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Identifying demand for private education at an urban Catholic college preparatory high school: a study of similarities and differences in parental motivation

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IDENTIFYING DEMAND FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION AT AN URBAN

CATHOLIC COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL: A STUDY OF

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PARENTAL MOTIVATION

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy

by

Tara M. Rolle

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Jennifer Rumack, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

IDENTIFYING DEMAND

This dissertation, written by

Tara Marion Rolle

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify and compare the factors that motivate

parents/guardians to enroll their admitted student in Catholic College Prep: an urban,

Catholic, college preparatory high school, with factors that motivate parents/guardians of

admitted students to enroll them elsewhere. This quantitative, cross-sectional study,

conducted by the researcher over one admissions cycle (September 27th to January 7th)

was used to restructure and improve Catholic College Preparatory High School's

marketing planning and action.

The researcher investigated this topic using the following questions as guides:

1. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in

   motivating them to apply to and enroll their children in a Catholic, college

   preparatory high school during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

2. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in

   motivating them to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school to which,

   upon acceptance, they choose not to enroll during the fall 2010 admission's

   cycle?

3. How do the factors, if at all, perceived to be very important in motivating

   families to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school compare between

   parents/guardians who apply to and enroll at a Catholic, college preparatory high

   school with parents/guardians who choose not to enroll their admitted students

   during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

This study was descriptive in design and utilized a likert scale survey for data

collection. The survey's purpose was to identify the motivating factors for families who

were pursuing Catholic College Preparatory High School. The survey contained 26

questions with a 3 likert scale response structure.

Study findings suggest that families who apply to and are accepted at an urban

Catholic college preparatory high school are motivated by academic reputation and

college preparation. Findings also revealed that families who were accepted and

registered were motivated by moral training while families who were accepted and chose

not to register were motivated by teachers. Responses for both subpopulations yielded

important insight into the motivations for families who pursue and are accepted at an

urban Catholic college preparatory school as well as prompted need for further study.

Chapter I: Introduction

Private, tuition-based schools in the United States are often responsible for generating their own income in order to support academic programs, pay for staffing, and support the general fund for the operations of the school. While every private school community and demographic is unique, many share one common need: strong marketing that attracts potential students to enroll. Especially with the growth in private education over the last few decades in the United States, Catholic schools often compete with other local private independent and Catholic high school options. This local competition makes it imperative for each site to define a clear positioning statement. This has become an especially relevant need as Catholic schools, specifically, have seen great losses in enrollment and suffered many school closures over the past ten years (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2009).

Catholic College Preparatory High School (referred to as Catholic College Prep) is no exception, experiencing similar enrollment and retention challenges as other Catholic schools. Catholic College Prep is heavily dependent on student enrollment with tuition dollars making up approximately 95% of the operating budget for the entire school. This relationship between tuition and school operations is a tense and delicate balance and relies on predictable and consistent enrollment for stable, sustainable budgets. This taut relationship has proven to be problematic at Catholic College Prep because application and registration numbers have become especially unpredictable and inconsistent (increasing and decreasing by as much as 30% in any given year) over the past 5 years. Application numbers decreased by almost 30% between 2008-2009 and

2009-2010 and student enrollment has declined by nearly 25% within the past 4 years (2006-2007 to 2009-2010).

The unpredictable number of student applicants and registered new students each year makes projecting an operating budget and staffing needs exceedingly difficult. For administrators at Catholic College Prep, predicting enrollment is especially challenging because it is not only the number of applicants that varies each year but also the ratio of accepted-to-registered students. This variation undermines standard budget projections based on application numbers because Catholic College Prep does not have a consistent rate for which accepted students have registered year to year. Therefore, building budget projections on an average rate of accepted-to-registered students yields inconsistent projections at best. As a result, the operating budget of the school varies from the projected budget depending on actual new student attendance and retention. This variation becomes problematic when projections are unreliable; therefore, gaps in funding arise. These funding gaps not only impact staffing (fewer sections require fewer teachers, leading to potential layoffs) but also can compromise academic programs and social and spiritual student opportunities such as elective course offerings, retreats, athletics, and co-curricular program offerings.

Research that looks to identify what motivates families to apply to Catholic College Prep and research that aims to specifically identify trends in the motivations for families who are accepted and choose to enroll at Catholic College Prep is very important. Launching marketing efforts that are tailored to a prospective family population that will register once accepted is imperative for Catholic College Prep to build enrollment and sustain longevity as a Catholic college preparatory high school. An

investigation of possible relationships between parental motivation to apply to Catholic

College Prep among accepted families who do and do not register at Catholic College

Prep is a vital and exciting opportunity for change at Catholic College Prep.

Background of the Problem

      Catholic education. Publicly funded Catholic education dates back through the

late 1840s as a response to high concentrations of Catholic immigrant populations who

were generating tension with the strict Protestant overtones of public education (Benson

& McMillen, 1991). As a result, public education founded *immigrant* schools for

Catholic families that remained publicly funded until they were growing too rapidly in

number; ultimately, they were established as private schools, no longer entitled to public

funds (Doyle, 1984).

      The shift from a public to private school model created a new flexibility in

Catholic school structures, and soon thereafter Catholic school administrators became

highly motivated academically and crafted their schools in such a way that they began to

attract students, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, who were drawn to the academic

opportunities at these schools (Geller, Sjoquist, & Walker, 2001). For many years,

Catholic schools saw marked enrollment growth that reflected students of all religious

backgrounds because of the academic programs they offered (Bauch, 1987); however,

with the emergence of competition in public education such as charters, magnets,

vouchers, and interdistrict transfer programs, Catholic schools began seeing decreased

enrollment in the 1990s. These new interpretations of public education re-engaged

communities in public education, attracting families who might otherwise have opted for

private education. This decrease in enrollment prompted school leaders at Catholic

schools to consider changes in the desires of prospective families. Based on these

evolving motivations, private school administrators began considering efforts and

resources to invest in more tailored school marketing (Meyer, 2007).

Qualities of appeal. In order to determine the marketability of Catholic

education, an examination of the appealing aspects of Catholic schools is an important

consideration. One significant appeal of Catholic education can be found through study

of the trends in Catholic education and Catholic secondary school students.

Contemporary studies looking to identify similarities and differences between private,

Catholic, and public schools seem to have commonalities in a few key areas of focus.

Specific to the work of Opdenakker and Van Damme (2006), these key areas have

been identified as school climate, student success rate, focus on basic skills, monitoring

of student progress, and policies on parental involvement and high expectations. In their

multi-variable study looking at private (predominantly Catholic) and public schools,

Opdenakker and Van Damme found that private, predominantly Catholic schools

demonstrated success rates in all of the aforementioned areas, even in studies where

student backgrounds were controlled. In broad terms, the essence of this research

suggests that Catholic schools, as a group, excel in these areas of importance when

compared to public schools. This conclusion is largely based on the study findings that

Catholic schools outperformed public schools in creating a climate of learning that has

high expectations for students coupled with a higher level of academic support and focus

on the basic elements of education. Furthermore, the Opdenakker and Van Damme study

revealed "no net effect of student recruitment and no joint effect of student recruitment

and school context (without a joint effect with school practice and composition)" (pp.

107-108). Opdenakke and Van Damme concluded that this lack of relationship challenges the assumption that much of the success of Catholic secondary schools can be attributed to student recruitment and refocuses the research on what Catholic education is doing in terms of structure and design that is creating opportunities for greater student success.

Another significant and contributing factor to the thriving of Catholic education is the poor state of the United States public school system. Given that the perceived quality of a school can be attributed to public discussion and parental impressions (Bauch & Small, 1986), the rate of dissatisfaction with the public school system has played a role in Catholic school success and growth. This public perception has some supportive research. Specifically, Hill, Foster, and Gendler (1990) found that at-risk students were more academically engaged and successful in the Catholic school environment than in the public school environment. This is significant because, based on Hill et al.'s study of academic performance, Catholic schools have demonstrated success with students who otherwise were deemed unreachable by the public school system.

This success rate seems to be especially true with Black and Hispanic students in urban American cities. Black and Hispanic students appear to thrive in the Catholic school environment, consistently graduating at a higher rate in Catholic schools than in public high schools (Stevans & Sessions, 2000). This type of success rate makes Catholic education an appealing option in urban areas, where public education is failing to reach minority students.

Another appeal of private education is the public perception of imbalanced budgets and unavailable resources for students in public education. In the 2008 PDK Survey of American attitudes towards public education, lack of funding was at the top of

the list for "Biggest problems faced by [public] schools" (Bushaw & Gallup, 2008, p. 11).

This budget challenge not only affects parent perception but also affects academic

programs. One report found that students enrolled in private schools were enrolled in

academic, college preparatory programs at a rate of 70% as compared to a 36%

enrollment in academic programs in the public schools (Benson & McMillen, 1991). In

addition to budget struggles, even Catholic schools that struggle financially still have

more freedom to operate differently from a comprehensive urban public school that may

provide opportunities that other public school do not have (Hill et al., 1990), which

ultimately is also a factor in overcoming budget difficulties and other circumstantial and

contextual challenges.

        Private school enrollment issues. Because private schools are responsible for

attracting and retaining their own enrollment, there can be great enrollment challenges for

a school that is not marketing effectively. In the last few decades, Catholic school

enrollment has declined dramatically (U.S. DOE, 2009), not only creating schools that

cannot afford to sustain quality programs but also actually forcing the closure of a great

number of Catholic educational institutions (Robelen, 2008). Some of these challenges

can be attributed to the emergence of competition in education with the development of

charter; magnet, and voucher schools, as well as inter-district transfer policies. This

diversity of school choice options in the public education sector has created pressure on

Catholic schools to begin marketing more aggressively.

        The intent of this emergence of more strategic Catholic school marketing came

from a desire to recapture lost clientele who were choosing public options instead of

private schools. Regardless, in order to avoid the continued trend of Catholic school

closures, it is important to also acknowledge what is known about enrollment challenges at the site level. Institutional survival requires effective marketing (Meyer, 2007); therefore, school administrators must identify and address their school's shortcomings to sustain consistent enrollment numbers. Sustaining enrollment not only considers direct branding and marketing (which define the school offerings and advantages through methodical site study and basic marketing strategies), but in fact also starts with understanding the types of issues that impact enrollment, including parents/guardians perception of the school and customer service—both of which relate to motivation given the relationship between the perceived attributes of a school and its desirability.

The positive perception of a school by the local community from which it looks to draw prospective students is essential in building and maintaining enrollment (Hamilton, n.d., p. 83). Where schools have not been attentive to their public image or have failed to market themselves effectively, there can be great potential for poor school branding and public perception. For this reason, Padgett (2007) emphasized the importance of using the media and other public outlets to brand and define the school. Boasting about the programs and accomplishments of the school in the local papers, newsletters, church meetings, and other public venues is one highly effective strategy for building public interest. Another effective strategy for influencing public perception can involve focusing on the language used when describing the school, "focusing on the 'privileging of the academic' over pastoral aspects of schooling…and some diversification in perception through technology" (Bagley, 2006, p. 6). This type of focus in marketing allows for schools to tailor prospective parent perception of the school program offerings and highlights the areas of emphasis for the school. This focus, when coupled with an

understanding of what motivates the local community to apply for enrollment at a specific site, could inform an effective plan for attracting and retaining qualified student applicants.

Perna (2004) highlighted the importance of customer service in the public perception of non-mandatory schools. Perna emphasized that each public contact is an opportunity to define the tenor of the school and that a poor customer service strategy will directly impact the *word of mouth* marketing for that site. In addition to customer service, Molnar (2002) stressed the importance of business and corporate relationships that, when made public, can directly influence the perception and understanding of the mission of a school. A school that creates public-corporate partnerships for any number of reasons, including athletic sponsorships and capital campaigns, must be conscientious of the business and practice with which they are associating themselves (Molnar, 2002). For example, allowing a cigarette company to sponsor the new gym scoreboard could present a public perception nightmare that would confuse prospective families and function as a school endorsement of underage tobacco consumption. The implications of allowing an inappropriate sponsor, such as a cigarette company, could significantly affect how the public defines the school, certainly generating a public message that would be much more far reaching and influential than any political mission or vision statement from the school administration.

Catholic school marketing. Private school marketing has recently become a topic of interest because of the number of school closures and great deficits in student enrollment. Despite this recent interest, however, the emergence of aggressive marketing in non-public schools and higher education was first noted in the early 1990s (Oplatka,

2007). While disorganized and inconsistent initially, this strategy for enticing prospective

student enrollment was prompted by a growing concern about enrollment and attracting

clientele. Specifically, as the market for school choice increased in the mid 1990s

(Oplatka, 2007), the competition between private, parochial, charter, independent, and

magnetized schools drew students and prospective families out of traditional educational

enrollment practices (i.e. the tendencies of particular demographics to select public or

private education) and into the market of school selection from a broader range of public

and private options. This new market of educational opportunity and choice forced

schools to compete against each other and this emergence of public options made for a

larger market than ever before. Strategies for advertisement and marketing emerged as

many schools struggled to maintain enrolment and avoid school closure (Hamilton, n.d.).

This categorically altered the business of non-mandatory education and forced schools to

evaluate themselves in terms of marketing, specifically public perception and product.

        In determining how best to begin a campaign for public perception branding and

marketing to the public, Blumenstyk (2008) insisted that a site must "start with research

to determine how your institution is perceived in key audiences [one] want[s] to attract.

Then [one] can build [a] plan based on what [was] learn[ed]" (p. 2). This understanding

of how a school is perceived is essential to developing a marketing strategy that will

assist in boosting and sustaining enrollment. Specific to the role of community perception

in prospective student interest, Hamilton's (n.d.) investigation of Catholic school

marketing asserted that "most school marketing is word-of-mouth with parents

recommending a school to other parents. So [a school leader must think] about things

from a branding perspective" (p. 75).

Catholic College Preparatory High School and the challenge of enrollment.

Catholic College Prep is an urban, Catholic college preparatory high school located in northern California. Although historically Catholic College Prep was not established as a college preparatory school but rather as a standard Catholic high school (containing multiple academic tracks), strong enrollment provided opportunities to redefine the student population. Prior to being established as college preparatory, most students were accepted at Catholic College Prep and tracked according to academic ability. When Catholic College Prep made the transition into a college preparatory school, however, administrators began taking only students with a history of strong academic success (grades) and high performance on the High School Placement Test (HSPT; Lek, 2010).

This change generated excitement and interest at first, yet when the local economy suffered in early 2000, the number of qualified students who could afford private education declined dramatically. Under the school's new interest as being charged with college preparatory curriculum and expectations, the number of prospective students who were able to afford and were academically qualified for Catholic College Prep decreased. Coupled with challenges surrounding retention, Catholic College Prep declined from a school of 1150 to a school of 900 in a matter of 7 years. In the immediate years after the sharp decline in student enrollment, Catholic College Prep worked hard to market the school more effectively with a target goal of increasing the student population to around 1100 students. Despite marketing efforts, however, the applicant pool remained small and the school was unable to grow beyond 900. As a result, the practices of the school and the admissions office became influenced by the need to maximize enrollment. To sustain itself, Catholic College Prep began modifying expectations and softening

deadlines, undermining the published structure of the admissions process. This change in practice (and remediation of expectations of the prospective community) was damaging to the reputation of the school and likely contributed to the continued reduction in the number of academically qualified applicants. Prospective students began seeking additional competitive options in the surrounding Catholic schools. Despite these challenges, Catholic College Prep maintained a 99% college attendance rate and raised capital to build state-of-the-art-facilities.

While it looked like growth might be possible with the Class of 2011 and 2012, the class of 2013 and 2014 applicant pools dropped again by nearly a third. Because of the demographics where Catholic College Prep is located, inconsistencies in applicant numbers, in part resulting from unstable economic conditions, is a reality that must be accepted. Therefore, strong marketing to increase applicant pools and target out-of-the-area families is important.

As important, however, is maximizing matriculated enrollment from accepted students from the applicant pool. In considering student registration, knowing what motivates families that will be accepted and enroll at Catholic College Prep, as well as knowing what motivates applicants who will be accepted at Catholic College Prep but choose to enroll at another school can provide greater insight for future marketing and enrollment projections as well as provide the school with feedback about what is important to the community. This information will allow Catholic College Prep administrators to become more responsive to the objectives of their prospective applicants, thereby branding Catholic College Prep as a viable and attractive high school option. Attention to these motivations could greatly improve the attractiveness of

Catholic College Prep for prospective families through an intentional effort to highlight and market the school according to the interests of the community.

Given the significance of anticipated class size in designing and balancing the projected budget, Catholic College Prep would benefit greatly from higher rates of predictability in prospective class yield. In order to address this challenge and opportunity, Catholic College Prep must identify the similarities and differences in motivation that exist for parents/guardians who do enroll versus parents/guardians who do not choose to enroll in an urban, Catholic college preparatory high school to which they are admitted. For the purposes of this study Catholic College Prep will not look to determine what motivations exist for the parents/guardians of students who were not accepted. While this is an important subgroup, given the marketing purposes of this research, those families who qualify for enrollment must be considered the target market. Therefore, data from the subgroup of declined applicants are not necessary for this study. A recommendation for further study of this subgroup may be worthwhile should Catholic College Prep consider the reallocation of marketing funds that were able to be identified as formerly targeting these declined families.

Statement of the Problem

Catholic College Prep, an urban, Catholic, college preparatory high school, has consistently put energy and resources into the marketing of their institution. Despite such efforts, the school has experienced a decline in enrollment and an internal analysis of admissions and enrollment patterns has revealed inconsistent application and enrollment numbers over the past 6 years. In order to improve marketing and increase enrollment at Catholic College Prep, those factors that motivate parents/guardians to apply for and

enroll Catholic College Prep must be identified. In addition, determining similarities and differences in motivation for accepted families who register versus those who choose not to register at Catholic College Prep will yield important information that will assist Catholic College Prep with future marketing and branding efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the factors that motivate parents to enroll their admitted student in Catholic College Prep, an urban, Catholic, college preparatory high school, with factors that motivate parents of admitted students to enroll them elsewhere. This quantitative, cross-sectional study, conducted by the researcher over one admissions cycle (September 27th to January 7th) will be used to restructure and improve Catholic College Preparatory High School's marketing planning and action.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are

1. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in motivating them to apply to and enroll their children in a Catholic, college preparatory high school during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

2. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in motivating them to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school to which, upon acceptance, they choose not to enroll during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

3. How do the factors perceived to be very important in motivating families to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school compare, if at all, between

parents/guardians who apply to and enroll at a Catholic, college preparatory high school with parents/guardians who choose not to enroll their admitted students during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

Importance of the Study

This study will steer the admissions and marketing of Catholic College Prep to maximize the impact of branding efforts and cost benefit of marketing materials. In addition, the results of this study will potentially inform the accuracy of the projected prospective class size in order to assist with the construction of the operating budget by providing data that will help create more accurate projections about the anticipated number of students who might register. This study may engage Catholic College Prep in more meaningful budget projections that will not only stabilize the operating budget but also serve as a model for other private schools looking to stabilize budget challenges as they relate to issues of enrollment. In addition, this study may have implications for the projected registration yield and admissions marketing for comparable private schools. If the study finds similarities and differences in motivation between accepted families who do and do not register, this will inform the branding and marketing of the school as well as inform the practices and procedures of the admissions process. Furthermore, the theoretical implications of this relationship may provide a design for studying enrollment motivation factors as related to private Catholic high schools. The findings of this study may help to inform the efforts of other similar urban, Catholic, college preparatory high schools.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The following de-limitations were present in this study:

1. This study is focused on a single independent, college preparatory Catholic high school located in northern California.

