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JESUIT LEADERSHIP, CHARISM, AND SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the impact of the Jesuit Leadership framework as described by Lowney to confirm if the framework had a positive effect on the schools’ viability and sustainability. Since the first Catholic school opened in 1782, Catholic schools have played an important role in the American educational system. In Catholic schools’ long history they have proven to more effectively close the achievement gap between high and low performing students, see graduates become more civically minded adults, and can boast that following graduation students earn higher wages. In addition, the enrollment of students in Catholic schools is reported to save public schools as much as $21 billion dollars annually. Despite these successes Catholic schools have seen declining enrollment and an increasing number of school closures consistently since the 1960s. While Catholic schools as a whole have seen declining enrollment, schools run and supported by the Jesuits have seen consistent and often growing enrollment. The literature on Lowney’s Jesuit leadership framework was limited and no prior research had been done regarding its effectiveness within the context of Catholic elementary schools. This multiple case study used structured interviews and observations to determine the role the Jesuit leadership framework played in the respective school’s sustainability. Analysis of the collected data led to the identification of five themes that support a school’s sustainability and were used by the researcher to develop a solution that can support a schools sustainability.
Dedication

Charlie you always believed in that I would finish this my homework. We did homework together for four years and with a smile you supported me every step of the way. You are the joy, laughter, challenge and foundation in my life. Thank you!
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1782, St. Mary’s School, the first parochial elementary school in America opened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Over 230 years later, St. Mary’s School is still open (Killeen, 2017). As a whole, Catholic institutions are some of the oldest in the United States, and the Catholic school system has no parallel in the world (Bryk et al., 1993). Catholic schools first appeared in colonial America at a time when education was viewed as a moral enterprise and both Protestants and Catholics grounded education in their respective religious beliefs. Over the next 100 years, the Catholic school system further focused on developing parochial schools with support from American bishops. Canon Law, which is the rules and laws laid down by papal decree, allowed for the establishment of three types of Catholic schools: diocesan, parochial, and private, with the most common being parochial schools operated by one or more parishes (Brown, 2010; Schafer, 2004). Whether a school was diocesan, parochial, or private, each was influenced by the charism of the religious order or diocese that oversaw its operations.

The early growth in Catholic schools was driven by the increase in Catholic immigration in the early 1800s, as Catholic schools were seen as preserving Catholic values and ethnic identities and facilitating the assimilation of immigrants into American public life (Bryk et al., 1993).

At the same time as local diocesan bishops and various orders of religious sisters were opening American parochial schools, the opening of Georgetown University in 1789 began the Jesuits’ impact on American Catholic education (Bryk et al., 1993). This first
Jesuit school, and all Jesuit schools that have opened since, have operated parallel to American parochial schools and were founded on and sustained by five principles: passionately maintaining a high standard of learning and character, offering a curriculum focused on the humanities and sciences, sustaining a preoccupation with values and ethics, maintaining one’s religious experience, and having a person-centered approach (Traub, 2008). Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, never intended to establish schools but rather focused on preaching the Gospel (Traub, 2008). However, he saw schools as productive vehicles to bring people closer to God (Traub, 2008). This approach resulted in the steady growth of Jesuit-run schools in the United States and around the world into the 21st century (Codina, 2000). Through the 1960s, this growth was mirrored more generally by American non-Jesuit Catholic schools. However, the growth trajectories diverged as Jesuit schools continued on a sustained growth trajectory while American Catholic schools began a slow, steady decline that continued into the early decades of the 21st century (Murnane & Reardon, 2018). The Secretariat for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education reported that between 2013 and 2018, the number of Jesuit schools worldwide increased from 790 to 844. Student enrollment in 2013 was 750,479 worldwide, and it grew to 890,971 by 2018 (Secretariat for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education, 2013; 2018). While the number of schools and students has grown, due to retirements, deaths, and a decline in seminarians, the number of Jesuit priests globally has steadily declined since 1965 (Gray, 2015). Gray (2015) also noted that the greatest decline has been in the United States, with a loss of 50%. Despite the
decline in the number of seminarians, there remains a continuing and growing interest among students wanting to receive a Jesuit education.

Lowney (2003) argued that the Jesuits’ ability to ensure their local schools are sustainable and achieve their mission is tied to their unwavering dedication to the foundation established by Ignatius Loyola and the other 10 Jesuits who founded the order. Moments in Jesuit history that saw challenges to the order’s success, and in some cases, to their very survival, show that remaining steadfast in their four pillars of leadership has supported this success. It is this focus that allowed them to quickly grow into an international order that established a foothold across Europe, Asia, and South America in the 1500s and continues to adapt to the changing world of the 21st century (Lowney, 2003). Lowney systematically outlines the four original pillars of love, self-examination, heroism, and ingenuity set forth by Loyola, and argues their implementation can serve as a roadmap for individual leaders and organizations in the modern world. Lowney leverages his experience in the corporate world to discuss how the Jesuit approach to leadership can support organizational viability. However, he does not discuss how this approach could positively impact a school’s viability, improve student learning, and inspire teachers. In the closing pages, however, when Lowney states, “the gap is filled one person at a time, one day at a time—in families, classrooms, offices, firehouses, nursing homes, playing fields and libraries” (p. 293), he does suggest the Jesuits’ approach to leadership is in fact applicable in all environments, including American Catholic elementary schools.

Statement of the Problem
The work done by Lowney (2003) and the growth in Jesuit-run school enrollment led this researcher to ask how and why enrollment is growing when the last decade has seen a decline in non-Jesuit-led Catholic school enrollment (Murnane & Reardon, 2018). Between 2000 and 2013, there was a 24.3% drop in enrollment in Catholic schools in the United States as a whole (Wisniewski, 2013). In 2018, the National Catholic Education Association’s (NCEA) annual report cited the high cost of Catholic schools, the loss of clergy, sex and financial scandals, and increased secularization as reasons for the decline (McDonald & Schultz, 2018). This decline continues in spite of evidence of the advantages of attending Catholic schools. For example, the achievement gap between high and low performing students is smaller in faith-based schools (Jeynes, 2007; Marks & Lee, 1989). The more economically disadvantaged and at-risk a student is, the greater their relative achievement gains in Catholic schools (York, 1996). Graduates of Catholic high schools are also more likely to vote and be civically engaged, to be tolerant of diverse views, and to be committed to service as adults (Campbell, 2001; Dee, 2005; Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Greene, 1998; Wolf et al., 2001). Furthermore, graduates of Catholic schools are likely to earn higher wages than public school graduates (Hoxby, 1994; Neal, 1997).

School closures and lost enrollment also have a ripple effect beyond students and parish communities. The NCEA reports they serve 2 million U.S. students each year, saving the nation approximately $21 billion annually in public school costs (Wisniewski, 2013). In particular, economically disadvantaged and minority children in the nation's capital are able to stay in schools that serve them better than failing public schools.
Catholic schools also have a strong impact on clergy vocations: 77% of those who chose vocations attended Catholic elementary schools, high schools, and colleges (Gray & Gautier, 2012). In addition, there are increases in crime in communities where a Catholic school closes (Brinig & Garnett, 2014). Thus, dwindling enrollment and school closures negatively impact communities; additional research is needed to learn from successful Catholic school models and systems. The Jesuit network of schools is one such system. Lowney (2003) examined the four pillars of leadership (self-awareness, ingenuity, heroism, and love) and showed how the pillars supported 450 years of success as a religious order and organization. As today’s Catholic schools (diocesan, parochial, and independent) struggle to increase or even maintain current enrollment levels, it is important to consider the example of success offered by the Jesuits.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study used a multiple case study design to examine three schools that embrace the Jesuit charism and determine if the leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003) can offer today’s non-Jesuit run Catholic schools a model for success. The purpose of this study is to examine three Catholic elementary/middle schools in northern California that embrace the Jesuit charism to determine if and how the Jesuit charism and the schools’ respective leadership frameworks support each school’s viability and sustainability.

**Research Question(s) and Hypotheses**

Catholic schools have been shown to have a positive impact on individual students, neighborhood communities, civic engagement, public school funding, and
individual parish communities (Brinig & Garnett, 2014; Campbell, 2001; Dee, 2005; Gray & Gautier, 2012; Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Greene, 1998; Hoxby, 1994; Jeynes, 2007; Marks & Lee, 1989; Neal, 1997; Smarick, 2011; York, 1996; Wolf et al., 2001; Wisniewski, 2013). Despite the evidence of their positive impact, Catholic schools continue to struggle with enrollment and overall sustainability (Wisniewski, 2013; McDonald & Schultz, 2018). However, in contrast, Jesuit Catholic schools are continuing to see higher levels of success and sustainability (Secretariat for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education, 2013; 2018). This contrast led to the development of the research question at the heart of this dissertation in practice: How does embracing the Jesuit charism and Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets support the efforts of three northern California Jesuit elementary/middle schools to remain viable and support their respective sustainability?

**Aim of the Study**

Research has shown that Catholic elementary schools have been and can continue to be an important part of the U.S. educational system. However, nationally, the Catholic school system has struggled to reverse negative enrollment trends since the 1960s. This study examines how the Jesuit approach to leadership impacts three Catholic elementary schools’ work to challenge national enrollment trends. A list of recommendations for how leaders in non-Jesuit Catholic schools can learn from the Jesuits’ success is provided. In addition, this dissertation presents a proposal for future training on how to implement the recommendations.

**Methodology Overview**
A case study methodology, as outlined by Yin (2003), is recommended when the research question requires the researcher to conduct an in-depth investigation. This approach aligns with Feagin et al. (1991), who argued that a case study methodology should be used when a complete and in-depth investigation is required. Stake (1995), Merriam (1998), and Yin (2003) were all major voices in support of the case study methodology, but each approached it differently. All are constructivists; however, Merriam and Stake argued for a social constructivist approach. As social constructivists, they believed case study research is the process of learning about the case or entity through the construction of knowledge. In contrast, Yin’s work is based on a post-positivist viewpoint. As Creswell (2013) outlined, post-positivists believe that the goal of research is to explain reality correctly and that the explanation will change as the body of knowledge evolves and grows. Yin’s (2009) conclusions align with this explanation of post-positivists seeing the researcher’s role as identifying what reality exists by crafting the right measures. This identifies the reality that exists for the participants using evidence gathered from interviews and observations.

Yin’s (2003) four criteria for deciding when a case study is the proper research methodology strengthened the decision to conduct case study research for this dissertation in practice. The four criteria are:

- The focus of the study is to answer “how?”
- The researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study.
- The research goal covers contextual conditions.
- The boundaries between the phenomenon and context are unclear.
When these criteria are met, the case study methodology is highly effective, as it allows the research to utilize multiple sources of data and offers an understanding of the context in which a phenomenon occurs (Yin, 2003). It is this approach to case study research that will guide the study, as the research question and the route to answering it meet the criteria as defined by Yin (2003).

To answer the research question, three schools were selected as cases for this study. Each has a unique culture, history, demographic structure, level of financial stability, and enrollment rate. These differences allow the researcher to consider the impact of the charism and leadership, regardless of the identified differences. The researcher initially identified all the K–8 Jesuit-run schools in northern California, and each case was ultimately selected to compare and contrast the impact of the schools’ leadership on their respective success and ability to usurp national enrollment trends.

The cases were selected to allow for demographic and socio-economic diversity. This researcher administered in-person interviews with school leaders and teachers, with a focus on finances, admissions, enrollment, and student learning data, to establish the schools’ levels of sustainability. The diversity of archival data and interviews with different stakeholders supported the triangulation of the data, thus enhancing the reliability of the results (Riege, 2003; Yazan, 2015). Aligning the research question with the case study design further supports the validity of the results (Russell et al., 2005). The researcher also engaged in the practice of writing reflective notes to support both the qualitative research process and the study’s credibility and carried out multiple rounds of coding the interview transcripts to enhance the overall dependability of the results.
The multiple rounds of coding helped manage the various filters, biases, themes, and theories that emerge with each coding process (Saldana, 2009).

**Definition of Relevant Terms**

In his *Second Treatise of Government*, John Locke (1689/1948) writes, “reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.” This is true, but it is also important to provide a common understanding of the material being written to ensure the information is understood by respective readers. To that end, the following operational definitions are offered and used throughout this study.

1. Jesuit leadership framework – Jesuits abandoned an ostentatious style of leadership and focused instead on the four values that are the basis of their leadership: self-awareness, ingenuity, love, and heroism (Lowney, 2003).

2. Jesuit pedagogy – Ignatian education strives to develop men and women of competence, conscience, and compassion. It is a collaborative process between and among faculty and students, which fosters personal and cooperative study, discovery, creativity, and reflection to promote lifelong learning and service to others (Korth, 2018).

3. Jesuit charism – As defined by Creighton University (2018) comprises the following tenets:
   a. *Magis*, always striving for excellence
   b. Being a man or woman for others, especially for the poor or marginalized
   c. *Cura personalis*, focusing on the whole person and ensuring they are respected and cared for
   d. *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (AMDG), ensuring all one does is for the greater glory of God
e. Being an agent of change and teaching others to think critically and responsibly and to consider their actions on moral and ethical issues.

4. Parochial school – A private school supported by a particular church or parish (Brown, 2009).

5. Sustainability – The ability of a nonprofit institution to sustain itself over time while fulfilling its mission. This includes financial sustainability, leadership succession planning, adaptability, and strategic planning (National Council for Nonprofits, 2018).

Assumptions

Creswell (2013) highlighted the importance of researchers identifying their biases and taking the necessary steps to mitigate them. The purpose of mitigating personal biases is for the researcher to convey how their background and personal experience informs how a study is conducted, the data analyzed, and conclusions reached (Creswell, 2013). Thus, this researcher must acknowledge her experience as a student at Catholic schools for her entire educational career. In addition, this researcher has professionally worked in Catholic schools for eleven years. The experiences as a student and educator have led to positive and negative personal assumptions on the topic of this study.

To mitigate the impact of these assumptions on the research process and final conclusions, several steps were taken. First, structured interviews were designed allowing for bias to be reasonably removed from the interview questions and ensure participants were asked a consistent set of questions. This approach allowed for the establishment of data triangulation in support of the study’s reliability. Second, member-checking following each interview, ensuring that the data collected was valid. Finally, through the
completion of this dissertation in practice, the researcher engaged in memoing. Ezzy (2002) argued that a memoing journal is critical for a lone researcher, as it allows them to manage bias, support rigorous research practices, and allow for a high level of validity.

Every researcher must take care in limiting the impact and mitigating the role of assumption and bias in conducting research and analyzing the collected data. Through the use of structured interviews, member-checking, and memoing, this researcher worked to limit the impact of bias and prior assumptions on the research process and the analysis of the data.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

A dissertation in practice involves scholarship focused on a problem and the generation of a solution supported by the findings of the research. There are some limitations to this goal. For generations, Catholic elementary schools have been run as independent silos with unique cultures and histories. This could impact each school’s respective ability to utilize the study’s findings, as could geographic and economic factors. The findings are focused on the unique environment of Catholic elementary and middle schools; therefore, the findings will not be applicable to high schools looking to strengthen their sustainability.

