratio. Each of these three scenarios was then used when analyzing the SASS data. An example of this is illustrated in the following table:

Table 1: Prediction for Number of Teachers Needed Based on three Scenarios

Scenario Number	SASS Continuation Rate from 1987-88 to 1988-89	SASS Continuation Rate from 1990-91 to 1991-92	Continuation Rate from 1993-94 to 1994-95
Scenario 1	2.1 million	1.9 million	2.4 million
Scenario 2	1.8. million	1.7 million	2.2 million
Scenario 3	2.3 million	2.2 million	2.7 million

The key question that must be asked, however, is who are these teachers that are leaving the profession and why? According to this NCES study, about half of the anticipated attrition between 1998-99 and 2008-9 (745,000 – 765,000) is due to retirement. For details on teachers who leave teaching, studies exist that list the reasons given. Among the most significant was a national study known as the School and Staffing Survey. According to the SASS, teachers in private and public schools cite low pay as the highest. The percentage of teachers citing low pay as a reason is significantly higher in private schools and overall, much higher than the second reason – administrative support. Listed among the reasons for attrition were the environment among the teachers, opportunities for professional advancement and student concerns and issues (Ingersoll, 1995). Recommendations generally focus on financial solutions since the highest reason given is low pay and opportunities for professional advancement also require more money to be funneled into schools.

Teacher Retention

While research on attrition identifies key factors and trends, there is much less available that approaches the problem from the perspective of teachers who *stay* (retention). Studies on teacher retention examine the reasons given by teachers who have chosen to stay in the profession beyond five years. Research on retention is primarily focused on how teachers feel about teaching (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000) or on habits of “successful” school administrators (Blase & Blase, 2001). This research suggests that the solutions to low rates of retention lie in two main areas – teacher attitudes and management. Farkas, Johnson and Foleno interviewed and conducted focus groups with teachers and discovered that teachers who chose to stay have a high level of satisfaction with teaching as a profession. They elaborate by demonstrating how this feeling of success came from positive support gained by the school community including colleagues and administration. Most notable is their finding that factors other than salaries actually attracted people. These factors included interactions and a sense of community among colleagues.

Research, done by Blase & Blasé, attributes high retention to administrators’ support of and their ability to nurture a healthy culture within the school (2001). They add to previous research on job satisfaction, but specifically within the category of administrative support. The categories include “shared governance” and “trusting the experts – teachers.” They provide guidelines for

administrators that enable them to create effective environments starting from the management. While this research represents the reasons teachers stay in public schools, it neglects any difference between public school and religious school environments. Data are available that indicate that teachers who prefer to work in private schools do so because of a heightened sense of community and connection to the school culture (Powell, 1990). This motivation is normally attributed to the smaller sizes of private schools.

What we need to understand are the deeper sentiments of teachers who stay in religious schools. This knowledge will enable religious school administrators to truly understand school culture and more importantly its connection to retention. Suggestions on retention of religious school teachers are mostly anecdotal or advocacy rather than research based (CAIS, 2001) and includes articles on leadership styles of school leaders who found success in isolated schools. Many organizations have formed to support private schools including the National Association of Independent Schools, the California Association of Independent Schools, and the California Association of Private School Organizations, (as well as similar chapters in many states).

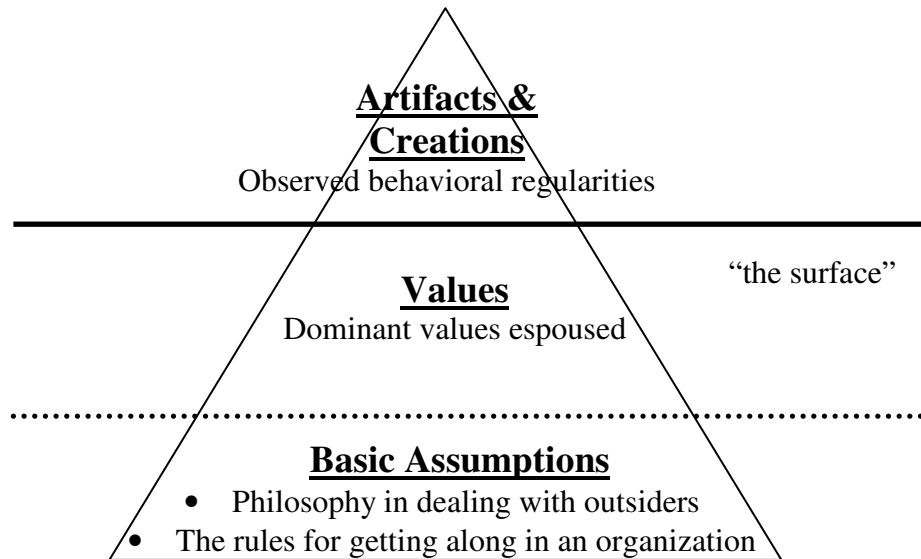
Although religious schools are usually a part of these organizations, some advocacy groups have formed for specific religious schools such as The American Association of Christian Schools. These advocacy organizations conduct research on the problems faced by the schools that are a part of the association (Sutton and

Watson, 1995). For example, they have reported that the somewhat overbearing involvement of the clergy in school management has been a deterrent to retention.

Organizational Culture

Before looking at the connection between retention and school culture, we must understand the overall culture of organizations. What exactly is culture? Among the most significant observations of organizational culture, made by MIT's Edgar Schein, is the nebulous nature of what culture, in particular organizational culture, is. "I have also had colleagues tell me pointedly that they do *not* use the concept of culture in their work, but when I ask them what it is they do *not* use, they cannot define 'it' clearly" (Schein, p.5, 1995). As noted earlier, culture is the accumulated beliefs and values of the organization that guide interactions among its members and create a sense of community, but some aspects are more visible than others. The following figure adapted from Schein (1995) illustrates the levels of culture that lie beneath the surface:

Figure 1: A Portrait of Culture



These levels include observed behavioral regularities such as verbal and body language, dominant values espoused such as “team effort,” the philosophy in dealing with outsiders, and the rules for getting along in an organization.

This diagram illustrates how most of organizational culture is beneath the surface of day-to-day interactions, making it harder to discern, however there are some useful descriptors of what organizational culture is. The most notable are the “*observed behavioral regularities* when people interact, such as the language used and the rituals around deference and demeanor (Goffman, 1959, 1967; Van Maanen, 1979b). When individuals within organizations interact, including the use of slang and clichés, the culture becomes apparent. For example, in some

organizations, members refer to each other by first name, or even nicknames, while others have a more formal standard of addressing one another. This level of formality can even be observed in non-verbal cues such as touching, hugging, and posture. This aspect of the culture of an organization enables one to understand the sense of community that exists with regard to an attachment to the organization and its individuals. Individuals will fit better in an organization if the behavioral norms closely match those preferred by the individual. Every culture can be identified by expressions in the form of verbal or body language, which become the norm, thus illustrating one artifact or observable element of organizational culture.

Below the surface of behavioral norms, reflected by an organization's product or service, are "the *dominant values espoused* by an organization" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). These values must be taken into consideration when one defines the culture of an organization. Such values are often reflected in an organization's mission and vision. This may be the explicit ideals which are different from the actual practices. For example, an organization may have a mission associated with high quality over affordability. What is produced and the vision of that product is critical to the description of an organization as well as the culture of its members. The organization's values also reflect an individual's own personal values that may add a spiritual connection between the individual and the organization, which will be explored later.

Even further beneath the surface or day-to-day interactions is a third principle of organizational culture known as “the *philosophy* that guides an organization’s policy toward employees and/or customers” (Ouchi, 1981; Pascale and Athos, 1981). Expressions like “the customer is always right” and “individual success through teamwork” indicate a culture within an organization. While behaviors can be observed, and values may be analyzed, one must combine these data to arrive at a general philosophy from which behaviors and values are derived. Such a philosophy must go beyond slogans and actually be manifested in the way members of an organization interact, even in the absence of postings or policies.

A final layer to be added to the definition of organizational culture is “the *rules* of the game for getting along in the organization, “the ropes” that a newcomer must learn in order to become an accepted member (Schein, 1968, 1978; Van Maanen, 1976, 1979b; Ritti and Funkhouser, 1982). This principle is far beneath the surface because it is composed of the un-written rules in an organization, for example, the way feedback is “supposed” to be voiced. In some organizations, while suggestions may be welcome and anonymous, the best placement of feedback is not the suggestion box. These unwritten and unspoken rules are critical for fitting into an organization. The first years in any organization are critical because it is within this time that a new member of the organization learns the culture and more importantly whether or not there is a match or “fit.” Much of this accumulation lies beneath the surface of day-to-day life in an organization and may

even become invisible to its long-time members. One goal of this study is to make these tacit assumptions manifest.

School Culture

When applied to school culture, we find that these same principles of organizational culture exist and they help us analyze teacher retention. In his study of school culture, Whitner relates school culture to retention. He claims that satisfaction with the school culture has been seen as the most influential factor in remaining with a school (Whitner, 1997). A positive school culture can have the most powerful influence on the retention of teachers.

The first of these principles of culture is the “behavioral norms” among the employees of a school – the teachers and staff. Teachers in some schools may behave in a very friendly and informal manner. Things are rarely misinterpreted and body language is very casual.

Teachers may even share inflections in their manner of speaking. While these behaviors may be due to regional or ethnic similarities, even among ethnically diverse schools, a common lexicon develops over many years. With regard to behaviors, teachers commonly interact with each other demonstrating esoteric behaviors possibly learned from students or a particular school “custom.”

The values espoused by a school contribute to school culture inasmuch as it is incorporated into the behaviors of individuals. With regard to student learning, environments that set up competition among teachers will have a different culture

than ones in which success is measured by the whole, thus encouraging cooperation, teamwork and sharing. While this value may or may not be evident in the school mission, it will create a culture among its teachers and staff. At the root of this attitude is the way in which a philosophy is worked into the daily practice of members. If the general philosophy is that “people work well together” or that “together, everyone achieves more” then certain values like teamwork and cooperation will become evident.

Finally, the school culture is developed by the norms that are created for the school, commonly referred to as “the ropes.” A teacher’s comfort with a school may be attributed to a teacher’s ability to learn or accept “the ropes” of a school. In a school this can include the way in which materials are requested or the way feedback is “supposed” to be voiced.

The details of school culture will help identify the proper “match” between a potential teacher and a school. The determination of the right match should begin with recruitment. Research on recruitment in public schools often suggests recruitment efforts are based on a shortage of teachers such as a critique of policies, teacher preparation, standards, teacher testing, the teaching pool, and alternate routes to certification (Fox and Certo, 1999). However, very little is suggested in terms of seeking a teacher that will have a good fit with to the school culture. Administrators considering an applicant for the likelihood to handle the responsibilities of teaching should also consider the likelihood of a teacher to

match the culture of a school. Administrators must also nurture the elements of the school's culture that are attributed to teacher retention.

Climate

As mentioned before, a critical aspect in the culture of a school is the way in which individuals in the school get along. When a teacher describes a connection to the school, this most often refers to interpersonal relationships. For the purposes of this study, interpersonal relationships will be referred to as "school climate." Although climate can be considered a subset of school culture, it deserves a specific focus because of the strong impact it has on the absence or presence of a sense of community. Schools that succeed despite adversities such as low-income demographics have identified a sense of community as a primary strength within the organization leading to its success (Hughes 1995). Within this same study, the sense of community is associated with high rates of teacher retention. A positive school climate is characterized by faculty teamwork and high staff morale. This addresses two key elements of relationships, the individual as well as the group. Hughes also identifies strong instructional leadership and a supportive principal as reasons for schools that succeed. One must be careful to realize the interconnectedness of these areas: high morale, faculty teamwork, and effective leadership.

An individual that is part of a group with high morale is confident and feels that he/she is among a group of successful teachers. This morale is the result of

other factors already discussed in the section on culture, but has a strong impact on the way members of a school interact. When a teacher feels positive, the result is a positive attitude toward others, providing an encouraging environment even for those who may have a low morale on a particular day.

A group dynamic is further emphasized through a sentiment of faculty teamwork that is interconnected with morale and ultimately a teachers desire to remain with a school. Teachers who find that they can share ideas with one another and thus participate in the success of everyone will demonstrate a high level of commitment through satisfaction with the school climate.