2. This study examines the data of one full admissions cycle during a given academic school year.

3. The survey data are limited to one parent or guardian per applicant who supports the applicant in completing the application process.

The following limitations were present in this study:

1. The similarities and difference in parent/guardian motivation identified, if any, between families who were accepted and registered and families who were accepted and chose not to register, are specific to Catholic College Prep and may have no implications for other schools.

2. The respondents may not be willing to participate or be candid in their responses.

3. The economy may play a role in the number of students who apply to and/or enroll at Catholic College Prep because it is a tuition-based school. In a stronger economy, more people may have more money to spend, versus in a weak economy, fewer people may have the financial resources to afford private education. This must be a consideration when analyzing and drawing conclusions from the admissions data.

4. The survey used in this study was designed for use with families already enrolled in the designated Catholic school of study. This study is using the

survey for prospective parents/guardians looking to enroll their students in a

designated Catholic school.

Statement of Assumptions

This study was undertaken with the following assumptions:

1. The prospective parents/guardians and the Catholic College Prep community

members will be honest. Prospective parents/guardians may feel inclined not to be honest

out of fear or hope that their answers to the survey could have an impact on their

students' admissions decision. In order to address this, the researcher will provide written

disclosure to all parents/guardians that the survey responses will not be accessed until

after admissions decisions are mailed and families are notified.

2. The majority of contact between prospective families and Catholic College Prep

will take place with the admissions department. This is important because it ensures that

the impression of the school generated by Catholic College Prep is somewhat consistent

across prospective families.

Key Terms and Operational Definitions of the Variables

Motivation: The internal state or condition that activates behavior and gives it direction;

the desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behavior; the influence of

needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behavior (Kleinginna & Kleinginna,

1981). For the purposes of this study motivation will refer to the motivation of the

parents/guardians of prospective freshman applicants. Motivation will be measured in

this study through the collection of data through the use of a survey about the reasons for

parent selection of Catholic College Prep for potential admissions.

Acceptance: An offer of admissions for enrollment in the prospective class. Referred to interchangeably as *admitted*.

Registration: Also referred to as *enrollment*, registration is the financial and contractual commitment of a family to attend Catholic College Prep. A student is referred to as having registered when they make their first tuition payment and submit their tuition contract.

Admissions Cycle: The period from September through January during which applications for the prospective class are accepted and considered for admission. For the purposes of this study the admission cycle will run September 27th, 2010 through January 7th, 2011.

Prospective Class: The class or grade level to which the student is applying. For the purposes of this study prospective class will refer exclusively to grade 9.

Parent/Guardian: The household adult who will assist the student in the completion of the application. In most cases this is also the person who will be financially responsible for tuition payments. For the purposes of this study the term family will refer to parent/guardian.

HSPT: The High School Placement Test (HSPT) is a generalized competency test that nationally assesses students in reading, math, language and total basic skills and reports scores on a local and national percentile as well as with a national grade level equivalent (Educational Testing Services).

Prospective: Families and/or students who are investigating Catholic College Prep as a potential high school of choice, both pre- and post-application.

Legacy: An internal descriptor at Catholic College Prep referring to families/students who have had (or currently have) a family member(s) attend Catholic College Prep.

Independent School: Independent schools are schools that generate the majority of their own funding. Independent schools receive limited or no resources from the state and federal governments and are typically founded for a particular type of learner or learning opportunity.

Trending: Trending refers to the process by which habits are identified in a particular process. For the purposes of this study trending will refer to observed and documented behaviors in the admissions process.

Recruitment: Recruitment is the process by which private schools attract prospective families and engage them in discussions about applying and, upon acceptance, enrolling. At the high school level recruitment is against athletic league policies and therefore is often referred to as attracting.

Retention: Retention refers to the maintaining of students (status: enrolled) from the time of enrollment to the point of graduation.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized in 5 chapters. Chapter I is designed to provide the background and context of the problem and to provide a framework and foundation for the research. Chapter I provides a brief history on tuition based private schools private school marketing and describes the enrollment challenges being faced by Catholic College Prep. Catholic College Prep is presented in enough detail to support the importance of this study through the presentation of history and data supporting inconsistent admissions rates.

The second chapter consists of a literature review and discusses the history and

appeal of Catholic education as well as the emergence of competition in secondary

education and the needs and challenges of Catholic school marketing. Careful attention is

paid to public school competition and enrollment struggles for tuition-based schools. The

marketable appeals of Catholic education as they relate to variables or factors of

motivation for prospective families are also examined. A summary of these factors

concludes the chapter in order to create the necessary context to support the importance

of this study.

Chapter III describes the methods utilized in this study. The research questions for

the study as well as the specifics of the design and the survey instrument are described.

Protection and compliance with regulations surrounding human subjects is also included.

Chapter IV provides a review of the data analysis and identifies themes from the

survey. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study.

Chapter V represents the interpretation of the findings and the closure of the

study, providing conclusions and recommendations for policy, practice and future study.

Chapter II: Comprehensive Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature

While research is available that focuses on the areas of private versus public education and Catholic school marketing, little research has been done regarding what motivates parents to enroll their students in an urban Catholic high school. Specifically, little research exists that describes what similarities and differences exist in motivation between families who are accepted and register versus families who are accepted and choose not to register at urban Catholic college preparatory schools. In addition, limited research exists regarding the similarities and differences in motivation between families who apply and are successfully admitted to an urban Catholic college preparatory high school versus those who apply and are not admitted (based on ineligibility). This is important for urban Catholic college preparatory high schools because, as independent tuition-based schools, they must understand the motivations of their prospective client-base in order to design targeted marketing strategies to attract and maximize these desired applicants.

In order to thoroughly understand the context of Catholic school marketing, an examination of the research available on struggling Catholic schools and the history and appeal of Catholic education must occur. In addition, examination of the literature surrounding the emergence of competition in secondary education and the specifics of private education (including enrollment practices) is important. Finally, analysis of the advantages for private school marketing in light of the current public secondary education system and existing Catholic school marketing practices will support the foundation for

further examination of Catholic school marketing and study on what motivates families to apply to an urban Catholic college preparatory high school.

Prompting Research: The Struggling Catholic School

Understanding the context of struggling Catholic schools supports the importance of research to inform Catholic school marketing in order to improve and sustain enrollment efforts. The history of Catholic education and secondary education in the contemporary world provides additional insights into the importance of this research. Knowing what challenges are currently facing Catholic education and having an understanding of what action is already being taken will reveal the importance of a study that looks to identify the trends in motivation for enrollment at an urban Catholic college preparatory school.

Despite the long-standing history of Catholic education, Catholic schools still have a need to focus resources on marketing and marketability (Bagley, 2006). Because of the pressure on Catholic schools to maintain consistent enrollment and to maximize prospective enrollment for budgeting and operating, marketing plays a vital role in Catholic education. Especially in the last decade and a half, Catholic schools have started to notice a decrease in enrollment, which threatens the sustaining of Catholic education and renews the importance of Catholic school marketing for survival. According to one National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) report (U.S. DOE, 2009) about the condition of education, from 1995-2007 private school enrollment (PreK-grade 12) decreased from 6.3 million students nationwide to 5.9 million. Within that decreasing enrollment, Roman Catholic school enrollment specifically decreased by 6% from 1999 to 2003, 7% of that decrease occurring at the secondary level (DOE, 2009). Statistically,

Catholic schools cannot continue to sustain academic programs without an intervention or a renewed marketing effort. Since 1990, over 1300 Catholic schools in the United States have closed due to low enrollment (Robelen, 2008) and 600 of those Catholic schools closed between 2000 and 2006. As Meyer (2007) commented, in order to survive as an institution, Catholic schools will "have to become expert fundraisers…And marketers. And promoters. And lobbyists. And miracle workers" (p.18).

These figures have prompted a renewed concern over Catholic school marketing and the identification of similarities and differences between parents who enroll versus those who do not enroll their children in Catholic education. Perhaps attributed to the growth of public options such as magnets and charters and perhaps attributed to the rising cost of tuition and bad press surrounding the Catholic Church, Catholic school administrators need now more than ever to market their schools in such a way as to increase and sustain valuable enrollment. By understanding first the origins of Catholic education in the United States and next the context of contemporary education, both Catholic and public, the complexities of Catholic school marketing can most clearly be seen.

History of Catholic Education in the United States

The early establishment of public education in the United States was based on the Protestant faith and included several religious practices such as daily prayer from the Protestant Bible (Doyle, 1984). This public education was government funded despite its religious affiliation and was largely the educational option available to students in the United States. Despite the federal funding for these religiously inclined educational institutions, public schools were not initially held in contempt for the presence of prayer

and religion and would come to be credited, in many ways, for prompting the emergence of Catholic schools in the United States (Doyle, 1984).

Catholic schools began to spike in the United States as an increasing immigrant population emerged. Initially from Ireland then later from Central and Southern Europe, the immigrant population in the United States brought a significant demand for Catholic educational opportunities and environments (Benson & McMillen, 1991). The large number of immigrants and their fierce dedication to the Catholic faith began to create tension with the Protestant overtones of public education, and this tension reinforced an already existing tension surrounding the large influx of immigrants. At their start, Catholic schools initially emerged as publicly funded alternatives to the public school system that was currently in place. These Catholic schools were designated as Irish schools or immigrant schools (in place of religious affiliation) and were embraced by immigrant families for their sense of community and religious doctrine (Benson & McMillen, 1991). These schools remained publicly funded through the late 1840s at which time they became designated as private, largely due to the growing number of schools developing and the associated costs (Doyle, 1984).

Between 1880 and 1920 the number of Catholic schools in the United States nearly tripled. Enrolled in these Catholic schools during this time period, the student population served quadrupled, demonstrating the far-reaching growth of Catholic education and foreshadowing the wave of enthusiasm for Catholic education that would later be embraced by Catholic and non-Catholic families alike (Benson & McMillen, 1991).

Largely in response to their increased demand and escalating enrollment, Catholic school administrators quickly began developing highly academic programs for motivated students, elevating the appeal of Catholic education from being attractive to Catholic families exclusively to being attractive to academically motivated families whether Catholic or not. These new families were looking for a more comprehensive and sophisticated education for their students, and they started seeing the developing Catholic school academic programs as desirable. The emergence of an increasing number of applicants allowed school administrators to be more selective when admitting students, thus reinforcing the academic success of many Catholic school students (Benson & McMillen, 1991).

Catholic education, although founded on religious doctrine and values, began to evolve to serve a larger demographic and clientele after the shift in funding migrated from public to private funds. The rate of growth of private schools was largely responsible for this shift, and the shift subsequently broadened the scope of what private education could offer and the ways in which it could divert from the restrictions and expectations of publicly funded schools. As private education continued to become a growing market, schools of all denominations as well as private independent schools began to be established. The options for educational opportunities that were privately funded grew steadily, undermining the exclusive stronghold Catholic schools had held in the private school market (Alt & Peter, 2002). Despite this diversity in private education, however, religious schools still dominate the scene and Catholic schools account for a great percent of those private religious schools. Between 1999 and 2000 a national survey

of the United States revealed that 79% of all private schools were religious, a full 30% of them Catholic (Alt & Peter, 2002).

One major factor in the prevalence and success of Catholic education is the historically dense populations of Catholics in designated communities. Partly due to the waves of immigrants to the United States and partly because of the economic landscape of America, several predominantly immigrant neighborhoods began to emerge and form religious communities. Because of the Catholic faith of large populations of the immigrants during this historical influx, where an increased population of immigrants resided, the possibility to promote successful enrollment at a Catholic school became increasingly more likely and desirable (Gemello & Osman, 1982). This trend continued to prompt the foundation of Catholic schools, resulting in a national representation of 48% of all students enrolled in private education attending Catholic schools (Alt & Peter, 2002).

Expansion of the Catholic School Student

As Catholic schools became at least as recognized for the value and quality of their academic education as their religious education, the demand for Catholic secondary school options for non-Catholic students began to emerge (Donlevy, 2007). Historically developed for the holistic education of Catholic children, Catholic schools were confronted with a unique challenge as they attempted to open their doors to non-Catholic students while maintaining their unique and fiercely Catholic identity and curriculum. A significant conflict began to emerge among Catholic educators as they struggled to identify and design curriculum for Catholic schools that included a growing population of non-Catholic students.

In response to this growing demand by non-Catholic families for the Catholic

school environment and academic education and the increasing discomfort of the

Catholic school model attempting to reconcile these distinctly different student bodies,

the Catholic Church determined that a position needed to be taken to guide schools in this

changing landscape. It was this emerging situation that prompted the Church fathers of

Vatican II to release *Gravissium Educationis,* which served as both an invitation to non-

Catholic students to attend Catholic schools and a directive for Catholic schools to open

their doors for non-Catholic students (Flannery, 1996). What started as an academic

opportunity for non-Catholic students in the Catholic school environment continued to

emerge, and by 1977 the Congregation for Catholic Education furthered the invitation to

non-Catholic students to include the social, spiritual, moral, and cultural education unique

to Catholic schools (Donlevy, 2007).

As could be expected, with time the non-Catholic population at Catholic schools

began to increase to impressive numbers, shifting the demographic of Catholic

enrollment and impacting the delicate balance of Catholic education. This population

change began creating a struggle for Catholic school educators who were now handling

students who lacked shared values in a values-based curriculum (Scholefield, 2005). The

Congregation for Catholic Education released a statement in 1988 that reinforced the

message of religious freedom for non-Catholic students while fiercely reminding schools

to be empowered by their freedom to proclaim the Gospel and offer formational values

based on the Catholic church and the dignity and distinct Catholic (not Christian) identity

(Donlevy, 2007).

This proclamation noted an important event in Catholic education, as it anticipated the continued trend of non-Catholic enrollment and directed the faith education of Catholic schools despite changed enrollment. Calling for tolerance, it maintained a standard of religious education for all students, regardless of faith.

Since the release of this statement by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the increasing enrollment of non-Catholic students in Catholic education continues. In fact, a recent census revealed that now even at the college and university level 34.4% of all students enrolling in Catholic colleges and universities identify themselves as non-Catholic students selecting Catholic education at will (Estanek, 2003). This enrollment data reflects a growing awareness at Catholic schools about religious diversity and highlights the fact that the motivation for families to pursue Catholic education does not rest solely on desiring an education based on the Catholic faith.

The Appeal of Catholic Education

The most powerful way of marketing a school is to understand and define what motivates parents to apply for and enroll their children in a specific Catholic school. While not enough research has been conducted in this area (Gemello & Osman, 1982), the research that is available emphasizes the importance of motivation and perception in targeted private and Catholic school marketing. What started as exclusivity founded on religious doctrine soon became more diverse in purpose and demand, opening Catholic education to new markets. This diversification of Catholic school curriculum and student demographic allowed Catholic schools to begin to brand and market their non-religious program offerings, potentially opening enrollment to a wider target audience (Geller et al., 2001).

Given that parent interest in a specific educational institution is likely to derive from their perceptions about the methods and values of education at that site, there are a multitude of potential factors that can influence prospective interest for the selection of private education (Bauch, 1992). There are some preliminary case study data and survey data that indicate possible motivations for enrollment in Catholic school. Understanding these motivations on a more general scale allows for schools to tailor their marketing efforts to a preliminary demographic before conducting specific research on how motivation relates to enrollment at their site.

The areas of marketable appeal of Catholic education are best understood as factors for motivation for prospective families. These areas of marketable appeal correlate with the factors being identified as motivations by the research instrument for this study. The survey questions correlate with these variables or factors for motivation as related to the areas of marketable appeal of Catholic education as identified in Table 1.

Table 1

Motivational Factors

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
A- Academic reputation	Academic	Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2008; Donohue, 1993; Eide, Goldhaber & Showalter, 2004; Lacey, 2000; Pustjens, Van de Gaer, Van Damme & Onghena, 2008 Whitehead, 2007

(*table continues*)

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
B- Child's friends attend	Social	Diversity of Catholic school communities	Bempechat, Piergross & Wenk, 2008; DOE, 2003; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Nelson & Bauch, 1997
C- Teachers	Academic-teachers	Teacher professionalism and satisfaction	Alt & Peter, 2002; Benson & McMillen, 1991; DOE, 2003; Guerra, 1995
D- Athletic programs	Co-curricular	Education of the whole child	Coll, 2007; Cronin, 1999; Elliot, 2004; Jensen, 1986; Lee, 1986; Scholefield, 2005
E- location	Safety	Campus safety	Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Donlan, 2003; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006
F- Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	Faith development	Faith formation	Alt & Peter, 2002; Coll, 2007; DOE, 2003; Rothstein, Carnoy, & Benveniste, 1999; Woodard, 2009
G- Buildings and other facilities	Co-curricular	Campus safety	Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Donlan, 2003; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006

(table continues)

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
H- Affordable tuition I- College preparation	Diversity and equity Academics	Diversity of Catholic school communities Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1997; Bempechat et al., 2008; Bauch & Small, 1986; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Lacey, 2000; Nelson & Bauch, 1987; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
I- College preparation J- Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended	Academics Social	Academic opportunities Diversity of Catholic school communities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Lacey, 2000; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
J- Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended K- Parent(s) or relative(s) attended L- Special technical courses or training programs	Social Academics	Diversity of Catholic school communities Diversity of Catholic school communities Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Lacey, 2000; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
K- Parent(s) or relative(s) attended L- Special technical courses or training programs M- Child wanted to attend	Social Academics Social	Diversity of Catholic school communities Academic opportunities Diversity of Catholic school communities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Lacey, 2000; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
L- Special technical courses or training programs M- Child wanted to attend N- Available public schools are unsafe O- School is open to parents' ideas	Academics Social Safety Social input	Academic opportunities Diversity of Catholic school communities Campus safety Diversity of Catholic school communities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003 2008; Donlan, 2003; Donohue, 1992; Fincham, 2007; Eide et al., 2004; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Hyde, 2008; Lacey, 2000; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
M- Child wanted to attend N- Available public schools are unsafe O- School is open to parents' ideas P- Religious education	Social Safety Social input Faith	Diversity of Catholic school communities Campus safety Diversity of Catholic school communities Faith formation	Alt & Peter, 2002; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Coll, 2007; DOE, 2003; Donlan, 2003; Elliot, 2004; Kim, 1994; Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Rothstein et al., 1999; Woodard, 2009

(table continues)