Like limitations, delimitations are important to consider when constructing a study. Delimitations are aspects of the study that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study (Simon, 2010). The current literature and research on the scope of the enrollment and financial problems facing American Catholic schools suggest that multiple avenues of research could provide insight and information to address these
problems. However, the researcher specifically chose to focus her research on the Jesuit leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003) and on parochial elementary/middle schools in northern California. These choices created manageable boundaries and were intended to ensure the scope of the study was reasonable.

The author’s personal bias also cannot be ignored when conducting a dissertation in practice. Having been educated in Catholic schools since the age of five and currently serving as a principal of a Catholic elementary school, the author views Catholic schools as relevant and important. This view is not shared by everyone, and it is an underlying assumption and bias within the study. In addition, the author’s professional experiences at multiple schools, as both a teacher and administrator, have resulted in a unique worldview on issues discussed in this dissertation in practice. It will be important to acknowledge the author’s experiences and bias and to actively put them aside when analyzing the gathered data.

There are also limitations on the resources and scope of the study. Finite financial resources are available to purchase the needed tools, such as coding software, and pay for the travel required to complete the research. These limitations have impacted the scope and design of the study, the number of cases involved, and the depth of the research question, as the study must be completed within a reasonable time frame at minimal cost (Fusch et al., 2017).

Though there may be concerns about bias, the researcher has taken appropriate steps as part of the research design in the hope that they will not limit the research outcome. The design of the study considered some limitations on available time and
resources and on potential scope. However, it will still be possible to gather rich data for analysis to provide an answer to the research question. The results presented here ultimately lay the foundations for future research.

**Leader’s Role and Responsibility in Relation to the Problem**

A leader establishes direction, provides organization, coordinates activities and resources, and motivates and manages conflicts (Johnson, 2013). Through the generations, such schools of thought as the Great Man, Trait, Behavioral, and Transactional theories of leadership have considered how and by whom the functions of a leader are best met. However, the Jesuit approach to leadership argues that everyone is a leader and that the focus should be on what a leader *is* rather than what they *do* (Lowney, 2003). In this context, Lowney (2003) articulated the four pillars (love, heroism, self-reflection, and ingenuity) of Jesuit leadership, established by Ignatius Loyola and his early followers.

This literature communicated the impact alternative governance models can have on Catholic schools’ sustainability by supporting improved financial management and partnerships. However, equally important to a school’s success is the leadership offered by principals. In a joint report, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) confirmed the central role principals have in schools’ success, but highlighted that principals struggle with conflicting priorities, multiple constituency groups, and fragmented schedules, leaving them feeling like many aspects of their roles are not fully carried out (2011). Principals are asked to be visionaries, instructional leaders,
assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, and more (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Parochial school principals experience these same struggles, but as Robinson et al. (1993) and Schafer (2004) note, they must also confront additional challenges involving funding, marketing, spiritual leadership, and unique governance models. Principals have immense job descriptions, but the empirical links between school leadership and improved student achievement are also immensely important (Louis et al., 2010). In the context of lagging enrollment in Catholic elementary schools, this study looks to determine whether the Jesuit leadership framework could be a factor in supporting Catholic school sustainability.

In furtherance of the impact leadership has on a school’s success, Louis et al. (2010) took a broader approach, examining hundreds of schools across the United States. They found that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. Their mixed-methods study reviewed data from standardized tests, interviews, and surveys carried out over six years covering 43 districts; 180 elementary, middle, and secondary schools; 8,391 teachers; and 471 school administrators. The data confirmed the importance of school leadership for the success of classroom instruction, student learning, and public policy initiatives. Similar to McIver et al. (2009) and Rochkind et al. (2008), Louis et al. (2010) focused on public schools and did not address specific leadership frameworks, leaving avenues open for future research on both private and parochial schools and on whether specific leadership frameworks are more effective in managing schools’ success and sustainability.
Significance of the Study

There are three ways this multiple case study is meaningful and impactful. This multiple case study offers significant insights into how dioceses and schools can effectively address issues of sustainability. Prior research had not examined how or why Jesuit schools are maintaining a high level of sustainability while other Catholic schools struggle with it. This multiple case study offers insights into what these successful school are doing differently, thus allowing schools to learn from that success. In addition, most prior research worked to identify the problems facing struggling Catholic schools, but little research has been done on how to address and fix these problems. Finally, this study articulates the burdens carried by principals, teachers, and schools in maintaining their sustainability, and this multiple case study identifies a model for how to practically support them and alleviate these burdens.

Summary

The history of Catholic education goes back hundreds of years and has been shown as successful in the realms of academics, civic development, and faith formation (Bryk, et al., 1993; Campbell, 2001; Dee, 2005; Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Greene, 1998; Jeynes, 2007; Marks & Lee, 1989; Wolf et al., 2001). However, over the last 60 years and more, there has been a continuous decline in the number of Catholic schools that remain open and the number of students who attend them in the United States (McDonald & Schultz, 2018; Reardon & Murnane, 2018). In contrast, Jesuit schools have seen growth in the number of schools opening and students attending (Secretariat for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education, 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). It should be noted the
Jesuit data is based on enrollment at all Jesuit school worldwide. Data on enrollment at Jesuit schools in the United States was not available. This multiple case study looks to examine what the Jesuits do differently to achieve their growth and what other Catholic schools can learn from them. Through the lens of the Jesuit charism and the four pillars of Jesuit leadership, as identified by Lowney (2003), it is the author’s intention to use the findings to provide recommendations for how schools can be more sustainable.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Catholic schools have a positive impact on families, individual students, local communities, and the nation at large (Brinig & Garnett, 2012; De La Portilla, 2018; Evans & Schwab, 1995; Hatchman, 2013; Jeynes, 2007; Sander, 1996). However, data gathered by the National Catholic Education Association show that over the past decades, Catholic school enrollment in the United States continues to decline and school closures continue to rise (McDonald & Schultz, 2016). In this environment, Catholic schools are struggling to define what it means to be a Catholic school and ascertain whether the traditional parochial school model is still sustainable (Britt, 2013; Geruson et al., 2013; Montejano, 2010; Tucker, 2016; Walbank, 2012; Zech, 2016).
The literature offers some insights into what conditions are needed to reverse the negative trends in Catholic school enrollments and closures. In addition, the literature highlights schools and religious orders that are finding strategies to maintain their student enrollment and sustainability. Specifically, the Jesuits have shown growth in enrollment and sustainability, while many other Catholic schools have seen a decline in enrollment and have been forced to close (Jesuit Education, 2018; McDonald & Schultz, 2016). This literature review offers insights into why some schools are able to achieve sustainability while others fail. Specifically, it discusses the literature on the American Catholic school and its sustainability, the Jesuit pedagogy and charism, and the Jesuit leadership framework.

The American Catholic School and Sustainability

By nature and mission, Catholic schools operate in such a way that moral choices and character values are just as strongly emphasized as educational performance (Robey, 2011). As the number of Catholic immigrants entering the United States increased in the 1820s, Catholic elementary schools saw steady growth in the number of schools opened and students enrolled (Walch, 2003). There was increased growth following the First Plenary Council of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore in 1852, in which bishops encouraged the opening of additional Catholic schools. The councils that followed led to the establishment of 3,500 schools by 1900, and by 1920, 6,551 schools were in operation.
This growth continued through the 1960s, with over 11,350 Catholic schools in operation as of 1969 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

The Elementary Parochial School Model

Canon Law identifies three types of schools that can be considered Catholic: diocesan, parochial, and private, with the most common being parochial schools operated by one or more parishes (Brown, 2010; Schafer, 2004). According to Canon Law, parochial schools are under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of the archdiocese, with oversight delegated to the parish pastor (Brown, 2010). Studies have shown that parochial schools, while the most common, are also the most vulnerable to closure, enrollment decline, and questions of whether the model is sustainable (Nuzzi et al., 2008).

Schafer (2004) completed a meta-analysis of the literature surrounding the relationship between pastors and Catholic school principals as questions about the sustainability of the parochial school model emerged. The relationship between pastor and principal is complex, and if it is to be successful, there must be clear roles, respected by both the pastor and principal (Schafer, 2010). However, the literature suggests that the common governance model described by Schafer is no longer sustainable. Britt (2013), Brinig and Garnett (2010), the Archdiocese of Chicago (2013), and Haney (2010) all offered evidence that the traditional model of parochial schools needs to be reconsidered, as it leads schools to struggle with enrollment and financial sustainability.

Furthermore, Muth and Zimmermann (2018) proposed unique funding options they argue would support parochial schools’ financial sustainability. Zech (2016) also outlined different organizational models to support Catholic elementary schools’
sustainability. In addition, much of the literature argues for stronger leadership at all levels to support sustainability (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2013; Dolph & Moore, 2005; Hobbie et al. 2011). The literature reviewed offers insights into the factors that challenge parochial schools’ sustainability and strategies for how parochial schools could transcend these factors. However, the literature does not offer evidence that these strategies are in fact effective.

**Challenges Facing Catholic Schools**

In the 1960s, American Catholic School enrollment began to steadily decline, a pattern that can still be seen today. Initially, this decline began with the transition from clergy-centric faculty to lay faculty, dramatically increasing costs and tuition. These increases left many families unable to afford tuition, a problem that has been exacerbated over time (McDonald & Schultz, 2018).

The decline accelerated as American society became more secularized (McDonald & Schultz, 2018). However, the last 20 years have seen larger decline in Catholic schools’ enrollment as a result of the overwhelming sexual abuse and financial scandals (McDonald & Schultz, 2018). The impact of the scandals on parochial schools’ sustainability can be seen in the number of school closures; in the 10 years since 2008, 1,336 Catholic schools have been reported closed or consolidated. In the same period, there was a 19.2% decline in the number of students attending Catholic schools, making the total decline 24.2% since 2000 (McDonald & Schultz, 2018; Wisniewski, 2013).

Publications, conferences, organizations, and foundations have addressed the issue of sustainability and ways to reverse the negative enrollment trends (Goldschmidt &
Walsh, 2011). Specifically, they have focused on new finance, governance, and leadership models to make schools more sustainable. Indeed, there is evidence that if current trends continue, the parochial school model will fail (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011), hence the emphasis on finding alternative models to support the schools.

**Governance and Finance Models for Catholic Elementary Schools**

Historically, Catholic elementary schools have been supported by advisory boards. Research has explored whether a transition to governing boards could support school sustainability. In 2012, the Catholic Higher Education Collaborative (CHEC) focused on the role of Catholic elementary school boards, suggesting that a limited jurisdiction school board governance model would support best practices of leadership, fundraising, enrollment marketing, and data-based cultures (Geruson et al., 2013). A limited jurisdiction school board is

a board with limited jurisdiction, also called a policy-making board . . . [with] delegated final authority to enact policy regarding certain areas of institutional operation, although its jurisdiction is limited to those areas of operation that have been delegated to it by the constitution and/or bylaws, and approved by the delegating Church authority (Haney et al., 2009, pp. 69–70).

Anecdotal evidence suggests this model can sustain schools, but no peer-reviewed studies have been conducted (Geruson et al., 2013). In particular, Britt (2013) highlighted and applauded schools that have implemented a limited-governance board model but contends that additional research is needed to determine whether it improves sustainability.
Goldschmidt and Walsh (2011) also offered a variety of governance models that could support schools’ financial sustainability. The suggested models range from maintaining the current model to partnerships between elementary schools, high schools, and universities and the development of consortiums of elementary schools to share resources (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). Furthermore, to maintain sustainability regardless of governance model, schools must clearly articulate their worth and value, embrace innovative approaches to governance and financial management, publish evidence of academic success, and highlight the unique strengths of their Catholic identity (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). Goldschmidt and Walsh concluded their qualitative study by stating that the recommended efforts would impact schools overall, and specifically their financial sustainability.

Additional research has supported Goldschmidt and Walsh’s (2011) conclusions on the potential positive impact of partnerships, consolidations, and governing boards (Britt, 2013; Dallavis & Johnstone, 2009; Geruson et al., 2013; Nuzzi et al., 2008). Nuzzi et al. (2008) conducted a quantitative study focusing on the importance of the financial model in supporting the sustainability of Catholic elementary schools. The study was based on survey results from pastors across the country, asking them about the greatest needs facing Catholic schools, and determined that Catholic identity and school finances were the most significant issues. It concluded that by establishing regional cooperatives or partnerships and by more aggressively accessing state and federal funding, expenses could decrease and income could increase. However, the extent to which these efforts would support parochial schools’ sustainability is unclear (Nuzzi et al., 2008).
Similarly, Britt (2013) worked with pastors in his quantitative study on the consolidation of schools. He examined 80 schools that were previously separate K–8 and 9–12 parochial schools and were then consolidated into K–12 parochial schools for resource sharing. He surveyed pastors and school administrators on the impact of the consolidation on their sustainability. He found that school finances had improved but enrollment numbers had not. Britt’s research suggests that school consolidation can support Catholic schools’ sustainability. However, it is not a guaranteed solution, as it does not fully address high tuition and funding needs, beyond using tuition as the primary source of income (Britt, 2013).

The literature also investigated partnerships as another path to helping Catholic elementary schools be more financially sustainable. Notre Dame explored this opportunity with the establishment of Magnificat schools. In 2006, Notre Dame looked to begin a program that created a partnership between K–12 Catholic schools and Catholic universities with the sole purpose of strengthening the K–12 Catholic schools. The three initial Magnificat schools were urban schools struggling with sagging enrollment, experiencing a lack of financial support for their respective academic programs, and needing professional development and financial support (Dallavis & Johnstone, 2009). As part of an agreement with the parochial schools, Notre Dame agreed to provide instructional coaching, professional development, marketing and fundraising support, and technology assessment to support the schools’ sustainability. Dallavis and Johnstone (2009) conducted a case study of the Magnificat schools to explore the impact of the partnership on sustainability. The case study offers key lessons on how to provide
temporary fundraising support to allow schools to become financially independent and sustainable (Dallavis & Johnstone, 2009). In the surveys completed, teachers positively highlighted Notre Dame’s support for coaching and professional development (Dallavis & Johnstone, 2009). Interestingly, Magnificat schools shared with the researchers that leveraging the Notre Dame brand in their marketing and enrollment strategies positively impacted their own brand and enrollment, providing an unintended consequence of the program. As a whole, Dallavis and Johnstone’s case study highlights the positive impact partnerships with Catholic universities can have on Catholic schools’ sustainability, providing resources without relying on tuition income.

Dallavis and Johnstone (2009) demonstrated the positive impact of partnerships with Catholic universities on parochial schools’ sustainability, but the structure of school boards is another means to create a sustainable financial model for Catholic elementary schools. At the CHEC, Geruson et al. (2013) presented a paper on how limited jurisdiction boards can support Catholic elementary schools’ sustainability. According to the authors, an advisory board has no official authority beyond making recommendations and advising the pastor and administration on policy decisions. In contrast, a limited jurisdiction board operates as a governing authority over specific aspects of the school, creating a foundation for long-term strategic planning and school sustainability (Geruson et al., 2013). Geruson et al. reviewed the impact of a limited jurisdiction board on 55 schools supported by the Healy School Foundation’s Catholic School Development Program (CSDP). They examined the transition and found that limited jurisdiction boards offer skills and perspectives that help create and implement strategic plans. However,
they offer no insight into the specific data gathered, nor do they discuss their methods of gathering the data. They offered a road map for other schools interested in establishing a limited jurisdiction board and argued that limited jurisdiction boards create a strong foundation to support schools’ sustainability. The CSDP’s conclusions showed the impact of limited jurisdiction boards on schools’ sustainability. However, additional studies using independently gathered data could provide more conclusive evidence.