Deeper still within the interpersonal relationships are the interactions with school leadership. By having a supportive administration and an effective leadership, teachers will develop high morale through a feeling of success and achievement. Additionally, the climate of the school becomes one in which administration and leadership is perceived as a component of faculty teamwork. By combining these three principles of climate, one can see how interconnected and critical interpersonal relationships are to the retention of teachers.

Management Style

The interaction between administration and teachers is part of the more specific issue of management style. As already emphasized, the leadership and administrative support has already been connected to retention of teachers. What is not evident is the specific type of management style that teachers prefer or even the

different styles utilized by religious school administrators. This study uses existing research on management style as a backdrop with which to identify its effect on the overall picture of employee satisfaction, and ultimately a connection to retention.

As early as the late 19th century, discoveries about when a machine works best led to what would eventually be a philosophy about workers as “...extensions of their machines” (Wilms, 1996). The vision of employees was one of “machines” that accomplish “jobs” and needed to be managed in a manner that produced maximal output. All of this stemmed from America’s industrial culture and had reverberations that are still evidenced today. Even in schools, systems are set up where teachers are seen as workers that must accomplish tasks and to ensure that every teacher was working at their optimal ability, managers must remain aloof from the staff so as to maintain a level of authority and prevent laziness or a depreciation of “output.”

This theory of management was further explored by Douglas McGregor in 1960. He would call this style “Theory X.” According to Theory X, people are by nature lazy and must be motivated to work through traditional forms of management, rewards, or punishments. Although McGregor advocated a different form of management, this style of management is still very much evident in schools today. An example of this would be a religious school where a religious official has “supreme rule” and is above several other levels of authority through which commands are passed along and workers are evaluated based on their compliance.

Even in the paradigm of a service organization like schools, the “output” can be clarified in the form of test scores, parent satisfaction, formal evaluations, and discipline problems.

McGregor preferred a management style that he based on what he called “Theory Y.” He proposed management styles that emphasized cooperation and individual growth, based on the theory that people had an intrinsic desire to work and find success through intrinsic rewards. As a result, teachers would manage themselves and not require external systems of control. In schools, this can be demonstrated through departments that collaborate and educational leaders that connect with teachers in an effort to extract a teacher’s talent. While structures may still exist, the interactions and decision making is not top-down and more inclusive with teacher independence built in.

The purpose of this study is not to discern which management style is preferred, but rather the how management style affects the culture of a school and affects the retention of teachers. On balance the dominant research suggests participative management (Maslow A. H., 1959), but in a religious school, this may be very different such as the possible existence of a benevolent religious school leader that manages a school with a high rate of teacher retention.

Spiritual Cohesiveness – Religious Callings

One final approach to this study takes is to explore the uncharted realm of a spiritual connection between a teacher and the school. Some anecdotal evidence

suggests teachers remain in religious schools out of a connection to the faith or ethics represented by the school. One such story comes from Christine Radel (2003) who writes about spirituality in the work environment. She cites many examples including one in which she notes an individual that makes it a common practice to pray for her colleagues. She claims an increased connection between her and her colleagues and a great sense of community. Pamela Cook offers a strategy for “Changing your boss by changing the way you think.” In an occasion where she found herself frustrated by her boss she decided to see “God’s likeness” in him. This eventually changed attitudes and enabled her to draw a spiritual connection to her job. At many religious schools, teachers accept and remain in positions that pay significantly less than public and private school counterparts and cite a deep commitment to the faith or ideology of the school. While school culture has the most direct impact on a teacher’s decision to remain with a school, the spiritual cohesiveness between a teacher and a school is a significant factor in the attraction of a teacher to a school, also referred to as a calling (Cook, 2003).

Organizational Fit

A connection to a school is best summarized as organizational fit. School culture including climate and management style is the reason teachers most often indicate as the motivation behind their decisions to remain in a school. This connection between culture and fit is illustrated through research on summer camps. Camp administrators concerned with generating a desirable camp culture

discussed critical elements of the culture such as signs and symbols, ritual and tradition, and habitual modes of communication. Applicants were then assessed based on their ability to learn or conform to these components to ensure a fit with the camp's mission (Jeffrey; Riggio, 2002). Similarly, school administrators may benefit from identifying the details of a school's culture and evaluating teacher applicants based on how the applicant fits with the organization.

Research on school principals has identified the difficulty of fitting into an organization. "They must discover how to fit into the existing work group at their school, while remaining distinct enough to contribute creatively to the growth and development of the school" (Morford, pg. 21, 2002). Principals from 10 new rural high schools and each began with preconceived ideas about their respective schools. After dealing with specific problem situations, they gained familiarity with their schools and communities. The items identified that related to fit included rural community culture and politics, insider advantages and disadvantages, and relationships with teachers and the superintendent. Just as principals struggle with fitting in, teachers may also experience similar challenges.

By approaching the problem of teacher shortages and failing schools via the perspective of teachers that choose to *stay*, school administrators may have critical details that will enable them to develop and nurture effective learning environments. These details may lie in the culture of a school, the way individuals

interact, and the overall fit of a teacher into the school culture to engender a sense of community or even spiritual connection to a school.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODS

Teacher turnover in private religious schools receives very little attention although studies show that the rate of turnover in these schools is about twice as high as the rate in public schools (Ingersoll, 1995). This study examines the problem from the perspective of teachers who choose to stay in religious schools. By assessing the motivations of teachers who choose to stay, it may be possible to understand why teachers leave (attrition) and what motivates them to stay (retention). Such data could guide administrators who are interested in retaining their staff toward new policies that may improve teacher retention. This study will also contribute to an understanding about the more general topic of teacher retention in religious schools about which very little is known. This chapter describes how I designed this study and the methods I used in carrying it out.

Research Questions

Research suggests that teachers choose to remain in schools because of certain characteristics within the environment at their schools. With regard to religious schools, there may be an added attraction produced by the spiritual nature of these schools. The key questions for this research are:

1. Why do teachers choose to stay in religious schools for a long period of time?

2. Are there discernable differences between teachers who have indicated their intent to stay at the schools for a long time in contrast with those that are planning to leave?
3. What school cultural factors appear to promote the retention of teachers? I will probe for responses to the impact of:
 - Relations with colleagues
 - Feelings about management style
 - A strong spiritual connection to the school and or the mission of the school
 - Fitting into the culture of the school.

Design

The Universe of Religious Schools in Orange County

Orange County is home to over 300 private religious schools of various faiths and affiliations. The scope of this study is K-12 schools of the following faiths:

Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Episcopalian. These four faith affiliations comprise approximately one-third of the K-12 religious schools in Orange. The universe of Jewish, Muslim, Catholic and Episcopalian schools with sizes and religious affiliations is indicated in Table 2:

Table 2: Number of Schools, Students and Teachers in Orange County based on Faith

Faith	Schools	Students	Teachers
Jewish	3	760	79
Muslim	4	640	62
Catholic	45	19184	962
Episcopalian	5	2515	175
Total	59	23099	1278

Sample Selection

In this study, seeking the factors teachers attribute to staying in a school, I included all the teachers from a sampling of 10 schools that vary in size and faith. My first step in selecting the sample of schools was to look up the list of California Association of Independent Schools in Orange County. There I found only seven schools, of which only five were religious schools. After careful examination, I noticed that three were Episcopalian, one was Jewish, one was Catholic School and none were Evangelical Christian schools.

To increase the size and variability of the sample, I decided to try to identify additional schools that were not accredited. I called the high schools on that list and asked them which religious schools they considered feeders for their school. They directed me to an additional Episcopalian school, one Catholic school, and a Jewish school that were not accredited.

To select Muslim Schools for the sample, I contacted the only two Muslim schools that were available to participate¹. Since both of these schools were small and relatively new, I decided to include a third Muslim School that is located in Pasadena because it was more established and the only Muslim School in Southern California that is accredited by CAIS.

In total I acquired a sample of ten schools that included five accredited school – two Episcopalian, one Jewish, one Catholic and one Muslims – and five non-accredited schools, one Episcopalian, one Jewish, two Muslim, and one Catholic. The sample included the universe of Muslim Schools and Jewish Schools. Table 3 is a list of the schools that were selected for this study.

¹Because I worked at a Muslim school, I could not use the additional Muslim School that existed in Orange County.

Table 3: Sample of Participating Schools based on Size and Faith

Faith	Small (n<300 students)	Medium (n=300-500)	Large (n>500)
Catholic	Mary Magdalene	St. Mary	
Jewish	Shalom		
	Jewish Academy		
Muslim	The Straight Path		
	Medina School		
	Al-Salam		
Episcopalian	St. Luke's		St. Peter's
			St. Matthew's

Methods

Gaining Access – Creating Value and Building Trust

For the purposes of this study and for the greater purpose of bringing together experts from different communities, I established a group of school administrators from the sample of ten schools as an “Inter-faith Council of Religious Schools” (ICRS), which acts as the client for this study. I gained access to these schools through a partnership endorsement from the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) as well as the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Nevertheless, there were some obstacles I had to overcome. For

instance administrators hesitated in fear that I may reveal sensitive information about their schools. Teachers may have been reluctant to open up and share their true motivations. One of the chief means I used to overcome such resistance was to engage members of the ICRS in the research planning as clients. They worked with me to establish the goals of what they hoped to gain, and participated in developing a research plan including questions for the questionnaire and the interview protocol. We discussed confidentiality of data so that nobody was inadvertently hurt. We also established clear and regular methods for feedback. Once I gained access, I began the research, which consisted of two phases: the survey and interviews. In this section I will describe each of these steps in more detail.

1. Survey

The first phase was to conduct a survey of teachers in the sample of 10 participating schools (2 Catholic, 2 Jewish, 3 Episcopalian, and 3 Muslim schools in Orange County). The survey was based on data from a questionnaire that I drafted with cooperation from members of the ICRS. I pilot tested the questionnaire with a small sample of teachers who were not included in the actual survey. The pilot test revealed revisions that needed to be made before the questionnaire was finalized. Once the questionnaire was revised and ready for distribution, I conducted the survey among all the teachers within the 10 schools that were selected for the study. I administered the questionnaire online for the

sake of convenience. I assigned a unique ID code so I could follow up with the non-respondents to insure a high completion rate. The importance of a high completion rate was emphasized with the participating administrators upon the start of the survey process. The questionnaire includes a question as to whether or not teachers are willing to be interviewed. Once the initial survey and the follow-up were complete, and the sample for follow-up interviews was selected, all identifying information was destroyed.

Data from the survey were arranged into frequency tables similar to the examples I've given in tables 4 and 5 for descriptive purposes as well as to identify patterns among schools from different faiths that will guide further qualitative research to answer the research questions.

Table 4: Satisfaction with Management Style
 EXAMPLE, NOT ACTUAL DATA

I am satisfied with my school management	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	40	18%
Agree	156	68%
Don't know	24	11%
Disagree	6	1%
Disagree Strongly	2	1%

Table 5: Percent Satisfaction with Management Style Within each School by Faith
 EXAMPLE, NOT ACTUAL DATA

Satisfaction w/management style by faith	Catholic (N=300)	Episcopalian (N=250)	Jewish (N=79)	Muslim (N=62)
Agree	17%	16%	18%	20%
Disagree	67%	95%	64%	70%
Don't know	16%	4%	82%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Other tables were generated to identify trends among other school factors such as climate, spiritual connections, etc. and how the results correspond to demographics such as faith, size and experience in the school. These data point in directions requiring further investigation. In total, 8 individuals were selected for a more in-depth interview. The interviewees varied in religious affiliation, gender and experience.

2. Interviews with Teachers

The last phase of the study was the interviews of eight teachers. With guidance from the ICRS, I developed an interview protocol that I then pilot tested. Once modifications were made, I then conducted interviews with the eight teachers. The transcripts from these interviews were analyzed using coding techniques that enabled me to reveal commonalities among the teachers and identify important themes in the data. I looked for any evidence that suggested ways that respondents'

faiths appeared to create special connections to the schools and how these connections induced teachers to stay. For example, although the references to scripture may be from different books, the essential guidance may be the same. While one teacher may boast about the school leader being more of a servant leader like Jesus Christ, another teacher at a different school may cite a similarity between his or her school leader and the Prophet Muhammad's leadership style. I conducted this type of analysis because it relied on my own perceptions of these figures or even familiarity with the different scriptures. I needed to be certain that I did not allow my own interpretations to bias my analysis. This was to be prevented by insuring that the ICRS was involved in each step of the research as findings developed. The presence and close involvement of the ICRS help to validate my findings.