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
N- Available public schools are unsafe O- School is open to parents' ideas P- Religious education Q- Moral training R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	Safety Social input Faith Faith and values Academic	Campus safety Diversity of Catholic school communities Faith formation Values based education Academic opportunities	Alt & Peter, 2002; Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Coll, 2007; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donlan, 2003; Donahue, 1992; Eide et al., 1992; Elliot, 2004; Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; Kim, 1994; Lacey, 2000; McGrath, 1999; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Rothstein et al., 1999; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007; Woodard, 2009
O- School is open to parents' ideas P- Religious education Q- Moral training R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems S- Discipline	Social input Faith Faith and values Academic Safety	Diversity of Catholic school communities Faith formation Values based education Academic opportunities Campus safety	Alt & Peter, 2002; Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Coll, 2007; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donahue, 1992; Donlan, 2003; Eide et al., 1992; Elliot, 2004; Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; Kim, 1994; Lacey, 2000; McGrath, 1999; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Nelson & Bauch, 1997; Pustjens et al., 2008; Rothstein et al., 1999; Whitehead, 2007; Woodard, 2009
P- Religious education Q- Moral training R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems S- Discipline T- Class size	Faith Faith and values Academic Safety Academics	Faith formation Values based education Academic opportunities Campus safety Academic opportunities	Alt & Peter, 2002; Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986 Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Coll, 2007; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donahue, 1992; Donlan, 2003; Eide et al., 1992 Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008 Lacey, 2000; Rothstein et al., 1999; McGrath, 1999; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007; Woodard, 2009;

(table continues)

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
Q- Moral training R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems S- Discipline T- Class size	Faith and values Academic Safety Academics	Values based education Academic opportunities Campus safety Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2003, 2008; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 1992; Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; Lacey, 2000; McGrath, 1999; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems S- Discipline T- Class size	Academic safety Academics	Academic opportunities Campus safety Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2008; Donlan, 2003; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 1992, 2004; Lacey, 2000; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
S- Discipline T- Class size	Safety Academics	Campus safety Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Convey, 1992 DOE, 2008; Donlan, 2003 Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Lacey, 2000; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
T- Class size	Academics	Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2008; Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Lacey, 2000; Pustjens et al., 2008; Whitehead, 2007
U- Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	Academics	Academic opportunities	Bauch, 1987; Bauch & Small, 1986; Convey, 1992; DOE, 2008 Donohue, 1992; Eide et al., 2004; Lacey, 2000; Pustjens et al., 2008; Van de Gaer, Van Damme & Onghena, 2008; Whitehead, 2007

Survey Questions	Factors	Variable Category	Literature Sources
V- Availability of transportation	Location/Safety	Campus safety	Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Donlan, 2003; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006
W- Willingness to address special and moral issues	Faith	Values based education	Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; McGrath, 1999
X- Positive influence of other students on my child	Safety	Campus safety	Bempechat et al., 2008; Coleman, 1998; Donlan, 2003; Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2006
Y- School shares my values and beliefs	Faith	Values based education	Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; McGrath, 1999
Z- Other: _____	N/A	N/A	

Teacher professionalism and satisfaction. One appealing aspect of Catholic education is the level of professional satisfaction experienced by the teaching and administrative staff at Catholic schools. In one aspect of that satisfaction, 70-85% of private school teachers surveyed about how they viewed their students responded with positive attitudes towards their students versus a 50-60% positive response from public school teachers (Benson & McMillen, 1991). The impact of positive teacher perceptions of students on the school environment has the potential to be significant. From a marketing perspective, making parents aware of this statistic may provide a potential motivator for their selection of private education. In addition to the positive view of teachers towards their students, Catholic schools also have demonstrated higher staff morale can be attributed to generally lower total school enrollments: an average class size that is smaller than in public schools and a lower student to teacher ratio (Alt & Peter, 2002).

Teachers at private schools also indicate job satisfaction as a result of their positive views of their careers as educators, the faculty collaboration at their sites, and

their sense of shared vision for their school (as compared to teachers surveyed at public

schools). Much of this professional satisfaction comes from a faculty perception that

school goals are communicated clearly, they are being recognized for achievements, and

they report to an administration that is supportive of teachers and enforces school rules

 with students (U. S. DOE, 2003). Although teachers at Catholic schools are not

represented or protected by established teachers unions and are still paid less on average

than teachers in public schools (Guerra, 1995), their sense of satisfaction with their jobs

creates an atmosphere that, marketed correctly, could be appealing to parents. These are

also appealing factors that not only make prospective families attracted to Catholic

education but also comprise important motivators that could be addressed in marketing

Catholic schools. Targeting efforts around the environment created by the positive

attitude of teachers is likely to be an effective marketing strategy for Catholic secondary

schools.

Values based education. Another potential factor to consider as a target for

marketing is the appeal of Catholic education for its instruction in Catholic values.

Catholic values, for the purposes of this work, will include not only the explicit gospel

values associated with the Catholic Church but also the advantages of the Catholic school

identity and presence of a community of faith. The presence of Catholic values is

demonstrated both in the leadership team and in the community; these values can offer an

attractive environment that prospective families find appealing and a strong marketing

angle for Catholic schools.

Families who are looking for a *family type* of community or learning environment

often look to Catholic education as a model of what a *values based* education and a

community of faith would look like in an educational setting. The presence of a community of faith ensures that each student has an opportunity to form a relationship with God and to take on the *charisms* of morality and kindness, which is important to many parents. In addition, research shows that students attending schools defined by a community of faith are more likely to find a place in the community, which ultimately creates a less hostile and more inclusive social environment for students (McGrath, 1999). This environment also has implications for student safety which will be addressed in a later section.

According to Fincham (2007), the unifying areas central to Catholic education focus on the components of citizenship and personal, social, and health education, determined primarily through citizenship education, moral education, and sex education. According to the findings, these attributes create a "distinct culture informed by core beliefs, values and traditions of the Catholic church" (p. 27).

An advantage of Catholic schools is the faith and spiritual development of students. This faith and spiritual component can be instrumental in the ability to build creative thinking characteristics upon the natural wondering and inquisitive nature of children (Hyde, 2008). In addition, a Catholic, values based education creates a sense of unity among faculty and staff, and prompts responsiveness from the entire community. This responsiveness contributes to the development of the whole child and the sense that students are able to be independent and unique and successful. This faith community is not only a result of the faith aspect of the school but can also be a product of the contribution of parents who have a shared interest in Catholic schools being warm and accepting for their students (McGrath, 1999).

Faith formation. Beyond the educational components, the Catholic faith and

faith formation of the faculty and staff is a vital component in creating an atmosphere of

Catholic values that appeals to prospective families. The role of the Catholic school

principal is vital to the perceived values and Catholic structure of a school. In a national

survey, 80-82% of Catholic school principals cited religious development as a primary

goal: more than any other single goal for their institutions or positions (Alt & Peter,

2002). This is not a surprise when considering that Catholic education is prescriptive in

guiding administrators in the development and continued faith formation of the school

and students. Catholic school administrators are called to bind their institutions to the

Catholic mission of the school and educate and articulate the community on the six pillars

of Catholic education: faith in Christ, formation of the whole person (mind, body and

soul), the relationship between faith and reason, the link between faith and the

transformation of culture, the connection between faith and action, and teaching respect

for and the experience of communication with others (Woodard, 2009). In fact, when

considering principals from a variety of religious education backgrounds, Catholic school

principals cite religious development as the most important goal of Catholic education

over any other private religious school principals (DOE, 2003). This focus on religious

development promotes strong moral and faithful development of students and suggests a

type of environment that is appealing for many prospective parents.

In addition to the principal being driven to promote religious identity and

development, the scriptural basis on which Catholic schools are founded can often serve

as a strong unifying force for the greater community (Rothstein, Carnoy, & Benveniste,

1999). According to *Student Teachers' Perception of Their Role and Responsibilities as*

Catholic Educators (Coll, 2007), a study that addresses the perceptions and motivation for student teachers entering into teaching positions at Catholic schools, all student teachers interviewed were clear on their role as a Catholic school teacher, specifically witnessing and teaching the Catholic faith, helping students with faith journeys, and spreading the gospel. In addition, the results indicated that many of the Catholic educators make that professional choice because either they identify with and feel a sense of belonging to the Catholic community, have a belief in faith-based education, or recognize that they belong to Catholic education and see it as a natural career choice (Coll, 2007). These uniting factors create a common community based in faith and pride in the Catholic identity, which increases the common message of education in Catholic schools and allows for collaboration and unity in mission for educators. This unity can be strongly appealing for families and can be perceived as offering a type of community not found in non-Catholic schools (Rothstein et al., 1999).

Campus safety. The perceived safety of the Catholic school environment is also an important factor in the potential interest of prospective families. In a time where violence on secondary school campuses is considered a threat for many students, the importance of a safe school environment is an undeniable factor in school selection (Bempechat, Piergross, & Wenk, 2008).

Safety is not only important for the well being of students but also as a factor in student behavior. One study that evaluated the relationship between school violence and student behavior focused specifically on data collected from students at both Catholic and public schools. In the survey, students from Catholic and public schools were asked questions about their perceptions of violence on their campuses. In asking for students to

identify different acts of school violence on a scale from mild to severe, 8.8% of Catholic

students interviewed perceived physical conflict on campus severe compared with 18%

of public school students. Similarly, possession of weapons on campus was responded to

as moderate or severe by 11.6% of Catholic school students compared with 23.3% of

public school students (Coleman, 1998). Overall, this study found that the Catholic

education environment had less perceived violence and negative student behavior than

public schools.

Interestingly, in addition to outperforming public schools, this study revealed that

Catholic school environments had positively impacted student behavior while other

private, non-Catholic schools were not identified as influencing student behavior

favorably− nor were public schools (Donlan, 2003). This becomes especially important

when considering the relationship between school environment and student academic

performance. According to the work of Opdenakker and Van Damme (2006), what is

happening inside of secondary schools has the greatest impact on student achievement. A

survey of the data reveals that the school type, i.e. public, private non-Catholic or

Catholic, is a major influence on what is occurring inside the schools. This is considered

to be an important factor because in light of the data

> opting for a public versus a Catholic school has implications for the kind of
>
> school mates a child is exposed to, as well as for the social climate and the kind of
>
> school organization and management the child and the parents are exposed to. (p.
>
> 111)

Given the findings of these works the implications for student success based on

environment can be seen as important, making Catholic education appealing for families

who are vested in the academic success, positive development and safety of their students.

Academic opportunities. In continuing to define marketing efforts by motivation to attend Catholic school, the academic reputation of Catholic education is a compelling factor for families considering enrollment in Catholic education (Bauch, 1987). In one study that examined families attending inner city Catholic schools, the data found that parents most frequently cited academics as the primary reason for their school selection (Bauch & Small, 1986).

Dating back to 1540, Catholic education, specifically Jesuit education, has been credited with providing the first rigorous educational system in the western world. Education has been a primary aim of the Jesuits because of the role of the church in serving as the guiding pillar of the community, and specific to the Jesuits, this focus has been on secondary and college level education in order to target the largest demographic of Catholics seeking education (Whitehead, 2007).

One 2008 study that considered the reading levels for 9, 13 and 17 year olds found conclusively that, for all three ages studied, students who were attending Catholic schools had higher reading scores than those students attending public schools (U.S. DOE, 2008). These types of academic skills prepare students in Catholic schools to continue to thrive academically with a larger majority of students from Catholic primary schools going on to enroll in academic programs in secondary education than those students coming from public schools (Pustjens, Van de Gaer, Van Damme, & Onghena, 2008). This reputation of Catholic schools for producing "high quality academic, religious and values outcomes" (Convey, 1992, p. 81) is appealing for families because it

appears to guarantee future academic success for students as they graduate to the college and university level. According to Eide, Goldhaber, and Showalter (2004), there is a statistically significant relationship between Catholic schooling and matriculation to the more competitive colleges and universities. This is certainly important when considering the marketability and appeal of Catholic education, especially for those families with highly academically motivated students.

This success in Catholic education has many possible explanations, some of which may be important supporting factors in generating a branding or marketing campaign. One possibility for the success of Catholic schools with college promotion concerns the fact that Catholic schools do not try to teach everything but rather prescribe a core college preparatory curriculum for all students (Donohue, 1993). Another possibility might be that teachers in Catholic education tend to be positive, sensitive to the teacher-student relationship, invested in the success of their peers and appreciative of the sense of being family (Lacey, 2000). Both indicate a sense of environment as important, which was alluded to earlier, seeing the value in a school that actively creates a compelling environment for both learning and self expression. Regardless of the specifics, for the overarching purpose of marketing and the appeal of Catholic education, academic advantages and accountability could likely serve as significant motivators that spur prospective families to consider Catholic education.

Diversity of Catholic school communities. In addition to the discounted theory of Catholic education being mores successful due to students from privilege, historically the data shows that Catholic schools have consistently been conscientious in serving the poor and underprivileged as students. This is important because it counters the argument

that Catholic schools see high performance only because they retain students of wealth. This is especially relevant in considering Catholic versus other private, non-Catholic schools. Research shows that despite the attendance of a typically disadvantaged student population, in a sample of 72 reports on Catholic education, 30 reported Catholic schools to be of "exceptional quality" (Elliot, 2004, p. 668). This is important to consider when looking at the demographics of private and Catholic education. In general, private school enrollments have higher enrollment among white and Asian students than black and Latino students, and they appear more segregated than public schools (Reardon & Yun, 2002). In the realm of private education, however, Catholic schools are typically larger and have a more diverse student body than other private, non-Catholic schools, enrolling a 12% Hispanic population as compared to a 3-6% enrollment of Hispanic students at other private, non-Catholic schools (U.S. DOE, 2003).

At Catholic College Prep, the demographics reflect a student body comprised of 4% African American, 2.5% Native American, 43% Asian, 27% Caucasian, and 23% other nationalities. In addition, in one study that considered the experience of African American students in Catholic education, it was determined that African American students in Catholic schools identified the helpful and caring involvement coupled with the unique teacher student relationship with their teachers more often than African American students in public education (Nelson & Bauch, 1997). Even in studies such as *Catholic High Schools: 1. History, Governance, Finance and Curriculum; 2. Catholic Identity and Politics* (Kim, 1994), which attempted to expose the inconsistencies of the relationship between Catholic identity and the faith community impact on academic achievement, the consistency between curriculum and classroom and the focus on student

empowerment and self-actualization in Catholic education was acknowledged by the author.

Ultimately much of the work surrounding Catholic education finds that regardless of race or socioeconomic status, students are likely to find success in Catholic education as compared to private non-Catholic and public education. This can, in part, be attributed to the idea that students in Catholic education have a strong sense of personal responsibility for their own learning and are aligned with an ever changing educational model because of the perceived school environment as being caring and reflective of teachers who are deeply engaged in both the academic and psychosocial well being of their students (Bempechat et al., 2008).

Education of the whole child. Beyond just the presence of trends in school success, the impact of a Catholic school environment on students is another draw for parents. In the establishment of Catholic education, the great emphasis and founding belief was that a values based education could only be accomplished in a religious school. The theory was that teaching values through theology and church was insufficient when a true education would allow for Catholic values to penetrate the entire academic curriculum (Elliot, 2004). The emphasis on integrating faith formation into education and curriculum has been an essential defining component of Catholic education because it points to the holistic development of students academically, socially, morally and spiritually. The success of this concept derives from the fundamental church belief that students who have been exposed to a values based education are expected to have a different moral compass than those without such exposure (Scholefield, 2005). This emphasis on faith formation and character development is a vital component of Catholic

education and can be seen exhibited through the quantitative and qualitative work surrounding Catholic education research. Internally, the importance of this faith formation education is not only evident in quantitative studies measuring student exposure and growth in areas of moral and ethical decision making but also through the collection of writings by educational leaders in Catholic education who strive to capture the essence and importance of character education in the Catholic school system (Cronin, 1999).

One particular area of emphasis is the role of social responsibility and service. Tied together in the Catholic faith, Catholic education sees student engagement in the community both through personal conduct and volunteerism (Coll, 2007). Without a doubt the significance of social responsibility and service in Catholic education reveals just a single facet of the emphases in a values based education.

In considering this, Lee (1986) conducted research to identify the advantages yielded from such a morally focused and faith filled educational model. Lee's work concluded that standard Catholic school advantages could be attributed to variation from standard non-Catholic education in social context, academic and disciplinary climate, as well as curricular offerings and requirements of Catholic education. This becomes important when evaluated with further studies including Jensen (1986), in which the observed behavior of Catholic school and public school students is noted as categorically oppositional. This difference in behaviors can, according to Jensen's work, be exclusively and directly attributed to the influence of Catholic school practices and design. This is vital to understanding the appealing market of Catholic education because it suggests that students who attend Catholic schools will, by the very nature and design of the schools,

exhibit improved behaviors as attributed to Catholic school expectations and environment.

Summary of the appeal of Catholic education. The impact of this school design carries over into the larger realms of social behaviors, as they share a natural connection and relationship with classroom behavior and subsequent academic performance. In considering Catholic school practice and the impact of student behavior on academic performance in general, Catholic education yields students whose academic performance can be attributed to greater levels and expectations of discipline and more rigorous academic requirements (Jensen, 1986). Tying back into the large scale model of Catholic education, this overall student development of academic, social, moral, and spiritual aspects of life can be attributed in part to the unique role of administrative leadership in supporting the intent and design of Catholic education (Pejza, 1985) and is what makes Catholic education a specific and identifiable model of education.

The Emergence of Competition in Secondary Education

While the history and development of Catholic education reveals some clear and marketable areas of appeal for families, public education too has developed over the last few decades making competition more prevalent in secondary education. While Catholic schools were improving and diversifying their educational model, public education was developing alternate educational models as well.

The first emergence of this public competition can be dated to 1778 when public education was becoming increasingly disappointing (Maxwell, 2010), creating room for the emergence of new educational opportunities. These new opportunities created

pressure on public education leaders to improve practices and reform their schools in order to compete in the new market.

Vouchers. Maxwell (2010) discussed the early proposals of educational vouchers from such prominent thinkers as Adam Smith. In Smith's famous economic treatise, *Wealth of Nations* (1778/1991), he called for a system that recognized the role of choice and option in education and suggested a manner for federally subsidizing the cost of this type of program. In 1769 Thomas Paine has previously alluded to this idea by promoting that the purpose of vouchers should be to expand choice options to families in consideration and support of educational choice (Maxwell, 2010). The essence of both authors' thinking was to promote a voucher system that would focus on a portion of school tuition being provided to qualified families for use at any participating public or private school of the family's choice (Metcalf & Legan, 2002).

Recently, vouchers have been adopted in several states and have received democratic support in urban communities. Successful implementation of the program has been seen in predominantly African American and Latino communities and, despite resistance, has been received with varying levels of enthusiasm. Supporters of the voucher model advocate for how it creates options for poor families that they may not otherwise have, including attendance at private and other tuition based schools (Maxwell, 2010).