Thielman (2012) presented another solution to dealing with the funding challenges facing Catholic schools using quantitative and qualitative data to determine whether Cristo Rey schools’ unique income source is sustainable. In the Cristo Rey model, work-study partnerships generate 70% of a school’s operating budget, with the remaining expenses raised through traditional fundraising from donors and foundations and modest tuition charged to each family based upon their ability to pay (Kearney, 2008). Thielman’s case study used the Boston Cristo Rey High School as an example of how creative funding solutions and strategic community partnerships support sustainability. The Jesuits have promulgated this approach as a creative solution to supporting students seeking a Catholic education whose families cannot afford tuition. However, the work-study nature of the funding model, while effective for high schools, does not offer a replicable funding model for parochial elementary schools. In addition, more independent research on the success of the Cristo Rey model is needed, as those conducting the current research are closely tied to the Cristo Rey schools.

**Leadership and Catholic Elementary Schools**
The literature communicated the impact alternative governance models can have on Catholic schools’ sustainability through improved financial management and partnerships. However, equally important to schools’ success is the leadership offered by principals. In a joint report, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) confirmed the central role principals play in schools’ success but highlighted that principals struggle with conflicting priorities, multiple constituency groups, and fragmented schedules, leaving principals to feel that many aspects of their roles are not fully carried out (2011). Principals are asked to be visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, and more (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Catholic school principals experience these same struggles, but as Robinson et al. (1993) and Schafer (2004) noted, they must also confront additional challenges involving funding, marketing, spiritual leadership, and unique governance models. The research highlighted how principals in K–12 schools (public, private, and religious) have immense job descriptions, but the empirical links between school leadership and improved student achievement are also immensely important (Louis et al., 2010).

Rochkind et al.’s (2008) quantitative research on new teachers and their attitudes to the teaching profession further highlight the enormity of the principal’s job and the impact they can have. The survey asked about the role of instructional leadership in teachers’ development. The results show that new teachers saw effective school leaders as having a “can-do” attitude. Rochkind et al. (2008) also focused on new teachers’
perceptions of their profession, but their findings on the impact of effective leadership also offer insights into the full impact principals can have on schools’ success and sustainability.

McIver et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of studies about the impact of public school leaders on students of color and students in low socio-economic areas. They found that effective school leaders focus on a clear mission and purpose, establish goals that align with the mission, and communicate the mission and goals to all stakeholders (McIver et al., 2009).

Louis et al. (2010) took a broader approach, examining hundreds of public schools across the United States. They found school leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. Their mixed methods study reviewed data from standardized tests, interviews, and surveys carried out over six years for 43 districts; 180 elementary, middle, and secondary schools; 8,391 teachers; and 471 school administrators. The data confirmed the importance of school leadership for the success of classroom instruction, student learning, and public policy initiatives. Similar to McIver et al. (2009) and Rochkind et al. (2008), the study focused on public schools and did not address specific leadership frameworks. It left these areas open for future research on both private and parochial schools and on how specific leadership frameworks are more effective in managing schools’ success and sustainability.

Research on the importance of principal leadership in parochial schools aligns with studies by Louis et al. (2010), McIver et al. (2009), and Rochkind et al. (2008). However, when looking at parochial school leadership, it is important to note that there
are unique demands around enrollment, tuition management, marketing, and faith leadership (Boyle et al., 2016; Polka et al., 2016). Boyle et al. (2016) noted that effective principal leadership is key to parochial schools’ success, but added that because of the unusual scope of the job, there is a need to better train parochial school principals for the unique expectations of being both a spiritual and instructional leader. Boyle et al. concluded that principal preparation programs are inadequate and that the lack of standards for Catholic school principals hurts the schools’ abilities to ensure strong leadership. They noted that additional research on this issue is needed and that additional findings would provide insights toward a sustainable future for parochial schools.

Prior to Boyle et al.’s (2016) findings, McCloskey’s (2010) case study of an urban Catholic school in Memphis, Tennessee examined the centrality of principal leadership in parochial schools. The study examined the principal’s leadership and how it helped maintain the school’s sustainability, despite operational challenges with finances and enrollment. When the principal was able to effectively support healthy fundraising programs, show deep dedication to its mission, and maintain a strong community, the school was more likely to be sustainable. McCloskey explained that the school offers unique programs that consider the holistic needs of the students and families and a sliding scale for tuition collection, all while taking advantage of endowment funds and other donation sources. This case study highlights and demonstrates the critical role of leadership in the sustainability of a parochial school: at the heart of the efforts described was a leader able to effectively develop a community; establish financial partnerships;
appropriately market the school to its community; and ensure the program, community, and financial needs of the school were sustainably managed (McCloskey, 2010).

Hobbie et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study of Catholic elementary schools’ vitality and its connection to a strong Catholic identity and effective organizational leadership. They surveyed over 1,200 teachers from 142 Catholic elementary schools on their perceptions of their respective schools’ Catholic identity and organizational leadership. The surveys revealed that principal leadership that supported a school’s Catholic identity and was mission-driven, flexible, and focused on student learning was key to maintaining a school’s vitality. While these findings reinforce the impact of leadership on parochial elementary schools’ sustainability, they do not address the financial, enrollment, and governance challenges facing schools, nor do they consider a particular model or theory of leadership.

This research is supported by studies of parochial and Catholic high schools in Australia. Through semi-structured interviews and researcher-generated field notes, Lavery and Hine (2013) considered eight Australian Catholic high schools and studied how the principals of each school impact student leadership development. Furthermore, Sultmann and Brown (2016) used interviews and surveys to examine the leadership of eight Australian Catholic elementary schools in a mixed methods study. Both studies supported the notion that principal leadership has a significant impact on parochial and Catholic schools and their respective programs (Lavery & Hine, 2013; Sultmann & Brown, 2016).
The current literature effectively acknowledges the central role principal leadership plays in parochial and Catholic schools’ sustainability, as well as the complex nature of this job (Boyle et al., 2016; Hobbie et al., 2010; Lavery & Hine, 2013; Louis et al., 2010; McCloskey, 2010). However, additional research on what leadership framework is most effective in sustaining parochial elementary schools is needed to avoid and reverse the negative enrollment and financial trends facing such schools.

**Jesuit Leadership Framework**

One leadership framework to consider when discussing the sustainability of parochial schools is the Jesuit leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003), which he argued is the reason that the Jesuits have seen their institution and the order as a whole remain sustainable throughout their 470-year history. This framework has four pillars: love, self-awareness, ingenuity, and heroism (Lowney, 2003). Based on the Jesuits’ self-reporting, student enrollment numbers at Jesuit-run schools have seen an increase of 16% since 2013 (Secretariat for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education, 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). Though data was collected during a different time period it is in contrast to the 24.2% decline in enrollment in non-Jesuit Catholic schools since 2008 (McDonald & Schultz, 2018). These statistics raise questions about what Jesuit-run schools are doing differently and suggest the need to look at how the schools’ leadership creates sustainable schools (Bogel, 2012; Dickel & Ishii-Jordan, 2008; Huchting & Bickett, 2013; McCallum et al., 2013).

The Jesuits have operated with the beliefs that everyone is a leader, that leadership springs from within, that leadership is not an act but a way of living, and that
the task of becoming a leader is never complete (Lowney, 2003). These foundational beliefs, outlined by Lowney (2003), have been part of the Jesuit foundation since its naissance in 1541.

However, there is limited research on the impact of the Jesuit leadership framework on an organization’s growth and sustainability. Much has been written about the Jesuits, their history, their members, and their many contributions to society at large, as well as on the integration of the leadership framework into institutions and programs. However, little literature exists on the Jesuit leadership framework’s impact on the sustainability of institutions and organizations.

Huchting and Bickett (2013) researched how students in Loyola Marymount University’s Educational Leadership program connected the Jesuit notion of social justice with their work in the field, concluding that students’ engagement with the Jesuit notion of social justice is transformative in their professional work. Huchting and Bickett showed that the program meets its learning goals but cautioned against generalizing the findings, as students self-selected to be part of the program and were predisposed to embrace the program’s learning goals. While participants said the Jesuit notion of social justice informed their professional choices, the research does not address other areas of the Jesuit charism or leadership framework. Also, the conclusions focus on individual participants and how the program transformed their work but do not examine its impact on the success and sustainability of the participants’ respective organizations.

Similar to Huchting and Bickett (2013), McCallum et al. (2013) focused on integrating the Jesuit charism and leadership framework into Loyola Marymount
University Business School curriculum. This integration was driven by secular business schools’ conclusions that graduates lacked a greater sense of purpose, causing concern that graduates were ethically uninformed. McCallum et al. suggested a path for future research by discussing how business schools could integrate the charism and leadership framework into their respective curricula. Much of their discussion is aspirational in nature, with no evidence of whether the integration had the intended impact on the graduates and their future work. Bogel (2012), McCallum et al., and Huchting and Bickett all highlighted participants’ positive perceptions when embracing the Jesuit charism and leadership framework, but did not address the impact of doing so on the sustainability of the institution.

In a mixed methods study, Arceo (2010) looked at the self-perceptions of seven Jesuit university presidents in Mexico, addressing a gap in the research on the Jesuit leadership framework. The universities themselves were Jesuit-run, but the university presidents who participated were laymen. The author concluded that collaborative lay presidents who embrace the Jesuit charism, leadership framework, and pedagogy are the most successful at offering a strong future for their institution and supporting its sustainability.

Arceo’s results are mirrored in the work of Garcia-Tunon (2008), who examined the 25-year presidency of Fr. Marcelino Garcia at Belen College Preparatory in Miami, Florida. Garcia-Tunon provides evidence that justifies describing Fr. Garcia as an outstanding leader who is visionary, goal-oriented, accessible, and adroit. Bolman and Deal (2002) identify these qualities and the four frames of leadership (political frame,
human-resource frame, structural frame, and symbolic frame) as essential to successful leadership.

In addition, the evidence confirms that the permeation of Jesuit charisms throughout the school supported a culture of innovation while honoring the school’s history and tradition (Garcia-Tunon, 2008). This case study suggests that the Jesuit charism and leadership framework support school sustainability. However, it does not consider the Jesuit leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003). Though the conclusions offered are informative, additional research must be completed on the charism and leadership offered by the Jesuits with regard to the sustainability of parochial elementary schools.

In general, there is a lack of literature on the impact of the Jesuit leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003) on parochial elementary schools’ sustainability. Arceo (2010), Bogel (2012), Dickel and Ishii-Jordan (2008), Garcia-Tunon (2008), McCallum et al. (2013), and Huchting and Bickett (2013) all highlighted the widespread embrace of the Jesuit charism and leadership and their impact on an institution’s sustainability. However, no current research examines the specific leadership tenants as defined by Lowney. Nor does current research consider the impact of the Jesuit charism and leadership framework on parochial schools. There is literature, however, on each individual tenet of the Jesuit leadership framework: love, ingenuity, heroism, and self-awareness.

**Love-driven Leadership**
Lowney (2003) explained that love-driven leadership is present when a leader envisions others’ talents and potential, possesses the courage to unlock that potential, and maintains loyalty to energize and unite their team. Amabile (1997), Dennis and Bocarnea (2005) and Greenleaf (2002) all offered research on the servant leadership theory, suggesting that leaders who show their followers care, compassion, and love create a more productive, innovative, and empowering culture. Uusiautti and Määttä (2013) examined the level of love and care experienced in Finnish schools and concluded that high levels of love and care for students and teachers improve student learning. Also, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) conducted a quantitative study examining the factors of servant leadership and the impact of each factor on an organization’s success. These findings demonstrate that empathy and love are statistically significant factors in a leader’s success.

**Ingenuity**

Early Jesuits prized personal and institutional agility, and this made their missionaries comfortable in a rapidly changing world, as they were quick to adapt, flexible, and open to new ideas (Lowney, 2003). In short, they embraced a culture of ingenuity, where members showed “readiness to cross the world at a moment’s notice in full-hearted pursuit of a good opportunity” (Lowney, 2003, p. 127). Amabile (1997), Bowman (2005), DiLiello and Houghton (2006), Kanter (1983), and Pardey (2007) all supported the importance of ingenuity, creativity, and innovation for a leader’s success and an organization’s sustainability.

**Heroism**
As Lowney (2003) explained, “Leaders imagine an inspiring future and strive to shape it rather than passively watching the future happen around them. Heroes extract gold from the opportunities at hand rather than waiting for golden opportunities to be handed to them” (p. 134). This notion of heroism is presented in Conger’s (1999) research on charismatic leadership and has been shown to impact leadership in schools (Garcia-Tunon, 2008), in the academic and professional spheres (Efthimiou, 2017), and on the battlefield during World War II (Wansink et al., 2008). The literature has also emphasized heroism’s role in ensuring the well-being of the individual, organization, and society at large (Efthimiou, 2017). The notion that heroism is important for allowing an individual to be viewed as a successful leader, as well as for characterizing an organization’s growth under their leadership as positive, is common in the literature.

**Self-awareness**

The final tenet of the Jesuit leadership framework, self-awareness, allows leaders [to] thrive by understanding who they are and what they value, by becoming aware of unhealthy blind spots or weaknesses that can derail them and by cultivating the habit of continuous self-reflection and learning. Only the person who knows what he or she wants can pursue it energetically and inspire others to do so as well. Only those who have pinpointed their weaknesses can conquer them. These may seem like obvious principles, but they are rarely heeded in practice (Lowney, 2003, p. 27).

Badaracco (1998) and Wildermuth and Wildermuth (2006) both offered findings that align with Lowney (2003); all three highlight that self-awareness allows leaders to
navigate enigmatic problems that are professionally and ethically complex, as well as fraught with ambiguity. In his speech to West Point cadets, Deresiewicz (2014) echoed Ignatius Loyola’s belief in quiet self-examination through spiritual exercises (reflections and meditations originally gathered by Ignatius Loyola). The impact of this practice can be seen in research by Lecourt and Pauchant (2011), who showed the impact of self-awareness on a leader’s ability to keep an organization sustainable and healthy.

Research has demonstrated the positive impact that each of Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets can have on organizations’ and leaders’ success. However, there is no research independent of Lowney (2003) that examines how the four tenets support organizations’ sustainability when embraced collectively. There is, however, literature on the positive impact of the Jesuit charism on schools’ sustainability.