Plan for Feedback to Clients

From the outset, I was working with the ICRS to provide members with useful information they have requested and findings that emerge from the study. As a first step, I prepared a summary of the findings for each school administrator that provided useful information. The analysis provides data for each school arrayed against aggregate data for all schools, broken down by faith. All of this is part of my final report of the entire study and its findings. It includes a complete description of the study and its methods, conclusions and implications for action.

Plan for Public Engagement

This final report will be made available to administrators beyond the immediate clients. Articles and reports can be disseminated through private school periodicals. It may even be presented to public school media in hopes of applying the implications toward similar efforts being researched in public schools.

Currently there is very little attention paid to the issues of private schools. Most of what is available is anecdotal or advocacy, which provides little in terms of large-scale development in the field. As more and more private schools emerge, many of which are religious, the burden carried by them to educate America's children deserves more attention. Specifically an area like staff retention is critical to both public and private schools.

The first step will be to work with the schools that make up the ICRS to help them bring about the changes they see warranted by the research, specifically in terms of how to enhance school culture to encourage better retention. Eventually the ICRS will grow to include more schools and even broader research in this area as well as similar issues affecting religious schools.

The work of the ICRS will eventually disseminate to the entire religious school community through websites, newsletters, and articles. The goal of this will be to bring these issues to the state and ultimately the national level, where it can then be applied more generally to all types of schools. Private religious schools have been a source for public schools to gain valuable ideas such as curriculum

development and management. This research is just one step in the direction of offering more to the global school community; an area that has gained much of the nation's attention – teacher attrition.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Teacher turnover poses a high cost that threatens any educational program, especially small, private, religious schools. I reasoned that if it were possible to understand the conditions that induce good teachers to stay at their schools, the costs of turnover could be reduced and resources shifted to more productive uses. Furthermore, teachers who elect to stay at their schools are probably more satisfied than those who want to leave and are likely to do a better job of teaching. It may be that teacher satisfaction is in some way connected to other aspects of schools' climate unique to religious schools. This study seeks to understand the motivations of teachers who choose to remain teaching in private religious schools to help these schools replicate these conditions for other teachers who might otherwise leave.

As noted previously, the rate of teacher turnover in private schools, 70 percent of which are religious, is twice that of public schools. While teachers have indicated reasons for leaving such as low pay or a lack of administrative support, little has been done to provide data on the motivations of teachers who choose to remain in their schools.

In the course of this study, I surveyed more than 300 teachers from 10 different religious schools (Jewish, Catholic, Episcopalian and Muslim) about their beliefs and attitudes about teaching. Next, I interviewed eight teachers from these

schools to understand the patterns indicated by the survey data more fully. The study was organized around the following research questions.

1. Why do teachers choose to stay in religious schools for a long period of time?
2. Are there discernable differences between teachers who have indicated their intent to stay at their schools for a long time in contrast with those who are planning to leave?
3. What aspects of schools' climates appear to promote teacher retention?

Description of the Sample:

Schools

I selected 10 schools to form an organization I named the "Interfaith Council for Religious Schools" (ICRS). The function of this council is to provide support to religious schools as they continue to improve their educational quality. There is an expressed desire among the participating administrators to seek help, and to provide assistance to one-another, to overcome problems that are specific to religious schools. As a first step we decided to try to understand the motivations of teachers who seem to find a good "fit" with their schools and teach for many years. The initial task of the council is to serve as a steering committee for this project and benefit from data as they emerge.

Nine of the ten schools that make up the council are located in Orange County, California. The tenth school is located in Pasadena and it was selected to round out the sample of well-established Muslim schools. Most of the schools

maintain a respected status in Orange County and maintain some form of accreditation such as that given by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). These two bodies are the recognized accrediting organizations within the private school world.

Two hundred eighty three (283) teachers were included in the sample and invited to participate in the survey and (n=183) responded yielding a response rate of nearly two-thirds (65) percent.² Figure 2 displays the sample of schools with some selected characteristics.

² One school was dropped from the sample because its overall response rate failed to reach the cut-off rate of 50 percent.

Figure 2: School Sample

Name of School	Religious Affiliation	Years Open	Grade Levels	Accreditation(s)	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Response Rate in Percents
Jewish Academy	Jewish	8	7-12	WASC Blue Ribbon	200	34	50 (n=17)
Shalom	Jewish	18	PS - 6	CAIS	125	18	66 (n=12)
St. Matthew's	Episcopalian	25	PS-12	WASC CAIS	1200	141	56 (n=79)
St. Luke's	Episcopalian	13	PS-8		135	11	72 (n=8)
Mary Magdalene	Catholic	42	9-12	CAIS WASC	235	24	58 (n=14)
St. Mary	Catholic	12	PS-5	WASC	325	19	84 (n=16)
The Straight Path	Muslim	20	PS-8	CAIS WASC Blue Ribbon	180	22	54 (n=12)
Al-Salam	Muslim	2	7-12		36	10	60 (n=6)
Medina School	Muslim	4	PS-3		65	7	100 (n=7)
Total						283	64 (n=183)

I wanted to see if there was a correlation between the religion of the school and the likelihood for those teachers to respond. To do this, I ran a Chi-square analysis and yielded the following results:

Chi-square statistic=2.84401509

Chi-square with Df = 1 @ 95%

CI critical value (1-tailed) =7.8147247.

Since the chi-square statistic is less than the critical value, we cannot reject the hypothesis that the variables are independent, which means that there is no correlation between the religion of the school and the likelihood of responses

Teachers

Survey respondents were asked to answer several questions about their own backgrounds. The most pertinent demographic data across the sample such as faith, age, years in the teaching profession, salary, and faith of the school are detailed below in the following series of tables.

Table 6: Distribution of Teachers by Faith

Faith	Catholic	Protes- tant	Other Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Episco- palian	Other*
Percent of respondents	21 (n=35)	18 (n=30)	17 (n=29)	12 (n=21)	12 (n=21)	9 (n=16)	14 (n=24)

* = Including agnostic or atheist

According to Table 6, respondents are distributed across many faiths. Catholics represented the largest number of respondents (21 percent), while Episcopalians were nine percent of the sample.

Table 7: Distribution of Teachers by Age

Age	<30	30-40	41-50	>50
Percent of respondents	14 (n=24)	26 (n=44)	31 (n=53)	29 (n=50)

As Table 7 shows, the sample of teachers is relatively mature. Sixty percent report being over 41 years of age. Nearly a third report being between 41 and 50 years of age, while 29 percent report being over 50 years of age.

Table 8: Distribution of Teachers by Years in Teaching

Years in teaching	0-5	6-10	11-15	>15
Percent of respondents	29 (n=50)	25 (n=43)	12 (n=21)	33 (n=57)

Once again there is a fairly even distribution of respondents based on their teaching experience. Less than a third (29 percent) report having taught for five years or less, two-thirds report having taught for six years or more, and a full third report having taught for more than 15 years.

Table 9: Distribution of Teachers by Years with School

Years with this school	<1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	10 years or more
Percent of respondents	18 (n=30)	14 (n=24)	15 (n=25)	15 (n=25)	24 (n=41)	15 (n=26)

Table 9 shows a fairly even distribution of teachers across years of service. More than half of the respondents have at least 3 years with their school (54 percent) while nearly a quarter (24 percent) has taught at their schools from 5-10 years and 15 percent have taught for more than 10 years.

Table 10: Distribution of Teachers by Salary

Salary	<35K	35K – <45K	45K – <55K	55K-<65K	65K +
percent of respondents	35 (n=59)	26 (n=44)	15 (n=25)	17 (n=29)	8 (n=14)

Table 10 shows that teachers in religious schools are not highly paid. More than a third of all teachers report earning less than \$35,000 annually, and an added quarter (26 percent) report earning between \$35,000 and \$45,000. Just a quarter (25 percent) earn more than \$55,000. It should also be recalled from data shown earlier in table 4, that nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the respondents report working at their schools for less than 5 years. ³

³ While I was able to achieve a 65 percent response rate, which is considered to be satisfactory among most survey researchers, I wanted to find out more about the non-respondents. Specifically to determine weather or not they were significantly different on some key variables than those who responded. I conducted an e-mail survey of about one-third (30 percent) of the non-respondents and found there to be very little difference on some of the key variables, leading me to believe that any non-response bias is probably minimal.

Table A: Results from the Non-Respondents

Non-Respondents by School	Percent Satisfied	Percent planning to stay
Shalom (n=1)	100 (n=1)	100 (n=1)
Jewish Academy (n=3)	33 (n=1)	33 (n=1)
St. Matthew's (n=23)	78 (n=18)	57 (n=13)
The Straight Path (n=3)	67 (n=2)	67 (n=2)
Total (n=30)	65 (n=22)	50 (n=17)

Table A indicates a fair distribution of teachers who for various reasons did not participate in the original questionnaire, most likely as a result of time constraints. It is clear from these data that the respondents who did not participate are fairly

Attitudes About Teaching

Participants were asked a series of questions aimed at understanding their attitudes about teaching and teaching as a profession. The following table indicates how respondents described their work, particularly teaching in faith-based schools. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Data were collected using a Likert scale: 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Don't Know, 4= Disagree, 5=Disagree Strongly.

Table 11: How well do These Attitudes about Teaching Describe You?

Attitudes	Percent Agree or Agree Strongly	Percent Disagree or Disagree Strongly
Teaching is work that I love to do.	99 (n=170)	<1 (n=1)
I believe I have a "calling" toward being a teacher.	87 (n=149)	6 (n=10)
Teaching is my life-long choice.	86 (n=158)	9 (n=15)
I am committed to teaching in a faith-based school.	65 (n=112)	21 (n=36)

According to the data in Table 11, nearly all of the respondents (99 percent) report having a positive attitude about teaching as a profession. Also the vast majority reported having a “calling” to teaching as a profession (87 percent) or teaching as a life-long choice (86 percent). Amira Osama, a teacher that shares the same faith as her school states:

consistent with those that did participate. There is not an unusually large percentage of non-respondents that are either satisfied or dissatisfied.

The high points are definitely the children. To tell you the truth everyday when I want to go [despite] all the things that are going on, it's the kids that keep me there. Seeing them and knowing that I'm making a difference, at least in English, I mean not in other subjects, but at least in English I know that they have benefited. And just to see their response and how much they develop, especially throughout their writing, to me is especially a high point...In general, something that I love is that all the kids have the potential in them to do better and I think that's the way kids are – they all have the potential...one of my students that is usually not top mark got the highest grade...that shows me that no matter what child you are, what age group – you can learn.

Also notable is the fact that nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the respondents indicated a commitment to teaching in a religious school. Mary Angus, who does not share the same faith as that of her school did state that “If it hadn't been religious...I probably wouldn't have stayed...It has helped me to reconnect with my own religious upbringing. I wouldn't say belief system, but upbringing.”

However, it must be noted that while a love of teaching and teaching as a calling is dominant in teachers' minds, the data indicate that teaching in a faith-based school is a secondary concern, at least according to one third of the respondents. This may be best explained by Julie Guzman, who although she shares the same faith as her school, explains: “...it's not so much a calling to a Jewish day school...It's more a calling to teach... regardless of the faith.”

Next, I surveyed teachers about their attitudes about teaching at their particular schools. The questions were designed to tap their feelings about the degree to which they are satisfied, their pay, and whether or not they planned to stay on.

Table 12: How well do These Attitudes about Teaching in Your School Describe You?

Attitudes of Teachers	Percent Agree or Agree Strongly (n)	Percent Disagree or Disagree Strongly (n)
I feel valued at this school.	74 (n=127)	19 (n=33)
I am satisfied with my job.	84 (n=145)	14 (n=25)
I am teaching at this school because of my commitment to its faith.	56 (n=97)	40 (n=68)
I am teaching at this school because of my commitment to faith-based education.	59 (n=102)	35 (n=60)
I feel that I am paid fairly for the work I do at this school.	46 (n=79)	47 (n=82)
I would not leave this school even if there was an opportunity at another school of the same faith.	52 (n=90)	27 (n=47)
I would not leave this school even if I was given better pay at another non-religious school.	43 (n=75)	38 (n=65)

According to the data in Table 12, three-fourths (75 percent) of the respondents report being valued at their school, while an even larger number (84 percent) report a general level of satisfaction with their job. Though less strong, well over half (56 percent) of the respondents indicate a commitment to teaching at their school because of its faith and slightly more (59 percent) indicate a commitment to faith-based education. Less than half (46 percent) of the respondents report that they are paid fairly for the work they do at their school. Finally, as Table 12 indicates, when it comes to commitment, just over half of the respondents (52 percent) indicated a commitment to their particular school, even if offered a position at another school of the same faith. However, only 43 percent

would remain if offered a better paying job at a non-religious school. This is possibly best represented by the comments of one teacher, Bob District who, although representing a minority according to the data, indicated a frustration with the lack of connection to the faith of school:

“The two upper schools are no longer rich in Christian faith, but are pretending to be so, which is worse in a way. I am starting to think that it would be better now to be at a school that is openly secular, and then to infuse my faith in Christ into the climate as the credible alternative to the world's wisdom.”