The growing support of vouchers can be seen reflected not only in state practice but in federal budgeting as well. In President Obama's 2011 budget, the administration requested $9 million for the voucher program. These funds were designated, however, as a "final request for federal money" (Maxwell, 2010, p. 2). While a critique of the voucher

system suggests that it may be a way to monopolize the educational process by popular or overbearing institutions (Welsch, Bambi, & Skidmore, 2010), the fundamental principle of infusing the educational system with choice remains encouraging.

Charters. Another emerging educational option is the charter school model. Charter schools are recognized for their advantages of market competition and reducing the typical red tape of public education. This is made possible by the design of charters as autonomous, publicly funded entities that operate on the basis of a contract between the group opening the school and the school sponsor, which is typically the local public school district or the state education agency (Fusarelli, 2002). Because of this contract arrangement, charter schools have fewer barriers and restrictions, which allows for more innovation while still benefiting from the advantages of being publicly funded.

While critics of charter schools argue that education does not respond to the market model and that charters are taking money away from already underfunded public schools, this flexibility in charter design through public funding has resulted generally in improved instruction and higher performing schools, with only 4% of all charter schools granted nationally having been revoked. These revoked charters have rarely, if ever, occurred as a result of low student performance (Fusarelli, 2002). In 2007, 2% of all K-12 students were in charter schools and students attending schools of choice had seen a 5% increase since 2003. Because charter schools engage students in a more tailored curriculum, many have seen higher success rates with students than standard public education.

In one particular California charter, the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART), high school juniors and seniors in Clovis and Fresno were invited

to attend a tech charter. One hundred percent of all participating students successfully passed the California High School Exit Exam, 95% of graduates enrolled in post-secondary education and the overall attendance rate was 2.5% higher than the traditional high school average (Forbes & Saunders, 2008). This successful implementation of charters can be seen across the United States, heralded for allowing the re-envisioning and infusion of new educational ideas and providing an alternate educational possibility for students (Nathan, 2005).

Magnets. Magnet schools are yet another emerging option in the sphere of public education and market competition. Magnet schools began to emerge in the 1970s and were accepted by the federal courts in 1975. The federal government recognized magnet schools as a method of desegregation and subsequently supported their establishment. Because magnets are typically established in urban districts with enrollments of ten thousand or more students, they have graduated onto the public education scene with a great deal of public enthusiasm. At present over 75% of all districts containing magnet schools report that student desire for enrollment is higher than the spaces available, and over 50% of those magnet schools contain significant waiting lists (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002).

One study found that the socioeconomic stratification of schools declined after choice was introduced to the school system, confirming the intent of the federal approval and promoting the demand for districts to continue to develop diverse offerings (Gorard, Fritz, & Taylor, 2001). This new layer of choice is yet another factor in the growing pressure on public education to market and reform in order to regain their student enrollment numbers and public perception (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002).

Interdistrict transfer. Beyond the array of publicly funded school choice options, many districts also boast an inter-district transfer policy or open enrollment policy, which has also been credited with highlighting the shortcomings in low performing educational institutions (Jimerson, 2002). Open enrollment is based on the market model; however, unlike magnets, charters, and the voucher system, it limits attendance to already existing public schools. It is equally as controversial as the others not only because of the implicit controversy of education as being an appropriate fit to the market model as a matter of principal but also because it has been accused of promoting social and ethnic stratification and influence by allowing flight from undesirable public schools. The premise, however, is that the competition of open enrollment will prompt low performing schools to embrace reform by systematically allowing the loss of significant enrollment at low performing sites, which results in a measurable financial loss or penalty (Jimerson, 2002).

Interdistrict transfer is considered a viable school choice option and has been adopted by many states; however, the rules and guidelines for implementation vary by state implementation (Welsch et al., 2010). While many argue that this ultimately punishes students who chose to stay at the neighborhood schools, open enrollment and inter-district transfer are yet another public model that are creating competition and choice in the sphere of public education (Jimerson, 2002). The argument against inter-district transfer is that it creates an opportunity for discrimination against poor socioeconomic status students. According to the published policy, however, students can only be denied transfer for five cited reasons, including: limited space, special education needs not offered in the transfer district, racial imbalance, expulsion from previous

district, or failure of the applicant to follow the published deadlines and/or application instructions. This policy provides for equal access to all students which, counter to the arguments from resistant objectors, can allow for mobility of both low and high income students (Welsch et al., 2010).

Each of these models is vital in understanding the plight of public education to reform and market, and makes the role of private education as a non-public opportunity for families more clear and significant in its existence.

Public school reform. As public schools have started to feel the pressure of market competition, the cries for public school reform have become more intense and compelling. Reform models are diverse in demand and expectations, some requiring the complete reinvention of the public educational system.

The ASCD reform model. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has been vital in designing models for school reform that focus on building on the existing educational system. The ASCD model (2006) proposed that the destruction of a system with over 100 years of development and practice is not practical given budget constraints and the number of students currently enrolled in public education. The ASCD instead postulated that making the system functional, not dismantling it, is the most practical and immediate way to reform public education (Seltz, 2008). Though voluntary, the ASCD outlined a very forward thinking model with five main components for school improvement. Focus for the high school reform proposal include an interest in schools adopting multiple assessments in the classroom, personalized student learning, flexible use of the school day and the school structure by the administration, thoughtful and intentional professional development for teachers and

school leaders, and the active engagement of local business and community groups (Seltz, 2008).

Active student engagement. This type of reform emphasis is reflected in movements throughout the country, with success stories abounding where teachers have focused on their connection with their students, their student's lives, and buying into teaching as a reciprocal process (Haglund, 1999). In addition, schools are called to focus on the sense of belonging of students and being instructionally attentive to improving the weak academic skills of freshmen students and engaging these skills through the connection of the material with students lives and making it meaningful and transparent (Quint, 2008). This connection of students to the material is vital for successful educational reform, with 96% of high school students surveyed feeling that real world experiences through opportunities such as internships would encourage students to work harder and would be an instructional benefit for teachers who tied their curriculum to these experiences (Folly, 2007).

Beyond just technology, support for expanding a high school diploma to reflect citizenship, folk tradition, creative career and technical education at large is beginning to grow, recognizing the current high school program as too restrictive and appreciating the value of a more diverse and student centered curriculum (Siegel, 2009). Where the learning outside the classroom (through life experience) can be tied into the learning inside the classroom, students are empowered to make a more deep and meaningful connection with the material which is, in most cases, what school reform experts are advocating.

Integration of technology. Another school of thought for public school reform is the active incorporation of technology, not only in the classroom but especially in the curriculum. In terms of curriculum, vocational and career classes that are focused on technology are relevant for all students and teach necessary skills for both college and real life (Vail, 2007). Technology focused classes at the secondary level, however, are accused of blurring the line between college and career prep and, in essence, undoing tracking. Because technology has become an essential skill for most jobs and professions, more jobs than ever before are requiring post-secondary training and technical skills, which puts students graduating without technical and technological skills at a great disadvantage (Vail, 2007).

The idea that an ideal educational model would marry career and college preparatory curriculum is an emerging trend in education, and students who are enrolled in technology infused curriculum actually enroll in post secondary education at a higher level then students from traditional high schools (Hoachlander, 2008), which indicates the success of such programs. This is just another reason why determining incentives that encourage school reform cannot be underestimated (Hyslop, 2007). The growing demand for technical education and technology-based skills has become too strong for schools to continue to ignore. In fact, between 1999 and 2004 the U.S. Department of Education saw enrollment in career and technical education increase by 57%, a stunning testament to the power of technology curriculum at the secondary level (Vail, 2007). Despite the specific model, the importance of education responding to student needs and interests is evident in the call for school choice and has implications for the role of private education in the United States.

Regaining public perception. Ultimately, the market widening of education has put pressure on public education to reinvent itself, and in the short term many public schools are finding their way to do this not through immediate reform but rather through marketing. This is a relevant consideration when looking more carefully at private school demand and the intentional marketing of private schools, specifically urban Catholic education, to target demographics.

One example of success can be seen at Capilano College, where there was a growing desire to design a marketing effort in order to become considered a school of choice. Through a targeted focus on being selective, creating attractive programs, hosting marketing and recruitment events, developing plans for community outreach and defining relationships with the local high school principals, Capilano was able to successfully market the school through a branding campaign and see measured results accordingly (Gelin & Jardine, 1990).

The research surrounding educational consumers suggests that consumers seek out information that reinforces their current position on a topic or perception of a school. As such, given that public perception of state education is that the system, as a whole, is not desirable, public education must become more confident and intentional in telling stories of success and engaging the community in programs worthy of boasting in order to overcome an existing public image (Carr, 2006). What public schools are finding as essential is promoting the story of their site- academic advantages and special programs to the public. This is largely due to the need for public education to overcome a negative public image and reputation. A study of public perception found that families gravitated towards private education because of, in addition to other factors, safety and security, the

standard of schooling, and the composition of students (Piwowarski, 2006). Public

schools must establish themselves as safe, innovative, and ethical places for students to

learn in order to see an increased perception by the community at large.

One such marketing angle would suggest that public schools embark on a fierce

campaign where they identify public school as the place where "the American dream

takes place" (Carr, 2006, p. 33). These types of campaigns have demonstrated success for

public school and will continue to be necessary as publicly funded options continue to

emerge. In a study of the Minnesota school district, Mounds View Public Schools,

competition with district transfers, charters, and private schools was creating some

significant challenges for the public school district. Despite their high academic

achievement, the reputation of public education superseded the data and families were

turning to private schools without consideration of public schools as even an option. The

district turned to an aggressive public school marketing campaign in order to actively

recover students who were being lost to these alternate educational opportunities, and

their marketing campaign was rewarded with significant returns on students, increasing

funding and allowing for the seeing of the fiscal benefits of marketing (Stover, 2006).

Understanding Private Secondary Education

Without a doubt, private secondary education models have some commonalities.

Within this common genre, however, Catholic schools have some strong similarities and

differences to private independent schools that are non-parochial. These similarities and

differences extend beyond structure and into admissions' policies and procedures,

making an understanding of private secondary education, both similarities and

differences, an important component of understanding Catholic school marketing.

Private education: Private non-parochial and parochial. While the public education system has been in turmoil, private education has continued to establish itself as a viable, if not preferable, educational alternative to public schools. While Catholic education is unique in much of its educational approach and style, in order to fully understand its role in the sphere of education, the overarching impact of private education in general is an important background. Private or non-government schools are established for a variety of reasons, most commonly for the benefit of a particular type of student or learner (i.e. gender or learning difference), services offered or required, the presence of religion or morality in the curriculum and assumed consistency in the morals of the students and innovative teaching (Erickson, 2001). With a variety of leadership and funding models, these schools have become regarded in many ways as significant competition for public schools, creating tension surrounding enrollment and animosity as it relates to public funding. The major two types of private schools are private non-public (otherwise known as independent) and parochial schools. In order to fully understand all the market options in education, an understanding of independent schools is important.

Independent schools, or private non parochial schools, were established initially during a time in education where a small percentage of children were graduating elementary school (Erickson, 2001). Often in the form of boarding schools, independent schools tended to (and continue to) attract and recruit students from wealthy families and are designed to educate largely students of privilege. Private non parochial schools are often considered to be elite and have a reputation for intense expectations of students and are often associated with a guarantee for college promotion (Erickson, 2001). For families looking for assurance about their students' academic future or families seeking

an elite education to afford their student an academic advantage, independent schools are historically and currently an attractive academic option. Often boasting huge tuitions and expectations for sizeable donations, the modern day Challenger or Stratford schools are prime examples of the reputation, preparation, and esteem that independent schools have become defined by.

Whether parochial or independent, ultimately families gravitate towards private schools both because of the poor reputation of public education and the perceived advantages of private education. There is evidence supporting the academic advantage such as the *High School and Beyond* assessment, which reveals that students in Catholic education outperform public school students in reading, vocabulary, math, and writing (Lee, Chow-Hoy, Burkam, Geverdt, & Smerdon, 1998). In fact, the constrained curriculum model, an ideal model for guiding student course selection in order to encourage optimal math achievement, is used most often in private schools with great success (Lee et al., 1998). In addition, while typically Catholic schools are larger and more diverse than private non-Catholic schools, they boast the highest graduation rates in all of private education (Minsun Kim & Placier, 2004). Despite this success of Catholic education, it is not uncommon for private independent schools to outperform parochial institutions (Erickson, 2001). This specific academic achievement is attributed to core curriculum areas, despite the higher Catholic school graduation rates and typical attendance of Catholic schools for academic preparation (Minsun Kim & Placier, 2004). One study focusing on parent choice in education found that 56% of families surveyed would choose a private school (36% parochial, 20% independent) if given a voucher for

school choice (Bowker, 2004), indicating that were finances not a barrier an even higher percentage of students would be enrolled in non-public institutions.

In many cases, the success of private education could lie, in part, in the attention paid to the transition of students into secondary education. In public education there is a lack of priority placed on the freshman year of high school, which includes the assignment of the most inexperienced teachers to those sections (Donegan, 2008). Much of the data suggests that this lack of attention to freshman year would be a major first step in public school reform and would likely improve high school retention rates (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009). Many private schools have transitional programs to ease student transition and ensure high graduation and academic success rates which combats this public education challenge. Even so, one study revealed that the most common reason for the selection of private education is the desire of parents to ensure their students will be provided with the access and support necessary to achieve a desired quality of life that they regard as essential to produce exceptional children (English, 2009).

Whatever the specific attraction or asset of private education, as school choice continues to expand the new question for public education will focus around how to leverage choice to the advantage for public school reform (Fowler, 2002). Public schools will continue to see growth in competition and will need to begin to market and improve quality in order to sustain in a growing market (Sweetland, 2002). This is especially true in many ways with Catholic schools, which are recognized not only for faith based curriculum and strong academics but also more diverse student populations and market success with students deemed otherwise unreachable by the public school venue.

Admissions and enrollment procedures. Most private high schools have a several step admissions procedure for determining applicant eligibility. While these policies and procedures vary by each specific school, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) provides guidelines for admissions best practices. These guidelines point to twelve areas of advisement covering efficacy; student interest; school consistency; and local, state, and federal laws and regulations including but not limited to discrimination (National Association of Independent Schools, 2007). These guidelines provide an important framework for private schools to design admissions procedures. Since the admissions process can generate a great deal of anxiety for students (Lynch, 2000), the framework is an important tool to ensure consistency among schools. From these guidelines, most private schools use some combination of a high school placement exam, a student and or parent interview, review of transcripts, and request for recommendations from a member or members of the previous school. The intensity of this process can often vary depending on the level of competitiveness of the school with more competitive schools having more stringent admissions standards in order to ensure the opportunity to select the top achieving applicants (Lynch, 2000).

In addition to the application and the applicant statement, Catholic College Prep requires seventh and eighth grade transcripts, recommendations from the English and math teacher as well as the site principal, a student-parent interview and the High School Placement Test (HSPT). These documents are used to conduct a holistic assessment of the applicant in order to determine if that student is likely to be successful academically, socially and spiritually. Like the guidelines of NAIS, Catholic College Prep publishes an admissions policy along with the required documents for a complete application.

Understanding common admissions procedures and those specific to Catholic College Prep is important when considering the marketing and enrollment scenarios surrounding Catholic secondary schools.

The Advantage for Private School Marketing: Failing Public Secondary Education

With so many emerging options in the field of education, Catholic schools must look to the public education system to provide context for the marketable advantages of private education. While charters, inter-district transfers, and even vouchers to some extent are becoming popular alternatives, ultimately they are still married to the public school system and therefore provide a marketable niche for Catholic schools as non-public educational opportunities. Therefore, in order to best understand the implications of marketing the advantages and unique qualities of Catholic education, it is important to understand the state of public secondary education in the United States.

Public education is designed as a single system that is publicly funded to serve the local community. The original (or "one size fits all") educational model has come under a great deal of skepticism as educators see the importance of tailoring schools to serve the specific needs of their students and their community (Copeland, 2009). Not only are schools being asked to develop local alternatives to standardized education but also the greater education field is being called to tailor funding and curriculum for the primary and secondary level. A 2008 study on public education points to the neglect of the federal government to attend to the unique needs and requirements of secondary education through both policy and funding (Wise, 2008a). While it wasn't until 1918 that all students were even required to attend elementary school and a high school diploma was only for the elite (Wise, 2008b), in recent decades the expectation for families is that all

students will be adequately prepared and supported to graduate high school. This lack of

governing policy and funding for special and improved programs has created a system

that is unsatisfactory in the education of students and is disappointing to parents.

One example of the shortcoming of public education in the United States is the

over one million high school students who fail to graduate from high school each year

(Wise, 2008a). This equates in California to a 70% high school completion rate (Carroll,

2004). Nationally, it is the opinion of the public that the performance of educators and the

educational system are substandard and disappointing. The data supports this opinion,

revealing that while many states are further along in making progress in the areas of data

and standards and assessments (compared with areas of null improvement), the areas of

lowest growth or improvement continue to be in teacher quality and the chronic low

performance of schools (McNeil, 2009). In California the current source of tension is

around the expectation of families that secondary education will provide their student

with the curriculum and resources necessary to be a qualified college candidate. This

proves to be a source of tension and disappointment as the California public education

system boasts a mere 17% of all districts that offer enough classes for students to take the

courses required by all public 4 year schools in the California University system.

(Carroll, 2004). Currently, barely 30% of freshmen in high school are reading at grade

level (U. S. DOE, 2007) and in the United States nearly 1.2 million students drop out of

high school each year and those that are graduating are often not equally or adequately

prepared (Wise, 2008b).

These data indicate that the current public education system is in crisis and

requires swift action in order to be restored (Wise, 2008a). In fact, in a more specific

examination of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in California reveals great discrepancies in secondary education as they relate to socioeconomic class and race (Griffin, Walter, Kimura-Walsh, & Yamamura, 2002). This would suggest that, beyond the general shortcomings of the public education system, certain districts are providing an even more disparate education to minority students and those students in low-income areas. This can, perhaps, be attributed to the levels of teacher preparation in those districts. In California the percentage of underprepared teachers is highest at the high schools, totaling 5% of all teachers as being under qualified. Specific to the highest achieving quartile of schools, only 1% of teachers are underprepared, while 5% of teachers are underprepared in the lowers achieving quartiles in California (Woodworth et al., 2009). This points to an inequity not just in student performance but in teacher preparation throughout public education as well.

Overall, while California is nationally ranked as having the second most Gold medal high schools, it is still a state plagued with budget deficits, educational shortcomings, and an emerging demand for better educational opportunities for students (Woodworth et al., 2009). This is being addressed in some schools through the re-envisioning of vocational education is academic track high schools. Some public schools have reengaged students through career and technical education that connects the curriculum with the real life application of the content. Although noted in charter schools, there are public non-choice schools invigorating their academic program through this marriage of career and college preparatory schooling (Hoachlander, 2008). This supports the idea of putting understanding first in schooling and focusing more on making students thoughtful and capable of understanding and applying knowledge.