**Jesuit Charism and Pedagogy**

The Jesuit charism is embodied in the ideals set forth by founder Ignatius Loyola in 1541 and drives the society’s work, life, and approach to education to this day. Each Jesuit school expresses the charism differently. In their literature, the Jesuits provide guidelines on the order’s charism, but do not offer specific outlines (Jesuits.org, 2018). This has allowed each Jesuit institution to articulate the charism using language and a format conducive to their locale, though there is often tremendous overlap. This study uses Creighton University’s expression of the charism, summarized in the following five categories:

1. *Magis*, always striving for excellence
2. Being a man or woman for others, especially the poor or marginalized
3. *Cura personalis*, focusing on the whole person and ensuring they are respected and cared for
4. *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (AMDG), ensuring that all one does is for the greater glory of God

5. Being an agent of change and teaching others to think critically and responsibly and to consider one’s actions on moral and ethical issues (2018)

This charism is infused into all Jesuit schools’ culture and specifically into their unique pedagogy. Secularly, pedagogy is a general term that refers to the actions and decisions taken by a teacher to influence the learner (Child Australia, 2017). In contrast, the Jesuits define pedagogy as

> the way in which teachers accompany learners in their growth and development.

Pedagogy, the art and science of teaching, cannot simply be reduced to methodology. It must include a world view and a vision of the ideal human person to be educated (International Commission on the Apostolates of Jesuit Education (ICAJE), 1993, p. 5).

Pedagogy as defined by the Jesuits is a continuation of the original Jesuits’ purpose in opening schools: to transform how youth look at themselves and other human beings, social systems and societal structures, the global community of humankind, and the whole of natural creation (ICAJE, 1993). Ignatian pedagogy argues that modern education and the pedagogy experienced by students in the classroom are too often transactional (ICAJE, 1993). In contrast, Jesuit educators are challenged through Ignatian pedagogy to have transformational aspirations for their students (ICAJE, 1993). This purpose was succinctly summarized by Fr. Jose Arrupe (1973) when he challenged all Jesuit educators to help their students become men and women for others.
Chubbuck (2007) examined pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the Jesuit pedagogy and the goal of teaching social justice. Her results indicate that these teachers appreciate and support the Jesuits’ pedagogical approach, but are also skeptical about integrating the aspirational pedagogy into the classroom when considering the demands of teaching the traditional curriculum (Chubbuck, 2007). Additional research on how pre-service teachers do or do not integrate the Jesuit pedagogical framework into their future teaching is needed. Further, there is no discussion about whether the pre-service teachers aimed to work in parochial or Catholic schools. Tuohy (2015) supported Chubbuck’s argument that the Jesuit charism and pedagogical approach are at the core of a complete education and should not be sacrificed, but no connection is made between the Jesuit charism and the overall success of the school. Neither author offers qualitative or quantitative evidence of how the charism, pedagogy, and the sustainability of schools are connected.

Dickel and Ishii-Jordan (2008) examined the increase in distance learning programs at Jesuit institutions. The novelty of distance learning raises questions about how to best ensure the curriculum offered through the Jesuit charism is not just learned but also translates into real-life action (Dickel & Ishii-Jordan, 2008). The study confirmed that it is possible and beneficial for the charism to be effectively integrated into distance learning course work. Additional research is needed on the impact of the Jesuit charism and leadership framework on the sustainability of programs, as well as on how the integration of the charism into distance programs impacts students’ future work.
Finally, Bogel (2012) examined the integration of the Jesuit charism into school libraries and concluded that the integration of the Jesuit charism into libraries’ programs offers learning spaces that meet individual student needs and cultivate the personal interests of students. However, the research does not offer evidence that student learning or engagement is improved by integrating the Jesuit charism into the learning environment.

Conclusion

Since the 1960s, enrollment in Catholic schools has declined—in recent years, rapidly (Murnane & Reardon, 2018). In 2018, the National Catholic Education Association cited the high cost of Catholic schools, the loss of clergy, sex and financial scandals, and an increasingly secular society as the primary reasons for the decline (McDonald & Schultz, 2018). This chapter has examined research on Catholic school sustainability models, leadership’s role in school sustainability, and the Jesuit charism and leadership framework and their impact on institutions’ success and sustainability. Existing research offers possible solutions but fails to demonstrate whether they would in fact reverse the negative enrollment trend. Furthermore, there is no current literature on whether the leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003) would impact Catholic elementary schools’ sustainability. Conclusions reached in the existing literature add to the collective knowledge but confirm the need for additional research to inform the management and oversight of parochial schools and support their sustainability.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This multiple case study was carefully designed to adhere to academically rigorous standards. The methodology supported data triangulation that allowed for a high level of reliability and validity, as well as achieving the necessary data saturation levels for sound results and conclusions. Participant selection, data collection tools, interview protocols, and procedures were carefully managed to protect the integrity of the study and its methodology.
Research Question and Hypotheses

The central research question that guides this multiple case study is as follows:

How does embracing Jesuit charism and Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets support the efforts of three northern California Jesuit elementary/middle schools to remain viable and support their respective sustainability?

Research Design

This dissertation in practice is a qualitative study that uses a multiple case study methodology. Yin (2009) stated that case studies—whether single or multiple—are a preferred methodology when the posed research question involves a “how” or “why” and the focus is a current, real-life phenomenon. Gustafsson (2017) supported the use of a multiple case study when the research question requires an examination of the similarities and differences between cases, asserting that it increases the reliability of the results and helps the researcher show the value of the information shared. Using Gustafsson as a guide, this multiple case study was designed to provide the highest level of reliability in the results and to offer conclusions of value to others.

The study focuses on three schools (i.e., cases) selected based on specific criteria. Each selected case is a K–8 or 6–8 Catholic school in northern California whose leadership has a history of or reputation for embracing the Jesuit charism and leadership framework, as identified by authorities in their local archdioceses. Following formal IRB approval, the researcher reached out to schools to procure participation (Appendix A). After securing each school’s participation, confidentiality agreements (see Appendix B) were signed. The participation of each school involved interviews with the school
leadership and 2–3 representative teachers from each school. The interviews and observations were used collectively to elicit evidence and data on the historical and prospective trends in enrollment and school finances to establish a sense of the level of sustainability of each school. A look at each school principal’s length of service, the enrollment, and financial data are integrated into the study’s final results. The focus is on data from between 2014 and 2019.

Establishing the correct level of data saturation and data triangulation was crucial for ensuring the validity of the results. Fusch et al. (2015) discussed the ambiguity that can occur when trying to establish the appropriate level of data saturation in a case study. Guest et al. (2006) likewise stated that saturation is achieved when there is no new data, themes, or coding, and when others are able to replicate the study. Dibley (2011) added that the data collected must be of high quality and reach the necessary quantity. The ambiguity of data saturation was overcome by conducting structured interviews and asking multiple participants the same questions (Fusch et al., 2015). Gathering data from multiple sources and perspectives establishes data triangulation and allows for highly reliable findings (Denzin, 2012; Stavros & Westberg, 2009). To further bolster the reliability and validity of the study, the researcher performed member checking after transcribing the interviews. This allowed participants to receive their respective interview transcript, review it for accuracy, and confirm that it correctly reflects their experiences.

Completion of the member-checking process helped yield more accurate results, thereby making the study more rigorous (Birt et al., 2016). Achieving the necessary level of data saturation, using structured interviews, allowing for member checking, and
triangulating data allowed the study to achieve the desired and appropriate level of academic rigor.

The researcher conducted interviews that provided an understanding of the schools’ leadership from a variety of perspectives. The data collection included interviews with the school leadership. In addition, the researcher conducted onsite observations to look for visible signs of the Jesuit charism on the school campus; evidence of how the Jesuit leadership framework impacts classroom culture, is visible in the interactions between community members, and is integrated into teachers’ lesson plans; and outward signs of a sustainable school. These interviews and observations ensured the necessary data saturation and strong data triangulation, which ultimately supported the reliability and validity of the final results.

**Participants/Data Sources**

Patton (2002) recommends that researchers use purposeful sampling in qualitative research when there is a need for information-rich cases and when resources are limited. Following this recommendation, this researcher used criterion-based selection to identify the study’s three cases. Criterion-based case selection focuses on identifying cases that meet a predetermined set of criteria and is commonly used to improve the level of rigor in case study research (Patton, 2002). Specifically, this type of case led to the selection of three northern Catholic elementary schools to serve as the cases for this study. For this study, participating schools are either K–8 or 6–8 schools, embrace a mission and philosophy that honors the Jesuit charism, and have leadership that model themselves after the Jesuit leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003). Outreach to northern
California arch/dioceses identified 11 schools that met the established criteria. Following outreach to the 11 schools 3 agreed to be part of this multiple case study. The goal of working with schools with different demographics was achieved; and this will be discussed further later in this dissertation in practice.

Outreach to northern California dioceses provided initial insight into schools and principals that fit the criteria needed to complete the study (Appendix A). Once potential participant schools were identified, this researcher sent introductory emails to their principals (Appendix A). If needed, these emails were followed by a phone call so that a fuller explanation could be provided and questions efficiently answered. Once the principals agreed to participate, formal written approval from schools’ leadership was obtained. Once written permission was received the data collection process began in earnest.

Observations focused on each school’s sustainability and on visible signs of the Jesuit charism on the school campus. These observations were scheduled on the same days as the interviews, to allow for efficient data collection and use of resources. The principals were asked to identify 2–3 teacher representatives for individual interviews. Interviews with teachers and principals were completed as efficiently as possible. The interview questions were first beta-tested with several professional colleagues of the researcher to ensure that the formal interviews were as efficient and productive as possible; the beta-testing phase examined the phrasing, tone, pace, and organization of the interview questions. Each highly structured interview lasted for 45 to 60 minutes, allowing the researcher to confirm that the information gathered during observation
sessions and interviews met the quality and quantity requirements needed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study and its results.

**Data Collection Tools**

The data collection tools were organized in a manner that provided valid and reliable results. In addition, the tools allowed for the necessary data saturation levels, replication of the study, and expected data triangulation. The tools used to achieve these goals included highly structured interviews, observation forms and checklists, interview recording tools, transcription services, confidentiality forms, and memoing journals.

Interview questions were open-ended with standard follow-up probes and were organized by topic (Appendix C). Confidentiality agreements were signed in advance of each interview, and the agreements were reviewed with each participant at the start of their interview (Appendix D). An iPad using the “Rev” app was used to record the interviews, which were later transcribed. Immediately following the interview, the recordings were checked to confirm that the recorder had functioned properly. No problems occurred and the researcher quickly sent the interviews for transcription by Rev.

Data collected during onsite school observations used the established observation form (Appendix C). In addition, the researcher took pictures using her iPhone to reinforce notes taken during the observations. The observations were used to support data
triangulation and to provide information on both the visible signs of the Jesuit charism on the respective school campuses and the outward signs of a sustainable Catholic school.

Several electronic tools helped the researcher organize and analyze data. The website Rev recorded and transcribed the interviews. Once the transcriptions were complete, Atlas.ti software coded both the interviews and observations. In addition, Google Docs provided a memoing journal that allowed for a reflexive approach to the data collection process (Birks et al., 2008). The memoing journal provided important recollections and details about the research process that allowed for a more accurate description of the process.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Following formal permissions from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher gathered data at the respective school sites. This study provided data to the researcher on the sustainability of the schools, their integration of the Jesuit charism, and the impact of the Jesuit leadership framework on their sustainability. Observations; interviews with principals, teacher representatives, and superintendents; and memoing all contributed to the data collection.

The interviews were structured and designed to last 45 to 60 minutes (Appendix A). The interview structure followed the recommendations from Jacob and Furgerson (2012):

- Keep the questions open-ended.
- Begin with easy-to-answer questions and move toward more complex questions.
- Use big, expansive questions that will encourage participants to offer robust, thoughtful answers.
Create probes or prompts for each question to keep the interview focused and on track.
Stay flexible, and allow for the interview to go in a different direction based on answers given.
Do not let the interview go on for too long.

To ensure that the participants were as comfortable as possible, the interviews took place in the classroom or office that was most convenient for the interviewee. At the start of the interview, the researcher asked each interviewee to provide some background information, including details on their educational background, professional experience, and recent professional development opportunities (Appendix A). Once the participant’s background was established, qualitative interview questions determined the impact of the Jesuit charism and the school leadership on the school’s sustainability.

As the interviews were completed, they were submitted to Rev for transcription. Once the researcher received the transcribed interviews, they were sent to the interviewees for review, to ensure that the collected data was correctly recorded and reflected the full thoughts and ideas of the participants. Following each interview, a note of thanks was sent to the participant to show appreciation for their time and participation.

Both the interview transcripts and observation forms were designed to be analyzed in multiple rounds of coding using Atlas.ti software. Multiple sources of data and multiple rounds of coding support the reliability and validity of the results and conclusions of this DIP. The researcher added notes and reflections to the memoing journal as the rounds of coding were completed. Birks et al. (2008) offered a mnemonic device as a guide for what to include in a memoing journal: mapping research activities, extracting meaning from the data, maintaining momentum, and ongoing communication.
This memoing journal supported the research process and served as field notes documenting it. In addition, reflections on interview transcripts and the coding process allowed the research to identify bias and limit its impact on the analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

It was important to work with the IRB to ensure that ethical concerns were addressed appropriately. An informed consent and confidentiality agreement was created and presented to everyone invited to participate in the study (Appendix B). Participating administrators and teachers completed the interview consent and confidentiality forms prior to the interviews. As part of the process, the anonymity of all participants was preserved and their names changed in the report of the study’s results. All data were electronically stored on the researcher’s computer and on remote servers to ensure the cross reference of material could not be completed and participant anonymity was preserved. Both the computer and the electronic files are password-protected to ensure that the data are secure and to maintain the expected level of confidentiality.

**Summary**

This qualitative study was designed to learn how embracing the Jesuit charism and Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets in three northern California Catholic elementary or middle schools supports each school’s efforts to be viable and sustainable for years to come. The tools, the approach to data analysis, and the choice of data sources supported the reliability and viability of the study, and ensured that rigorous academic research standards were upheld and IRB expectations were met. In designing this study, the researcher worked to honor how Hurston (2006) described research: “formalized
curiosity . . . poking and prying with a purpose. It is a seeking that he who wishes may know the cosmic secrets of the world and they that dwell therein” (p. 143).
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

How does embracing the Jesuit charism and Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets support the efforts of three northern California Jesuit elementary/middle schools to remain viable and promote their respective sustainability? Over the course of two months, interviews were conducted at three unique school sites in the hope of answering this question. As the data were analyzed and the interviews coded, consistent themes emerged. This analysis offered information and conclusions that allowed the researcher to better understand the sustainability of Catholic elementary schools. This case study allowed for insights into how three schools that differ in their economic, ethnic, and structural make-up worked towards or supported their school’s sustainability.