Below the surface of these attitudes are the perceptions of teachers with regard to their school community. The next table indicates the responses of teachers with regard to their school community.

Table 13: How much do you Agree with These Statements About Your School Community?

Level of agreement	Percent Agree or Agree Strongly	Percent Disagree or Disagree Strongly
People generally keep to themselves.	22 (n=37)	74 (n=127)
Things are very formal	24 (n=42)	69 (n=119)
There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and administration.	68 (n=117)	28 (n=48)
There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and parents.	80 (n=136)	15 (n=25)
We feel like an extended family.	81 (n=139)	14 (n=24)
Everyone feels welcome.	85 (n=146)	11 (n=18)
Everyone knows everyone.	85 (n=133)	14 (n=23)
There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and students.	86 (n=165)	2 (n=3)
There is a spirit of teamwork among the teachers.	87 (n=150)	12 (n=21)

According to the data represented in Table 13, only about one-fifth (22 percent) of the respondents report that their school community is one in which people keep to themselves while slightly more (24 percent) report that their environment is very formal. Just more than two-thirds (68 percent) report a sense of teamwork between teachers and the administration, yet well over three-fourths (80 percent) indicate a sense of teamwork between teachers and parents. Reported even higher (81 percent) was the feeling of the school community as an extended

family. This is reinforced by even more respondents (85 percent) who describe their environment as one in which everyone knows everyone and feels welcome. Finally the highest ratings among the respondents were with regard to their feeling of teamwork between teachers and students (86 percent) and a feeling of teamwork among the teachers (87 percent). When asked what has the largest impact on school community, Amira Osama stated: “Oh definitely I think the principal and the school administration makes or breaks a school.”

Demographics by Retention

The next series of tables explore any patterns that exist when teacher demographics are measured against a teacher’s intention to remain with or leave the particular school. In each table, the first column shows the overall distribution of the respondents. The remaining columns indicate the distribution of respondents based on their intention to remain with the school or leave. “Stayers” are determined by an indication that they plan to remain with the school “as long as they are able” or “until they are eligible for retirement.” Teachers who responded to the same question by indicating that they “Will probably stay unless something better comes along” or they “Definitely plan to leave as soon as possible” were designated as “Leavers.” The intent of this distribution was to separate teachers that seemed strongly committed to remaining with their school from those who

were not.⁴ A Chi-square test showed the results to be significant ($p < .05$) meaning there was a 95 percent chance, or better, that the results were not produced by chance.

Table 14: Age Distribution of Participants (in percents) including Intent to Stay or Leave.

Age	Overall	Stayers	Leavers
Percent Under 30	15 (n=24)	50 (n=13)	25 (n=6)
Percent 30-40	26 (n=44)	48 (n=20)	20 (n=9)
Percent 41-50	31 (n=53)	79 (n=38)	13 (n=7)
Percent 51+	29 (n=50)	84 (n=40)	8 (n=3)

According to Table 14, over half (56 percent) of the participants in this study were over 40 years old and as the ages increase more respondents report an intention to remain with their school. In teachers under the age of 40, only one half report a plan to remain with their school, while over four-fifths (84 percent) of the teachers over the age of 50 reports planning to remain with their schools. And, teachers under age 40 may have a higher likelihood of leaving.

⁴ I also calculated scores for people that reported they were “undecided.” A visual inspection of the data revealed that the undecided was where to be expected, in between the stayers and leavers. So to simplify the visual presentation of the data, I did not include them in the tables.

Table 15 indicates the distribution of the participants based on the number of years they have been in the teaching profession including their plans to stay or leave. The results were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 15: Experience of Participants including Intent to Stay or Leave

Years in Teaching	Overall (n=183)	Stayers	Leavers
Percent 0-5 years	27 (n=50)	74 (n=36)	14 (n=7)
Percent 6-10 years	24 (n=42)	40 (n=16)	23 (n=10)
Percent 11-15	12 (n=22)	81 (n=15)	10 (n=2)
Percent > 15	31 (n=56)	81 (n=42)	12 (n=6)

According to the data represented in Table 15, three-fourths (74 percent) of the teachers who have been teaching for less than five years report a plan to stay with their school. Two-fifths (40 percent) of the respondents who have been in the teaching profession six – ten years report an intention to stay. The lowest rate of retention is in teachers who have been teaching between 6 and 10 years. This range is also the range in which the most teachers plan to leave. The data show a relationship between teachers' years of experience and their plans to stay - teachers with longer years of service have a higher likelihood of staying.

Table 16 indicates the distribution of teachers based on their salaries as well as how stayers and leavers are distributed based on their salary. The results are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 16: Distribution of Participating Teachers Based on Salaries and Intent to Stay.

Salary	Overall	Stayers	Leavers
Percent 35K and below	35 (n=59)	73 (n=43)	12 (n=7)
Percent 35-45	26 (n=44)	72 (n=34)	9 (n=4)
Percent Above 45K	40 (n=68)	59 (n=40)	21 (n=14)

According to these data, those who say they plan to leave are most likely those who earn the most. The reverse is true among those who plan to stay.

The next table indicates the distribution of teachers based on the faith of the participating schools. The results are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 17: School Faith Distribution of Participants Including Intent to Stay or Leave

Faith of the School	Overall	Stayers	Leavers
Percent Catholic	18 (n=30)	80 (n=24)	10 (n=3)
Percent Episcopalian	51 (n=87)	70 (n=61)	12 (n=10)
Percent Jewish	17 (n=29)	52 (n=15)	31 (n=9)
Percent Muslim	15 (n=25)	44 (n=17)	8 (n=3)

According to the data represented in table 17, nearly half of the participants in this study teach at an Episcopalian school. Catholic schools contain the largest percentage of teachers planning to remain with their schools and a percentage of leavers just slightly behind the teachers at Muslim schools. Although Jewish

schools show the highest percentage of leavers, Muslim schools represent the lowest number of stayers. Based on the data, teachers who teach at Catholic or Episcopalian schools may have a higher likelihood of staying than those at Jewish or Muslim Schools.

The next table displays the distribution of participating teachers based on their own faith.

Table 18: Individual Faith Distribution of Participants Including Intent to Stay or Leave.

What is your Faith?	Overall	Stayers	Leavers
Percent Catholic	21 (n=35)	74(n=26)	14 (n=4)
Percent Episcopalian	9 (n=16)	81 (n=13)	0 (n=0)
Percent Protestant	18 (n=30)	73 (n=22)	17 (n=5)
Percent Other Christian	17 (n=29)	72 (n=21)	7 (n=2)
Percent Jewish	12 (n=21)	67 (n=14)	24 (n=5)
Percent Muslim	12 (n=21)	67 (n=14)	10 (n=2)
Percent Other *	14 (n=24)	38 (n=9)	29 (n=7)

* = Including agnostic or atheist

According to the data represented in table 18 there is a fairly even distribution of faiths represented in the schools, with the largest percentage being of Catholics and the lowest being of Episcopalians. Episcopalians represent the

largest group of stayers, while Jews have a ratio of stayers to leavers that indicates they are the least committed to their schools. The results are significant ($p < .05$).

Differences Between Stayers and Leavers

The next table combines the data from tables 11, 12 and 13, and represents them as a table of means based on the responses of stayers and leavers. Each teacher was asked how much he or she agrees with each of these statements. Responses were scored on a Likert scale where a score of 1 means agree strongly and a score of 5 means disagree strongly. A score of 3 is indicative a choice that represents “don’t know.” A third column is included to indicate the difference between the mean responses of stayers and leavers. The significance of this difference is determined by running a t-test of means. An asterisk (*) indicates that the relationship is significant (at the $p < .05$ level). The expression “reject” indicates that the difference is not significant.

Table 19: How well do These Attitudes about Teaching Describe You?

Attitudes of Teachers	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Difference
Teaching is work that I love to do.	1.05	1.50	.45*
I believe I have a "calling" toward being a teacher.	1.37	2.17	.80*
Teaching is my life-long choice.	1.45	2.48	1.03*
I feel valued at this school.	1.79	2.88	1.09*
I am satisfied with my job.	1.49	3.00	1.11*
I am teaching at this school because of my commitment to its faith.	2.55	4.00	1.45*
I am teaching at this school because of my commitment to faith based education.	2.31	3.96	1.65*
I feel that I am paid fairly for the work I do at this school.	2.87	3.13	1.74
I am committed to teaching in a faith-based school.	1.88	3.63	1.75*
I would not leave this school even if there was an opportunity at another school of the same faith.	2.06	3.88	1.82*
I would not leave this school even if I was given better pay at another non-religious school.	2.40	4.50	2.10*

*= difference is significant (at the $p < .05$ level)

Based on these data the smallest difference between stayers and leavers is in the commitment to teaching as a profession and the attitude that seems to differentiate stayers from leavers the most is the commitment to the faith of the school. This sentiment is best captured by Laila Ameen, a homeroom teacher that shares the same faith as that of her school: “I can teach more about religion, that’s what I like to teach.” Although she is not the religious studies teacher, she still feels she is teaching her religion through daily interactions. Similarly, Francine Averros a homeroom teacher who shares the same faith as that of her school states:

Christian values. The Golden Rule. You know, one thing I’m very strong in my class is Do Unto Others as You Would Have Others Do Unto You. You know? And just being a Christian and treating other people the way you want to be treated. And I think that’s a very important thing at our school.

When the data are represented in a similar format, but with regard to perceptions of school community, an even deeper layer of understanding is revealed.

Table 20: How much do you Agree with These Statements About your School Community?

Level of Agreement	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Difference
Everyone knows everyone.	1.92	1.92	0
People generally keep to themselves.	3.96	3.36	.6*
Things are very formal	3.75	3.48	.27
There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and students.	1.40	1.96	.56*
We feel like an extended family.	1.76	2.48	.72*
Everyone feels welcome.	1.65	2.52	.87*
There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and parents.	1.85	2.76	.91*
There is a spirit of teamwork among the teachers.	1.67	2.68	1.01*
There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and administration.	2.10	3.24	1.14*

*= difference is significant (at the $p < .05$ level)

The data in Table 20 indicate an identical sentiment among stayers and leavers with regard to a sense of community (“Everyone knows everyone”). The largest difference between stayers and leavers is with regard to the spirit of teamwork between teachers and administration as was summarized by Amira Osama in the previous chapter. The details of what entails effective management will be explored in the next section.

Expectations Verses Perceptions

The next series of tables represents the data collected from respondents based on how well their individual expectations are matched to their perceptions about the school they work in. Each respondent was asked to respond to a two-part question using the same Likert scale described previously. The first part of the question presented a statement aimed at determining the respondent's expectations with regard to an aspect of their schools. The second part of the question probed for their perception as to how well the schools matched their expectation. The main purpose of the next series of tables is to explore more details behind the feelings about management, dimensions of a spiritual connection to the school, and the school climate, defined previously as the relationships and atmosphere in the organization.

Feelings About Management Style

Each of the following tables probes for expectations and perceptions about the school management. Each table presents the average response from stayers and leavers. However in order to demonstrate a trend, a third category has been added which represents the average response only of respondents who indicated they "definitely plan to leave as soon as possible." Such respondents have been labeled as "definite leavers."

Table 21: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Communication

Communication	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Clear communication is important in any school	1.02	1.05	1.00
This school has good mechanisms for open and clear communication	2.37	3.00	3.60

As table 21 indicates there is very little contrast (.025) amongst the three groups of teachers when it comes to expectations about clear communication. There is however a larger difference when it comes to perceptions from the three groups, with a much higher degree of disagreement among the definite leavers. Finally the difference between expectations and perceptions is the largest amongst the definite leavers. The value of open communication is best represented by the following quote from Laila Ameen wherein she states: “I feel that...we always communicate together...even if we don’t like something, we can talk clearly.”

