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The contemporary challenges facing Catholic schools and Catholic school leaders are widely known. Effective and systemic solutions to these mounting challenges are less widely known or discussed. This article highlights the skills, knowledge, and dispositions associated with mission driven and data informed leadership—an orientation to school level leadership that we believe holds great promise for the renewal and revitalization of Catholic schools. The conceptual framework developed in this article takes specific shape through an examination of the problem-based learning strategies embedded in the curriculum of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program in the Alliance for Catholic Education at the University of Notre Dame, and three exemplary action research projects completed by program graduates and current leaders in Catholic schools.

The role of the Catholic school principal has changed drastically over the years, now demanding that school leaders display expertise in instruction, human resources, financial management, development, marketing, enrollment management, and community relations, among others (Nuzzi, Holter, & Frabutt, 2011). Catholic schools themselves face myriad issues, from maintaining financial solvency to ensuring academic excellence, and have arguably never been more vulnerable as an institution since their founding in the United States nearly 200 years ago. And yet, the demise of U.S. Catholic schools is far from a *fait accompli*. It is true that teachers and leaders in Catholic schools must make difficult decisions every day that impact the viability of their school and success of their students—decisions that directly affect the children entrusted to their care. It may be the case, though, that the very institutions threatened by growing fiscal and demographic challenges hold the answers to their own renewal. O'Keefe (2007) concluded his analysis of the challenges and possibilities awaiting Catholic schools with the reminder that "the great strength of Catholic schools is their autonomy, the ability to craft creative responses to meet current needs" (p. 55). He went on to state that schools that beat the odds and respond well to these challenges have leaders and personnel who "innovate, they reach out to the local community, they form partnerships" (p. 55).

Recent research asserts that few traditional leadership preparation programs are designed to prepare candidates to meet the leadership demands of the 21st century (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005), and that the preponderance of programs for Catholic school administrators are not adequately attentive to the theological and administrative skills, knowledge, and dispositions required of the contemporary Catholic school leader (O'Keefe, 1999; Schuttloffel, 2007). So how do these leaders meet the increasing demands of Catholic school leadership? What tools do they have at the ready to ensure they are making the best decisions with their precious resources, are engaging the local community, and forming fruitful partnerships?

We believe that action research is an integral skill set and response to the leadership challenges manifest in Catholic education today. By embracing the practice of action research—systematic inquiry conducted by educators—Catholic educational leaders are better equipped and more empowered to act in ways that support the Catholic mission, always informed by the careful and strategic use of data. Further, we believe that action research—the skills, dispositions, and mindsets encompassed therein—is an integral component in the formation of a new generation of Catholic school leaders. We assert that Catholic school principals who engage in community-based action research are "poised to address myriad challenging issues at work in their schools" by applying sound educational research methodology to urgent needs in their school community (Frabutt, Holter, & Nuzzi, 2008, p. 1). In so doing, these individuals not only address pressing needs in their local community, they also advance the broader goal of school renewal as they "systematically use data to answer questions and take an inquiry-based approach toward educational improvement" (Frabutt et al., 2008, p. 1; see also Goldring & Berends, 2009). Through this article and those that follow, we demonstrate that action research for and enacted by Catholic school leaders is rooted in Catholic theology and is responsive to the administrative demands of contemporary leadership.

The foundational premise of this focus section is that a new generation of leaders can reshape Catholic schools through research and action for change (Frabutt et al., 2008). Such a focus on educational improvement is truly at the heart of the Catholic school vision. The approach outlined here builds upon prevailing theory and practice in action- and practitioner-research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Mertler, 2012) and leadership development (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008; Wamba, 2006, Zeichner, 2001). In so doing, it asserts that a truly effective leader is one who systematically uses data to answer questions and takes an inquiry-based stance toward educa-

tional improvement. Moreover, we extend the model to include components of community and spirituality as integral to the endeavor of action research in Catholic education.

The Preparation of School Leaders

The educational research literature is quite clear that principals matter a great deal (see Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008). Cognizant of the essential role school leaders play in the education of children and overall effectiveness of school communities, recent scholarship has examined the content and delivery of the academic programs preparing the next generation of school leaders.