Presentation of the Findings

The names and schools of the individuals interviewed have been changed in order to honor the confidentiality agreement. The researcher conducted interviews at three different northern California Catholic elementary or middle schools. Each was chosen due to its identification with the Jesuit charism, the grade levels taught, and its reputation for leadership following the Jesuit leadership framework, as outlined by Lowney (2003). Table 1 offers a basic set of facts about each school that provide insight into the foundational similarities and differences between them. While there are differences among the schools studied, they each share a connection and history with the Jesuit charism.
Table 1

*School Demographic Information, Governance, and Funding Models*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Category</th>
<th>St. Xavier</th>
<th>St. Joseph</th>
<th>Our Lady of the Lake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment as of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2019</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of establishment</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2001 (Boys) and 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Girls)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Model</td>
<td>Parochial</td>
<td>Parochial</td>
<td>Overseen by Jesuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overseen by diocese</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>overseen</td>
<td>(no pastor with some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and managed by Jesuits</td>
<td></td>
<td>by diocese</td>
<td>diocesan oversight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City size</td>
<td>Over 500,000 / suburban school</td>
<td>Over 1 million / suburban</td>
<td>Over 1 million / urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment level</td>
<td>100% with waiting list</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100% with waiting list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic level</td>
<td>Mid-high socio-economic</td>
<td>Mid-low socio-economic</td>
<td>Low socio-economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Demographics</td>
<td>75% - Caucasian</td>
<td>42% - Latinx</td>
<td>98% - Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>29% - Asian</td>
<td>2% - Filipino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8% - Mixed Race</td>
<td></td>
<td>18% - Mixed Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% - Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>9% - Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Source</td>
<td>Majority tuition and fundraising subsidy</td>
<td>Majority tuition, some fundraising and diocese subsidy</td>
<td>Fundraising (97%) and 3% tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly base tuition</td>
<td>$5,600 (in-parish) - $7,950 (out-of-parish)</td>
<td>$7,717</td>
<td>Below $1,000 a month per student (94% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch and breakfast)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the schools themselves, the individuals interviewed are a diverse group with different backgrounds, understandings of Jesuit leadership and its charism, and levels of experience, as shown in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Years of Experience in Education</th>
<th>Years at the School</th>
<th>Teaching assignment</th>
<th>Highest Level of Ed</th>
<th>Credential(s) Held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Brady</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Lake</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>MA in education</td>
<td>Teaching and admin credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Manning</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Lake</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>6th grade HR / ELA and SS</td>
<td>MA in teaching</td>
<td>In process of obtaining CA Teaching Credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Morris</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Lake</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>7th grade HR / Math and Tech.</td>
<td>MA in history</td>
<td>Single-subject Teaching Credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Torres</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Lake</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>6th HR / Science</td>
<td>MA in Theology</td>
<td>Multi-subject Teaching Credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Coleman</td>
<td>St. Xavier</td>
<td>33 years</td>
<td>33 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>MA in Ed Administration</td>
<td>Teaching and Admin Credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Britten</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2nd grade</td>
<td>BA and working towards an MA at the time of the interview</td>
<td>Working towards multi-subject credential at the time of the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rice</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>Masters in ED</td>
<td>Multi-Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. McGreary</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Masters in ED</td>
<td>No credentials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The unique experiences, amount of time in the profession, background attending or working with and for Catholic schools, education level, and credentialing all helped inform the dynamic feedback offered in the interviews, which were analyzed and coded in four separate stages, as suggested by Patton (2002). The first round of coding involved identifying and coding the recurring regularities. Two criteria were used during the first round of coding: internal homogeneity, or the extent to which data belonged in a certain category, and external heterogeneity, or the extent to which differences among codes are bold and clear (Patton, 2002).

The second round of coding commenced with a focus on prioritizing the codes. This illuminated which codes were most important to identify the themes and patterns that informed the conclusions and results of the study. During this second round of coding, 954 quotations were analyzed and categorized. Table 3 lists the categories identified in decreasing order of frequency:

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Numbers of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesuit charism modeled by leadership</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Clergy</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection / Self-examination</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table provides information about the interviewees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Credentials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Kramer</td>
<td>St. Xavier</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>HR / Humanities, Masters in ED, Multi-credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Fincher</td>
<td>St. Xavier</td>
<td>34 years</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>Kindergarten, BA, No credentials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the third round of coding, the categories and codes were reviewed, with a focus on identifying larger themes. The codes were then narrowed into the following five themes:

1. Strong connection between clergy and school
2. The Jesuit charism is modeled and highlighted
3. Principals use of Lowney’s Jesuit tenets of love, heroism, self-reflection, and ingenuity
4. Partnerships and unique funding sources ensure long-term school sustainability
5. Knowing and articulating the school’s mission.

The final round of coding examined the divergence of the data, flushing out the identified patterns and identifying a high level of redundancy to meet the saturation requirements. There were 123 additional quotations with codes that did not occur with regular frequency and lacked enough support to be included. With this final step, the coding process concluded and the five identified themes were confirmed. The themes are summarized below.

**Theme 1: Strong Connection between Clergy and School**

The first theme revolves around the role and function of the clergy at each site differing widely. St. Xavier has 4 full-time Jesuit priests supporting the church and school. The principal and teachers of St. Xavier described the clergy’s active role in the classroom, attendance at community meetings, and high level of engagement in fundraising efforts. Our Lady of the Lake is overseen by a Jesuit deacon who serves as
the school’s president. In this role, the main focus of the deacon is to bring in donations while meeting the spiritual needs of the school. As Ms. Manning stated, “Development of our school is managed by a board of directors . . . . [the] president oversees the development . . . . [and] is responsible for making sure that there is enough funding for each student. Bottom line. That's his job. It's about $20,000 per student.” Ms. Manning also discussed the important message the president shares during school Mass: “In mass today, I think he [the school president] probably said, ‘I love you’ and ‘we love you as your leaders of school.’”

In contrast, the role of the clergy at St. Joseph’s is the most limited of the three schools examined. As Ms. Brittan stated, “Our pastor is a little bit less involved than a traditional Catholic school parochial school. Our pastor doesn't have too much involvement in the leadership of the school.” Ms. Brittan went on to explain how the school is governed by the local diocese, per the establishment of an initiative that not only changed the governance of the school but also impacted its academic program:

Our pastor doesn't have too much involvement in the leadership of the school.

Like I said, the . . . initiative is [that] about half, I would say, of the diocesan schools . . . are under the Drexel initiative. One of the associate superintendents kind of has the rein over those . . . schools, so we kind of report to them.

Under this initiative, however, the pastor supports the school as a spiritual leader and serves at the weekly school Masses. These sentiments are supported by Ms. Rice’s statement:
Unfortunately, we don't have as strong of a connection with the pastors. We do see them on Mass, but that's the extent of that. They'll sometimes come over to our school if we invite them, but they don't really engage unless that invitation is made. He [the principal] makes the decisions for everyone in regards to money and budget.

The initiative altered the school’s governance model and resulted in a growing division between the school and church communities, as Ms. Rice said: “Since the initiative has taken over, from my understanding, I don't think they [the parish] feel as welcomed.” The principal shared that he struggles with enrolling families from the church in the school due to the struggling connection. Mr. McGreary asked during the interview,

So why aren't the parishioners sending their kids to our school or why aren't they taking advantage of it? We announced it all the time. We talked to people about it all the time, but for whatever reason we don't typically get students who are parishioners coming through our door.

The lack of parish connection at St. Joseph was communicated, but Mr. McGreary made clear, “I think it's really important for the priests to take a more active role in the school.”

The clergy played a different role at each school. Despite the varying roles there was a unanimous belief in the importance of the clergy for the schools’ sustainability. Ms. Coleman said, “It all starts with the pastor, because if the pastor doesn’t believe in the school, nothing is going to happen.” All other interviews supported the notion that at schools where the clergy were highly involved, this involvement was widely applauded;
when clergy were less involved, it was seen as negatively impacting growth and sustainability.

**Theme 2: The Jesuit Charism is Modeled and Highlighted**

The impact of the Jesuit Charism on a school’s sustainability was the second theme identified. Interviewees from all three schools answered in the affirmative when asked if the Jesuit charism was a factor in their respective school’s sustainability. Ms. Coleman felt so strongly that she stated, “I would put everything, 100% of our sustainability, on the Jesuit charism.” Mrs. Kramer, a teacher at St. Xavier, agreed, and when asked if the Jesuit charism supported the school’s sustainability, provided the following answer:

I think it [the Jesuit charism] has a huge role, I do. I think that people . . . . It's a feeling you feel when you walk on campus. I think the idea of parents serving on different boards and teachers working directly with their students, the service projects that we do here. What we hear from parents after their kids graduated is kids leave here wanting to do more and wanting to serve others and wanting to still be involved in making the world a better place, not just going on to the next education place.

Ms. Brady, the principal of Our Lady of the Lake, came to a similar conclusion when asked if the Jesuit charism provides her the tools and resources to be sustainable:

“Absolutely . . . . I feel like if I had, if I was having an issue with a president or [someone else,] they're people that I could call; I almost would probably call them first, then the diocese.” Interesting comments made by Mr. Torres and Mr. Morris—both from Our
Lady of the Lake—focused on the notion that the charism provided the tools, vision, and resources they needed to do their work, but also offered them the freedom to teach the charism and work with students in an authentic manner. Mr. Torres stated, “I think through them [school leadership] and learning, they [school leadership] do their best to allow us to live that out.” In his interview, Mr. Morris shared the following sentiment when discussing the Jesuit charism:

It’s very open to the factors that they are willing to help out in any way possible . . . we can approach him [the president] on any topic and get some feedback of what you're thinking you should teach in these different rooms, and they definitely have a tendency of being very theological but also very smart about their ideology. So it's actually a welcome kind of discussion other than just, "Hey, this is the way it is." We want to welcome you into this community and this is what we do and let me hear what you think.

The teachers felt this freedom, combined with the charism, was a reason for their school’s high level of sustainability.

At Our Lady of the Lake, the charism is an ingrained piece of the school’s identity and mission and serves a guide for the community. The charism drives the faculty and staff, guides the school’s mission, and encourages the sponsorship efforts of the school. The principal, Ms. Brady, when discussing the charism, shared that it is “kind of just being open to growth or open to wanting more for them, wanting more for yourself. What can we do to better the school, better their lives . . . the Jesuit charism sort of is propelling
you.” Ms. Brady also talked about the support the school receives from the nearby Jesuit high school:

[the Jesuit high school and university] is so generous with us. So they basically let us use their facility when it's not in use, like for our major donor event, part of Fiesta in the spring. So we hold it there. We have had shared faculty, which has been phenomenal because our kids have gotten to know some of the high school teachers but at the same time [the Jesuit high school] is paying for them.

The impact of the Jesuit charism on her leadership was also something Ms. Brady brought forth: “I try to set that example and that expectation because it is different, we're not working in silos here.”

Mr. Morris, a teacher at Our Lady of the Lake, shared how the Jesuit charism supported the school not just through the articulation of its mission but also through needed partnership. Mr. Morris talked of how Our Lady of the Lake would partner often with [the Jesuit high school] as well as [the Jesuit university]. One of their two good institutions that we can draw from here. So it's nice to have two very sustained Jesuit institutions close that can help us [and] provide us with any questions or any direction. We do have a gentleman here . . . who is studying all the activities of the Jesuit and he provides us the latest and greatest on all the activities of the Jesuits. He actually does go through the process of teaching all this, all the religion classes. So it's done from a Jesuit standpoint in regards to what are the philosophical aspects of Catholicism.
In addition, the charism is seen in the classroom. Ms. Manning discussed how Our Lady of the Lake incorporated the examen into the schedule: “So it's Saint Ignatius’ examen . . . we do it as a whole school, it's everyone in their classrooms and it's student-led.” At our Lady of the Lake the Jesuit charism was present, and Mr. Torres argued that because of the charism, “There is joy in the community here.”

Similar to Our Lady of the Lake, the teachers and principal at St. Xavier saw the Jesuit charism as central to the school’s mission and sustainability. When discussing her role as Director of Ignatian Formation, Ms. Kramer shared the enthusiasm she felt for being trusted to work with staff in a way she found productive: “I think we are really good about continuing, looking at ways that we can improve and going in that direction . . . . still pushing forward and still trying to get better.” At St. Xavier, the charism permeates every aspect of the school and is embraced with tremendous enthusiasm. The principal, Ms. Coleman, began her discussion of the Jesuit charism by saying, “It's something that the staff and the children live 24/7. So, it's not just something . . . . It's not a textbook, it's not a religion. Like it's a breathing, living way of being.” Ms. Coleman continued on to say there is a “striving for excellence, living the Jesuit charism. So, being whatever you do, doing it to the best of your ability, service-oriented, caring about others, and nurturing others. And taking some time to reflect.” The teachers at St. Xavier also spoke positively about the Jesuit charism, with Ms. Kramer speaking passionately about the idea and practice of *cura personalis* as “the care for individuals in the place they’re at. I think Jesuits, whether you're at a Jesuit parish, a school, a priest, I think it's looking at the individual in mind, body, spirit, everything.”
Mrs. Fincher agreed with Ms. Coleman and Ms. Kramer, but expressed that she brought the Jesuit charism into the classroom differently. As a kindergarten teacher, she worked to create a foundation for students’ understanding of the charism:

That's how I present it to kindergartners at least. It's just a very special way of looking at the world and about seeing our role in it that God wants us to have.

And that caring for others is the main thing, is doing for others, service to others.

And that's just a way of life. It's just the way we live here in our school.

She discussed how she teaches students that God made everybody good and that we must treat each other with respect for that goodness. She felt this idea very deeply and several times during the interview said, “It's a special way.” This statement seemed to sum up the view of the Jesuit charism at St. Xavier.

The faculty as St. Joseph also felt that a connection to the Jesuit charism generally impacted a school’s sustainability. However, they struggled to specifically identify how it informed their daily work. When asked about the presence of the charism on campus, Ms. Britten shared, “Yeah, I think so. Like a little bit of a Jesuit presence when it comes to prayers.” Ms. Rice stated, “I think we try to advocate. I think we offer programs for families that might not have the financial needs to be here. I think we are an inclusive school.” However, Ms. Rice did see the Jesuit charism as aspirational: “I think that's what we're striving towards . . . through our mission statement.” This lack of connection was supported when visiting the campus, as there were no visible signs of the Jesuit charism, in contrast to the other schools participating in this study. However, Mr. McGreary did share that the Jesuit charism supported their admission efforts: “I think people hear Jesuit,
they hear Jesuit education, they hear Jesuit school, and that makes them think of Bellarmine and Santa Clara and USF and things like that.”

Each participating school saw the Jesuit charism as a positive force on their respective campus. For some participants, the charism inspired them in their daily work. For others, the charism informed the overall mission of the school community. The charism and the history many families have with the Jesuits is even seen as a driver for school admissions. The descriptions were all different, but the message of all eleven participants was consistent. All the participants saw the Jesuit charism as positively impacting their respective school and its growth.

**Theme 3: Principals Use the Lowney’s Jesuit Leadership Tenets of Love, Heroism, Self-reflection, and Ingenuity**

The positive impact the Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets of love, heroism, self-reflection, and ingenuity have on a school’s sustainability is the focus of theme three. Analyzing the interview transcripts showed that the specific leadership framework, as defined by Chris Lowney (2003), was a factor in a school’s sustainability. Two of the three schools were optimistic and confident in their level of sustainability. At both schools, teachers responded in the affirmative when discussing Lowney’s framework and whether the leadership they experienced aligned with it. Teachers at all three schools were clear that the success of the school and the principal’s leadership were directly linked.

