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Editors' Comments

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Editors' Comments

On the occasion of a historic week for the Church and with the eyes of the world—the curious, the skeptical, and the faithful—fixed on the election of Pope Francis I and its meaning for the 1.2 billion Catholics throughout the world, we offer another issue of the journal dedicated to scholarly inquiry into the ministry, practice, and outcomes of Catholic education.

This issue begins with Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M. and David S. Caudill who argue that Catholic universities can advance discussions about Catholic identity by how they present science and technology in their curriculum. The authors outline the contributions that the interdisciplinary field of "science, technology & society," or STS, can offer Catholic higher education. They discuss how teaching science and technology as social forces can provide the intellectual and reflective space necessary for critical evaluation of their moral dimensions, both in society and in the professional lives of students.

Gail Mayotte, Dan Wei, Sarah Lamphier, and Thomas Doyle offer a professional development strategy delivered as part of a systematic, long-term approach to school and teacher improvement. The professional development model, called the ACE Collaborative for Academic Excellence, utilizes a framework based on the three pillars of the Alliance for Catholic Education to build teacher, group, and vision capacity within schools and across diocesan schools. The authors offer an analysis of participant survey data that explores program outcomes and suggests several ways that professional development can be strengthened to effect lasting change in Catholic schools.

Marc Snyder's research provides an evaluation of the academic achievement of homeschooled students compared to traditionally schooled students attending a Catholic university in South Florida. The study offers empirical data regarding the success of homeschooled students in higher education, specifically in Catholic colleges and universities. A statistically significant difference was found between homeschooled students and traditionally schooled students in ACT and SAT scores, and overall GPA. Snyder's findings affirmed the value of homeschooled students to the institution and support the literature on the academic viability of homeschooled students in college.

Katina Pollock makes the case that the ways in which educators and administrators define school success tends to guide their practice, and may have implications for current and future policy initiatives. Drawing on data from

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the International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP), this study explores how one publicly funded Catholic school in Ontario, Canada, conceives of school success in their local context. Pollock pays particular attention to the question of whether or not narrow achievement priorities from the provincial government dominate local school discourse and practices.

The Focus Section for this issue addresses a number of innovative governance, structural, and decision-making approaches to Catholic schools across the country. Collectively, the four articles provide insights into the strategic planning and long-term vision that may contribute to the kinds of innovations necessary for a sustainable future for Catholic education. This section begins with Kenith C. Britt's investigation of the organizational structures within K–12 consolidated school systems established by several dozen dioceses in the United States, the factors that led to consolidation, and variables that predict perceived viability of the consolidated model. The author posits that the K–12 consolidated Catholic school system can be an effective model that allows for greater collaboration, financial efficiencies, and reductions of parish subsidies. This study also shows that while the model may help Catholic schools remain open, the separation from the parish leads to a lack of parish ownership of the school, a sense of competition between the school system and the supporting parishes, and unclear roles and accountability.

Craig N. Horning presents an analysis of how an emerging form of schooling—"religious" charter schools—may influence the future of urban Catholic elementary education in America. Specifically, the author synthesizes the literature related to religious charter schools and urban Catholic education—a first of its kind. The author concludes that while religious charter schools' present very real problems with regard to faith-formation and Catholic identity, the concept of such schools merits further reflection and research. Despite the challenges of implementing such schools, this emerging model may provide new opportunities and benefits to the Catholic community and others invested in values-based urban education.

Anthony Sabatino, Karen Huchting, and Franca Dell'Olio share the results of their study that investigates the decision making process utilized by three elementary schools in adopting a 200-day school year in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Drawing on interviews with principals, pastors, parents, and school advisory council representatives, the researchers outline the decision making process, the reactions to the decision by the stakeholders, and the reasons why these three schools chose to extend their school calendar. Findings suggest that the autonomous leadership and governance structure

of the elementary schools allowed them to utilize a context-specific decision making process.

In the final article of this Focus Section, Rebecca A. Proehl, Shelese Douglas, Dean Elias, Anthony H. Johnson, and Wendy Westsmith examine one urban Catholic school's successful transition to multi-grade classrooms when student enrollment dropped dramatically. The researchers found that the transition to multi-grade classrooms did not have a significant impact on student outcomes as measured by absences, tardiness, or academic performance, though other social-emotional and developmental benefits were perceived. For example, students were more likely to nurture other students, assume shared responsibility and leadership in the classroom and at home, have fewer disciplinary problems, and be more respectful of their classmates. The researchers offer lessons learned about the transition for other Catholic school leaders who may be considering such a change.

Finally, this issue contains four book reviews: Max T. Engel reviews Michael P. Caruso, S.J. (2012). *When the Sisters Said Farewell: The Transition of Leadership in Catholic Elementary Schools*. Lantham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield; Matt Hoven reviews, M. Andrew Holowchak and Heather L. Reid. (2011). *Aretism: An Ancient Sports Philosophy for the Modern Sports World*. Lantham, MD: Lexington Books; George A. Jacinto reviews, Roger Bergman. (2011). *Catholic Social Learning: Educating the Faith that Does Justice*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press; and Rev. John Friesen reviews, Margaret M. McGuiness. (2012). *Neighbors & Missionaries: A History of the Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine.* New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

This issue marks a moment of transition for the journal. Boston College will complete its five-year editorial responsbilities in June 2013 and the editorial offices will move from the Roche Center for Catholic Education to Loyola Marymount University's Center for Catholic Education. On behalf of the Boston College editorial team, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the journal governing board for the opportunity to advance the mission of the journal since 2008—in particular, the journal's successful move to an Open Access, online format. We are also grateful for the many authors and peer reviewers who generously gave their time and talents to ensure the high quality of scholarship that our readers have come to expect and from which we all benefit. We look forward to working with the new editorial team at LMU over the next five years.

Michael James, Joseph O'Keefe, S.J., and Lorraine Ozar