Table 22: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Student Discipline Management

Student discipline management.	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
I value a school where behavioral expectations of students are clear and consistently enforced	1.07	1.07	1.00
At this school, behavioral expectations of students are clear and consistently enforced	2.22	3.04	4.00

According to Table 22 all three categories of respondents place high value on clear and consistent behavioral expectations for students. However their perceptions indicate a sharp contrast between stayers and leavers, and an especially large contrast when compared to definite leavers. Definite leavers have the largest difference (3.00) between expectations and perceptions. Anton Gerry, a new teacher to a school that held a different faith than his own commented on a lack of support he encountered when he complained about student behavior in his class:

...these kids will argue every point. Most schools, you walk in a room and say sit down and be quiet. The kids will do it...Well [at my school]...I would get, “well, you hadn’t started class yet”...I don’t find this elsewhere. This is an anomaly....and I was actually lectured on this [by the administration]. “Well this is our tradition - that we should question everything.” And I’m like, that’s fine, but when I tell you to sit down and be quiet, there’s no questioning on this!

Table 23: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Administrative Recognition

Recognition from Administration	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
It is important for teachers to be recognized by their administration for their achievements	1.17	1.39	1.00
This school recognizes its teachers for their achievements	2.13	2.74	3.40

According to Table 23, every group indicates a high expectation of administrative recognition and yet their perceptions show a clear contrast between stayers and definite leavers. Perceptions of the stayers are on average in agreement that there is recognition from the administration while definite stayers are on

average in disagreement. Overall the difference between expectations and perceptions is the largest among the definite leavers. Julie Guzman indicated just how important administrative recognition is:

I like what I do. [My principal] is very good at handing out a lot of compliments, and I like to hear nice things...it allows me to do what I want to do, which is teach. Anton Gerry stated “It is very fulfilling to work with the students at this school. It is the administration's lack of supervision and confidence of the teachers that has led to under appreciated teachers.

Table 24: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Ample Classroom Supplies

Ample Resources for the Classroom (materials and equipment)	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Teachers should have all the resources they need for their classroom	1.09	1.00	1.00
This school provides its teachers with the resources they need for the classroom	1.75	1.96	2.60

According to Table 24, all groups have a similar high expectation for having ample resources in their classrooms. Perceptions across the three groups are reasonably positive, with definite leavers showing the largest difference between their expectations and their perceptions. This observation is best described by Francine Averros as she states: “...the classrooms are well stocked. We have a lot of things available to us as teachers. We still do our own thing and buy, but there’s a lot in the classroom.”

Table 25: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Staff Development

Staff Development through in-service Programs.	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Schools should have regular staff development through in-service programs, workshops, etc	1.35	1.64	1.80
This school has regular staff development through in-service programs, workshops, etc	2.33	3.36	4.40

According to Table 25 all groups generally have an expectation that their school should provide regular staff development. However there is a large difference in perception with regard to whether or not their school provides such support. The definite leavers are nearly unanimous in strongly disagreeing with the fact that their school provides sufficient support through staff-development. Max Frank, who came to his current school from a public school, indicates just how much he appreciates the fact that their school "...pays for me to take workshops and develop my skills as a teacher in way that benefits me, my colleagues and ultimately my students and school."

Table 26: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Administrative Support

Support from Administration	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Teachers must feel supported by their administration	1.07	1.00	1.00
The administration at this school is supportive of its teachers	2.18	2.78	4.00

According to Table 26, every group indicates a high expectation for administrative support, with leavers strongly agreeing that teachers must feel supported by their administration. There is however a sharp contrast in the perceptions of stayers versus definite leavers. On average, definite leavers disagree that there is support from the administration. Definite leavers average a difference between their expectations and perceptions that is nearly three degrees less in agreement. One of the more positive sentiments was that of Laila Ameen when she simply stated “I feel the love over there from ...the administration and the people working there.”

Table 27: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Respect from leadership

Respect from Principal/School head	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Teachers should feel respected by their principal/school head	1.00	1.04	1.00
At this school, teachers feel respected by their principal/school head	2.01	2.52	3.80

Table 27 indicates that almost every respondent strongly agrees that teachers should feel respected by their leadership, however the definite leavers disagree that such respect exists at their school. The definite leavers also show the largest difference between what they expect and what they perceive with regards to respect from their administrative leadership. As Anton Gerry puts it administrators should always make the life of the teachers simpler.

I would say, [by] understanding how sacred my classroom is. Because that's one of the things I always hate as a teacher, is when somebody comes in and tries to tell me how to teach my class, and looks over my shoulder.

John Perry is more specific in indicating "I am given a lot of flexibility in my classroom..."

Table 28: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Evaluation Procedures

Procedures for Performance Evaluation (of teachers)	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Schools must provide clear procedures for performance evaluations	1.04	1.04	1.00
This school provides clear procedures for performance evaluations	2.43	3.13	3.80

According to Table 28, each group places a very high value on clear procedures for performance evaluations. There is an increasing level of disagreement across the groups when respondents are probed for their perceptions of clear procedures for evaluations. Definite leavers seem to disagree the most that

performance evaluations are clearly articulated. Definite leavers also show the greatest difference between their expectations and perceptions with regard to this aspect at their school. Mary Angus, a very satisfied teacher offers an example of how unclear procedures can cause frustration and disappointment:

...there was a self-evaluation that we all did...Well, the... principal didn't see the point. He didn't feel that it was valid, or that it served any purpose, other than for the teacher to see maybe his or her ways that he or she had improved...I agree with that. That's fine and good. But we were also told...that none of that would be used as criteria for hiring, or for re-hiring. And yet our letters that we received in the summer spoke volumes about that observation, and that evaluation, as though it was expected that, that was what that was about.

Spiritual Connection

The following series of tables displays responses to questions that probe for a spiritual connection to the school. Tables follow the same format as the tables from the previous section.

Table 29: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about School Mission/Vision

Mission and Vision	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Teachers should only work in schools that have a compatible mission and vision	1.42	2.05	1.20
This school has a mission and vision that is compatible to my teaching philosophy	1.55	1.95	2.40

According to Table 29, there are differences in the expectations of each group with regard to working in a school that has a compatible mission and vision

and definite leavers have the highest expectation. However the perceptions of the respondents follow a more normal pattern with stayers agreeing the strongest, leavers agreeing more than they expected, and definite leavers agreeing the least that school’s mission and vision is compatible. The differences between expectations and perceptions is minimal among the stayers and leavers (<.10), but the largest among the definite leavers (1.20). For some like Anton Gerry, this incompatibility was described as a lack of clarity:

One of the things that we’ve been looking at is having a unique value proposition. Every school has to have that to go forward...if you have a clear vision, then you can keep the clients...high points are when it seems like in certain meetings we’re working on a clear definition of our future trajectory. Low points are when I see muddling in the mix, and sort of a loss of identity or a refusal to clearly articulate the identity.

Table 30: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Spirituality

Spirituality	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
The school I work at should give me a sense of spiritual fulfillment	1.77	2.74	2.20
I feel a sense of spirituality by working at this school	1.83	3.00	3.20

According to Table 30 stayers report that they expect a sense of spirituality from their schools though leavers and definite leavers, report far lower expectations. As for perceptions of teachers about spirituality in their own schools, not surprising, stayers feel a sense of spirituality the most, while the leavers feel it

the least. The largest difference between expectations and perceptions is among the definite leavers.

One teacher, Amira Osama, clearly explained the way in which spirituality has an impact on a teacher’s happiness with her school: “There are lots of incidents where I will remind them of things and use [Scripture] and I’ll see their faces light up – that feels so wonderful.”

Table 31: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Meaningful Employment

Meaningful Employment	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
One’s job should give a person a sense of meaning	1.25	1.20	1.00
Working at this school gives its teachers a sense of meaning	1.45	3.80	3.80

According to Table 31 every group responded with similarly high expectations for a sense of meaning in their employment⁵. As for how they perceive their own schools, those who planned to stay reported a very positive perception while leavers and definite leavers both reported responses that were clearly on the negative side. The difference between expectations and perceptions is much larger among the definite leavers. This sentiment about finding meaning

⁵ As the reader can see from the survey questions, “meaning” is intended to tap respondents’ general feelings about their work as teachers. “Spirituality”, on the other hand, is a specific construct indicating a sense of obligation to one’s faith.

through an overall impact on the lives of children is best captured by Amira Osama when she states:

To tell you the truth everyday when I want to go despite all the things that are going on, it's the kids that keep me there. Seeing them and knowing that I'm making a difference...I know that they have benefited. And just to see their response and how much they developed...

Table 32: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Stayers (n=110)	Leavers (n=25)	Definite Leavers
Education should include some connection to a faith/religion	1.80	2.57	2.00
This school offers an education that is well connected to a particular faith/religion	1.59	2.00	2.60

According to table 32 the average expectation among all three groups is such that they agree there should be some religious affiliation at the school where they work. When it comes to perceptions, a trend of decreasing levels of agreement is evident. However it is interesting to note that among the stayers and leavers, perceptions are actually better than expectations. Only among the definite leavers is there a perception that is lower than their expectations. Anton Gerry explains this reality when he states: “The good thing I find is that when you have a strong central religious component that can be sort of used as a unifying technique for the school.” As he described a religious service that was lead by the older students he went on to say: “It was a really special defining moment for a school. You wouldn't get that at secular schools, necessarily”

School Climate

The next series of tables seeks to determine the impact collegial relations have on teachers' desires to remain with their schools. The tables are set up, as before, laying out the respondents in three groups – stayers, leavers, and definite leavers. All respondents were asked how much they agreed with a pair of statements. Their responses are measured on a Likert scale, 1 meaning agree strongly and 5 meaning disagree strongly. Under each group, the average response rating is included to evaluate a respondent's expectations and perceptions regarding their school.

Table 33: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about collegial expertise

Surrounded by great teachers	Stayers	Leavers	Definite Leavers
Schools should easily be able to maintain only the strongest teaching staff	1.41	1.41	2.20
This school is able to maintain a very strong teaching staff	2.04	2.91	4.40

According to table 33, both stayers and leavers hold the same high expectations for working among a strong teaching staff. Definite leavers have a much lower expectation. However when perceptions are compared, there is still a very large difference between what the definite leavers expect and what they perceive. Anton Gerry details how much he values the intellectual stimulation he gets from his colleagues:

It's ad hoc conversations in the hallway, in the lounge, in the classroom that's going to keep the person coming back. It's when they feel that they are working with colleagues that, you know, are like-minded and are intellectuals. And able to approach a problem and really care about kids.

Table 34: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about School Culture

Positive school culture	Stayers	Leavers	Definite Leavers
I value a school where the overall school culture is positive	1.07	1.05	1.00
The culture at this school is positive	1.56	2.26	3.60

According to Table 34, every group places a high expectation on working in a positive school culture. Perceptions however were significantly less amongst the definite leavers, who also showed the largest difference between their expectations and their perceptions. Amira Osama directed her frustration at a negative school climate toward the administration: "...they're not the best kids but at the same time...any of the problems that have gotten worse since September - it's the environment that creates that ...specifically the administration...not the kids..."

Table 35 Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Formal Mentors

Formal Mentors (specifically assigned)	Stayers	Leavers	Definite Leavers
It is important for new teachers to have formal mentors at the school they work at	1.29	1.13	1.20
This school has a good program that provides formal mentors for new teachers	2.68	3.70	4.00

According to Table 35 stayers reported the lowest expectations for having formal mentors, while leavers reported the highest expectations. As for perceptions however, the leavers and definite leavers on average do not perceive that the existence of formal mentors at their schools. Francine Averros considers herself a formal mentor and explains the benefit of being one: "...you're welcome to talk to me now as a friend and a teacher, and I'll listen." Anton Gerry also seems convinced of their influence when he says: "Lots of schools have done it. You take a senior faculty member or a junior faculty member, you stick them on the head cabinet, and they're in the meetings, and they get to air faculty grievances."