Hess and Kelly (2007) acknowledged that "almost no current research systematically documents the content studied in the nation's principal preparation programs" and set out to remedy this lacuna by surveying 31 leadership programs in the United States (p. 247). Their inquiry revealed that "issues of data and research receive very limited attention in principal preparation programs" and that there is high variability among programs in their focus on and teaching of the skills and dispositions associated with managing for results using data (p. 257). Only 11% of the instructional weeks examined through available course syllabi addressed research-related or data-driven leadership skills in any way. The principal preparations programs surveyed in this study were deficient in other areas as well (e.g., technology, personnel management, etc.), yet the scant focus and inconsistent delivery of courses related to data-based decision making is especially troublesome given the importance of these skills for effective school leadership.

There is an apparent disconnect, then, between the skills and dispositions required of effective contemporary leaders and the type of training offered in many traditional leadership preparation programs. At the same time, there are a few exemplary leadership preparation programs that bridge this divide by incorporating problem-based learning strategies and experiences within and across required courses (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2010; Davis et al., 2005). These problem-based learning strategies may include action research projects, case study analysis, and other applied projects and assignments that link classroom learning and educational theory with the practice of leadership in the local school setting. A student enrolled in one of the exemplary leadership preparation programs described the action research

course as a way to "take ownership" of school-level issues and stated that "if you want to explore an area further in action research….you can do so" (Darling-Hammond et al., p. 59).

Problem-based learning strategies are more than a novel programmatic component; they have a real, positive impact on leadership skills. In fact, graduates of exemplary programs that use problem-based learning strategies such as action research demonstrated more effective leadership practices—including using data to manage school improvement—than did principals in the national comparison sample (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). These exemplary programs do highlight the promise of action research as a tool to foster effective leadership development, yet the reality remains that "few educational leadership programs require principals to learn about or conduct action research that would prepare them to lead their schools in such inquiry processes" (Taylor, Cordeiro, & Chrispeels, 2009, p. 352). In this new era of accountability, school leaders are increasingly required to use data for "setting goals, monitoring progress, allocating and reallocating resources, and managing the school program" (Tucker & Codding, 2002, p. 37), but are not necessarily receiving commensurate training or instruction in their leadership preparation programs.

Action Research Further Defined

We have already offered a simple definition of action research, suggesting that most basically it consists of systematic inquiry conducted by educators. Some additional background and expanded definition are in order to grasp fully the key nuances of action research. Action research is not the latest innovation to sweep the educational landscape. Instead, action research has a long and distinguished lineage that spans over 50 years and several continents. The term "action research" has been used to define an array of inquiry from teacher self-reflection on classroom instruction to a broad examination of social issues with the intent to change policy and structure. It has taken root in fields other than education and often appears under corollary terms such as participatory research, action science, community-based research, teacher research, practitioner research, and the like. Within education, however, there are rich strands of applied scholarship outlining the methods, approaches, processes, and products of educational action research (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006; Frabutt et al., 2008; Holter & Frabutt, 2011; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Noffke & Somekh, 2009; Pine, 2009).

For our purposes, a more developed understanding of action research holds

that it must contain three elements (Frabutt et al., 2008; Holter & Frabutt, 2011). First, action research is systematic. In other words, action research inquiry unfolds in a planned and organized manner aligned with best practices in educational research methodology. Second, action research must always be oriented toward positive change in the school community. Action research does not seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Rather, it is employed when one needs to be solutions-focused regarding an important issue or problem in the school community: investigating the impact of a new third grade reading program or assessing the prevalence of bullying in middle school, for example. Third and finally, to bear the moniker of action research, our model holds that action research must be practitioner driven and participatory. Since the research questions and data to answer those questions will arise from the school community, the action research process itself should be participatory and involve multiple stakeholders where appropriate. In other words, action research is conducted with participants rather than on them. Furthermore, action research relies on the practical experience and expertise evident in the school community to drive the inquiry.