Despite initial difficulty in understanding ingenuity and heroism, principals and teachers described there always being a desire to identify ways their respective school
could operate better, improve its respective programs, and enhance its Catholic identity.

Ms. Brady, with humility, tried to identify heroism in her own leadership practice:

The thing that comes to mind mostly with that is, I do get some pushback from the board, in that they would like to see enrollment higher. Why can't we help our kids? Because the enrollment was a lot higher at the school's inception. But since most of them, all of them are non-educators, [they] don't understand the needs of our population of learners and keeping our class size small and the ratio of small teacher to student [low] to bring them up [academically] . . . . So I would say making those unpopular decisions and trying to explain that. Of course I would love to help our kids, but I also know that you can only do so much. If I had a class, and I do teach a class of 35. It's a lot different than teaching a class of 14, when we separate the genders. So I don't necessarily know if I call that heroism, but it is something though, those are some of those hard decisions.

While Ms. Brady was unsure about her own heroism, Ms. Manning shared her view of both the principal and president as heroes:

I've seen them on the weekends when kids are having concerns at home or with their mental health, that they're visiting the families. They're going to the hospital. They're doing those kinds of things. So, in that respect, I think that from a leadership standpoint, they're definitely showing those heroic roles.

A similar sentiment was shared by Mrs. Kramer when describing the leadership offered by Ms. Coleman at St. Xavier as heroic:
There's definitely been situations that I know that Patty, with either parents, or any situation, that she has had to make hard decisions and definitely not the easiest, for the benefit of the school. And I know that it could have been a lot easier for her to just keep moving along with it, but it had to be done for the best benefit of the school.

Ms. Britten also highlighted Mr. McGreary’s handling of difficult situations as an example of showing heroism in his leadership:

[That] they are able to manage the parent community would, to me, reflect heroism, just based off of, they remain composed and stand their ground, but also are able to compromise and working with parents that might be coming in with a really strong opinion and thinking that you can't change their mind in any way, shape, or form, but a lot of the times reminding them that we all have your student’s interest in mind and how can we move forward and make our decisions based off the fact that we are in support of the same thing here?

In addition to heroism, ingenuity was also seen in the leadership of all three principals. Ms. Brady from Our Lady of the Lake talked of how the Jesuit province supports ingenuity and growth by encouraging collaboration between principals:

Magis, which is a third Jesuit charism word, which means more. Kind of just being open to growth or open to wanting more for them, wanting more for yourself. What can we do to better the school, better their lives? And when you put those three kinds of tenets of the Jesuit charism sort of propelling you and
then you've got these companions in school leadership, that's another big thing of the Jesuit charism. We have a CSL, it's Companions in School Leadership.

Teachers also observed ingenuity in the decisions made by the principals. Mr. McGreary did not describe himself using the term “ingenious”; however, his teachers did see ingenuity and creativity in his leadership. Ms. Rice said, “I think that he has brought a lot of creativity to the school.” This was confirmed more specifically by Ms. Britten when she discussed how discipline was managed:

We really try to do the restorative justice approach where, if there is a problem . . . . Restoring the harm is what we call it. And so, not just saying, well, they have two strikes, you're going to the office. More of like, let's pull you in. Let's see what happened.

Mrs. Fincher also saw ingenuity in Ms. Coleman’s leadership and described it from the teacher’s point of view: “We're never feeling like we're stuck in the mud. It's always full, let's find a different way to do it.” At Our Lady of the Lake, ingenuity from leadership was seen in the way teachers were encouraged to think and do their work. As Ms. Manning said,

I think just the fact that people think out of the box all the time and that if you're trying, if you're doing something one way and it doesn't work, it doesn't mean that you do it the same way until it does work, but that you find a different way of doing it.

However, it was with regard to Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets of love and self-examination that all participants talked in great depth about leadership at their respective
schools. All three schools highlighted love as a central part of the principal’s leadership. At Our Lady of the Lake, Ms. Brady’s goal was to ensure the teachers and students all feel loved: “You got to love every single one of them to their bone.” Mr. Torres articulated how the example of love trickled down to the classroom: “I'm not just teaching science. It's what is going on in this student's life that makes him or her this way. That sense of love.” These same sentiments were mirrored by Mrs. Manning. She highlighted how important it is for love to be part of how Our Lady of the Lake is led, as love is needed to sustain the community through their extended school day. As Ms. Manning stated,

We love you as your leaders of school maybe 30 times. I think it's spoken, but I think it's also shown by people taking the extra time. The kids are here from 7:30 until 5:00, 5:15 every day. So it does become more of a family feeling where that love is expressed.

This focus on love was also omnipresent among the leadership of St. Xavier, as outlined by Mrs. Kramer and Mrs. Fincher. Ms. Kramer shared,

[Ms. Coleman] loves this school. She loves her staff, she loves the kids. She is so devoted, and inspires all of us. I mean, if you . . . . I don't know if during your tour, walking out even on the playground, I mean, kids are running to her, and these are kids that maybe were in her office a few weeks ago. You know, maybe not for great reasons. But people know, and you have to feel that. You have to feel when you're really cared about.

These sentiments were supported by Ms. Fincher:
[Ms. Coleman] is just the example of love, I think, to all of us. She cares about those kids from day one. She's coming into the classroom a lot. I've had the three previous principals before her, none of them can come even close.

This demonstration of love from Ms. Coleman is seen as inspirational by the teachers.

The tenet of self-examination and self-reflection was described very specifically by all three participating principals as being central to their ability to be successful in their work. Ms. Coleman, Mr. McGreary, and Ms. Brady were very clear on how important it is for them to find moments of quiet reflection about important decisions. Mr. McGreary shared that “I've learned it is reflection and thought, and I don't like to make a rash decision. And so that's a big thing there. I know that we've also had decisions that were difficult decisions.”

Ms. Rice confirmed Mr. McGreary’s sentiments: “When presented a problem, he never responds in that moment. It's always, ‘Let me think about it,’ and then he has a reaction. They also are very responsive in our feedback.” Ms. Britten also highlighted the use of self-examination in Mr. McGreary and the vice-principal’s leadership: “Self-examination when it comes to just the way that they lead and the way that they carry out meetings and professional developments and whole staff projects.”

At Our Lady of the Lake, Ms. Coleman spoke of the impact of the Jesuit province on her approach to leadership and self-examination leadership: “Being open to growth or open to wanting more for them, wanting more for yourself. What can we do to better the school, better their lives?” Comments from Ms. Brady mirrored Ms. Coleman’s sentiment about how Jesuits West, a regional support for Jesuit institutions, encouraged her as a
leader and encouraged the school: “Whatever you do, doing it to the best of your ability, service-oriented, caring about others, and nurturing others. And taking some time to reflect.”

Practicing self-examination was also a focus of the teachers at St. Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake. Each shared that their respective principals encourage the examen in the classroom. Mrs. Manning stated,

That's a huge part of Jesuit education. I do that in my own classroom with every novel that we're reading. On a daily basis, I give them a prompt and I pull out a paragraph from what we read and they make a connection to themselves and then they reflect on that and write about that. They do that every day in my life class. As a whole school, on Wednesdays, traditionally we do an examen as a whole school.

Mrs. Kramer also mentioned the use of the examen at St. Xavier:

We do examens as part of Ignatian spirituality . . . that thinking about the best part of things, and then thinking about ways that things can change and how we're going to make it change for the better the next day, and I do think [Ms. Coleman] really runs her leadership like that.

Lowney (2003) argued that the Jesuits’ leadership tenets of heroism, self-reflection, ingenuity, and love were fundamental to the order’s success and that businesses and organizations could experience great sustainability if Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets were embraced. This contention was seemingly supported by the feedback provided in the conducted interviews. When pushed, the principals saw
Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets ingrained in their work. However, it was the teachers who were more specific about how they each saw their respective principals bring Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets into their work as a leader. Further, the teachers saw that by ingraining Lowney’s four tenets, the principals were supporting the schools’ sustainability.

**Theme 4: Partnerships and Unique Funding Sources Ensure Long-term School Sustainability**

Theme four highlights how participants recognized that without partners and resources, the schools could not function. In the interviews, funding and resources were not always the focus when participants were asked about what it meant to be a sustainable school. However, interviewees highlighted funding and resources as an obstacle to sustainability and a concern mentioned by all three administrators interviewed. Each school has different sources of income, fundraising models, and enrollment levels, but participants from all three schools shared their worry about having the resources needed to maintain their respective school and support its growth.

Regardless of the worry expressed, when discussing their respective school’s sustainability, funding and resources were central topics that participants shared without prompting. Discussions of mission and teacher retention were shared more freely. However, during the interviews, all participants acknowledged that funding is an important consideration, and the principals specifically mentioned it as a regular concern. Both Ms. Coleman and Ms. Brady shared their own desire to emulate how other Jesuit schools’ endowments lessened the financial burdens school leaders had to carry. Both
principals also stated that collaborating with other Jesuit elementary schools on issues of advancement and funding was productive.

The discussion on endowments was a focus of Ms. Coleman. She expressed a constant concern with keeping tuition at an affordable level while working to offer teachers’ salaries that supported the school’s teacher recruitment and retention efforts. However, Ms. Coleman also mentioned what she had learned during collaborations with other Jesuit schools. She began by sharing, “My struggle . . . is my staff is so underpaid, and my aides are really underpaid,” and continued,

We all know tuition's going to keep rising, costs keep rising. And as endowments are so important . . . . But if you don't raise money for the endowment, or you don't know how to market yourself, or you don't . . . or you miss out on some gifts from families that might consider you, but if they don't even know . . . . So, there are some schools that, not in the . . . area, but that are, elementary schools, that are already at the principal/president model. And there's a Jesuit elementary school up in Seattle . . . that's amazing. Their endowment is $11 million at an elementary school.

Ms. Coleman also highlighted a recent meeting with Jesuits West that focused on school advancement:

I had a meeting yesterday that turned into a conversation about that [partnerships] with our executive director, who wants us to go back . . . a couple of us . . . to go back to this Partners in Mission Workshop in Boston. Because that's what . . . It's all about advancement.
Like Ms. Coleman, Ms. Brady from Our Lady of the Lake also looked to other Jesuit schools from which she could learn: “[some schools] are blessed with an endowment. So if those dollars are there as a nest egg, the math certainly works out . . . [it] would be good to explore”. Mrs. Brady continued that an endowment would “help with the sustainability of the school and the fundraising” and that “Jesuits West has been really instrumental in making sure the nativity schools are involved in all the dialogue and that there's content that's relevant to our schools and our needs.”

Though they had a different perspective, the teachers at St. Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake appreciated the importance of fundraising and supporting the school budget. Ms. Kramer, as a teacher at St. Xavier, shared an awareness of the budgetary issues facing the school as she praised the principal for “finding room in our budget to be able to hire our reading specialist and our resource teacher to be here four days a week versus only two days a week.” At St. Xavier, teachers shared their gratitude for the community fundraising efforts. As Ms. Fincher stated,

Our parent club is the fundraising body of our school. They raise, they do all the major fundraisers, and they're the ones that are getting all the volunteers organized and promoting all that and they raise a huge amount of money for us.

Ms. Fincher followed up by saying,

Look [at] all the programs that we are benefiting from this [fundraising]. We wouldn't have all the aids that we have. We wouldn't have Spanish, art, upper science, lower science, and technology. We wouldn't have all these PE, we
wouldn't have any of that without this income . . . . But everybody understands that's what it takes.

Ms. Kramer touched on the importance of managing the budget carefully: “Things fitting into a budget would be challenging for an administrator to do, but asking for parents and fundraising has . . . . You know, with its challenges and hard work, we do it.” Ms. Manning from Our Lady of the Lake also recognized the importance of the school managing its budget and the connection between this and the school’s sustainability:

Money has to come from somewhere else. So that's where, even, I mean, the parents can want it, the kids can want it, but if the donor factor were to change, then we would not be a sustainable school because you need to have that financial backing.

St. Joseph also had concerns about maintenance of the school budget. Mr. McGreary, whose efforts doubled enrollment at St. Joseph, shared the current precarious financial position of the school. While they are the beneficiary of diocesan subsidies, this arrangement is temporary and the school faces challenges with ensuring financial independence:

There still is a deficit. So the diocese has been funding the deficit and will continue to fund the deficit, but every year there's an expectation that the deficit shrinks and within the next few years, it needs to be zero. We need to have a balanced budget.

In the conversation about St. Joseph’s budget, Mr. McGreary saw two paths to helping with the budget challenges facing the school. First was discussion of an annual campaign:
“one of the things that [we] are working on is running a fundraising campaign annually to help with the budget.” Mr. McGreary also highlighted the support of a local foundation that provided funding for needed classroom renovation:

They redid the field for us, hundreds of thousands of dollars were pumped into the school. And then separately from that we secured money through another foundation to get new classroom desks and chairs. And so when the kids came back, it was like a brand new school.

Joining a unique diocesan initiative brought hope for sustainability at St. Joseph. In 2014, enrollment had dipped to 100 students and fear of closure was high. The diocese came to the pastor and offered the support of a new initiative that transferred governance to the school superintendent and provided technology, administrative support, and professional development for the teachers.

Ms. Britten highlighted that “those schools that are [part of the initiative] have kind of a different set of leadership, apart from the pastor of the school parish.” As Mr. McGreary said, “We have this great program in [the initiative], we have technology, we have art and PE and music and choir and things that schools in the other areas don’t.” Ms. Rice shared that “the school was close to closing because of leadership of an old principal. And so, we were down to eight kids in a classroom. We were very low. And Drexel came in with financing.” The collective feedback from St. Joseph provides some insight into the impact the initiative had on the school. However, feedback from the teachers confirms that the even with support from the initiative, the school struggles financially.
When asked about the St. Joseph budget, Ms. Rice described how the teachers understood it:

We're all very aware that we need more money to do the services that our students need. For instance, we used to have a reading specialist. We couldn't afford that anymore. Had to unfortunately cut that. We have had multiple meetings about things that we need as a staff to do our job correctly, and unfortunately there is a lack of funding in that aspect.

Ms. Britten’s comments regarding the school budget aligned with Ms. Rice’s: “It's kind of like an unspoken agreement among the teachers that [we] try to kind of pick and choose what you get reimbursed for because we know that money is tight.”

The three schools are very different with regard to size, populations served, and formulas for success. However, all three identified securing funding as an important challenge they must carefully manage. Each of the three schools looked to fundraising and the establishment of partnerships as a mechanism for providing resources to sustain the school’s operations, facilities, and programs.