Table 36: Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions about Informal Mentors

Informal Mentors (no specific program)	Stayers	Leavers	Definite Leavers
It is important for new and veteran teachers to have informal mentors	1.50	1.14	1.40
This school has informal mentors that help new and veteran teachers	2.59	3.41	4.20

According to Table 36 the importance of informal mentors is similar amongst every group of respondent. However the perceptions of their being someone at the school, who can serve as a mentor, is very different across the groups. Among the definite leavers, the level of disagreement with regard to this aspect is one of the highest in the survey and the difference is also one of the

largest. Mary Angus explains the feeling she got as she received a compliment from one of the senior teachers in the school: “And she said to me, straight out, ‘I like you, Mary, and you have a lot to give here.’ And coming from her...that was great.” John Perry explains how good it was to be on the other end and serve as a type of informal mentor to other teachers: “I led the advisory committee for accreditations – we all worked together.”

We now turn to the final chapter that begins with a summary of these findings and the conclusions I draw from them. I then discuss the implications of these findings for action and the steps I plan to take.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION, AND PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT

Summary of Findings

Sample Characteristics

The purpose of this study is to assist religious schools in retaining their best teachers. To gather necessary data I conducted a survey of teachers in a sample of these schools and then interviewed a smaller number to answer some of the questions that emerged from the survey data. I was trying to identify factors that were related to teachers' predisposition to stay at their schools or to leave. After a careful analysis of the findings, the answers to the research questions become more apparent. In this chapter I summarize the findings and discuss their implications for practice. Finally I discuss ways I intend to use the study to affect practice and steps I plan to take to prepare the study's results for a broader public engagement.

The findings are based on data drawn from teachers from a variety of backgrounds and faiths. Schools in the sample were also varied in their ages, sizes, and faiths. Taken together these variations provide important contrasts in the data. For instance the percentage of respondents from different faiths is evenly distributed with a standard deviation of only four percent. The sample of teachers could be described as "mature" in that nearly two-thirds (60 percent) are over the

age of 40. Similarly, two-thirds (65 percent) of the teachers have been teaching for more than six years.

Characteristics of the Teachers and Schools

Teachers “Love” Teaching

To understand what is beneath teachers’ commitment to their schools, I analyzed the data about respondents’ attitudes about their profession. The findings are clear that the respondents are much more committed to teaching than one might expect. Ninety-nine (99) percent of the respondents reported that they “love teaching as a profession,” which suggests that even teachers who are planning to leave their schools are doing so despite their love of teaching.

Teachers are Committed to Faith-Based Education

While not as impressive, but still a substantial number, 59 percent of all respondents indicate a commitment to faith-based education. Slightly fewer (56 percent) report being committed to the actual faith of a school. This finding suggests that while a commitment to teaching as a profession is the nearly unanimous sentiment of all respondents, teaching in a faith-based school is important, but secondary. This was best described in the previous chapter by Julie Guzman when she says “...it’s not so much a calling to a [religious] school...It’s more a calling to teach... regardless of the faith.”

Religious Schools have Positive Climates

Eighty percent of all respondents reported feeling positive about almost every aspect of their school community and more than 80 percent reported positive feelings about their schools' climate. However, somewhat fewer (68 percent) report being satisfied with the level of teamwork between teachers and administrators. Still, more than two-thirds feel positively about their relationship with the administration.

Pay Versus Job Satisfaction and Sense of Value

While a popular view holds that low pay is a cause of turnover, results from my study show that pay alone appears to be unrelated to respondents' level of satisfaction. While perceptions about fair pay are nearly evenly divided, the majority of the respondents (84 percent) report feeling satisfied and nearly three-quarters (74 percent) report feeling valued at their schools. This finding indicates that while respondents are split with regard to whether or not their pay is fair, a significant number report being satisfied suggesting that retaining good teachers may not be such a challenge for most of these schools. However understanding the motivations of teachers that are satisfied and planning to stay may help administrators prevent their best teachers from becoming those who decide to leave.

Stayers and Leavers

According to the data collected from respondents, only 15 percent indicate a lack of commitment to their school with only 3.5 percent of the respondents indicating that they “definitely plan to leave as soon as possible.” Overall, this suggests that despite only half the teachers feel they are paid fairly; many more are satisfied and feel valued and only 3.5 percent of the respondents indicate a strong desire to leave. While we can be certain that the turnover rate overall at these schools may be more than 3.5 percent⁶, understanding the motivations of teachers that choose to stay and comparing them to those that plan to leave may help administrators prevent their best teachers from becoming those in the small percentage that leave.

Callings and Spirituality

One of the questions this study seeks to determine is the possibility of a deeper spiritual calling to teaching in a religious school and how that relates to teachers’ plans to stay or leave. As indicated prior, nearly every respondent (99 percent) indicated a commitment to teaching as a profession and teaching as a life-long choice. However far fewer were committed to teaching in a religious school. Even when the results are broken down by those who plan to stay and those who plan to leave (“stayers” and “leavers”), only two-thirds (66 percent) are committed

⁶ According to this sample, it can be assumed that turnover in these schools is, at most, 15%, which is well within the range of percent turnover in public schools as well as industry standards

to the school because of its faith. However, one cannot ignore that two-thirds (66 percent) of the stayers is a significant proportion of respondents who indicate a commitment to the faith of the school. Even more (69 percent) of the stayers indicate that they are teaching at their school because of their commitment to faith-based education. This is best described by Francine Averros when she says:

What originally brought me to teach there is I attended the church there, and they were going through a rough time. And at the time, I thought, what can I do for my church? So that's kind of how I ended up starting to teach there.

This statement indicates that respondents hold some value for the fact that the school has some religious affiliation. In fact Anton Gerry who did not share the same faith as that of his school stated:

And one of the things that we've been looking at is having a unique value proposition. Every school has to have that to go forward... The good things I find is that when you have a strong central religious component, that can be sort of used as a unifying technique for the school.

When he was asked to elaborate on the effect this may have on teachers, he said:

...You can retain teachers...if you've got a faculty member that is incredibly driven by the faith of the institution where he or she is working for...then maybe they are going to be willing to work at that school despite short-fallings and shortcomings they see, because they feel like they're working for their faith.

Anton Gerry's theory is best supported by the following comments made by Bob District:

The schools are no longer rich in faith, but are pretending to be so... I am starting to think that it would be better now to be at a school that is openly secular.... But in prayer and journaling, I have understood that the Lord wants me to be here next year. Every year I start over and ask these questions again.

The commitment to the faith may be able to retain teachers better however this comment shows it can often be a source of great frustration as well.

School Climate

Both stayers and leavers need to find a connection to the school mission and respondents expect their administration to effectively represent the mission of the school. John Perry explains the value this holds when he says the following:

Well, our head of school...is a great leader, embodies the school's philosophy and mission, and is always a constant reminder to the students, to the faculty, to the staff of what the school's goal is...I think that's one of the great things, having a living example on campus for us.

Administrative Leadership

Positive relations with the administration may be critical to a teacher's desire to stay. When comparing stayers and leavers in every aspect of school community, both stayers and leavers have positive sentiments. However, the exception and in fact the largest difference between perceptions of stayers and leavers, is with regard to issues that relate to administrative leadership.

Stayers and definite leavers show large differences in their perceptions about administrative leadership. The teachers who say they are going to leave are far less likely to agree with the statement "Teachers feel supported by their administration" than those who are likely to stay. This pattern can also be seen when comparing responses to the statements, "The administration at this school is supportive of its teachers" and "At this school, teachers feel respected by their principal/school head." Those teachers who plan to leave were far less likely to

agree with these statements than were the other teachers, especially those who planned to stay. Other areas of difference were with regard to staff development suggesting that respondents felt the need for better staff development and clear procedures for evaluations.

Collegial Relations

The next area of significant difference between stayers and leavers is with regard to collegial relations. Both stayers and leavers report having positive relations with other teachers. However when compared more closely, the leavers report having positive collegial relations less strongly. This difference is one of the largest, second only to reports about teachers' relations with administrative leadership. One example of how much teachers value positive collegiality is described by Francine Averros:

Last year we'd always had a time where a bunch of us, about six of us, could time our lunches, and we'd go have lunch together. One would have the table ready, one would come late, and they'd pick up the tab. We haven't had that opportunity. But I think that's important for teachers to get to know each other on a personal level. I think you have more commitment to the school.

Francine then went on to explain how she felt teachers had become less enthusiastic about the school because opportunities to go out to lunch as described above, which built collegiality, were no longer possible because everyone had become too busy.

Max Frank points out how he was disappointed in losing this connection when he said:

The one thing that I would have to say is...the negative area here is the collegiality between faculty. No one seems to get together. When I was at

Orange, everybody ate in the faculty lunchroom. Faculty all sat down together at lunch and talked. Not about teaching. Just talking...my wishes are...we need to do stuff more together, so we kind of bond...I think it's important to [help] make faculty feel that...make sure that you take care of the people that make your institution go, which is normally your faculty, your teachers.

Additionally, John Perry describes the importance of friendly relations with his colleagues as follows:

... the faculty came together to support the accreditation process and make it a positive thing instead of just another reason we have to stay after school for an hour. Also there's different types of celebrations, whether marriages, or baby showers. There always seems to be something that there's reason to celebrate in each other's lives.

Julie Guzman also noted that the feeling at her school is like a family and when one teacher was not asked to return it was like they "got rid of one of [her] sisters. So it's, you know. It's hard."

This need for strong collegial relations may be related to teachers' desires to work with a staff of expert teachers. Among the lowest agreement scores among those who were definitely going to leave their schools was in response to the statement that "This school is able to maintain a very strong teaching staff." These teachers were equally critical of the lack of available mentors to help teachers. In fact, even stayers were critical about this element of their schools. Teacher Julie Guzman offered one explanation when she says: "I think that [my administrator] isn't necessarily great at choosing teachers. And I think that that's a really hard skill to learn." Morale, even for stayers is strongly founded in relations with other teachers. While some data suggest the connection may be partly religious, none of

the interviewees indicated that their interactions were manifestations of their spirituality. Max Frank made the point when he described a small group of teachers that "...have what they call table talk where they sit down and talk Scriptures," he immediately followed by saying "That's not me."

Conclusions

Based on these findings it is clear that teachers are not leaving their schools because of a lack of a commitment to teaching or because of low pay. Those who are leaving also love teaching. Teachers who plan to leave their schools are also highly committed to teaching and most are committed to faith-based education. What appears to be most valued by these teachers is a school with a clear vision, an effective administrative leadership and good camaraderie with their colleagues.

Teachers are Committed to Teaching

One of the principal findings of this study reveals that teachers in these religious schools are far less likely to leave these schools than the literature and anecdotal evidence suggested. In fact, the turnover rate (estimated from respondents' self-reported plans to stay or leave) indicates that retention is likely to be well below what the research has suggested.⁷ Furthermore, some may believe that teachers who elect to teach in private religious schools lack the commitment to teaching found among public school teachers. However, as this study shows,

⁷ Nationwide, teacher turnover is between 10-15 percent. As indicated in chapter 1 and 2, teacher turnover in private schools (70 percent of which are religious) has been found to be 20 – 30 percent.

teachers in these religious schools are highly committed to teaching. Additionally, most teachers reported that they had a “spiritual calling” to teach, another important factor that leads to commitment. Finally, the vast majority of these teachers report being satisfied with their jobs. What is clear from this study is that teachers’ commitment to teaching is primary and commitment to faith is secondary.

Religious school teachers seem mired in the image that they have chosen to work in religious schools because of their faith and much less a commitment to teaching as a profession. On the contrary, this study demonstrates that while the commitment to faith is high, it is not as high as the commitment to teaching

Teachers Value a Positive School Climate

This study shows the central role of a positive school climate. Teachers’ need to feel that they fit within their schools’ climate is shown to be of significant importance in these religious schools. Interestingly, it is not necessary that a school have a faith-based mission that corresponds to a teacher’s own faith. Whatever faith the mission reflects, teachers must feel comfortable within it, and that the mission remain clear and consistent. The expectation is that schools must protect the integrity of the mission. Teachers need to feel that it is alive and resolute, impervious to the pressures of increasing enrollment or pleasing everyone. Even those teachers who continue to stay, despite challenges and difficulties, seem to be clinging to this one source of meaning – the mission of the school, which at times,

if lost becomes yearned for until finally abandoned along with their commitment to the school.