Where schools could refocus on this learning and implement strategies to return classroom instruction to focus on student learning, public schools could be well on their way to achieving the type of meaningful education that families are craving (Wiggins & McTighe, 2008). The current educational system has been described as suffering from *persistent underachievement* and the solution calls for schools to close the gap and recognize the internationality of the new world through preparing students to serve and understand the global community (Jackson, 2008). Some of the unique challenges of public education can be attributed to a failure to embrace and understand the role of immigration, not only as it impacts the United States but the educational world at large (Jackson, 2008). Ultimately, as the educational needs of the public have continued to diversify, the single public educational system has become insufficient to meet the educational needs of all or even many students. This sense of insufficient educational opportunity has prompted a range of new educational measures and systems designed to supplement or replace public education and provide improved options for students.

Catholic School Marketing

Catholic school marketing has a much less impressive history than the Catholic educational system in general, only recently emerging out of need from significant decreases in enrollment. In light of all the emerging options for choice in education, Catholic education has recently become responsive to changes and competition in education and has started to discuss the importance of identifying those marketing opportunities and strategies that are specific to Catholic education (Oplatka, 2007). Especially with the growing diversity of school choice including magnets, open enrollment, private non-religious schools, and charter schools, Catholic schools are

slowly recognizing that they will not sustain without an effort to strategize marketing efforts. Catholic schools cannot remain complacent if they expect to see growth in enrollment and plan on remaining the choice of selective families (Keebler, 1997); therefore, a growing need for research around Catholic school marketing is necessary and important.

New target demographics. While the consistent and solid foundation of a Catholic education has remained a constant attribute for private education, Catholic schools started facing challenges in enrollment and retention as early as the 1990s and began to see the need to supplement enrollment with a wider and more diverse demographic (Oplatka, 2007). While Catholic schools had become greatly diverse in structure and demographic, the need to reach new target families who had not considered or had not selected Catholic education became a must. In order to increase prospective enrollment, Catholic schools began to see the need to tell their story through branding and marketing campaigns tobring not only Catholics who had not before considered Catholic education back to their schools but also to see growth in enrollment of non Catholic students who would be compelled by the academic and environmental advantages of Catholic education (Oplatka, 2007). Those students who before were seen as a challenge to integrate into a Catholic environment were now seen as valuable new customers who needed to be targeted and drawn in to the advantages of Catholic education.

Impressing informed clientele. In order to market effectively, Catholic schools must first appreciate that parents are becoming more selective and discerning about education (Keebler, 1997). Parents are looking to make choices about education based on

the merits of competing institutions, and this puts Catholic schools in a unique position either to get on board and gain from this opportunity or fall behind because of a failure to recognize this shifting demographic. As such, Catholic schools are being called to market themselves, and, more specifically, market themselves with a plan (Keebler, 1997).

Nationally, Catholic education has an annual theme (a theme that is pre-determined such as the 2010-2011 theme "A+ for Catholic Education") that schools can use to promote their institution. This is one easy and free way to tie into a national brand and create recognition through demonstrated and generic advantages of Catholic education. In addition, however, all schools are being asked to become responsive to their communities and market according to their prospective and target community desires and their particular institutional strengths (Keebler, 1997).

Tailored branding. There are several emerging strategies for effective Catholic school marketing. One significant strategy for school marketing is the identification of the interest of the prospective community and branding the school accordingly. By tailoring the strengths and marketing message of a school to the desired educational opportunities of the prospective community, schools are likely to see greater success (Padgett, 2007). This requires an acute awareness of the specific community values, needs, desires, and expectations. Whereas faith formation was, at one time, all-inclusive for prospective families, the new market reveals the need for Catholic schools to be more specific about the advantages for students attending their schools based on institutional merit (Keebler, 1997). This marketing philosophy reveals a need for Catholic schools to know what is wanted and what is possible, and then market a truthful and well crafted message that demonstrates how the school can meet these wants with ease and superiority

(Keebler, 1997). This angle of marketing is reflected in the design of this study in which the importance of community perception and motivation is integral to defining future marketing efforts for Catholic College Prep.

Recently Catholic schools have started emphasizing and maximizing community resources in order to promote the defining programs and accomplishments of their site in an effort to attract their particular demographic (Bagley, 2006). Whereas, before Catholic education had relied on families to identify the strengths and opportunities of their site independently, now Catholic schools have started seeing the importance of telling these stories to parents. This need to identify the advantages of their site is in response to the need of Catholic schools to market to the areas of motivation and interest for prospective families. As an example, where music is a high motivator for prospective families in a given community, promoting the music program through marketing, including local performances of the school band, is a strong marketing technique to build prospective family interest. This includes using language and phrasing that reveals the strengths of the school programs and appeals to prospective families (Bagley, 2006). This language and phrasing is necessary to create an identifiable brand and is most effective when a school can also take advantage of personal parent contacts to reinforce the character and advantages of the institution (Perna, 2004).

This combination of school and testimonial marketing is attributed to the model of targeted marketing. Targeted marketing focuses on the art of crafting a message that speaks to a particular community and is addressed through multiple modalities. The essence of effective marketing centers around careful data collection that focuses on precise and articulated public perceptions about the school as well as identified

motivators and characteristics of the clientele that the school is looking to attract (Blumenstyk, 2008). Without an awareness of the needs of the particular community to whom a school is marketing, efforts to attract students will not likely yield significant change, which undermines the cost and intent of effective and targeted marketing.

Education as a product. Ultimately, the emphasis on what can be provided by a school and accomplished by a student is of primary interest to parents in determining their school selection (Bagley, 2006). The importance of product has become key in school selection by prospective families and requires a change in the way educators look at Catholic education. No longer can schools be satisfied that their environment and academics alone will boost their reputation, but they must instead get behind the idea of promoting these attributes aggressively (Keebler, 1997). Based on the educational goals of the family, the school selected will be that which is perceived as being most able to provide the education necessary for their student to succeed (Bagley, 2006). This can put schools that are not marketing themselves at a real disadvantage in terms of enrollment and retention, which is why more pressure and guidance for Catholic schools and emerging marketing plans is imperative (Keebler, 1997). According to one principal cited in Hamilton's (n.d.) work "In my business if people aren't coming through your front door it's because you haven't created a product people want" (p. 83).

This emphasis on product adds a vital yet daunting dimension to school marketing because it indicates the need to market to a specific type of student who will be attracted to and capable of succeeding in the articulated programs of a given site. In citing one specific school strategy, Bagley (2006) identified the use of the "school's language college status to attract academically able students" (p. 10). As a defined college

preparatory education, the school needed not only to promote the program required to

support this type of college bound student but also needed to ensure that the marketing

efforts were tailored to attract highly capable students who would graduate and attend top

colleges in order to continue to perpetuate this marketing perception. If a school cannot

market data that supports their brand then the school is destined for failure because of

inconsistencies and inaccuracies. A school that boasts of an outstanding academic

reputation cannot have a low college attendance rate just as a school that boasts of a

superior athletic program cannot have teams that cannot win a game. This type of focused

marketing for the attraction of students who will drive results that support and strengthen

the branding image of a school is vital for Catholic education because "[Catholic schools]

have to get these kids which are going to give [them] the results" (p. 10-11). This reality

is important for Catholic educators to understand because in order for a school to meet

the expectations of their community they must not only market what they do effectively,

but ensure that they do, in fact, do it effectively (Keebler, 1997).

Internal marketing. Oplatka (2007) considered the drive for product in school

marketing to be not only exclusive to the public perception of the school but also to that

of the internal community as well. Celebrating the accomplishments of the school builds

community morale, which is a major indicator in employee satisfaction, and satisfied

employees lead to satisfied customers (Oplatka, 2007). Catholic identity, in addition to all

other marketing and branding identities, can remain a highly effective marketing tool for

promoting Catholic education as a complement of other marketing efforts. Catholic

schools that effectively use Catholic identity as a recruitment tool play on the relationship

between Catholic education and excellent education (Wirth, 2004). This plays on the

desire for product and the branding of Catholic education as being able to deliver that

product and feeds into some steadfast beliefs about discipline and faith and the impact on

education (Wirth, 2004). Despite the controversy in the Catholic Church over the years,

the faith and fabric of Catholic identity continue to be a vital marketing component for

Catholic education and should be used to the advantages of catholic school marketing

(Wirth, 2004). Ultimately, the importance of product promotion in educational marketing

is vital for increased and sustained enrollment. In order to accomplish this, one crucial

aspect of research must focus on the motivations of prospective parents who are and are

not successfully admitted and enrolled in catholic school (Keebler, 1997).

Summary

Catholic schools have a unique opportunity to differ radically in structure and

appeal from other competitive public and private schools. Given this flexibility in

structure, Catholic schools can maximize their prospective client base by creating a

marketing scheme around the desires or motivations of their local prospective

community. Where a Catholic school can identify a clear objective or marketable

strength, that school is likely to experience a more probable success. This can be

attributed in part to the appeal of that particular school to parents who share that

objective. This objective, however, can also serve to alienate prospective families,

undermining prospective numbers and devastating marketing efforts. For this reason, it is

vital that a Catholic school research the motivations for prospective families who are

applying for admissions in order to determine what specific objectives and desires they

have for a secondary school for their student.

In a time where education is a market defined by options, both private and public, Catholic education can no longer rely on their appeal as being non-public but rather must define and market themselves for their particular strengths. The data collected about prospective family perspectives will reveal the true motivations of the applying community and allow the school to more accurately and effectively market to their desired demographic. Research has been done around the perceived benefits and drawbacks of public and private education as well as the history and importance of Catholic school marketing. Despite this available research, however, each school faces unique challenges based on demographics and clientele that must be addressed in order to sustain enrollment and ultimately remain open. Catholic schools can generate a framework for site-based inquiry using the research and literature regarding Catholic school marketing as a foundation. This site-specific research will determine how best to brand the site's educational product in order to attract and retain the desired demographics. In addition, this research will allow schools to target prospective students who are most likely to be successfully admitted and enroll at their school. Specifically for Catholic College Prep, the opportunity to gain insight that will support enrollment efforts through an informed marketing campaign tailored to the motivations of prospective families is vital for the sustainment and longevity of the school.

Chapter III: Methodology

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the factors that motivate

parents/guardians to enroll their admitted student in Catholic College Prep: an urban,

Catholic, college preparatory high school, with factors that motivate parents/guardians of

admitted students to enroll them elsewhere. This quantitative, cross-sectional study,

conducted by the researcher over one admissions cycle (September 27th to January 7th)

was used to restructure and improve Catholic College Preparatory High School's

marketing planning and action.

Restatement of Study Questions

The research questions for this study are

1. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in

   motivating them to apply to and enroll their children in a Catholic, college

   preparatory high school during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

2. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in

   motivating them to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school to

   which, upon acceptance, they choose not to enroll during the fall 2010

   admission's cycle?

3. How do the factors, if at all, perceived to be very important in motivating

   families to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school compare

   between parents/guardians who apply to and enroll at a Catholic, college

   preparatory high school with parents/guardians who choose not to enroll their

   admitted students during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

Research Design and Rationale

This quantitative survey study, conducted over one fall school admission's cycle at Catholic College Prep, examined the factors motivating prospective parents to apply to and enroll at Catholic College Prep, an urban Catholic college preparatory high school. This study administered an online survey that was attached to the online application for admissions. The survey contained 27 total questions: 26 ranking of importance (3 likert scale option) selection questions and one primary ranking of importance question. The survey was administered to 330 parents who applied for their children to attend Catholic College Prep as students in the class of 2015 (freshmen in 2011-2012) with a participation rate of 73.78%. The researcher studied, described and compared the survey responses across two accepted applicant populations: those who were accepted for admission and who register at Catholic College Prep and those who are accepted for admission and who choose not to register at Catholic College Prep. Students who are not accepted for admission at the school will not be considered in this research.

Sampling Method, Sample and Participants

Method. From the population of the parents/guardians of approximately 200 prospective freshman applicants, one survey (Appendix A) per applicant was attached to the online application for admissions. Given that the survey was attached to the online application, which is a required document for admissions, one parent/guardian for each applicant was provided an opportunity to participate in this study. A letter of introduction and notification of consent preceded the survey. The letter introduced the study and the content of the survey and explained the significance of the data collection for Catholic College Prep and for the researcher. In addition, the letter assured families that the results

of the survey would not be looked at until after admissions decisions were made and prospective families were notified. Therefore, participation or non-participation, would not affect admissions decisions. This was reinforced for families by reminders that admissions decisions will be made by a blind committee with no access to the survey data. For the purposes of this study, the parent/guardian was the household adult who was supporting the student in completing the application. The rationale for attaching this survey as a component of the application was to maximize the efficacy of the study by recruiting all prospective families in providing data about their motivations for applying to Catholic College Prep. Attaching the survey to all applications also allowed for parent/guardian responses to come from a variety of middle schools and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as legacy or non-legacy relationships. It also allowed the researcher to ensure that the participants accurately reflect the population for which they were serving as a sample.

This study used descriptive survey research. Descriptive survey research intends to determine the frequency of response for a determined population (McCall, 2000). For this study, this population of prospective families was studied in two subpopulations: admitted and registered and admitted and choosing not to register. Descriptive survey research was the appropriate design for this study because it revealed existing trends in the responses for these three subpopulations and generated descriptive data results for study and interpretation.

The proposed survey contained multiple choice and importance questions (McCall, 2000), which looked to identify frequency in response as well as primary motivators for applying families. For this study, this combination of questions was

appropriate because it not only revealed the motivators prospective families experience when applying to Catholic College Prep, but also similarities and differences in motivation between subgroups. This allowed for trending and also allowed for consideration of what is "very important" for families applying to Catholic College Prep.

While survey research may not extract the same amount of depth as interviews, for the purposes of this study, it was the best method for collecting data because it ensured a standard experience for participants. Using a survey was also more feasible given the size of the potential participant population. This survey also provided the researcher with responses that were designed for categorization and examination for trends in response. In addition, this particular survey not only generated a list of common responses, but also yielded a hierarchical ranking of importance.

The researcher had a 73.78% participation rate for compete surveys from prospective families. This is excluding the 20.73% of surveys that were returned partially completed. There was a total of 5.49% of prospective parents/guardians who declined participation in the survey. Had less than 65% of prospective families participated in the initial survey attached to the application, the researcher planed on following up with prospective families through an email reminder and request for survey completion. The email would have reminded parents of the importance of this survey and would have provided a link for online completion of the survey. This email would have been sent by the researcher to each individual family (who did not yet complete the survey) within one week of their application submission. Had the desired 65% participation still not be obtained through email reminders, an additional opportunity for responses would have been provided at the Student-Parent Interview at which parents would be provided with

an opportunity to complete a hard copy of the survey. This hard copy of the survey would

have been administered to willing families by the researcher at the main office as families

are checking in for their interviews. Should the researcher still been unable to obtain the

desired 65% participation, the available data would have been analyzed with a

recommendation for further study during the subsequent admissions cycle.

Given the 73.78% participation rate, enough families participated in each

subgroup to render meaningful statistics and provide some degree of anonymity. For the

Fall 2010 admission cycle, 76% of families who were accepted registered at Catholic

College Prep and 24% of families who were accepted selected another institution.

Setting. This research was conducted at Catholic College Prep, an Urban Catholic

college preparatory school in Northern California. Catholic College Prep is a school

founded under a prominent Catholic congregation, modeled after the educational model

of an important founding figure in the congregation. As a congregation school, Catholic

College Prep is accountable to the Congregation; however, for the purposes of location

and local support Catholic College Prep is housed under the local Diocese. As a non-

diocesan school, Catholic College Prep receives funding and students from the Dioceses

but is not directly accountable for Diocesan policy or curriculum. Catholic College Prep

is a demographically diverse school that serves 70% Catholic families from over twenty-

five parishes and middle schools. Catholic College Prep is 67% Catholic and

demographically is made up of 4% African American, 2.5% Native American, 43%

Asian, 27% Caucasian and 23% other nationalities.

As a college preparatory school, there is a curricular and social emphasis on

college readiness and promotion rates. At present, 99% of all students who graduate from

Catholic College Prep will attend college, with the one percent either entering the military or attending a trade or art school.

      Procedure. The application process opened online on September 26th and closed January 7th at noon. For this application cycle, prospective student applications were completed exclusively online by visiting the website and completing the application and payment. The online application asked for student and parent/guardian participation for a variety of data collection, including historical data and writing samples. The survey for the parents/guardian was placed as the next to last step on the parent portion of the online application. This step was included as an optional step on all applications. The parent/guardian was asked to voluntarily complete the parent/guardian survey, and after the completion of the survey the student portion and the final step for credit card payment information was to be entered and the application was submitted electronically. Given the design of the online application, every parent/guardian had the opportunity to participate in completing the survey as a component of the application. Had an exceptional circumstance arisen in which a paper application was required, the parent/guardian would have been provided with a paper copy of the survey along with the paper application by mail or by picking one up from the school's Office of Admissions. An exceptional circumstance would be a family without computer or internet access who was unable to come into Catholic College Prep to complete an application during normal school hours. There were no exceptional circumstances requiring a paper application during this admissions cycle. Additional opportunities to complete the survey were not made available via email or at the Student-Parent Interview because it was not necessary.

Sample. There were a total of 328 surveys distributed to parents/guardians of prospective freshmen students. Because the survey was attached to the application, a parent/guardian of every applicant had an opportunity to participate. The researcher was anticipating the completion of 65% of surveys; a total completion rate of 73.78% occurred. While the specific demographics of the participants cannot be disaggregated given that it was not a collected component of the survey, historically it can be projected that this population was 60-70% Catholic school students, 70% Catholic, with a minimum household income of 80,000 dollars, and was predominantly Asian, Mixed Race and Caucasian with representational samples of African American and Hispanic applicants and families.

Participants. Participants were the parents/guardians of prospective freshmen students who applied to Catholic College Prep. For the purposes of this study, the household adult who was assisting the student with the online application was considered the parent/guardian.

Data Collection Setting and Procedures

For the purposes of this study, the President of Catholic College Prep approved the addition of a motivation survey to the online application for prospective students. The researcher also applied to the Pepperdine IRB and was granted approval of this study. A form for consent was included in the online application so that every parent/guardian provided consent along with the submission of their application.

Data collection. This quantitative research was conducted from September 26, 2010 through January 7, 2011, aligned with the admissions cycle for the class of 2015. Once the data were collected and they were stored until March 2011, at which time

admissions decisions were made and families who had been accepted and declined were notified. At this time families who were accepted decided whether to register or not register at Catholic College Prep. Once the list of registered students was available (March 26, 2011), the surveys were divided into two distinct groups for study: those parents/guardians who's students were admitted and chose to register at Catholic College Prep and those parents/guardians who's students were admitted and chose not to register at Catholic College Prep.

Human Subjects Considerations

Informed consent. In order to obtain subject consent, a letter of informed consent was attached to the online application which parents were asked to read before continuing and completing the survey. This letter was approved by Pepperdine University's Institutional Review board and indicated the purpose of the study, describe the procedures for confidentiality, and assured participants that responses would not impact their student in the admissions decision process. The non-mandatory nature of the survey was also disclosed.