**Theme 5: Knowing and Articulating the School’s Mission.**

Financial resources and partnership were seen as necessary for a school to be sustainable, but this case study’s participants saw the mission as central to sustainability. The principals and teachers from St. Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake all expressed confidence in their respective schools’ levels of sustainability and credited commitment to the school’s mission as a reason for this high level of sustainability. Ms. Coleman’s appreciation for the connection between St. Xavier’s mission and sustainability can be
seen in her creation of a Mission Effectiveness Committee on her advisory board. At Our Lady of the Lake, Ms. Brady saw “just having long term faculty and staff that are totally committed to the mission and when they're not and when the three that you talked to totally are, their hearts are in it” as the reason for Our Lady of the Lake’s sustainability. Ms. Brady also shared how she leans on the school’s mission when having to make difficult decisions, saying she is “very intentional about the decisions that we make. There is that period of discernment where we need to just kind of come to the table and hash things out. If this was the right direction to go.” Mr. Torres said of Our Lady of the Lake, “It's sustainable because that mission remains and people are able to really work at it.” The important role of the school mission was a focus of Mrs. Manning’s as well:

I try to live that out in my work here. There is joy in the community here. It is . . . . It's taken me years to really say this and to develop this, but I come to the school happy, glad. There is joy that comes out of it and I speak to that joy because of the mission.

In contrast to St. Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake, St. Joseph’s principal and teachers shared concern over the school’s level of sustainability. Mr. McGreary, when asked if he saw the school being sustainable, said, “Well, I would say we're trending in the right direction, but sustainability is going to be a challenge.” Ms. Britten, when asked if she saw St. Joseph as sustainable, said, “At this point, I do not.” Ms. Rice answered the same question, “I don't think we're where we need to be.” With these concerns regarding sustainability also came the observation that greater focus on the school’s mission was necessary.
When discussing the mission, Ms. Rice said, “We need to be very clear in what our mission is and what our long-term goal is. We did long-term, short term planning, and that's it, I'm pretty sure. So yeah, so with that, it's growing because we're very clear on where we are and where we need to be.” In addition, Ms. Britten highlighted how the administration during teacher coach sessions would do something to kind of bring back our purpose and our mission and I think that is really important and something that I didn't see last year, and I haven't seen or really heard from other teachers as well in kind of re-grounding why we're here.

Mr. McGreary’s comments aligned with the teachers at St. Joseph; the mission is “in a young state of that. I think there can definitely be more.”

Throughout the interviews, comments about the schools’ mission were not numerous, but they were consistent. The schools that maintained a view of themselves as sustainable also had a positive view of their mission and saw it as a focus of the work done on their respective campuses. In contrast, the school that articulated a weaker connection between the work done on campus and the mission did not see itself as being currently sustainable.

**Summary and Synthesis of Findings**

This case study has explored the role of the Jesuit charism and leadership framework in a school’s long-term sustainability. The researcher looked to answer the following question: how does embracing the Jesuit charism and Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets support the efforts of three northern California Jesuit elementary/middle schools to remain viable and support their respective sustainability? Structured interviews
with teachers and principals from three schools were conducted and allowed for the identification of factors that support a school’s long term sustainability.

Both St. Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake showed evidence of high levels of long-term sustainability. In contrast, St. Joseph’s shared that they have high hopes to continue their current trend toward establishing a high level of sustainability. This contrasting level of sustainability suggests that the Jesuit charism and Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets could have an impact on a school’s sustainability, but several other themes were identified as supporting their respective school’s sustainability:

1. Strong connection between clergy and school
2. The Jesuit charism is modeled and highlighted
3. Principals use Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets of love, heroism, self-reflection, and ingenuity
4. Partnerships and unique funding sources ensure long-term school sustainability
5. Knowing and articulating the school’s mission.

The participants provided experiences, observations, and thoughtful reflection that supported these conclusions and offered information to inform future work toward school sustainability. The necessary level of data saturation was reached, as information shared by participants showed consistent themes and patterns in their answers. However, a singular answer to the research question did not emerge. While there are patterns of factors that bolsters a school’s sustainability, a school’s path to sustainability must consider its unique story, history, and culture. However, the identified factors are informative. They offer schools areas on which to focus when looking to strategically and purposefully improve their level of sustainability.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Introduction

Catholic elementary schools across the United States are struggling to be sustainable. Prior research has highlighted the many paths to sustainability some that have the potentially of overwhelming a school and its leadership. The solution to school sustainability outlined in this chapter allows schools to avoid being overwhelmed and focus on implementing a clear and manageable plan.

Participating Jesuit schools helped the researcher identify five consistent factors that support a school’s sustainability irrespective the different socio-economic standings of their students, their diverse governance models, their various financial models, their unique histories, and their varying demographics. These five themes are as follows:

1. Strong connection between clergy and school
2. The Jesuit charism is modeled and highlighted
3. Principals use Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets of love, heroism, self-reflection, and ingenuity
4. Partnerships and unique funding sources ensure long-term school sustainability
5. Knowing and articulating the school’s mission.

With the pressures put on a school, addressing all five factors is a challenge. The solution presented in this dissertation was designed to offer schools a framework within which to address the five themes identified.

Purpose of the Study

This study used a case study design to examine three schools that embrace the Jesuit charism and determine if the leadership framework as defined by Lowney (2003), who argues that the Jesuits have been on a growth trajectory for 450 years, can offer today’s organizations a model for success. Using Lowney’s leadership framework, this study examined three Catholic elementary/middle schools in northern California that
embrace the Jesuit charism to determine if and how the Jesuit charism and the schools’ leadership frameworks support each school’s viability and sustainability.

Aim of the Study

Research has shown that Catholic elementary schools have been and can continue to be an important part of the American educational system. However, across the U.S., the Catholic school system has struggled to reverse negative enrollment trends that began in the 1960s. This study examined how the Jesuit approach to leadership impacts three Catholic elementary schools’ work to challenge national enrollment trends. A list of recommendations for how leaders in non-Jesuit Catholic schools can learn from the Jesuits’ success will be provided in the forthcoming pages. This dissertation in practice presents a proposal for future collaboration to support school sustainability.

Proposed Solution

The triangle is known to be the strongest shape as it does not alter and has a strong foundation. This strength is what Catholic elementary schools need to be sustainable and is the reason the triangle was used as an inspiration for the Triangle of Success. The Triangle of Success is a collaborative that provides a framework, network of support and bank of resources to support schools’ sustainability. As shown in Figure 1, the Triangle of Success embodies the Three Points of Success, which are charism, consistent guidance and regional support.
Figure 1

*The Triangle of Success*

The research conducted identified five themes that, when addressed by schools, can strengthen their sustainability. In considering a workable solution this researcher reflected on a mechanism to help interested schools embrace the five identified themes. During her time of reflection, the researcher continually returned to the words of Mrs. Brady:

I get a lot out of being with the Jesuits West schools. I don't know if it's just different than anything I've ever been to at the diocese and I've been part of the diocese for 17 years. It's just different.

The identification of the five themes, as well as Mrs. Brady’s words, led the researcher to question the important role Jesuits West played in two of the participating schools’ strong sustainability; note that the one participating school that struggled with their sustainability did not have a connection with Jesuits West. The Jesuits organize their institutions into provinces or regions with the purpose of providing guidance, resources
and professional development. The schools participating in this study work directly with the Jesuits West. Using Jesuits West as a model inspired the researcher in their development of the Triangle of Success as a solution to the problems of sustainability facing Catholic elementary schools.

By providing regional support, consistent guidance and a focus on charism the Triangle of Success presents a framework and the organization needed to strengthen a schools’ sustainability regardless of the different socio-economic standings of their students, their distinct governance models and financial models, their unique histories, and their varying demographics. Within this collaborative, schools would use the tools, partners, and mentor to address the five themes of sustainability identified in this study.

The first point of success is *charism*. A strong history with a charism that is consistent, viewed as aspirational by stakeholders, and reasonably flexible, and is used by the school as a guide in making decisions can help strengthen a school’s level of sustainability. The findings in this case study suggest that this focus could improve enrollment, partnership development, and focus on the mission, as well as collaboration with stakeholders in and outside the school community.

The second point of success is consistent consultation with and guidance by a mentor. Using the 21st Century Standards for Catholic Schools and the oversight model used by the Jesuit School Network as guides, it is possible to set an oversight plan that is manageable, viewed as supportive by schools, and growth-oriented. The interview transcripts did suggest a general disappointment in the support received from local dioceses. In contrast, Jesuit provinces were seen as supportive and helpful by local school
leadership. The proposed solution will look to use the Jesuit School Network model to provide productive consultation and guidance to schools.

The third point of success is a regional support network to encourage collaboration between participating schools. This last point of success is inspired by the work done by the various Jesuit provinces. The provinces’ support of schools is steeped in research on best practices, tools for mission formation, training, and collaboration between schools. The findings showed this work supported a culture of excellence and growth that enhanced the schools’ sustainability.

With each point of success, the five themes of sustainability can be addressed by participating schools. However, efforts require thoughtful, honest self-reflection. By engaging in each point of success, it will be possible to cultivate partnerships and collaboration outside the immediate school community, allowing for greater sustainability and support for the school’s mission. The work needed is multi-faceted and complex, but possible. However, schools will also need to know that establishing a model of sustainability takes time, and the school will need to establish reasonable timelines.

Support for the Solution

The Triangle of Success creates a framework, expectation, and vision for schools looking to become more sustainable and reverse their negative enrollment trends. In addition, it builds capacity within the school to effectively leverage the efforts of community stakeholders while honoring the unique history, culture, governance, and demographics of individual schools.
Britt (2013), Brinig and Garnett (2010), the Archdiocese of Chicago (2013), and Haney (2010) all claimed that the traditional model of parochial schools needs to be reconsidered, as it leads schools to struggle with enrollment and financial sustainability. Additional research by Nuzzi et al. (2008) showed that school finances and the model on which they are based were a concern for school leaders and that establishing regional cooperatives or partnerships would support school sustainability. The important role partnerships play in a school’s sustainability was also seen in research by Dallavis and Johnstone (2009). The literature review also highlighted that parochial school principals experience many challenges and are asked to be visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, and more (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Louis et al. (2010) articulated the importance of successfully managing these roles, finding school leadership second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning.

The Triangle of Success honors the importance of school leadership by addressing the needs prior research has identified as necessary for a school to fulfill in order sustain itself and by giving the leadership the tools needed to put the research into action. Study participants’ insights and feedback confirmed conclusions from prior research while also providing additional insight into what it takes to ensure a school’s sustainability: a focused charism, consistent consultation and guidance, and support from a regional province.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Solution
Diocesan and school administrators will be invited to participate in the Triangle of Success. For dioceses and schools interested in joining, work will need to be done to inform participants of how to prepare for the start of their work with the Triangle of Success and the timeline for the work they will be doing. While the Triangle of Success will be working directly with diocesan and school administrators the impact and perspective of teachers, students and parents on a school’s sustainability and viability must also be considered.

**Policies Influenced/Influencing the Proposed Solution**

Each diocese and school have a governance model, organizational structure, policies, and guidelines that will impact the work done with the Triangle of Success. The established structures will not be barriers to the work toward sustainability. Rather, they create a framework within which this work can be done. Communication between local Chanceries, school leadership, and the Triangle of Success will allow the established policies and structures to be understood and honored as work is done.

**Financial/Budget Issues Related to Proposed Solution**

The Triangle of Success would begin as a pilot program with initial funding provided by foundations such as the Hilton Foundation, Koch Foundation, and Healey Education Foundation. Initial funding would allow for school recruitment efforts and ensure the support provided requires little to no financial contribution from the participating schools. If the procurement of grant monies took longer than expected it would be wise for the Triangle of Success to find opportunities to achieve its stated objectives that do not require the grant monies.
Planning and organization for the pilot would be done on a voluntary basis by the researcher and recruited task force members. Identified funding would be used to support initial implementation, with a transition to a more professional model with paid staff to support newly identified members of the Triangle of Success. Efforts will need to be taken to identify additional funding as additional schools are added.

**Potential Barriers and Obstacles to Proposed Solution**

This research has identified three possible barriers to the success of the Triangle of Success. First, research has shown that parochial school principals have demanding jobs and, as Robinson et al. (1993) and Schafer (2004) noted, school leaders confront challenges involving funding, curriculum marketing, spiritual leadership, and unique governance models. These challenges, along with the limited time these leaders have, are barriers to their success when engaging with the Triangle of Success. Secondly, work will also need to be done to encourage engagement by the clergy connected to the diocese and schools to support principals. As noted during the interviews, the clergy are viewed as a vital part of a school’s sustainability and confirming their buy-in to the Triangle of Success is imperative. The third possible barrier is funding. The program funding was designed so participation would not drain money from participants’ budgets and obtaining grant money could be a barrier to offering training and support. The identified barriers are not insurmountable, but being aware of them so work can be done to address them early in the planning is essential.

**Implementation of the Proposed Solution**
Multiple stakeholders will be required to coordinate their efforts to ensure the work done with the Triangle of Success meets their goals. Work will be done to identify and recruit founding members to the Triangle of Success who will work to procure grant money, develop curriculum and training materials and serve as mentors to participating school. The founding members of the Triangle of Success will collaborate with stakeholders, support the implementation of this plan, and ensure it is successful. This collaboration will focus on supporting school sustainability and will involve identifying the necessary facilities, recruiting facilitators, designing the program curriculum, communicating with the parties involved, and managing the financial needs of the program.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Implementation of the Solution Facilities

Outreach to local Catholic institutions will ensure the needed facilities are available. Founding members will be from northern California, as that is the geographic area for the pilot. However, as the organization grows, consideration for conducting trainings and events in other geographic areas will be given. Professional relationships will be leveraged to find the facilities that best support the training.

Facilitators and Mentors

Founding members will serve as facilitators of the training and mentors for participating dioceses and schools. Prior to conducting training, facilitators will collaborate on planning and expectations to ensure the planning program is of the quality and consistency expected of the Triangle of Success. In preparing the program, there will be a balance between direct instruction and collaborative work.
Curriculum and Materials Development

The founding members of the Triangle of Success will prepare a program based in research, best practices, and the members’ own practical experiences. Materials offered to participating dioceses and schools will include templates, informative resources on best practices, and activities that support reflection and viability. The curriculum will be focused on supporting schools’ development of long-term solutions with built-in benchmarks to ensure there is evidence of progress. Using the established benchmarks, schools will work with a mentor to monitor progress.

Communication

A central focus of the founding members will be to ensure a regular and productive communication network. The founding members will prepare monthly communication via an e-mailed newsletter to participating dioceses and schools. These communications will also include opportunities for participating dioceses and schools to learn from work being done elsewhere. Regular communication will also provide additional resources for program participants. In addition, mentors will reach out to their individual schools to offer support and guidance as needed.

Evaluation and Timeline for Implementation and Assessment

Establishing the Triangle of Success requires a three-year implementation plan. Year one will involve the creation of the training program, supporting materials, and framework of the collaboration. Identification of funding and development of a larger team would begin in year one and be fully realized in year two. Year three focuses on
recruiting interested schools and other partners. This recruitment would seek to choose founding schools, to begin their first training at the end of year three.

A specific timeline with benchmarks of achievement will be identified for all three years of the implementation. These benchmarks will be partnered with time for self-reflection, to help support the work done and the planned next steps. In addition, feedback would be elicited from all involved stakeholders about the training activities, provided materials, and support given to schools. Provided feedback and self-reflection will collectively identify possible changes or areas for improvement.