Infusing a Mission Driven, Data Informed Approach into a Catholic School Leadership Program

The Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program is a graduate program—the largest for Catholic educational leaders in the country—that culminates in a master of arts in educational administration degree. Similar to other preparation programs in educational leadership, candidates complete coursework in the principles of educational administration, instructional supervision, curriculum leadership, education law, human resources management, and financial management. However, as the Remick program expanded in 2006 from a certificate to a 3-year master's degree, we sought to add a unique dimension to the usual course of study. We designed and implemented a four-course, 10-credit-hour action research sequence. While several preservice teacher training programs include requirements in teacher research or action research, it is more unusual for principal preparation programs to do so (Taylor et al., 2009). The following two sections describe: a.) how the architecture of this endeavor has been shaped by key philosophical and theological considerations, and b.) how the course sequence is structured and implemented within the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program.

Philosophical and Theological Foundations

The particular brand of action research encountered in the Remick Leadership Program uses the same principles of good social science and effective practice that one might expect in any course sequence on educational research and methodology. However, there are two elements, deeply rooted in our Catholic beliefs, which specially animate our approach to action research: one's own spirituality and the notion of Christian community. First, we recognize that many who serve in Catholic schools today do so not because they hold a job much like any other, but rather because their service is a vocation, an act of ministry. Their deep-seated beliefs in the core constructs of the Catholic faith, their lives of personal prayer, their embrace of the sacraments, and the placement of the Eucharist at the center of their lives—all of this should be placed in conversation with, rather than cordoned off from, their professional activities, including action research. Moreover, it would be disingenuous of us to extol the way personal faith inspires and sustains our students in their vocation as school leaders, and then ask them to set aside the touchstone of faith when seeking positive change in their school community through the work of action research. We hear from many of our students that it is precisely their rich personal and communal life of faith that prompts them to form partnerships within their school that will propel them to positive change.

The Catholic faith insists that one's own spirituality is most alive when it is lived and we suggest that an enkindled spirituality engages directly with the problems of the world. Henri Nouwen wrote:

> As your life becomes more and more a prayer, you not only come to a deeper insight into yourself and your neighbor, but you also develop a better feeling for the pulse of the world you live in. If you are really praying, you can't help but have critical questions about the great problems with which the world is grappling. (1995, p. 97)

Moreover, the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching must also be brought to bear on what school teachers and leaders research and how they research it. When school leaders focus their action research efforts on attending to the success of every learner, extending a sense of welcome to marginalized families, or including the most vulnerable children, leaders are using methods of social science as a vehicle for social justice in tangible ways. In fact, "engaging in the systematic analysis of educational issues through action research can be a first

step in identifying and challenging firmly entrenched injustices" (Frabutt et al., 2008, p. 35). Furthermore, an embrace of action research "relies on collaboration and social science to extol the dignity of all people through education, to renew and create systems that reify this belief, and thereby enact a very real and applied social justice" (p. 40).

Second, Christians are called to community by their baptism, and teachers and administrators live community in Catholic schools through their vocation (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). Indeed, "strong community life is at the heart of the Catholic school" (Moore, 2004, p. 172). Practitioner-led action research, then, emanates from this central basis of lived Christian community. Realizing which educational issues need attention—discerning which groups of students are not reaching their potential or what kinds of instructional support faculty members need—is a way of acknowledging and extolling the importance of community and simultaneously strengthening it through systematic inquiry and action for positive change. Once a need is articulated, community-embedded action research seeks partnership with others in the school to help frame the project, guide its execution, and see it through to completion. A participatory approach to research acknowledges that members of the community have unique insights and valuable perspectives that can elevate the quality of the action research inquiry.

Maintaining a collegial and collaborative approach to action research extends to applying and sharing the results of one's inquiry as well. Recommendations and implications are reflected back to the very community partners and school stakeholders that gave rise to them initially. Ideally, broad community ownership of the action research process itself makes any resultant changes more likely to take hold. In sum, Catholic schools and those that educate within them are called in a direct way to embrace community and to work with collegial appreciation for a culture of inquiry and renewal. Thus, collaborative, participatory action research approaches coalesce naturally with the call to community that animates Catholic schools.

Logistics, Structure, and Format

As mentioned earlier, the Remick Leadership Program contains a core concentration—10 credit hours—focused on developing mission driven and data informed school leaders. A four-course sequence of learning experiences occurs over a 1-year period in which each degree candidate designs, executes, reflects upon, and disseminates an original, context-specific action research

project. Mertler's (2012) stage model has been a useful heuristic for align-
ing the major milestones and processes of action research with the particular
course progression in our action research sequence (see Table 1). These steps
and stages, along with key student activities, are delineated below.