Risk minimization and benefit maximization. Participants in this study were subject to minimal risk. Anticipated risks included frustration over the length of the online application with this additional step, anxiety over the potential impact of this survey on the admissions decision for their student, or discomfort for the total duration of time that is spent on the computer in the process of completing the application. In order to ease frustration over the length of the online application and reduce the discomfort over the total duration of time spent on the computer completing the application process, the application was designed so that families could save their work and return to the

application at any time before the deadline. In addition, the application and survey were designed as succinctly as possible in order to minimize the length of the application with the addition of the survey. Regarding anxiety over the potential impact of this survey on the admission status of their student, all parents were notified in writing on the consent form in the online application that the responses to the survey would not be accessed until after admissions decisions were made and prospective families had been notified.

Confidentiality. Student application data as well as parent survey data were kept confidential. Data were stored electronically in a dual password protected database until the closing of the application cycle at which time the data were transferred to an electronic database that was single password protected. This transition was necessary because the application database needed to be exported in order to analyze the survey and application data. In addition, the data were kept on a single laptop and flash drive, both of which remained in a locked office when not in the direct possession of the researcher. The researcher ensured limited access of data as well as the storing of protected files. In addition, the data will be destroyed after 3 years.

Instrumentation

Instrument. The researcher used and modified a survey designed by Dr. Patricia A. Bauch for the 1990 publication *Attitudes and Values of Inner-City Catholic School Parents: Development and Analysis of a Survey* (Appendix B). This survey was designed to survey parents about their motivations for pursuing catholic educational institutions. This modified survey as used for this study had two parts: Part I focused on 26 components (or factors) of catholic education and asked for the responding parent/guardian to rank the level of importance for each factor on a 3-point likert (various

headings) scale. The factors each shared a relationship with the variables of marketable appeal (as identified in Chapter II). The response options for this first part of the survey included "Very Important," "Somewhat Important," or "Not at All Important." Part II of the survey asked the responding parent/guardian to identify the primary factor of importance from the same list of variables. Because of the length and relevance of the survey, the section used in this study were question #9 part I and II.

Permission from Dr. Patricia A. Bauch was obtained to modify and administer this survey. The modification utilized for this study included the use of only question #9 parts I and II. This modification was made in response to the length of the original survey and the specific relevance of question #9 parts I and II for this study. The original survey is attached as Appendix B. The amended survey used for the purposes of this study and is attached as Appendix A.

Validity and reliability. This survey has been administered and factor analysis found that the related items had a high alpha score and significant Pearson correlation (Bauch, 2010). The survey was designed as the compilation of several survey components, each of which each had been field tested and found to be statistically reliable measures. In addition, the survey components were found to significant scale reliability coefficients and therefore contribute to the overall reliability of the survey (Bauch, 1989).

Analytic Techniques

After the survey data were collected from the online application, the data were then stored until February 2011, at which time admissions decisions were made. In February, the data were exported and stored until March, at which time prospective

students who had been accepted or declined were notified, and families who were accepted made the choice to register at Catholic College Prep or decline the offer of acceptance. In late March 2011, a list of accepted students was generated and the survey data were divided into two groups: families who were accepted and registered and families who were accepted and chose not to register. Once these two subgroups were identified analysis of the data began.

Determining Similarities and Differences from the Data

Basic descriptive statistical analysis of the survey was performed on a MacBook computer using and an excel database with basic statistical functions. As the descriptive statistics for this study utilizes a frequency chart, the mathematical functions available in excel and the number of responses from the survey were well within the range of processing and storage available both on Microsoft Excel (for Mac) and on the MacBook hardware.

The survey data were collected electronically, creating an excel document based on the responses. Each survey response was given an alphanumeric code containing two alpha characters followed by three numerics: A-R000 for accepted/registered students and A-N000 for accepted/not registered students. Surveys that were incomplete were excluded. For the purposes of this study, the response rate for "very important" was the response that was used for this analysis as, from a marketing perspective, it was the best indicator for motivation. In addition, for the purpose of this study "most important" was considered a subset of "very important" and was therefore evaluated by subgroup. This was justified by the qualification that "most important" identified the top of the spectrum or range of "very important" factors.

First, a frequency analysis was conducted on "very important" responses in survey part I using a descriptive statistics analysis. Excel was utilized to compute the rate of frequency for each factor by subgroup. After the data were run, the researcher considered survey part II to see if there was any single factor identified by each subgroup as being "most" important. This analysis was also conducted using a frequency chart as processed by excel. Because "most important" is a subset of "very important" this secondary consideration in data analysis was considered for potentially being important to consider for each or either subgroup.

At the completion of the frequency analysis for each subgroup individually, the research considered the similarities and differences in responses for families in the two designated subgroups. Each subgroup was designated as a variable (per the codes above). Based on the results of the survey, the researcher identified trends in the data for families who were accepted and register and families who were accepted but chose not to register. Once the survey results that are most frequently responded to were identified, the researcher identified what similarities and differences existed between the motivations for families who were accepted and registered and families who were accepted and did not register. These similarities and differences were based exclusively on the survey data that revealed the three most common and three least common results for each identified population. The similar and different motivations were determined by comparing the frequency tables charting the frequency of response for each of the three distinct populations. The comparisons of the tables focused on identifying what trends, if any, were revealed through the data comparison.

Developing a conceptual schema from the data. In addressing the first research question, the researcher divided the data into families who were accepted and registered at Catholic College Prep. The researcher performed a frequency analysis for part I of the survey, considering the survey results for trends and identifying what responses were provided most often and what responses were provided least often. Each response was then calibrated to determine the frequency with which each response was provided, determining which responses were the most common and least common. For the purposes of this study the full range of similar and different responses were considered as statistically significant. A table was generated to reflect the results of this frequency analysis for families who were accepted and registered at Catholic College Prep. The researcher then created a frequency table that analyzed the rate of response for survey part II, identifying the rate of response for each factor as it relates to being "most important." Given the relationship between "most important" and "very important," this was an appropriate chart to generate and consider for each subgroup.

In addressing the second research question, the researcher divided the data into families who were accepted and did not register at Catholic College Prep. The researcher performed a frequency analysis for part I of the survey, considering the survey results for trends and identifying what responses were provided most often and what responses were provided least often. Each response was calibrated to determine the frequency with which each response was provided, determining which responses were the most common and least common. For the purposes of this study the full range of similar and different responses were considered as statistically significant. A table was generated to reflect the results of this frequency analysis for families who were accepted and registered at

Catholic College Prep The researcher then created a frequency table that analyzed the rate of response for survey part II, identifying the rate of response for each factor as it related to being "most important." Given the relationship between "most important" and "very important," this was an appropriate chart to generate and consider for each subgroup.

The final research question was addressed by comparing the frequency of response for each subgroup with one another in order to identify any trends in response between either of the two groups. As above, particular attention was paid to those "very important" responses that were commonly selected most frequently and least frequently between the two groups. This analysis, supplemented with observations from the frequency of response for "most important" factors by subgroup, revealed what similarities and differences existed in motivation between these two subgroups of the admitted student population.

Validating the accuracy of findings. The data collected were quantitative and collected from a survey that had been previously tested and that has high validity and reliability ratings. The researcher ensured that the data that were reported was exactly as it was reflected from the survey and that no bias was projected in the analysis of the data. This was ensured through the use of Excel for all primary data analysis and through the employment of the guidance and supervision of the researcher's Pepperdine University dissertation committee.

Writing up the analysis. After identifying the similarities and differences between the two comparative populations, the researcher wrote up the findings of this research addressing each of the three research questions in an un-biased report. This

report identified those similarities and differences uncovered by the data. In addition, the research used this data and analysis to draw some preliminary conclusions and make recommendations for further study.

Chapter IV: Results

Overview

This study examined the similarities and differences in motivation that existed

between two subpopulations of the Fall 2010 application cycle to Catholic College Prep,

an urban Catholic, college preparatory high school. The subgroups examined were

families who, upon acceptance, registered at Catholic College Prep and families who,

upon acceptance, choose not to register at Catholic College Prep.

Three primary research questions guided this study. The first research question

examined the similarities and differences in motivation to pursue an education in an

urban Catholic, college preparatory high school among families who chose to register at

Catholic College Prep after being accepted. Survey data were collected from participants

in this subgroup and frequency tables were designed to analyze the rate at which each

factor noted as "very important" was selected. In addition, the frequency of response

among factors designated as "most important" was also considered given that "most

important" is a subset of "very important." The research question that guided this first

phase of data analysis was

1. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in

motivating them to apply to and enroll their children in a Catholic, college

preparatory high school during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

The second research question examined the similarities and differences in

motivation to pursue an education in an urban Catholic, college preparatory high school

among families who chose not to register at Catholic College Prep after being accepted.

Survey data were collected from participants in this subgroup and frequency tables were

designed to analyze the rate at which each factor noted as "very important" was selected.

In addition, the frequency of response among factors designated as "most important" was

also considered given that "most important" is a subset of "very important." The research

question that guided this

2. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in

motivating them to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school for their

children to which, upon acceptance, they choose not to enroll during the fall 2010

admission's cycle?

The final research question examined the similarities and differences in

motivation to pursue an urban Catholic, college preparatory high school between

accepted families who choose to register (subgroup of research question #1) and accepted

families who choose not to register (subgroup of research question #2) at Catholic

College Prep. The frequency tables for each subgroup were compared and the three most

frequent responses for "very important" were considered. In addition, the responses of

each subgroup for "most important" were noted as they were similar and different from

each other. The research question that guided this final phase of the data analysis was:

3. How do the factors, if at all, perceived to be very important in motivating

families to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school compare

between parents/guardians who apply to and enroll at a Catholic, college

preparatory high school with parents/guardians who choose not to enroll their

admitted students during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section addresses the first

research question and includes descriptive statistical analysis of the data as it relates to

frequency in responses of each likert scale response. The responses of "very important" are then tabled as they relate to the factors influencing motivation for this subgroup. In addition, a descriptive statistical analysis of the response rate for "most important" was considered in order to supplement the discussion of "very important" for this subgroup.

The second section addresses the second research question and includes descriptive statistical analysis of the data as it relates to frequency in responses of each likert scale response. The responses of "very important" are then tabled as they relate to the factors influencing motivation for this subgroup. In addition, a descriptive statistical analysis of the response rate for "most important" was considered in order to supplement the discussion of "very important" for this subgroup.

The third and final section addresses the third research question and includes descriptive statistical analysis comparing the frequency of response for "very important" between the two distinct subgroups. Particular attention was paid to the three most frequent responses for each subgroup and a comparison of how they are similar and different. Additionally, attention was paid to similarities and differences in responses between the two subgroups to the frequency of response of "most important" factors in order to supplement the comparison of motivating factors between the two subgroups.

Research Question One

The first research question examined motivating factors for families who registered at Catholic College Prep. The study included a frequency analysis of 26 questions that identified motivating factors and asked for responses of "very important," "somewhat important" and "not at all important" with an analysis of the marketable attribute of "very important" and a frequency analysis of the single response rate of "most

important" for the same 26 factors. The purpose was to identify the factors that were "very important" for families in this subgroup.

Participants were provided with a survey attached to their application for admissions and asked to respond to the 26 questions as they relate to the variables as identified in Chapter II. Part One asked for them to respond to each question by selecting one of three likert scale response scores ("very important," "somewhat important," or "not at all important").

Table 2 shows the range of responses for each of the twenty six questions asked for families who were accepted and registered at Catholic College Prep. This frequency table reveals the distribution of responses and indicates the total percentage of the responding population that provided each response. While only responses for "very important" will be considered, Table 2 provides a complete account of survey responses. The responses for "very important" were then taken and put in priority order based on the total percentage of response with the highest response percentage being rank first in importance. Table 3 reflects this priority rank order of responses.

Table 2

Factor Response Ratings: Accepted and Registered

Question	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
A- Academic Reputation	162	96.4	6	3.6	0	0
B- Child's friends attend	90	53.6	37	22	41	24.4
C- Teachers	151	89.9	16	8.3	1	1.8
D- Athletic programs	76	45.2	82	48.8	10	6
E- Location	81	48.2	81	48.2	6	3.6
F- Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	96	57.1	55	32.8	17	10.1

(table continues)

Question	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
G- Buildings and other facilities	90	53.6	75	44.6	3	1.8
H- Affordable tuition	124	73.8	41	24.4	3	1.8
I- College preparation	167	99.4	1	.6	0	0
J- Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended	55	32.7	37	22.1	76	45.2
K- Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	28	16.7	45	26.8	95	56.5
L- Special technical courses or training programs	90	53.6	64	38.1	14	8.3
M- Child wanted to attend	147	87.5	20	10.7	1	1.8
N- Available public schools are unsafe	114	67.9	42	25	12	7.1
O- School is open to parents' ideas	110	65.5	54	32.1	4	2.4
P- Religious education	122	72.6	42	25	4	2.4
Q- Moral training	158	94	10	6	0	0
R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	82	48.8	57	33.9	29	17.3
S- Discipline	153	91.1	13	7.7	2	1.2
T- Class size	120	71.4	43	25.6	5	3
U- Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	110	65.5	47	28	11	6.5
V- Availability of transportation	63	37.5	71	42.3	34	20.2
W- Willingness to address social and moral issues	136	81	32	19	0	0
X- Positive influence of other students on my child	156	92.9	12	7.1	0	0
Y- School shares my values and beliefs	141	83.9	26	15.5	1	.6
Z- Other: _____						

Table 3

Ranking of Importance: Accepted and Registered

Rank Order of Importance	Very Important		Question	Factor	Variable Category
1	167	99.4	I	College preparation	Academic Opportunities
2	162	96.4	A	Academic reputation	Academic Opportunities
3	158	94	Q	Moral training	Values based education

(table continues)

Rank Order of Importance	Very Important		Question	Factor	Variable Category
4	156	92.9	X	Positive influence of other students on my child	Campus Safety
5	153	91.1	S	Discipline	Campus Safety
6	151	89.9	C	Teachers	Teacher professionalism and satisfaction
7	147	87.5	M	Child wanted to attend	Diversity of Catholic school communities
8	141	83.9	Y	School shares my values and beliefs	Values based education
9	136	81	W	Willingness to address social and moral issues	Values based education
10	124	73.8	H	Affordable tuition	
11	122	72.6	P	Religious education	Faith formation
12	120	71.4	T	Class size	Academic opportunities
13	114	67.9	N	Available public schools are unsafe	Campus safety
14	110	65.5	U	Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	Academic opportunities
14	110	65.5	O	School is open to parent's ideas	Diversity of Catholic school communities
16	96	57.1	F	Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	Faith formation
17	90	53.6	G	Buildings and other facilities	Campus safety
17	90	53.6	B	Child's friends attend	Diversity of Catholic school communities
17	90	53.6	L	Special technical courses or training programs	Academic opportunities
20	82	48.8	R	School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	Academic opportunities
21	81	48.2	E	Location	Campus Safety
22	76	45.2	D	Athletic programs	Education of the whole child
23	63	37.5	V	Availability of transportation	Campus Safety

(table continues)

Rank Order of Importance	Very Important		Question	Factor	Variable Category
2425	5528	32.716.7	JK	Older brother(s)/sister(s) attendedParent(s) or relative(s) attended	Diversity of Catholic school communitiesDiversity of Catholic school communities
2526	280	16.70	KZ	Parent(s) or relative(s) attendedOther:	Diversity of Catholic school communities(n/a)
26	0	0	Z	Other:	(n/a)

Table 3 shows the priority of responses for survey respondents who were accepted and registered at Catholic College Preparatory High School. Table 3 shows that the top priorities for families who were accepted and registered were college preparation, the academic reputation of Catholic College Prep, moral training, the positive influence of other students and discipline. These top priorities align with academic opportunities, values based education, and campus safety. The two responses with over 95% response rate were college preparation and academic reputation, making these two factors the standout motivators for families in this subgroup.

The bottom priorities for families who were accepted and registered at Catholic College Prep included the attendance of parent(s)/relative(s), older brother(s)/sister(s), the availability of transportation, athletic programs and the location of the school. These low priority responses equate to the diversity of Catholic school communities, campus safety, and the education of the whole child. Campus safety appears as both a top and a bottom priority for families in this subgroup.

In order to complement these data responses, families were also asked to identify

the factor that was most important in their decision to apply to Catholic College Prep,

reflected in Table 4.

Table 4

Response Rate- Most Important: Accepted and Registered (168 Respondents)

| | Most Important | |
Question	#	% of total
A- Academic Reputation	67	39.9
B- Child's friends attend	0	0
C- Teachers	1	.6
D- Athletic programs	1	.6
E- Location	0	0
F- Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	1	.6
G- Buildings and other facilities	0	0
H- Affordable tuition	2	1.2
I- College preparation	60	35.7
J- Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended	3	1.8
K- Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	1	.6
L- Special technical courses or training programs	0	0
M- Child wanted to attend	11	6.5
N- Available public schools are unsafe	2	1.2
O- School is open to parents' ideas	0	0
P- Religious education	3	1.8
Q- Moral training	4	2.9
R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	0	0
S- Discipline	3	1.8
T- Class size	0	0
U- Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	2	1.2
V- Availability of transportation	0	0
W- Willingness to address social and moral issues	0	0
X- Positive influence of other students on my child	1	.6
Y- School shares my values and beliefs	5	3
Z- Other: _____	0	0

Table 4 shows that the two responses with the majority of responses include

academic reputation (39.9%) and college preparation (35.7%), making up 75.6% of all

responses for what is most important to families in this subpopulation. Both of these factors align with academic opportunities and were also reflected as rank #1 and #2 for "very important" to families. Therefore, the response rate for "most important" reinforces the trends revealed in the priority ranking of Table 3. No other factors returned a high enough response rate to be considered a significant factor for families in this subgroup.

Summary

Overall, it can be determined that the academic opportunities of Catholic College Preparatory High School, specifically college preparation and the academic reputation of the school, are the top motivators for families who registered at Catholic College Prep upon acceptance in the Fall 2010 admissions cycle. These two factors had the highest response rate for "very important" and were overwhelmingly identified as the top two factors that were "most important." There appears to be a statistically significant relationship between the motivating factors of college preparation and academic reputation and families who were accepted and registered at Catholic College Preparatory High School.

Research Question Two

The second research question examined motivating factors for families who were accepted but chose not to register at Catholic College Prep. The study included a frequency analysis of 26 questions that identified motivating factors and asked for responses of "very important," "somewhat important," and "not at all important" with an analysis of the marketable attribute of "very important" and a frequency analysis of the single response rate of "most important" for the same 26 factors. The purpose was to identify the factors that were "very important" for families in this subgroup.

Participants were provided with a survey attached to their application for

admissions and asked to respond to the 26 questions as they relate to the variables as

identified in Chapter II. Part One asked for them to respond to each question by selecting

one of three Likert scale response scores.

Table 5 shows the range of responses for each of the 26 questions asked for

families who were accepted and chose not to register at Catholic College Prep. This

frequency table reveals the distribution of responses and indicates the total percentage of

the responding population that provided each response. While only responses for "very

important" will be considered, Table 5 provides a complete account of survey responses.