Teachers Value Being Appreciated and Respected by Administrators

The results of this study support what research has suggested as the second most significant predictor to turnover – perceptions about administrative leadership. While one can infer from this study that most teachers in religious schools are satisfied with their school climate, there is a sharp drop when it comes to feeling connected with the school leadership. Part of this is in part due to the perception that the leadership does not facilitate clear communication, in particular procedures for performance evaluations. However at the core of this is a disconnection between teachers and administrators, which suggests that administrators have not done enough to foster a positive relationship with their teachers. Teachers place a tremendous amount of burden on the administrative leadership to manage the climate at their school and then to clearly identify their role in that climate. This entails making sure that the administrative leadership accurately represents the school's mission and vision.

Teachers Value Collegial Relationships

The last and perhaps most significant factor for retaining teachers is the presence of positive collegial relationships. This aspect of the climate is one of the most significant in differentiating teachers' commitments to their school. Teachers want

to be connected to their colleagues, at the very least, on a professional level.

Unlike what may have been suspected, teachers do not have high expectations of bonding with one another on a purely religious level. Spirituality may exist among teachers, but more so as it relates to teaching as a profession and working together in a job that holds significant meaning for them. Teachers want to be able to rely on a colleague to talk to and connect with, not necessarily about teaching alone, but about their own personal lives and challenges.

Implications for Action

When I set out to begin this project, it was in large part because of the need indicated by religious schools to develop a support system that would meet the needs particular to private religious schools. To this end, I formed the Interfaith Council of Religious Schools and encouraged the schools represented by the council to participate in this study. The results of this study have direct implications for the participating schools. However this study also provides valuable data for other religious schools beyond those included in this study. The ICRS and others interested in this study may now take the implications from this study and begin to apply them in their schools, but more importantly to learn from each others' experiences the steps and methods necessary for nurturing positive changes in their schools. Overall these implications suggest that administrators must determine what their teachers value and then "feed" those teachers.

Protect and Preserve the Teachers who “Love” Teaching

The first implication for action is based on the finding that religious schools largely staffed by committed teachers, which are an asset to be protected. This may include teachers that are committed to faith-based education even though they may personally follow a faith different from that of the school. Many schools are plagued with an attitude that their teachers are not committed and at times this attitude may in fact be the cause of low morale. When teachers are publicly recognized as professionals who are committed to teaching, they will feel more appreciated and thus more committed to their schools. Teachers must be considered professionals and thus given support that can come through professional development and through mentors that can guide both new and veteran teachers through their own professional goals.

Identify and Manage the School Climate

Teachers value feeling connected to their school’s mission and vision. As is evident from this study, teachers will feel more committed when they feel their school’s mission and vision are clear and firm. Administrators must strive to ensure that their school’s mission is clearly identified; teachers are well matched with it, and make sure teachers see the integrity of that mission maintained through all decision-making. Involving teachers in some level of school leadership, decision making or at least informing them of the motivations behind decisions will

reinforce their sense of connection to the school as an extended family and more than “just a job.” Teachers also need to feel that their administrative leaders are living embodiments of their schools’ mission and vision. To this end, leaders must be aware of their actions and the depth to which their actions leave perceptions in the minds and hearts of their teachers. Administrators must continuously, but subtly, demonstrate the way in which they embody the school’s mission.

Appreciate and Respect Teachers

The way teachers are treated by their administrators has shown to have a significant impact on a teacher’s commitment to the school. Support and respect from administrators must go beyond providing token support like classroom supplies and provide tangible support like useful professional development and providing leadership opportunities. My findings also show that administrators can provide emotional support to help teachers get through difficulties and not confine their roles to just to evaluating them. Even when evaluating them, administrators must clearly explain the procedures for evaluations.

Develop and Nurture Teachers’ Collegial Relationships

Teachers need to feel satisfied with their collegial relations. Much of the burden for creating a collegial climate is on the administration. This can include relieving teachers of break duty, giving them additional opportunities to connect with colleagues or spend time with mentors. Since most administrators are not

available to serve as mentors, they must put special care and consideration into matching new hires to the existing teachers and in selecting teachers to guide their colleagues through their challenges. Such mentoring can be formalized, but there must also be a concerted effort made by administrators to make sure every teacher feels a connection to the school family via colleagues who can serve as informal mentors. It may be as simple as building in opportunities for teachers to come together in a staff lounge and arranging schedules to make sure teachers can meet together.

Plan of Action and Public Engagement

I plan to distribute the results of this research through private school literature as well as public publications because these results may provide valuable insights for both private and public schools. This study may shed light on the importance of collegial relations, enhancing the connection between staff, and administrative leadership. Both public and private schools must realize that teachers may develop deeper spiritual callings that do not stem just from being in a religious environment at all, but rather a commitment to finding meaning in their job. This may especially be the case with teachers that choose to work in struggling schools. The respondents were from such a broad religious spectrum and often did not share the same faith as their school, yet the fact that many were committed to faith-based education suggests something important. Finding

meaning in employment is not necessarily associated with a connection to a faith, but rather a connection to the climate in the school.

Step 1 – Convene the Council and Review the Findings

The first thing I plan to do is reconvene the Interfaith Council of Religious Schools (ICRS) and begin a discussion with the participating administrators. The purpose of these discussions will be to examine data from this study and to develop, as a group, a plan for specific steps to improve teacher retention in the schools represented as well as religious schools in general. First I will present the implications as they are laid out in this chapter. Then we will break up into smaller focus groups that will come up with specific actions. I also plan to include teachers in this session to insure that their perspectives are represented. As a final step in this first meeting we will come back together and share the ideas, which will then be put into a plan of action. To a great extent my hope in developing the ICRS was for a purpose far beyond the needs of this study. There is ultimately a phenomenal gain achieved when people of different communities, including faith communities, get together and talk. This bridging of social and religious gaps is one of the principal ideals behind my forming of the ICRS. As noted in Step 3 below, I then plan to invite an educational reporter to this meeting in hopes that he or she will write a piece on the ICRS and our work to improve education and build relationships.

Step 2 – Follow Up Survey

The next step will be to conduct a follow-up survey in 1-½ years to assess the progress of the plan of action. This survey will seek to determine if the commitments made by these schools seemed to have had any effect. The survey will be designed in such a way to track the changes reported by the respondents. This will require me to facilitate a smooth transition of control over the survey technology to members of the ICRS. That way, the data from this study as well as follow up surveys can be used for continuous improvement and not dependent on one individual.

Step 3 – Broadening the Public Discussion

The next step will be to bring this issue into the broader realm of public discussion. Up until this point my research has remained exclusively for the benefit of the participating schools. However the implications can have a significant impact on other religious schools as well as public schools. To do this, I will employ two strategies. The first is to write op-ed pieces for the Orange County Register and the Orange County edition of the Los Angeles Times about the hidden educational assets represented by the commitment of teachers in religious schools and the implications of building such teacher commitment for public education. This will in turn bring the issue into the public debate and possibly lead to changes in the overall private and public school worlds. The second strategy is to invite a

reporter into the follow-up meeting with the ICRS noted above. I will give the reporter background information about my research, the findings, and the implications. The reporter may initially feel inclined to participate just because of the interfaith nature of such an effort, but ultimately realize that the implications of my research warrant change in religious schools as well as the broader universe of education, public and private.

Step 4 – National Impact on Religious Schools

Finally, I plan to bring this work to the statewide and national associations that specifically address the issues of independent schools. The California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) as well as the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) are two of the most recognized accrediting associations in California. However, their work extends beyond accreditation to support and professional development. The NAIS in particular has an arm dedicated specifically to research in the area of school improvement and many religious schools in the United States benefit from their work. I plan to submit my study with its implications and results in hopes that it begins to have an impact on religious schools at the statewide and national level.

Personal Reflections

I have been committed to working in Muslim Schools for several years and the experience of conducting this research has deeply affected me. I have always known that my commitment to Muslim education was in part due to a deeper

calling and I was sure there were other teachers who had similar feelings across all faiths. I was however confident that the heart of committed teachers was one of the most abused resources in a school, particularly in religious schools. I wanted to dig deeper and understand the motives and aspirations of teachers in religious schools, thereby, understanding myself. I was pleased to discover from the selection of schools in this study that religious schooling provides a high quality education with few sacrifices. This is significant because teachers in religious schools are deeply committed to teaching, and while it is beyond the scope of my research, I suspect and want to believe that this commitment is stronger than the commitment among most teachers in public schools. If this is indeed the case, it may be that teachers in religious schools may feel more fulfilled because of the meaning they find in their teaching.

Interestingly, my life has taken a very different course as a result of all this. I've realized that what I now know through my own experiences and the results of this study are realities that may never truly come to light. And if they were to be actualized, the changes necessary to make a difference are not within my grasp were I to remain a teacher or even an administrator in Muslim Schools. I've realized that because of the nature of private schools, and religious school in particular, very little change in the fundamental attitudes of organizations can come from only teachers. I've even tried to fight this battle as an administrator only to loose at the hands of board members who are non-educators. My professional

experience with different types of religious schools, including the ones I became so deeply acquainted with as a result of this study have lead me to discover that board members are often disconnected from teaching as a profession. They often attempt to run schools on somewhat of a corporate model, where a problem like teacher turnover is simply a matter of paying teachers “enough.” To my dismay, there are some administrators who also hold to this vision and in turn treat their teachers as blue-collar workers. Guided by these beliefs schools come to resemble industrial style factories where the very notion of allowing teachers to participate in decisions that affect them is perceived as preposterous.

I will forever have a commitment to Muslim schools. However my experience with the amazing individuals in the UCLA Educational Leadership Program and what I have been taught by the professors has developed in me a newfound commitment to public education. While I plan to continue serving Muslim schools at a governance or consulting capacity, I pray that I find an added fulfillment, just as spiritual and meaningful, through my services in public schools. It may be that there I can have a larger impact on the future of education in America.

APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Study Information Sheet Page 1 of 2

University of California, Los Angeles

Research Study Information Sheet

Aspects of Religious Schools that Promote Teacher Retention

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Omar Ezzeldine, under the direction of Wellford Wilms, Ph.D., from the Department of Education and Information Studies, Educational Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. The results of the research study will contribute to Omar Ezzeldine's dissertation toward his doctoral degree. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a teacher in a religious school. Your participation in the research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate in the research will not affect your relationship with your administration or school.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind from your supervisor.

*** PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to determine the motivations behind teachers that choose to work and continue working in a religious school. By gathering this data, administrators may be better informed as to how they can create and maintain an environment that is conducive to retaining the best teachers.

*** PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

You will primarily be asked to participate in a survey by answering a simple on-line questionnaire aimed at determining your motivations for working in a religious

school. It will also attempt to determine if there is a deeper motivation behind teachers who work and/or choose to remain working in religious schools. The on-line questionnaire is designed to take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

Certain participants may be asked to participate in an additional aspect of this research – interviews. These interviews will be voluntary and you are by no means obligated to participate if you are asked. To ensure your privacy, the interviews will be conducted in a site other than your place of employment. The most convenient place for you will be determined once you are selected. If you do elect to participate in an interview, the time commitment will be no more than one or possibly two 30-minute interviews. Interviews will be audio-taped.

*** POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

If you agree to participate in the interview, you may feel uncomfortable talking about some issues and your experiences with someone you do not know very well. Participation in the survey may potentially cause some discomfort when answering questions about your job.

*** POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Your administrator will receive a report detailing how your school may be improved to motivate more teachers, such as yourself, to find satisfaction in their job and remain working.

*** PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You shall receive no payment or financial compensation for participation in this research.

*** CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

If you elect to participate in an interview, the interview will be audio-taped and you have the right to review, edit or erase the research tapes of your participation in whole or in part. At the conclusion of this study, all written or recorded information will be destroyed.

Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding procedures. Names of

individuals and schools used in the interview will be changed and biographical information that could identify individuals will be left out. The data will be safeguarded by being locked in one location at the residence of Omar Ezzeldine and only accessible by him. Data from the survey will be aggregated across schools (i.e. the data will not be reported for individual schools).

*** PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You may refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

*** IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Omar Ezzeldine	Wellford Wilms
4 Cartier Aisle	1029 Moore Hall
Irvine, CA 92620	Los Angeles, CA 90095
(949) 387-8900	(310) 206-1673
omarezz@hotmail.com	wilms@gseis.ucla.edu

*** RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Research Subjects, 2107 Ueberroth Building, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

Completion of this questionnaire will constitute consent to participate in the project.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study.

Please enter your user name (the e-mail address where you received the link to this page).