Table 1

The Step-by-Step Process of Action Research in the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program
(based on Mertler, 2012).

Program Phase	Course Number or Requirement	Stages of Action Research (Mertler 2012)
Pre-Program (Application)	Applicants are asked to respond to an essay prompt regarding an issue in their school community that is appropriate for action research project	Stage 1: Planning Stage Identifying and limiting the topic Gathering information Reviewing related literature Developing a research plan
Summer #1	No official coursework; individual consultation with faculty members	
Academic Year #1	No official coursework; individual consultation with faculty members, completion of action research topic selection rubric	
Summer #2	EDU 73777: Educational Research and Methodology. Candidates develop an action research plan that is implemented in their school community	
Academic Year #2	EDU 73886: Action Research in Catholic Schools I. Candidates implement the action research plan developed over the summer, collect data, and begin data analysis plan	Stage 2: Acting Stage Collecting and analyzing data
	EDU 73887: Action Research in Catholic Schools II. Candidates finalize data collection and analysis, evaluate the impact of their intervention or inquiry, and formulate recommendations and next steps	Stage 3: Developing Stage Developing an action plan
Summer #3	EDU 73888: Leadership in Catholic Schools. Candidates reflect on the AR process and prepare a research brief and conference poster to disseminate their findings at the school level and to the broader Catholic leadership and action research communities	Stage 4: Reflecting Stage Sharing and communicating results Reflecting on the process

Stage I

In the planning stage (Stage 1), the action researcher identifies the primary

issue, problem, or need that will be the focus of their inquiry. The process of identifying a school-based research topic actually begins during the application process where applicants are asked to identify the needs, challenges, or opportunities at their school that are appropriate for a community-based action research project. Prior to taking *Educational Research and Methodology*, offered during their second summer of coursework, candidates complete a structured rubric designed to vet and sift research ideas. This process provides an opportunity to identify a potential topic that is focused on change, is within their realm of professional responsibility, is reasonable in scope, and is feasible to complete within one year. Throughout the 5-week summer course, candidates are exposed to the basics of educational research—research designs, methodologies, quantitative and qualitative data analysis—while continuing to focus on their own action research topic. In fact, the primary deliverable at the end of the course is an action research proposal complete with a problem description, purpose statement, research questions, literature review, and a fully specified articulation of research methods (i.e., participants, instruments, procedures, and plan for data analysis). The action research proposal is built in a step-by-step, highly iterative manner, in close consultation with the course professor, a process described in detail in Holter and Frabutt (2011).

Stage II

At the close of the summer session, candidates have in hand a detailed blueprint for their action research project, and return to their schools where they will continue to work full-time as teachers and administrators. These teachers and administrators are also simultaneously enrolled in an online course, *Action Research in Catholic Schools I*. This course roughly corresponds with Mertler's acting stage (Stage 2), which focuses on project implementation and execution. During the fall semester, each candidate carries out data collection activities according to the plan they developed over the course of the summer in stage one. They complete periodic research journal entries to update course faculty on progress and challenges; each receives individual consultation, feedback, and troubleshooting advice as needed. Course readings deepen candidates' understanding of pertinent constructs in action research, such as validity and researcher positionality (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Another key component of the fall course is peer collaboration, facilitated by each candidate's assignment to a five- or six-member action research group. The groups communicate frequently via e-mail and conference call to update one another on progress

and exchange drafts of surveys, interview questions, and consent forms. They also engage in a peer exchange of action research papers. Underscoring the importance of community, this one-to-one peer review allows for the sharing of critical insights and constructive feedback between trusted colleagues in the field of Catholic education. Moreover, the review provides another opportunity to sharpen one's arguments, research logic, and overall presentation style.

Stage III

During the second semester of the academic year, program candidates enroll in *Action Research in Catholic Schools II*, another 3-credit online course in which they continue intensive work on their individual action research project. Corresponding to Mertler's developing stage (Stage 3), effort centers on finalizing data collection, defining the pattern of findings, and specifying the action researcher's interpretations and conclusions based on that information. Candidates extend their findings into an action plan. Sometimes referred to as the "so what?" stage, the action researcher puts forth the next steps of the action research sequence as recommendations, suggested new interventions, or a subsequent round of the action research cycle. Mertler (2012) noted, "developing and implementing an action plan is the aspect of this type of research that really puts the action into action research" (p. 205). Candidates complete one more round of peer review, exchanging a paper draft with a different colleague who reads the paper in its entirety, providing section by section commentary and feedback. As in the fall, faculty advisement is frequently targeted toward emerging questions and problem solving specific to each student's paper and project.