The responses for "very important" were then taken and put in priority order based on the

total percentage of response, the highest response percentage being rank first in

importance. Table 6 reflects this priority rank order of responses.

Table 5

Factor Response Ratings: Accepted not Registered

Question	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
A- Academic Reputation	55	93.2	4	6.8	0	0
B- Child's friends attend	8	13.6	29	49.2	22	37.2
C- Teachers	56	94.9	3	5.1	0	0
D- Athletic programs	24	40.7	29	49.2	6	10.1
E- Location	29	49.2	28	47.5	2	3.4
F- Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	32	54.2	19	32.2	8	13.6
G- Buildings and other facilities	30	50.8	28	47.5	1	1.7
H- Affordable tuition	45	76.3	11	18.6	3	5.1
I- College preparation	58	98.3	1	1.7	0	0
J- Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended	5	8.5	12	20.3	42	71.2
K- Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	5	8.5	16	27.1	38	64.4

(table continues)

Question	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
L- Special technical courses or training programs	38	64.4	16	27.1	5	8.5
M- Child wanted to attend	43	72.9	13	22	3	5.1
N- Available public schools are unsafe	31	52.4	22	37.3	6	10.3
O- School is open to parents' ideas	36	61	23	39	0	0
P- Religious education	42	71.2	15	25.4	2	3.4
Q- Moral training	53	89.8	6	10.2	0	0
R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	31	52.5	17	28.8	11	18.7
S- Discipline	54	91.5	4	6.8	1	1.7
T- Class size	52	88.1	6	10.2	1	1.7
U- Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	31	52.5	20	33.9	8	13.6
V- Availability of transportation	21	35.6	28	47.5	10	16.9
W- Willingness to address social and moral issues	49	83.1	10	16.9	0	0
X- Positive influence of other students on my child	54	91.5	5	8.5	0	0
Y- School shares my values and beliefs	50	84.7	9	15.3	0	0
Z- Other: _____	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 6

Ranking of Importance: Accepted not Registered

Rank Order of Importance	Very Important		Question	Factor	Variable Category
1	58	98.3	I	College preparation	Academic opportunities
2	56	94.9	C	Teachers	Teacher professionalism and satisfaction
3	55	93.2	A	Academic reputation	Academic opportunities
4	54	91.5	S	Discipline	Campus Safety
5	54	91.5	X	Positive influence of other students on my child	Campus safety
6	53	89.8	Q	Moral training	Values based education

(table continues)

Rank Order of Importance	Very Important		Question	Factor	Variable Category
7	52	88.1	T	Class size	Academic opportunities
8	50	84.7	Y	School shares my values and beliefs	Values based education
9	49	83.1	W	Willingness to address social and moral issues	Values based education
10	45	76.3	H	Affordable tuition	Diversity of Catholic school communities
11	43	72.9	M	Child wanted to attend	Diversity of Catholic school communities
12	42	71.2	P	Religious education	Faith formation
13	38	64.4	L	Special or technical courses	Academic opportunities
14	36	61	O	School is open to parents' ideas	Diversity of Catholic school communities
15	32	54.2	F	Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	Faith formation
16	31	52.5	U	Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	Academic opportunities
16	31	52.5	R	School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	Academic opportunities
18	31	52.4	N	Available public schools are unsafe	Campus safety
19	30	50.8	G	Buildings and other facilities	Campus safety
20	29	49.2	E	Location	Campus safety
21	24	40.7	D	Athletic programs	Education of the whole child
22	21	35.6	V	Availability of transportation	Campus safety
23	8	13.6	B	Child's friends attend	Diversity of Catholic school communities
24	5	8.5	J	Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended	Diversity of Catholic school communities
24	5	8.5	K	Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	Diversity of Catholic school communities
26	0	0	Z	Other:	

Table 6 shows the priority of responses for survey respondents who were accepted

and chose not to register at Catholic College Preparatory High School. Table 6 shows that

the top priorities for families who were accepted and registered were college preparation, teachers, academic reputation, discipline, and the positive influence of other students. These top priorities align with academic opportunities, teacher professionalism and satisfaction, and campus safety. The factor with an over 95% response rate was college preparation with teachers being the second closest factor at 94.9%, making these two factors the standout motivators for families in this subgroup. Academic reputation is the third ranking factor at 93.2%.

The bottom priorities for families who were accepted and chose not to register at Catholic College Prep included the attendance of parent(s)/relative(s), older brother(s)/sister(s), the child's friends attending, the availability of transportation and athletic programs. These low priority responses equate to the diversity of Catholic school communities, campus safety, and the education of the whole child.

In order to complement these data responses, families were also asked to identify the factor that was most important in their decision to apply to Catholic College Prep, reflected in Table 7.

Table 7

Response Rate- Most Important: Accepted not Registered (59 respondents)

	Most Important	
Question	#	% of total
A- Academic Reputation	25	42.4
B- Child's friends attend	0	0
C- Teachers	1	1.7
D- Athletic programs	1	1.7
E- Location	1	1.7
F- Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)	0	0
G- Buildings and other facilities	0	0
H- Affordable tuition	1	1.7

(table continues)

Question	Most Important	
	#	% of total
I- College preparation	16	27.1
J- Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended	0	0
K- Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	0	0
L- Special technical courses or training programs	0	0
M- Child wanted to attend	4	6.8
N- Available public schools are unsafe	1	1.7
O- School is open to parents' ideas	0	0
P- Religious education	5	8.5
Q- Moral training	0	0
R- School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	1	1.7
S- Discipline	0	0
T- Class size	1	1.7
U- Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	0	0
V- Availability of transportation	0	0
W- Willingness to address social and moral issues	0	0
X- Positive influence of other students on my child	1	1.7
Y- School shares my values and beliefs	1	1.7
Z- Other: _____	0	0

Table 7 shows that the two responses with the majority of responses for most important include academic reputation (42.4%) and College preparation (27.1%), making up 69.5% of all responses for what is most important to families in this subpopulation. Both of these factors align with academic opportunities and were also reflected as rank #3 and #1 for "very important" to families. Interestingly, teachers (rank #2 on "very important") had a 1.7% response rate as being most important. The response rate for "most important" reinforces the importance of college preparation and academic reputation as motivating factors for this subgroup despite the absence of teachers in Table 7. No other factors in Table 7 returned a high enough response rate to be considered a significant factor for families in this subgroup.

Summary

Overall, it can be determined that the academic opportunities and teacher professionalism and satisfaction of Catholic College Preparatory High School, specifically college preparation, academic reputation and teachers, are the top motivators for families who chose not to register at Catholic College Prep upon acceptance in the Fall 2010 admissions cycle. College preparation, teachers, and academic reputation had the highest response rate for "very important" and academic reputation and college preparation were overwhelmingly identified as the top two factors that were "most important." There appears to be a statistically significant relationship between the motivating factors of college preparation, teachers and academic reputation and families who were accepted and did not register at Catholic College Preparatory High School.

Research Question Three

The third research question examined the similarities and differences in motivation between families who did and did not register at Catholic College Preparatory High School upon acceptance. The analysis for the third research question used the priority ranking for "very important" and "most important" for each subgroup, analyzed above, and compared the top three motivating factors for each subgroup. The purpose was to identify the "very important" and "most important" factors that were similar and different for each of the two subgroups. Table 8 reflects the top three priority responses for "very important" for each subgroup. Table 9 reflects the top two "most important" responses for each subgroup.

Table 8

Comparison of Subgroups: "Very Important"

Rank Order of Importance	Question/ Factor	ACCEPTED: REGISTERED Very Important		ACCEPTED: NOT REGISTERED Very Important		Question/ Factor	Rank Order of Importance
1	I- College preparation	167	99.4%	58	98.3%	I- College preparation	1
2	A- Academic reputation	162	96.4%	56	94.9%	C- Teachers	2
3	Q- Moral training	158	94%	55	93.2%	A- Academic reputation	3

Table 8 shows that both families who registered and chose not to register at

Catholic College Prep responded most frequently that college preparation was a very

important motivating factor. Both subgroups had a response rate of over 98% for college

preparation. This is a strong similarity between the two subgroups. In addition, both

subgroups identified academic reputation in their top three responses, registered families

identifying it as the second highest ranked factor (96.4%) and non-registered families

identifying it as the third highest ranked factor (93.2%). This is a strong similarity

between the two groups as well, although the difference between second and third rank is

a difference worthy of note.

In terms of differences, families who chose to register recognized moral training

as a factor in their top three ranked motivators with a 94% response rate. This subgroup

identifies moral training as an important motivating factor. Families who chose not to

register, however, do not recognize moral training as a motivating factor in their top three

rank selections. Instead, families who chose not to register identified teachers as a very

important motivating factor at a 94.9% response rate.

Table 9

Comparison of Subgroups: "Most Important"

ACCEPTED: REGISTERED Factor identified as most important	Most Important		ACCEPTED: NOT REGISTERED Factor identified as most important	Most Important	
	#	% of total		#	% of total
A- Academic reputation	67	39.9%	A- Academic reputation	25	42.4%
I- College preparation	60	35.7%	I- College preparation	16	27.1%

Table 9 shows that the two factors with the majority of responses for most important among both subgroups include academic reputation and college preparation. In addition, these responses for "most important" support the factors in the top three priority ranking for "very important" for each subgroup. Table 9 reveals that the two most important factors for each subgroup are not only the same, but are also ranked in the same order based on frequency of response. This is a significant similarity between the two subgroups.

Summary

Overall, there are two compelling factor similarities in motivation for families who registered and chose not to register at Catholic College Prep upon acceptance. Both subgroups reveal academic reputation and college preparation as important motivating factors in their decision to apply to Catholic College Prep. This is not only revealed in the response rate to "very important" factors, but is also fully aligned in the rank and response of "most important" factors for both populations. Where the subgroups are different is in the presence of an additional "very important" factor for each population: moral training among registered families and teachers among non-registered families.

This difference is important to note because it is the major factor in the top ranking for

"very important" that separates the responses between the two subpopulations.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to identify and compare the factors that motivate parents to enroll their admitted student in Catholic College Prep: an urban, Catholic, college preparatory high school, with factors that motivate parents of admitted students to enroll them elsewhere. This quantitative, cross-sectional study, conducted by the researcher over one admissions cycle (September 27th at 8am to January 7th at noon) will be used to restructure and improve Catholic College Preparatory High School's marketing planning and action.

The following questions guided the study:

1. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in motivating them to apply to and enroll their children in a Catholic, college preparatory high school during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

2. What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in motivating them to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school to which, upon acceptance, they choose not to enroll during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

3. How do the factors, if at all, perceived to be very important in motivating families to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school compare between parents/guardians who apply to and enroll at a Catholic, college preparatory high school with parents/guardians who choose not to enroll their admitted students during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?

Discussion of Findings

      Analysis of findings for research question one. Research Question 1, "What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in motivating them to apply to and enroll their children in a Catholic, college preparatory high school during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?" revealed that families who registered upon acceptance at Catholic College Preparatory High School shared some strong trends in motivating factors. Participants in this subgroup conclusively identified college preparation and academic reputation as the two highest ranking "very important" factors with response rates of 99.4% and 96.4% respectively. Additional high ranking factors include moral training (94%), the positive influence of other students (92.9%), and discipline (91.1). In addition, this population identified academic reputation (39.9%) and college preparation (35.7%) as the two "most important" motivating factors.

      This consistency between factors identifies a clear interest in academics and college preparation by families who registered at Catholic College Prep upon acceptance. This finding is consistent with the expectation that the academic reputation of a school is a compelling factor for families considering Catholic education (Bauch, 1987) and reinforces the market perception that Catholic schools have a reputation for producing high academic outcomes in students (Convey, 1992). The academic program provided in Catholic education is perceived to be a strong marketable strength for Catholic schools (Bauch & Small, 1986; Pustjens et al., 2008) and has a consistent relationship with college preparation and promotion (Donohue, 1993; Eide et al., 2004; Whitehead, 2007). It is important to note that moral training was not indicated as a high ranking factor for "most important," receiving a 2.9% response rate. This indicates an inconsistency in

response between what is perceived as "very important" and "most important" in this population as it relates to moral training. While moral training is recognized as an appeal of Catholic education (Fincham, 2007; Hyde, 2008; McGrath, 1999), the indication from this population is that, given a choice between academic program/college preparation and moral training, their selection would defer to the academic and college preparatory option.

Analysis of findings for research question two. Research Question 2, "What factors, if any, do parents/guardians perceive to be very important in motivating them to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school to which, upon acceptance, they choose not to enroll during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?" revealed that families who did not register upon acceptance at Catholic College Preparatory High School shared some strong trends in motivating factors. Participants in this subgroup conclusively identified college preparation and teachers as the two highest ranking "very important" factors with response rates of 98.3% and 94.9% respectively. This response rate is consistent with research that indicates the relationship between college preparation/matriculation and Catholic education (Donohue, 1993; Eide et al., 2004; Whitehead, 2007). In addition, this points to the research surrounding teacher professionalism and satisfaction and Catholic education, specifically the positive role of teachers in Catholic education (Alt & Peter, 2002; Benson & McMillen, 1991; U.S. DOE, 2003; Guerra, 1995).

Additional high ranking factors include academic reputation (93.2%), discipline (91.5%), and the positive influence of other students (91.5%). In addition, this population identified academic reputation (42.4%) and college preparation (27.1%) as the two "most

important" motivating factors. This is consistent with the identified academic factors and identifies a clear interest in academics and college preparation, but it does not indicate the same level of priority on teachers (1.7%). This variation in priority of teachers is an inconsistency in response between what is perceived as "very important" and "most important" in this population. This response indicates that, given a choice between a school offering that had a strong academic reputation/college preparation and a school known for it's teaching staff, families would defer to the school with the reputation for academics and college preparation. This is a bit inconsistent given that the academic program and college preparation would be directly related to the teaching staff; this is an area requiring further research to determine those qualities of teachers that are deemed "very important". It is possible that, in the response of this population, the quality of the faculty was assumed to be implicit in the strength of the academic program and college preparation.

Analysis of findings for research question three. Research Question 3, "How do the factors, if at all, perceived to be very important in motivating families to apply to a Catholic, college preparatory high school compare between parents/guardians who apply to and enroll at a Catholic, college preparatory high school with parents/guardians who choose not to enroll their admitted students during the fall 2010 admission's cycle?" reveals some compelling similarities and noted differences between the two populations. Most similar is the rate of response for motivating factors that were identified as "most important" to both populations. Both families who registered and families who chose not to register after acceptance ranked academic reputation and college preparation as the two most important factors, respectively. Both populations conclusively identified these

responses as the priority motivators for their pursuit of Catholic College Prep with no other factors receiving statistically significant response rates (>10%).

Also similar between both populations were two of the three identified top ranking "very important" factors. Both families who registered and families who chose not to register identified college preparation as the "very important" factor with the highest response rate (99.4%/98.3%). In addition, both populations identified academic reputation in the top three priority factors, registered families prioritizing it with the second highest rate of response (96.4%) with non-registered families prioritizing it as the third ranking factor (93.2%). This is another similarity that is validated by the consistency between the identified "very important" factors and "most important" factors.

In addition to the number of similarities, differences also exist in motivating factors between the two populations. Families who registered upon acceptance identified moral training as the third "very important" factor based on their frequency of response. This identifies an additional clear priority on the presence of moral education with a response rate of 94%. This factor does not appear to be as high of a priority for families who chose not to register (89.8%), although it is still in the top 25% of factors by frequency of response (6th in rank of importance). In addition, families who chose not to register identified teachers as a strong motivating factor (94.9%), which does not appear in the top three factors for families who registered. This indicates an additional difference in priorities although teachers were still in the top 25% of responses (89.9%), holding the 6th place for rank of importance by frequency of response.

Summary. While there are defining factors that are distinct for each population of families, there are also compelling similarities. Accepted families acknowledge moral

training in addition to academic reputation and college preparation. Families who chose

not to register identified teachers in addition to college preparation and academic

reputation. Both subgroups clearly identified academic reputation and college preparation

as the factors that were very important in their choice to pursue Catholic College

Preparatory High School.

Conclusions and Discussions

This study was designed to identify what similarities and differences existed

between families who did or did not register at a Catholic, college preparatory high

school upon an offer of admission. The results of this study can be used to guide policy

and practice at Catholic College Preparatory High School and may have implications for

policy and practice at comparable schools. Findings from this study support the following

conclusions:

Families who are accepted at Catholic College Prep, regardless of whether or not

they choose to register, are motivated by the academic reputation of the school and the

provision of college preparation. The role of college preparation and academics are high

importance factors for families who are accepted at Catholic College Prep. Academic

reputation and college preparation are most important for both populations of accepted

families. Therefore, in addition to ensuring that these are target marketing messages, it

may be important for CCP to continue to focus on academic performance and college

promotion rates to ensure the accuracy of these marketing messages. It is important to

consider the continued improvement in these areas so that CCP can remain competitive

with other local schools.

Families who choose to register at Catholic College Prep upon acceptance are also motivated by the presence of moral training. Moral training is a high priority factor ("very important") for families who chose to register at Catholic College Prep upon receiving an offer of admission. This is an area that has been under-examined at CCP and will require a recommendation for further clarification on how it is understood by the community and taught on campus. Interestingly, moral training was identified where faith formation was not, so the implication is that the appeal is more universal that the specific teachings of the Catholic faith and therefore not addressed specifically through theology courses.

Families who chose not to register at Catholic College Prep upon acceptance are also motivated by teachers. Teachers were a high priority factor ("very important") for families who chose not to register at Catholic College Prep upon receiving an offer of admissions. This is an area of curiosity given that the teachers administer the academic program for the school. Therefore, this population's priority on academics/college preparation and teachers and choice not to register may indicate an impression that the faculty at CCP is not as qualified or capable as staff at other competitive schools. This requires investigation to determine what messages and impressions about the CCP faculty exist (or what information is not available to the consuming public) in order to draw specific conclusions that will prompt future study or action.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This study was designed to identify motivating factors among distinct subpopulations of accepted families to a Catholic, college preparatory high school. The

findings from this study can be used to inform the marketing practices of Catholic

College Preparatory High school as well as other comparable schools:

1. It is recommended that the branding messages focusing on college preparation
   and academic program are developed and implemented as a major emphasis of
   school marketing. The statistics surrounding the college promotion rate of over
   99% and the number of AP and Honors course offerings are likely compelling
   data to support this perception of Catholic College Prep in the community.

2. It is recommended that CCP continue to invest in the academic program at the
   school, paying particular attention to AP pass rates and college acceptance rates
   as they relate to accurate marketing of the academic and college preparation
   programs.

3. It is acknowledged that the focus on moral training was received by families who
   chose to register. It is recommended that Catholic College Prep continue to refine
   the branding messages surrounding moral training in order to continue to market
   effectively to families who will register if accepted.

4. A recommendation for the marketing practice of Catholic College Preparatory is
   to identify the messages that exist currently about the teaching faculty and refine
   the marketing strategy as it applies to teachers. The relationship between the
   identification of teachers as a high priority and families who chose not to register
   may indicate a lack of effective marketing as it relates to the teaching staff at
   Catholic College Prep. This is addressed primarily through recommendations for
   further study which will lend itself to future improved practice.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. A study to determine the desirable qualities and characteristics about teachers from the perspective of prospective families.