**Implications**

**Practical Implications**

Enrollment in Catholic schools has been experiencing a consistent decline for over sixty years, resulting in many school closures (McDonald & Schultz, 2018; Wisniewski, 2013). These enrollment declines need to be addressed, as the achievement gap between high and low performing students is smaller in faith-based schools than in their secular counterparts (Jeynes, 2007; Marks & Lee, 1989; York, 1996). Additionally, graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to vote and be civically engaged, to be tolerant of diverse views, and to be committed to service as adults (Campbell, 2001; Dee, 2005, Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Greene, 1998; Wolf et al., 2001). Graduates of Catholic schools are also likely to earn higher wages than public school graduates (Hoxby, 1994; Neal, 1997). The NCEA reports they serve 2 million U.S. students each year, saving the
nation approximately $21 billion annually in public school costs (Wisniewski, 2013). Catholic schools also have a strong impact on vocations: 77% of those who chose vocations attended Catholic elementary schools, high schools, and colleges (Gray & Gautier, 2012). In addition, there are increases in crime in communities where a Catholic school closes (Brinig & Garnett, 2014). All of these problems can be addressed by the solutions offered by the Triangle of Success.

This case study identified five themes that impact a Catholic school’s sustainability. In addition, prior research highlighted the challenges principals face with their daily workload as they struggle to be visionaries, instructional leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, and more (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). This daily struggle was confirmed by the participants in the case study. This multiple case study provides practical tools for schools as they manage daily operational challenges while looking to grow enrollment, avoid closures, and strengthen their sustainability. The Triangle of Success looks to address the five themes identified in this multiple case study and ensure that the support and training is manageable for school leadership.

**Implications for Future Research**

This multiple case study highlighted some practical options that would allow Catholic schools to be more sustainable, but there are opportunities for additional research. This dissertation in practice and the literature review are both effective in highlighting the challenges facing Catholic schools and offering solutions. However, more research in several areas is needed. This additional research could focus on the
impact of the work done between the Triangle of Success and participating schools. Following the work done to improve the schools’ sustainability, the qualitative and quantitative data will confirm if the proposed solution was effective in meeting its goals and benchmarks. This multiple case study focused on school sustainability from the perspective of school leadership and teachers. Research on school sustainability from the parents’ and school community’s perspective could further inform how to strengthen a school’s sustainability. Continuing case study research in other areas outside of northern California would provide insight into whether the findings in this dissertation in practice are consistent across different regions. In addition, a quantitative study focused on creating a tool that measures a school’s sustainability would allow schools to determine appropriate proactive measures to ensure their long-term health.

This multiple case study has noted that there is not one answer to how a school can improve its level of sustainability, as each school has its own charism, history, demographics, and story, which impact their best approach to the problem. Future research needs to analyze the many options and the impact of the various solutions available to schools facing a challenge to their sustainability.

Implications for Leadership Theory and Practice

There is little prior research on Jesuit leadership and its impact on an organization and its sustainability. This is especially true when looking at organizational sustainability and Jesuit leadership as defined by Chris Lowney (2003), whose leadership framework defined four habits of Jesuit leadership: ingenuity, love, heroism, and self-examination. This multiple case study originally focused on examining the impact of these four
leadership habits and the Jesuit charism on a school’s sustainability. Upon completion of the research, findings identified five factors that schools must address to strengthen their sustainability that include the Jesuit charism and habits of leadership.

1. Strong connection between clergy and school
2. The Jesuit charism is modeled and highlighted
3. Principals use Lowney’s Jesuit leadership tenets of love, heroism, self-reflection, and ingenuity
4. Partnerships and unique funding sources ensure long-term school sustainability
5. Knowing and articulating the school’s mission.

Summary of the Study

The work done by Lowney (2003), the data showing the growth in the enrollments of Jesuit-run schools, and the decline in non-Jesuit-led Catholic school enrollment (Murnane & Reardon, 2018) led to the development of this multiple case study. Three schools that embrace the Jesuit charism were examined through the lens of the Jesuit charism and leadership framework, as defined by Lowney (2003), who argues that the Jesuits have been on a growth trajectory for 450 years and can offer today’s organizations a model for success. Using the evidence gathered in the multiple case study, this dissertation in practice presented the Triangle of Success. A proposal for a framework, network of support and bank of resources to give schools the tools that need to strengthen their sustainability.

Each selected school has a unique culture, history, demographic structure, level of financial stability, and enrollment rate. Looking at the charism and leadership at Jesuit schools with these differences allowed the researcher to consider the full impact of the Jesuits’ influence on each school’s sustainability. Each case was selected to compare and
contrast the impact of the schools’ leadership on their respective success and ability to usurp national enrollment trends.

In all three schools, the five aforementioned themes identified can support school sustainability. These factors were identified by analyzing multiple interviews with participants who had a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and observations. The participants’ feedback informed the study’s conclusions. However, the analysis of the evidence gathered in this multiple case study did not provide a singular answer to the research question. Rather, common factors that support a school’s sustainability emerged. The identified factors offer schools areas on which to focus to improve their level of sustainability. This strategic and purposeful work will be supported by the Triangle of Success. With the goal of supporting Catholic school sustainability, the Triangle of Success offer schools training and opportunities for collaboration between participating schools.

Research has shown the positive impact of Catholic schools. Catholic schools have a smaller achievement gap between high and low performing students, higher graduation rates, higher civic engagement by graduates, higher rates of service, and graduates with higher wages (Campbell, 2001; Dee, 2005; Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Greene, 1998; Jeynes, 2007; Marks & Lee, 1989; Wolf et al., 2001). In addition, Catholic schools have been shown to save billions in public school costs (Wisniewski, 2013); and when they close, there is an increase in crime in local communities (Brinig & Garnett, 2014). This data highlights why Catholic schools are important, and the proposed
Triangle of Success provides a vehicle for schools to address the challenges they face in maintaining their sustainability.

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Appendix A

Good Afternoon!

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Marie Bordeleau. I am writing as a doctoral student from Creighton University (Omaha, Nebraska). I am working to complete my Dissertation in Practice and am working on a study on the sustainability of Catholic elementary schools. This study is part of my effort to earn an EdD in Interdisciplinary Leadership. I am writing to you today to kindly request your help on this case study. Below are the details of the study.

Research has shown that Catholic elementary schools have been and can continue to be an important part of the U.S. educational system. However, the Catholic school system nationally has struggled to reverse negative enrollment trends over the last several decades. This study aims to examine how the Jesuit charism and leadership framework impacts three Catholic elementary schools’ work to have a sustainable enrollment levels, budget and community.

Your school fits the criteria for the study and your participation would be greatly appreciated. Participation in the study asks the following of each school:

- The principal completes a interview
- 2-3 teachers (selected by the principal) agreeing to a 45 minute interview
- The superintendent would be asked to complete a 60 minute interview
- The school granting permission to the researcher to conduct observations in the school for one to two hours before or after completing the interviews.

Following each interview a transcript would be produced and shared with the interviewee for review. Each participant would be invited to add to or adjust the transcript to ensure the information and feedback is accurate and complete.

All information shared in the interviews would remain confidential with the school name and the name of all participants changed to ensure the promised confidentiality was honored.

Catholic elementary schools across the United States are struggling to remain sustainable and this research is hoping to examine how to help schools create a sustainable and bright
future for their community. I humbly ask for your help on this journey to finding answers to being asked in the case study.

If you have any questions about the study and your involvement please let me know. I am available via phone or email.

Sincerely,
Marie Bordeleau, Mbo50698@creighton.edu
(408) 644-8629

Appendix B

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Creighton University ● Omaha, NE

Title of Study: Catholic Elementary School Sustainability
Investigator: Marie Bordeleau Phone: 408-644-8629

Introduction
• You are being asked to be in a research study of Catholic elementary school sustainability and the role of Jesuit leadership
• You were selected as a possible participant because the school at which you teach has agreed to serve as the study’s case
• We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study
• The purpose of the study is to examine how the Jesuit leadership framework supports Catholic school sustainability.
• Ultimately, this research may be the focus of the researcher’s dissertation in practice

Description of the Study Procedures
• If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Open your school/classroom to observation and be part of a 60 minute one-on-one interview with the researcher.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study
• There are no reasonably foreseeable (or expected) risks.

Benefits of Being in the Study
• Though your participation is appreciated, there are no direct benefits for participating

Confidentiality
• The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. All audio files will be password protected and accessible solely by the researcher. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
• The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or Creighton University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns
• You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during, or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, feel free, at any time, to contact me, Marie Bordeleau, at mbordeleau839@gmail.com or by telephone at (408) 644-8629. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact Marie Bordeleau.
• If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to the Creighton University Institutional Review Board via email (IRB@creighton.edu) or phone (402-280-2126)

Consent
Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study investigators.

Subject's Name (print): _______________________

Subject’s Signature: ________________________  Date:________________
Appendix C

**Principal Interview Questions**

Name of interviewee: 

Name of interviewer: 

**Background Information**

- □ Schools attended and degrees earned: 
- □ Credentials/Certifications held: 
- □ Professional experience, including years of service in your current position: 

**School background information**

School’s Name: 

- □ Basic info about your school: 
  a. What has been the school enrollment trends over the last five years? 
    i. Has the attrition and retention rate of students and families been of concern or worthy of celebration? 
  b. What is the size of faculty and staff currently?
Has the school experienced high levels of attrition and/or retention of faculty and/or staff over the last five years?

Could you describe your leadership structure? Role of the pastor? Principal? School board? Finance council? Are there any other leadership groups or representatives?

Over the past five years have you seen the school grow and evolve in a positive direction? How?

Is the leadership team able to maintain a budget that represents a school that is sustainable and financially viable/healthy? If yes, what specifically does that mean?

What role does the diocese play in helping you in the following areas?

- School operations?
- Visionary leadership?
- Managing the school’s long-term sustainability?
- Professional development for principals? Teachers?

**School sustainability**

What is your definition of a sustainable parochial school? What are the criteria a school must meet for you to consider it sustainable? How does your school meet that criteria?

What do you see as the biggest obstacles to a parochial school maintaining their sustainability?

What are the main sources of income that sustain your school budget?
Is the income sufficient to balance the school budget?

Do see the current budget model as one that provides for the long-term needs of the school?

What are the current admissions, fundraising, advancement, and development programs that support the school’s budget and enrollment?

How would you describe the school’s culture? How and where is it visible and lived by all stakeholders?

**Jesuit charism**

How do you describe the Jesuit charism?

- How do you see it visible and integrated into the school culture?

- How is it integrated into the mission of the school?

Do you see the Jesuit charism as a factor in the school’s sustainability or an obstacle to its sustainability?

What visible signs do visitors, students and other stakeholders see that support the charism of the school?

**Jesuit leadership framework**

Chris Lowney (2003) defines the Jesuit leadership framework as made up of the following four tenants:

a. Love
b. Ingenuity
c. Heroism
d. Self-examination

Do you integrate each of these tenants into your work as a principal? How?
Do see that by integrating these tenants into your work as a principal has supported the school’s sustainability?

What challenges do you face when integrating them into leadership of the school?

Do you differentiate between your work managing school operations and leadership that supports a larger school vision?

Do you see these roles (at times) in conflict with one another?

How do you balance these two demands placed on principals?

Have you found that integrating the tenants of the Jesuit leadership framework has improved your long-term sustainability? How?

What obstacles are you encountering in your work to ensure your school’s sustainability? What future obstacles do you see need to be planning for?

Do the tenants of Jesuit leadership support overcoming these obstacles? How?

Are the tenants of Jesuit leadership enough when managing and overseeing your school’s program, operations, mission, and vision? Are they enough to create a sustainable school for your community?

Teacher Interview Question

Name of interviewee:

Name of interviewer:

Background Information

Schools attended and degrees earned:

Credentials/Certifications held:

Professional Experience including years of service in your current position:

School Background Information

School’s Name:

Basic info about your school:
Could you describe your understanding of the school’s leadership structure? Role of the pastor? Principal? School board? Finance council? Are there any other leadership groups or representatives?

Over the past five years have you seen the school grow and evolve in a positive direction? How?

What is your perception of how the leadership team maintains a budget that represents a school that is sustainable and financially viable/healthy?

What role do you see the diocese playing in helping the school in the following areas?

- School operations?
- Visionary leadership?
- Managing the school’s long-term sustainability?
- Professional development for principals? Teachers?

School Sustainability

What is your definition of a sustainable parochial school? What are the criteria a school must meet for you to consider it sustainable? How does your school meet that criteria?

What do you see as the biggest obstacles to a parochial school maintaining their sustainability?

What role do/should teachers play in supporting the school’s sustainability?

Do you as a teacher see budget model for the school as one that provides for the long term needs of the school?
What are the current admissions, fundraising, advancement and development program that support the schools’ budget and enrollment? Are they at levels that are appropriate and supporting the work you do in the classroom?

How would you describe the school’s culture? How and where is it visible and lived by all stakeholders?

**Jesuit Charism**

- How do you describe the Jesuit charism?
  - How do you see it visible and integrated into the school culture?
  - How is integrated into the mission of the school?

- Do you see the Jesuit charism as a factor in the school’s sustainability or an obstacle to its sustainability?

- What visible signs do visitors, students and other stakeholders see that support the charism of the school?

**Jesuit Leadership Framework**

Chris Lowney (2003) defines the Jesuit leadership framework is made up the following four tenants:

e. Love
f. Ingenuity
g. Heroism
h. Self-examination

Do you see the tenants integrated into how the principal leads the school? How?
  - How do these tenants better support the schools sustainability?
  - What challenges do you see with how the principal integrates them into leadership of the school?
Does the principal’s integration of the tenants of the Jesuit leadership framework improve the school’s long-term sustainability? How?

For the overall operations and growth of the school, are the tenants of Jesuit leadership enough as the principal manages and oversees the school’s program, operations, mission and vision? Are they enough to create a sustainable school for your community?
# Observation Notes for Improvement of Learning

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<th>School</th>
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<td>□ visible signs of the Jesuit charism on the school campus</td>
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<td>□ how the Jesuit leadership framework impacts the culture in the classroom</td>
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<td>□ how the Jesuit charism is visible in the interactions between community members</td>
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<td>□ how the Jesuit charism is integrated into teacher lesson plans</td>
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Appendix E

IRB Approval

DATE: 15-Oct-2019
TO: Bordeleau, Marie
FROM: Social / Behavioral IRB Board
PROJECT TITLE: The Jesuits: Does their leadership impact school sustainability?
REFERENCE #: 2000373
SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Application
REVIEW TYPE: Exempt
ACTION: APPROVED
EFFECTIVE DATE: 15-Oct-2019

Thank you for your Initial Application submission materials for this project. The following items were reviewed with this submission:

Creighton University HS eForm

This project has been determined to be exempt from Federal Policy for Protection of Human Subjects as per 45CFR46.101 (b) 2.

All protocol amendments and changes are to be submitted to the IRB and may not be implemented until approved by the IRB. Please use the modification form when submitting changes.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 402-280-2126 or irb@creighton.edu. Please include your project title and number in all correspondence with this committee.