Stage IV

The last iteration of an action research cycle, Mertler's reflecting stage (Stage 4), is designed to facilitate reflection on the process of action research as it has unfolded in the school community, and to encourage dissemination of the results with their cohort peers and members of their school community. These processes unfold as candidates attend the final summer session of their master's program, completing a 1-credit action research capstone course, *Leadership in Catholic Schools*. Candidates are prompted to take a reflective stance toward their action research experience, unpacking challenges, successes, and insights. In particular, they discuss how spirituality and community were evident in

their action research. They are encouraged to write and share their own advice for novice practitioners of action research—the next cohort in the program that is just beginning the process. Candidates also describe the next likely cycle of their action research agenda, articulating a new round of questions and directions. Importantly, candidates are challenged to engage how the approach, skills, and posture of action research ultimately shape them as a school leader. They are asked to consider how and to what extent the entire action research process might influence them and their approach to school leadership in years to come.

Finally, in order for others in the Catholic educational community to benefit from their research inquiry, candidates are strongly encouraged to disseminate their research. One built-in requirement is to present their work formally at the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Conference, an event held each summer at the University of Notre Dame, which allows for interactive discussion with educational leaders from across the country, as well as other novice action researchers. Candidates' action research has been highlighted in *Momentum* (Zelenka, 2009); the peer-reviewed journal *i.e.: inquiry in education* (Klich, 2011); an ACE Press publication entitled *Research and Action for Change: Leaders Reshaping Catholic Schools* (Frabutt et al., 2008); and at annual conferences of the National Catholic Educational Association (Mullarkey, 2011; Sorkin, 2011; Swanson, 2011), and the American Educational Research Association (MacCready, 2011).

Across the four program courses, and the four primary stages of action research, our goal is that the sequence challenges candidates to become both critical consumers and skilled producers of relevant and well-designed educational research. This intentional pairing of consumption and production of educational research bridges the traditional chasm between practice and research and places educational leaders at the nexus of cutting-edge research and real, positive change in their schools.

Emerging Leaders: Demonstrated Competencies and Reflections

Emerging leaders completing the action research sequence have experienced a full arc of action research, they are challenged to share it, and they are prompted to conceive of the next round of action research and what it would entail in their school context. This instructional and experiential process enrolls members from a particular community, empowers them with the tools neces-

sary for systematic research, challenges them to apply those tools to their own community needs, and supports them in the evaluation of the projects and interventions they are assessing. They generate the questions, and as program faculty we supply the framework and technical assistance to ensure that they have the proper tools and resources to identify and assess their pressing questions accurately.

From the perspective of outputs, we have clear evidence of these leaders' demonstrated competence: their final action research report. Edited to conform more closely to typical journal-length articles, the three action research manuscripts in this focus section provide a snapshot of the manifest skills and expertise of these practitioner researchers. The action research projects highlighted here are representative of the array of topics explored and variety of methodologies employed across the over 100 action research projects completed in the Remick Leadership Program over the last five years (see http://researchandaction.wordpress.com/ar-research-projects/ for a full list and complete conference poster of all action research projects). What these and all the others share in common is that they brought utility to those who executed them; they are tangible instantiations of a problem-solving process directed at an issue of real concern to them and their school community. Feedback from these leaders indicates an appreciation for informed data usage as a vehicle for remaining steadfastly focused on mission and continuous improvement. One graduate wrote:

> No longer must I feel imprisoned by anecdotal evidence, which is far too often used to make important decisions regarding the fundamental aspects of the life of the school. Now if there is a problem, I have a systematic approach to examining existing research on a topic, collecting data, and analyzing results that will allow me instead to be data informed. (T. Jarotkiewicz, personal communication, June 2009)

Toward a Framework for Measuring the Impact of Action Research on Emerging Leaders