2. A study that identifies what is known about the teachers at Catholic College Preparatory High School by the same distinct populations of this study.

3. A study to dissect moral training as it applies to the expectations and practice of Catholic College Preparatory High School.

4. A study of student applicants who are not accepted at Catholic College Prep to determine if similar motivations exist among this subgroup that could inform redirected marketing efforts.

5. A study regarding similarities and differences in motivation between subgroups compared among local competitive schools.

6. A longitudinal study of motivations of both noted subgroups as they apply year to year to determine consistent motivations for Catholic College Prep.

Final Thoughts

Catholic schools in the United States are in a critical time of much needed marketing reform. It is important for Catholic schools to begin to invest time and energy in the marketing of their institutions if there is to be any possibility of slowing the closure rate and declining enrollment trends in Catholic schools. While marketing practices have not yet been formalized at many Catholic institutions, Catholic College Preparatory High School served as a compelling test site for tailored marketing based on data collection that reflects the motivations of customer subgroups. The results of this study point to

consistent consumer desires and highlight those areas where the branding messages are being heard and those sources of inconsistency that may be impacting admissions.

While there is not enough known about Catholic school marketing and best practice, what is known is that we must collect as much information as possible about what our consumers desire in an educational institution and then market our programs that meet these desires. Being present, convenient and Catholic no longer can sustain optimal enrollment, and marketing is the solution to begin filling enrollment gaps.

Perhaps most interesting on a personal level in reference to the data collected for Catholic College Preparatory was the lack of importance surrounding faith formation/religious education and a previous family relationship with the school. Families who were accepted were overwhelmingly dismissive of any previous relationship with the school, relatives, and siblings having attended, making up the bottom of the list for both populations of families. Catholic College Prep being a Catholic institution was also underwhelming for accepted families in both populations with faith formation and religious education not appearing at the top of either priority list for motivating factors. This reminds us that as Catholic school administrators we must look past our religious affiliation and established relationships with families and keep our energy directed on branding the school to the desires of the consuming public.

While this study only scratches the surface of a vital topic in the sustainability of Catholic education I hope that it begins a much needed conversation and, for some schools, provides a road map of beginnings for site marketing for Catholic education. Catholic education is a vital choice option in our American educational system and any

efforts to meet enrollment gaps and market challenges should be met with encouragement

and hope for a return to sustainability.

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APPENDIX A

Modified Survey

As a parent, you have a variety of reasons for sending your child to a Catholic high school. Listed below are some reasons parents frequently give for choosing a Catholic school.

FOR EACH REASON ->

FIRST: How important was each reason in helping ou decide to send your child to this school?

a. Academic reputation
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

b. Child's friends attend
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

c. Teachers
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

d. Athletic programs
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

e. Location
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

f. Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

g. Buildings and other facilities
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

h. Affordable tuition
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

i. College preparation
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

j. Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended
○ Very Important
○ Somewhat Important
○ Not at all Important

k. Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
l. Special technical courses or training programs	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
m. Child wanted to attend	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
n. Available public schools are unsafe	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
o. School is open to parents' ideas	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
p. Religious education	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
q. Moral training	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
r. School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
s. Discipline	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
t. Class size	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
u. Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
v. Availability of transportation	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important

w. Willingness to address social and moral issues	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
x. Positive influence of other students on my child	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
y. School shares my values and beliefs	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important
Other:	
z. Other:	○ Very Important ○ Somewhat Important ○ Not at all Important

SECOND: Which reason was the <u>most important</u>?

(Mark ONLY ONE)

○ a. Academic reputation
○ b. Child's friends attend
○ c. Teachers
○ d. Athletic programs
○ e. Location
○ f. Presence of religious (priests/brothers/sisters)
○ g. Buildings and other facilities
○ h. Affordable tuition
○ i. College preparation
○ j. Older brother(s)/sister(s) attended
○ k. Parent(s) or relative(s) attended
○ l. Special technical courses or training programs
○ m. Child wanted to attend
○ n. Available public schools are unsafe
○ o. School is open to parents' ideas
○ p. Religious education
○ q. Moral training

○ r. School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems

○ s. Discipline

○ t. Class size

○ u. Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum

○ v. Availability of transportation

○ w. Willingness to address social and moral issues

○ x. Positive influence of other students on my child

○ y. School shares my values and beliefs

○ z. Other:

Other: _____

APPENDIX B

Original Survey

PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS: A NATIONAL STUDY

The National Catholic Educational Association is conducting a study of Catholic secondary schools here and in other communities in the United States. We have developed this questionnaire for the parents of students in the schools we are studying.

We realize that this questionnaire is long, but we worked very hard to make it as short as possible. We are asking you these questions because we feel that parent opinions on a large number of issues are extremely important for the growth and improvement of Catholic schools. This information is essential for understanding and interpreting the rest of the information we collect in your child's school.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE. We realize that you may find some questions difficult to answer or you may feel that some questions are personal or are about "sensitive" issues. We are asking you these questions only because we think the answers will give us meaningful information for our study of Catholic high schools. We hope you will cooperate with us in our effort.

Your answers will be kept completely confidential. All information will be immediately returned to our researchers for analysis, and the results will be presented in "averaged" form NOT IN TERMS OF INDIVIDUAL PARENTS.

Please help us in this study. We hope as a result of your cooperation we can see some useful ways of helping all Catholic schools offer the best education possible to their students.

We want you to answer the questions in this questionnaire only for

.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the National Catholic Educational Association representative at your school.

Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible in the sealed envelope to the school.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

PART I:

1) How many of your children are currently enrolled in this school? _____

2) How many of your <u>other</u> children attended this school? _____

3) What is your relation to the oldest child now attending this high school?

_____ Mother _____ Father _____ Other:_____

4) Do both parents live in the home? _____ Yes _____ No

5) How many adults (over age 18) live in your home? (Count yourself) _____

6) How many children age 18 or under live in your home? _____

PART II:

Eventhough you may have more than one child enrolled in this school, think only of the <u>oldest</u> child now enrolled in answering the following questions.

1) As things stand now, how far do you think your child will get? (Mark ONLY ONE)

___Drop out of school before getting a high school diploma

___Graduate from high school and get no more education after that

___Go to trade, business, or vocational school for a year or two after high school

___Go to college for one or two years

___Get a college degree

___Get past college and get a Master's degree

___Get an advanced degree after college (Ph.D., M.D., or law degree)

2) How important do you feel it is for parents to know what goes on in their child's school?

_____ Very Important _____ Somewhat Important _____ Not Important at All

3) How much do you feel you know about what goes on in your child's school?

_____ A great deal _____ A moderate amount _____ Very little

4) During the last year, <u>about</u> how many times have you talked to your child's teachers?

___ None ___ 1-2 ___ 3-5 ___ 6-10 ___ 10 or more times

5) <u>About</u> how many times did these talks take place in the following settings? (Write the number beside each item as it applies.)

_____ Over the phone _____ In a group (back-to-school night, parents meetings)

_____ Individual meetings (parent-teacher conferences)

6) About how many times in the last year did the teacher and/or principal come to your home?

___ None ___ 1-2 ___ 3-5 ___ 6-10 ___ 10 or more times

7) Who usually asks for any personal contact you have with the school?

___ Parent(s) ___ Teachers ___ Guidance counselors ___ Administrators

8) When you make a request for contact with the school concerning your child, how quickly does the school respond to your request?

___ The school usually responds quickly

___ The school responds, but after some delay

___ The school usually doesn't respond at all

___ I never had to contact the school

9) As a parent, you have a variety of reasons for sending your child to a Catholic high school. Listed below are some reasons parents frequently give for choosing a Catholic school.

FOR EACH REASON ⟶ FIRST: How important was each reason in helping you decide to send your child to this school? ⟶ SECOND: Which reason was the most important? (Mark ONLY ONE)

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	
a. Academic reputation	O	O	O	O
b. Child's friends attend	O	O	O	O
c. Teachers	O	O	O	O
d. Athletic programs	O	O	O	O
e. Location	O	O	O	O
f. Presence of religious (priests/brothers/ sisters)	O	O	O	O
g. Buildings and other facilities	O	O	O	O
h. Affordable tuition	O	O	O	O
i. College preparation	O	O	O	O
j. Older brother(s)/ sister(s) attended	O	O	O	O
k. Parent(s) or relative(s) attended	O	O	O	O
l. Special technical courses or training programs	O	O	O	O
m. Child wanted to attend	O	O	O	O
n. Available public schools are unsafe	O	O	O	O
o. School is open to parents' ideas	O	O	O	O
p. Religious education	O	O	O	O
q. Moral training	O	O	O	O
r. School emphasizes programs that help students who have learning problems	O	O	O	O
s. Discipline	O	O	O	O
t. Class size	O	O	O	O
u. Available public school offers a poor or limited curriculum	O	O	O	O
v. Availability of transportation	O	O	O	O
w. Willingness to address social and moral issues	O	O	O	O
x. Positive influence of other students on my child	O	O	O	O
y. School shares my values and beliefs	O	O	O	O
z. Other:_____	O	O	O	O

10) Parents have a variety of expectations about the educational goals of the Catholic high school.

FOR EACH GOAL ⟶ FIRST: How important is each goal to you as a parent?⟶ SECOND: Which goal is the <u>most</u> important to you? (Mark ONLY ONE)⟶ THIRD: Which one do you think receives the <u>most</u> emphasis at this school? (Mark ONLY ONE)

Columns: Very Important | Somewhat Important | Somewhat Unimportant | Not at All Important

a. Building community among faculty, students, and parents....................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

b. Developing appreciation of the arts...................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

c. Developing high moral standards and citizenship...O····O····O····O·········O···········O

d. Developing individual responsibility for the management of one's own learning program............O····O····O····O·········O···········O

e. Encouraging student understanding, acceptance, and participation in the Catholic church..............O····O····O····O·········O···········O

f. Fostering spiritual development..................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

g. Preparing students for college.......................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

h. Preparing students for the labor market............O····O····O····O·········O···········O

i. Promoting understanding of and commitment to justice......................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

j. Promoting understanding of and commitment to peace........................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

k. Teaching basic skills in writing, reading, and mathematics.............O····O····O····O·········O···········O

l. Teaching life skills (skills needed for surviving in a complex world, interpersonal skills, personal finance, job hunting skills, etc.)................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

m. Teaching students how to get along with others......................O····O····O····O·········O···········O

(Please return to second question at top of page.)

11) Below is a list of characteristics that describe the curriculum at some schools.

FIRST: As far as you know are these characteristics a part of the curriculum at this school? ——→ THEN ——→ SECOND: How much emphasis do you think each receives at this school?

	I don't				Too	About	Too	I don't
Yes	No	Know			Much	Right	Little	Know
O	O	O	a.	Liberal political beliefs	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	b.	Conservative political beliefs	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	c.	Modern attitudes towards women and their roles	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	d.	Traditional attitudes towards women and their roles	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	e.	Sex education	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	f.	Homework	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	g.	Discipline	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	h.	Minority representation in the curriculum	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	i.	Teaching religion	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	j.	Teachers ask students to talk about their personal feelings	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	k.	Vatican II ideas	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	l.	Theory of evolution	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	m.	Helping the poor	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	n.	Social justice issues	O	O	O	O

12) Below is a list of areas about which parents may or may not advise and/or help make decisions for this school.

FOR EACH OF THESE AREAS ——→ FIRST: Do you advise and/or help to make decisions for this school? ——→ SECOND: If you do not would you like to?

		Yes	No		Yes	No
a.	Hiring and firing teachers	O	O		O	O
b.	Standards for student behavior (i.e., discipline policy)	O	O		O	O
c.	The way students are graded	O	O		O	O
d.	How the school budget is spent	O	O		O	O
e.	What textbooks or other learning materials are used	O	O		O	O
f.	What subjects are taught	O	O		O	O
g.	How subjects are taught	O	O		O	O
h.	Hiring and firing of administrators	O	O		O	O
i.	Ways the school and parents work together	O	O		O	O
j.	The school's daily schedule	O	O		O	O
k.	The way religion is taught	O	O		O	O
l.	Setting school goals	O	O		O	O
m.	Setting admission policy	O	O		O	O
n.	How money is raised	O	O		O	O
o.	Setting teachers' salaries	O	O		O	O
p.	Helping solve school maintenance problems	O	O		O	O

13) Below is a list of ways in which parents might participate in school activities.

FOR EACH WAY ⟶ FIRST: How IMPORTANT do you think it is for parents to participate? ⟶ SECOND: Have you ever participated?

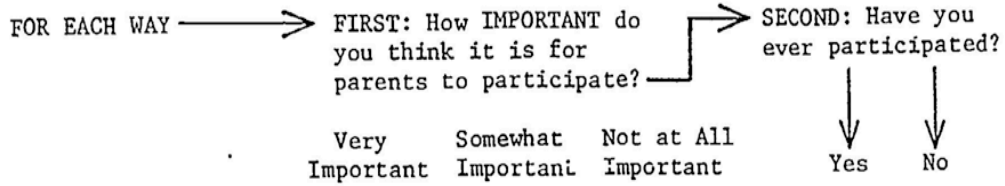|	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at All Important	Yes	No
a. Acting as a teacher or substitute teacher	○	○	○	○	○
b. Acting as a classroom aide or tutor	○	○	○	○	○
c. Serving as a School Board, Advisory, or Parent Board Member	○	○	○	○	○
d. Attending Parent meetings	○	○	○	○	○
e. Acting as a guest speaker	○	○	○	○	○
f. Attending meetings to discuss local, social, and political issues	○	○	○	○	○
g. Attending meetings to discuss other community problems	○	○	○	○	○
h. Attending meetings to discuss school problems	○	○	○	○	○
i. Helping with class trips	○	○	○	○	○
j. Helping with extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, music, plays, driving, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
k. Making sure homework is done	○	○	○	○	○
l. Helping with school maintenance	○	○	○	○	○

14) Mark whether or not any of the following have prevented you from being involved in activities at this school during the past year.

	Yes	No
a. Baby sitting/child care	○	○
b. Lack of transportation to get to the school	○	○
c. Principal's and teachers' attitudes	○	○
d. Conflict with my working hours	○	○
e. My belief that it is the job of the principal and the teachers to run the school	○	○
f. Different language spoken by the school people	○	○
g. Other: _____	○	○

13) Below is a list of ways in which parents might participate in school activities.

FOR EACH WAY ⟶ FIRST: How IMPORTANT do you think it is for parents to participate? ⟶ SECOND: Have you ever participated?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at All Important	Yes	No
a. Acting as a teacher or substitute teacher	○	○	○	○	○
b. Acting as a classroom aide or tutor	○	○	○	○	○
c. Serving as a School Board, Advisory, or Parent Board Member	○	○	○	○	○
d. Attending Parent meetings	○	○	○	○	○
e. Acting as a guest speaker	○	○	○	○	○
f. Attending meetings to discuss local, social, and political issues	○	○	○	○	○
g. Attending meetings to discuss other community problems	○	○	○	○	○
h. Attending meetings to discuss school problems	○	○	○	○	○
i. Helping with class trips	○	○	○	○	○
j. Helping with extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, music, plays, driving, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
k. Making sure homework is done	○	○	○	○	○
l. Helping with school maintenance	○	○	○	○	○

14) Mark whether or not any of the following have prevented you from being involved in activities at this school during the past year.

	Yes	No
a. Baby sitting/child care	○	○
b. Lack of transportation to get to the school	○	○
c. Principal's and teachers' attitudes	○	○
d. Conflict with my working hours	○	○
e. My belief that it is the job of the principal and the teachers to run the school	○	○
f. Different language spoken by the school people	○	○
g. Other:_____	○	○

16) What is your highest level of education? (Please mark ONLY ONE)

_____ Completed eighth grade or less   _____ Had some college, but didn't finish

_____ Had some high school, but didn't finish   _____ Graduated from a two-year college

_____ Completed high school   _____ Graduated from a 4-year college or university

_____ Completed technical, vocation, trade, or business school   _____ Completed a post-graduate or professional degree

17) How satisfied are you with your own level of education? (Please mark ONLY ONE)

_____ Very satisfied   _____ Somewhat dissatisfied

_____ Somewhat satisfied   _____ Very dissatisfied

18) How many years did you attend

_____ Catholic elementary school?   _____ Catholic high school?

19) What kind of financial assistance does your child receive for schooling that comes from outside the home?

_____ None   _____ Sponsorship of a relative

_____ Partial school scholarship   _____ Sponsorship of a patron not a relative

_____ Full school scholarship

    _____ Other:_____

20) How many hours a week does your child earn money by working outside the home?

_____ None   _____ 11-20 hours

_____ 1-5 hours   _____ 21 or more hours

_____ 6-10 hours

21) To what extent does your child financially contribute toward schooling by working? (Mark ALL that apply)

_____ None   _____ Transportation

_____ Partial tuition   _____ Clothing

_____ Full tuition   _____ Entertainment

_____ Books, supplies

22) What is the approximate total family income per year? (Please mark ONE)

_____ Less than $5,000   _____ $20,001-$30,000

_____ $5,001-$10,000   _____ $30,001-$50,000

_____ $10,001-$15,000   _____ $50,001-$100,000

_____ $15,001-$20,000   _____ Over $100,000

23) Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?

_____ White/Caucasian/Anglo   _____ Cuban/Puerto Rican/ Other Latin American

_____ Black/Negro/Afro-American

_____ Oriental/Asian American   _____ American Indian

_____ Mexican American/Mexican/ Chicano   _____ Other:_____

_____

24) In what kind of housing do you live?

_____ Owner-occupied house, condominium, or townhouse   _____ Government-subsidized housing

_____ Single or duplex rental   _____ Other:_____

_____ Multiple unit rental

_____

25) Is the mother in this family employed outside the home?

_____ Full-time   _____ Part-time   _____ Not at all

26) Is the father in this family employed outside the home?

_____ Full-time   _____ Part-time   _____ Not at all

27) How would you describe the political beliefs of most of the people who send their children to this school?

_____ Strongly conservative   _____ Liberal

_____ Conservative   _____ Strongly Liberal

_____ Moderate

28) How would you describe your own political beliefs?

_____ Strongly conservative   _____ Liberal

_____ Conservative   _____ Strongly Liberal

_____ Moderate

29) Are you Catholic?   _____ Yes   _____ No

30) If yes, how much do you participate in parish or other church activities?

_____ Weekly   _____ A few times a year

_____ Monthly   _____ Not at all

31) If you are not a Catholic, how much do you participate in church or religious activities?

_____ Weekly   _____ A few times a year

_____ Monthly   _____ Not at all

BEFORE ANSWERING THE LAST QUESTION ON THE NEXT PAGE, PLEASE CHECK BACK TO BE SURE YOU ANSWERED ALL OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS. THANK YOU

32) If there are any comments you would like to make or concerns you have about this study or about the school, please write them here.