If you do not complete the questionnaire and wish to return to where you left off to complete it later, just make sure you do so from the SAME COMPUTER otherwise you may have to start over.

Please enter your e-mail address below.

Section 1 (of 3) Demographics

Please provide us with some background information.

1. How many years have you been in the teaching profession?
2. Please indicate the name of your school by selecting it from the following menu.
3. How long have you been teaching at this school?
 - Less than 1 year
 - More than 1 year, but less than 2 years
 - More than 2 years, but less than 3 years
 - More than 4 years, but less than 5 years
 - More than 5 years, but less than 10 years
 - More than 10 years
4. What Grade levels do you teach?
 - Pre-Kindergarten
 - Kindergarten
 - Grade One
 - Grade Two
 - Grade Three
 - Grade Four
 - Grade Five
 - Grade Six
 - Grade Seven
 - Grade Eight
 - Grade Nine
 - Grade Ten
 - Grade Eleven
 - Grade Twelve
5. What subjects do you teach at this school (select all that apply)?
 - Classroom teacher (core subjects)
 - Math (any level)
 - Language Arts (any level)
 - Science (any field)
 - Music
 - Computers

Visual/Performing Arts
Hebrew
Arabic
Spanish
French
Other foreign language
Religious Studies
Social Studies/History
Physical Education/Athletics

6. What is your employment status at THIS school?

Full time

More than ½ time, but less than full time

½ time

Less than ½ time

7. What percentage of the work you do at THIS school is in the capacity of a TEACHER at this school? In other words, if you are a department chair or if you hold a partial administrative position, only consider the time you consider part of your job as a TEACHER at THIS school only.

100%

75%

50%

25%

8. 8. What is your employment status at THIS school?

Full time

More than ½ time, but less than full time

½ time

Less than ½ time

9. What percentage of the work you do at THIS school is in the capacity of a TEACHER at this school? In other words, if you are a department chair or if you hold a partial administrative position, only consider the time you consider part of your job as a TEACHER at THIS school only.

100%

75%

50%

25%

10. What is your age?

- 18-21
- 22 – 25
- 26 – 29
- 30 – 35
- 36 – 40
- 41 – 45
- 46 – 50
- 51 – 55
- Over 55

11. Are you male or female?

12. What faith/denomination do you consider yourself?

- Catholic
- Episcopalian
- Mainline Protestant (including Methodist, Lutheran)
- Other Christian
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Other (Please specify or include more details if you prefer – e.g. orthodox etc.)

13. How long do you plan to teach at this school?

- As long as I am able
- Until I am eligible for retirement
- Will probably continue unless something better comes along
- Definitely plan to leave as soon as I can
- Undecided at this time

14. How much is your gross annual salary earned from teaching at this school?

- Below \$25,000
- \$25,001 - \$35,000
- \$35,001 - \$45,000
- \$45,001 - \$55,000

\$55,001 - \$65,000
More than \$65,000

15. Please respond to the following statements by indicating if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat disagree strongly, or don't know.

How would you describe your school community?

Everyone knows everyone.

We feel like an extended family.

Everyone feels welcome.

People generally keep to themselves.

Things are very formal.

There is a spirit of teamwork among the teachers.

There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and administration.

There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and parents.

There is a spirit of teamwork between the teachers and students.

Section 2
Attitudes

Please respond to the following statements by indicating if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly, or don't know.

1. Teaching is work that I love to do.
2. Teaching is my life-long choice.
3. I am committed to teaching in a faith-based school.
4. I am satisfied with my job.
5. I believe I have a "calling" toward being a teacher.
6. I am teaching at this school because of my commitment to its faith.
7. I am teaching at this school because of my commitment to faith based education.
8. I would not leave this school even if I was given better pay at another non-religious school.
9. I would not leave this school even if there was an opportunity at another school of the same faith.
10. I feel that I am paid fairly for the work I do at this school.
11. I feel valued at this school.

Section 3

Values, Perceptions and Influences

Each of the following questions will be asked in groups of two. The first question will attempt to identify what you value in a school workplace. The second will attempt to identify what your perceptions are of your current school workplace.

Please answer each question carefully according to the following scale: Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly or Don't know.

1. Pay (salary)
 - a. Teachers must be paid fairly.
 - b. Teachers in this school are paid fairly.
2. Benefits
 - a. Schools must offer their teachers good benefits.
 - b. This school offers its teachers good benefits.
3. Staff development through in-service programs.
 - a. Schools should have regular staff development through in-service programs, workshops, etc.
 - b. This school has regular staff development through in-service programs, workshops, etc.
4. Autonomy in the classroom.
 - a. Teachers should have autonomy in their classrooms.
 - b. Teachers at this school have autonomy in their classrooms.
5. Teaching load (number of classes)
 - a. Teachers should have a fair teaching load.
 - b. Teachers at this school have a fair teaching load.
6. Workload (non-teaching duties)
 - a. Teachers should have a fair workload in addition to just teaching and preparing.
 - b. Teachers at this school a fair workload in addition to just teaching and preparing.
7. School support for teachers' professional development (masters, credential, etc.)
 - a. Part of a teacher's benefits should include financial support for professional development.

- b. This school offers financial support for professional development.
- 8. Flexibility in recruitment (i.e. non-state certified teachers)
 - a. Teachers should be allowed to work in this school, even if they DO NOT possess a teaching credential
 - b. This school allows teachers that DO NOT possess teaching credentials to teach at this school.
- 9. Surrounded by great teachers.
 - a. Schools should easily be able to maintain only the strongest teaching staff.
 - b. This school is able to maintain a very strong teaching staff.
- 10. Community oriented sense of school culture
 - a. A school must have a school culture that has a strong sense of community.
 - b. This school's culture has a strong sense of community.
- 11. Friends (i.e. people you interact with regularly outside of work) or family members work at the school.
 - a. It is good to have friends and/or family members working at the same school.
 - b. I have friends and/or family members that work at this school with me.
- 12. Child(ren) attend(s) the school.
 - a. It is good for teachers to have (a) child(ren) attend the same school they work at.
 - b. The possibility of my child(ren) attending this school is a positive factor in my decision to work here.
- 13. Religious affiliation of the school
 - a. Education should include some connection to a faith/religion.
 - b. This school offers an education that is well connected to a particular faith/religion.
- 14. Positive school culture
 - a. I value a school where the overall school culture is positive.
 - b. The culture at this school is positive.

15. Smaller class sizes (22 students or less)
 - a. I believe class sizes should be small.
 - b. This school has small class sizes.

16. Proximity to home (10 miles or less)
 - a. The school at which I teach should be close to my home.
 - b. This school is close to my home.

17. Attractive facilities
 - a. Schools should have clean and attractive facilities.
 - b. This school has clean and attractive facilities.

18. Contact with a small student body (less than 700 students)
 - a. Schools should have small student body populations.
 - b. This school has a small student body population.

19. Stable student body
 - a. Schools should have very little student turnover.
 - b. This school has very little student turnover.

20. Student readiness to learn
 - a. I value students that have a positive attitude about learning.
 - b. The students at this school generally have a positive attitude about learning.

21. Respect from colleagues
 - a. Teachers should feel respected by their colleagues.
 - b. At this school, teachers feel respected by their colleagues.

22. Respect from students
 - a. Teachers should feel respected by their students.
 - b. At this school, teachers feel respected by their students.

23. Respect from parents and community
 - a. Teachers should feel respected by their parents and community.
 - b. At this school, teachers feel respected by their parents and community.

24. Respect from principal/school head
 - a. Teachers should feel respected by their principal/school head.
 - b. At this school, teachers feel respected by their principal/school head.

25. Respect from the board.
 - a. Teachers should feel respected by the school board.
 - b. At this school, teachers feel respected by the school board.

26. Regard for the overall program
 - a. I hold a high value for a strong overall program at any school.
 - b. This school has a strong overall program for its students.

27. Meaningful employment (making a difference in the world)
 - a. One's job should give a person a sense of meaning.
 - b. Working at this school gives its teachers a sense of meaning.

28. Intellectual challenge
 - a. The school I work at should offer an intellectual challenge.
 - b. This school offers me an intellectual challenge.

29. Spirituality
 - a. The school I work at should give me a sense of spiritual fulfillment.
 - b. I feel a sense of spirituality by working at this school.

30. Job Security
 - a. Job security is important in the teaching profession.
 - b. This school gives its teachers a good sense of job security.

31. Formal Mentors (specifically assigned)
 - a. It is important for new teachers to have formal mentors at the school they work at.
 - b. This school has a good program that provides formal mentors for new teachers.

32. Informal Mentors (no specific program)
 - a. It is important for new and veteran teachers to have *informal* mentors.
 - b. This school has *informal* mentors that help new and veteran teachers.

33. Communication
 - a. Clear communication is important in any school.
 - b. This school has good mechanisms for open and clear communication.

34. Mission and Vision
 - a. Teachers should only work in schools that have a compatible mission and vision.
 - b. This school has a mission and vision that is compatible to my teaching philosophy.

35. Dismissal of students (for academic and/or behavioral reasons)
 - a. Schools should be able to dismiss students that have emotional and/or academic needs beyond the capacity of the school's program.
 - b. This school can dismiss students that have emotional and/or academic needs beyond the capacity of the school's program

36. Dignity of the student
 - a. Schools must protect the dignity of the student throughout the disciplinary process.
 - b. This school respects the dignity of the student through the disciplinary process.

37. Student discipline management.
 - a. I value a school where behavioral expectations of students are clear and consistently enforced.
 - b. At this school, behavioral expectations of students are clear and consistently enforced.

38. Recognition from administration
 - a. It is important for teachers to be recognized by their administration for their achievements.
 - b. This school recognizes its teachers for their achievements.

39. Support from administration
 - a. Teachers must feel supported by their administration.
 - b. The administration at this school is supportive of its teachers

40. Ample resources for the classroom (materials and equipment)
 - a. Teachers should have all the resources they need for their classroom.
 - b. This school provides its teachers with the resources they need for the classroom.

41. Enough time for religious education (including specific language e.g. Hebrew, Arabic, etc.)
 - a. Religious schools must offer a fair amount of time to teach the religious studies curriculum.

- b. This school provides a fair amount of time to cover the religious studies curriculum.
42. Enough time for mainstream curriculum (Math, Lang. Arts, Science, etc.)
- a. Religious schools must be able to offer just as much time to teach non-religious subjects as in non-religious schools.
 - b. This school offers a fair amount of time to cover the mainstream subjects.
43. Plenty of time to teach (i.e. very little intrusions by extra curricular school events and activities, etc.)
- a. Teachers should be allowed to teach with minimal distractions/interruptions.
 - b. This school does not interrupt instructional time with extra curricular events and activities.
44. Teachers have a voice (decision making)
- a. Teachers should be a part of the day-to-day decision-making at their school.
 - b. Teachers at this school are a part of the day-to-day decision-making at their school.
45. Opportunities for independent study (e.g. sabbatical or part-time independent study)
- a. Teachers should have opportunities for independent study.
 - b. This school offers its teachers opportunities for independent study.
46. School safety (violence, etc.)
- a. Teachers should feel safe at the schools they teach in.
 - b. Teachers at this school feel safe.
47. Procedures for performance evaluation (of teachers)
- a. Schools must provide clear procedures for performance evaluations.
 - b. This school provides clear procedures for performance evaluations.

Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Would you be willing to participate in one 30 minute follow-up (anonymous) interview to discuss these issues? Even if you say yes now, you are free to decline at any time.

Thank you for your time in taking this survey.

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How would you describe your experience teaching at this school? What have been the high points? Low points?
2. Are you as motivated in your teaching today as you were when you first started? How has your level of motivation changed from just before you first began working here? What do you think has been responsible for that change?
3. Do any especially good experiences with students stand out in your mind? Please describe them.
4. Do any especially good experiences with other teachers stand out? Please describe them.
5. How do you feel about the school's administrative leadership? How could it be improved?
6. Please describe the two or three main values or beliefs (principles) you hold about teaching? How well do they mesh with the school's value and belief system?
7. To what extent has the religious nature of this school had an impact on your desire to teach here? Please explain.
8. What are the three most important reasons you continue to teach at this school?
9. Would you recommend this school to a friend as a good place to teach? Why or why not?
10. How do you feel your spirituality has an effect on others (teachers, students, etc)?
11. Please describe two or three experiences where you feel your interactions were a manifestation of your spirituality.

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