There are many more examples like the quotation cited above that attest to our candidates' engagement with action research as a significant way to enhance one's effectiveness as a school leader. These comments and reflections, while no doubt pointing to an important reality, have been collected anecdotally,

rather than through systematic inquiry. In much the same way, while the end product of the action research sequence is itself a demonstration of mastery, the new frontier calling for exploration demands moving beyond the products themselves, to the dispositions, attitudes, and skills that underlie them. So while action research has been extolled as a valid and valuable orientation to inquiry across a variety of educational and civic contexts (Boothroyd, Fawcett, & Foster-Fishman, 2004; Frabutt, Gathings, Harvey, & Di Luca, 2010; Stoeker, 2005), we want to know what exposure to action research as part of a school leadership program looks like going forward. Our hope is to outline a framework for and specific data to address the chasm that exists between the value of action research as an effective tool in leadership formation and the evidence to support such claims. In the definitive text on the education of school leaders, Taylor et al. (2009) stated that "in spite of its prevalence in teacher education, the use of action research as a pedagogical approach in leadership preparation programs is much less common, and consequently little research exists regarding its effects on student competencies and performances" (2009, p. 352). Researchers and practitioners must therefore collaborate to develop an assessment framework and the tools necessary to appropriately evaluate the effect of action research on the attitudes and behaviors of school leaders.

Conclusion

It is no secret that contemporary Catholic schools face serious and mounting challenges. Neither is it a secret that passionate, visionary, data-informed Catholic school leaders are essential if schools are going to successfully meet and overcome these challenges, and thrive. Our principal concern is one that is shared by committed stakeholders in elementary school classrooms to executive boardrooms and everywhere in between: the next generation of Catholic school leaders are by and large not receiving the kind of education and training required to meet the demands of 21st century Catholic school leadership successfully.

To be clear, we do not intend to assert that action research is the answer to the problem of preparing effective Catholic school leaders, but we would argue that it is and ought to be part of the answer. Action research represents an orientation to Catholic school leadership that is shaped by the Catholic faith, supported by community, and strengthened through the use of sound data to bring about positive change. These core skills and dispositions are at the center

of a vocation in Catholic education—a vocation that "demands special qualities of mind and heart, very careful preparation, and continuing readiness to renew and adapt" (Vatican Council II, 1965).

Overview of Principal Action Research Projects

The dual purpose of this focus section on mission driven and data informed Catholic school leadership is to highlight the importance of problem-based learning strategies such as action research in the training and formation of highly effective school leaders, and to exhibit action research projects completed by graduates of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program—all of whom are in leadership positions in Catholic education. To that end, the following three papers in this focus section will punctuate the major elements and possible outcomes of action research in Catholic education. You will see that each action research project is highly contextualized—responsive to the specific needs in a particular school community—but also reflective of the broader educational research literature. In their own way, each author draws from the rich traditions and teachings of our Catholic faith to frame their inquiry and pursue positive change in their school community.

First, in *Sustaining the Heart: Attracting Latino Families to Inner-City Catholic Schools*, Thomas Suhy employs a mixed-method action research design to examine stakeholder perspectives on the value and accessibility of Catholic education in Dallas, Texas. Results confirmed the positive perception and high valuation of the academic program and faith formation provided in area Catholic schools. Suhy's research also uncovers the obstacles Latino families cite as barriers to accessing these positive benefits: financial costs, differential treatment because of their economic status, and embarrassment in inquiring about school options.

Next, Jennifer Beltramo, a principal in Los Angeles, California, implemented an action research project designed to address the specific literacy needs of students in grade 4 though 8. Response to *Student Literacy Needs at Mother of Sorrows Catholic School* chronicles how a thoughtfully designed and carefully monitored reading program fostered statistically significant gains in fluency, word study, and reading comprehension, regardless of students' grade-level proficiency at the start of the intervention.

Finally, *Fostering Community through the House System at Most Holy Trinity Catholic School* is a study conducted by Michael Brennan to examine student and faculty perceptions of community and Catholic identity after the imple-

mentation of a new school-wide house system. Data collected through student and faculty surveys and focus group interviews highlighted that within less than one academic year, there were positive changes in vertical relationships (e.g., increased sense of community and connectedness across multiple grade levels), overall school community, and the Catholic identity of the school.

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