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The Local-executive Governance Model in Catholic Parochial Elementary Schools:
Understanding Pastors' Perspectives

by

Armando Luiz Carvalho

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2021

Local-executive Governance Model Catholic Parochial Elementary Schools:

Understanding Pastors' Perspectives

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by

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This dissertation written by Armando Carvalho, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

3.24.21

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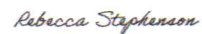
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ABSTRACT

The Local-executive Governance Model in Catholic Parochial Elementary Schools:
Understanding Pastors' Perspectives

by

Armando Luiz Carvalho

Catholic parochial elementary schools in the United States are normally governed by the pastor of the local parish and under a local-executive governance model. Despite pastors' paramount role in the governance of Catholic parochial elementary schools they often lack the training, interest, or time to fulfill their roles. This qualitative study explored pastors' perspectives on the local-executive governance model, where governance of the school is local and the pastor is the sole executive of the school. This dissertation included interviews with nine pastors in a diocese on the west coast of the United States. The study explored how pastors' view their roles at their parochial schools. The pastors were asked about their views on their spiritual, education, and managerial roles at their parochial schools. Findings indicated that pastors enjoyed their spiritual roles at their schools but chose to delegate many of their financial, human, and academic responsibilities to the school principal. The findings supported the need for Catholic schools to explore other options in school governance beyond the local-executive governance model and to shift more authority from pastors to qualified laypersons.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Many operations of the Catholic Church are managed within the framework of Canon Law. Canon Law is a set of ecclesial laws that lay out the governance structures for Catholic elementary schools. In relation to Catholic education, Canon Law states that the pastor has near absolute authority over a parochial school, limited only by the local ordinary (Catholic Church, 1984). The local ordinary is normally the local bishop, who enforces Canon Law in his diocese and oversees the pastors who apply Canon Law to their individual contexts, usually at parishes. The relationship and governance structure between Catholic schools and the Catholic Church includes important distinctions and varying authority models.

There are various types of governance within Catholic education. Goldschmidt and Walsh (2011) discussed different types of models, including parish (parochial) schools, private schools, inter-parish schools, diocesan schools, consortium schools, and others. A parochial model of governance means that the school is attached and functions as a ministry of a Catholic parish and is headed by the pastor of said parish. This model was instituted by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 and, at the height of Catholic education in the United States in the 1960 when enrollment exceeded 5,200,000 students, was the model used by 95% of Catholic elementary schools (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). The Archdiocese of Los Angeles, as is the case in many dioceses, has a policy where the pastor appoints the principal but holds final authority (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021; Schafer, 2004). For example, schools can be operated by a public juridic person other than the local bishop or archbishop such as religious

institutes (Brown, 2010). In these types of schools, the religious institute controls the school, but the school must have approval by the local ordinary to be called a Catholic school. There is a third type of school that is recognized as Catholic. A school that has been recognized as Catholic means that a school received the appropriate ecclesiastical authorization to be considered a Catholic school. Theoretically, any school could be deemed a Catholic school by the local ordinary, though it would seem unlikely that a public school would be deemed Catholic. Under this model where a school has been determined to be Catholic, the school can have any governance structure as long as it is deemed as Catholic by the local ordinary. This study focused on the local-executive governance model and pastors' viewpoints on this model.

As a result of the variation in governance structures at a school site, specific schools require different qualities in principals depending on their delegated authority. The scope of responsibilities of the principal is an aspect that forms the criteria a pastor must use in determining who will be a school leader at his site. The responsibilities that the pastor delegates to the principal have varied at a parochial school (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2013). The job description of a principal varies significantly from site to site, which has implications in the hiring process and in the day-to-day operations of the school. For example, at some school sites a principal may be responsible for financial operations while at another school site the parish business manager may be responsible for financial operations of a school. Since the role of the principal varies significantly, research is of limited use to pastors in determining what qualities they desire in a principal.

Declining Vocations to the Priesthood

Since the pastor makes the decisions concerning the governance of a parochial school and has his own preferences for the selection of principals, it is important to look at the context of the Catholic priesthood in the United States. Over the last 50 years, the Catholic Church in the United States has seen a decline in the number of vocations to the priesthood. According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate the number of priests in the United States has decreased from 59,192 in 1970 to 36,580 in 2018, a decrease of about 38% (n.d.). Additionally, the number of graduate level seminarians, who might later be ordained priests, has decreased from 6,602 in 1970 to 3,553 in 2018. To put this in the context of Catholic education, when Catholic education was at its height in the 1960s there were significantly more priests on hand at parishes than there are currently (National Catholic Educational Association, 2021). With much fewer priests, it is important to understand what their perceptions are on the current governance model since many priests are likely to govern schools as pastors due to the lack of priests and alternate assignments available.

While these numbers demonstrate a lower number of priests, it is helpful to present this data in relation to the number of active priests at parishes. While there has been a small decrease in the number of parishes from 1970 to 2018, the number of active diocesan priests per parish has decreased from 1.8 in 1970 to 1.0 in 2018. In addition, the number of Catholics in the United States has increased from 54.1 million in 1970 to 68.7 million in 2019, further decreasing the ratio of priests to lay Catholics (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, n.d.). This data shows that in the past priests may have had more associate or assistant pastors to assist them with

their duties but now have to perform all of the sacramental and administrative responsibilities at a parish themselves.

Financial Challenges

Catholic schools currently have challenges in their financial operations. Across the United States, Catholic schools have lower enrollment, higher operating costs, and challenges remaining competitive in the private education marketplace (Wolsonovich et al., 2018). The primary source of income for a Catholic school was tuition from enrolled families (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011; Lundy, 1999). Prior to 1967 tuition was low or nonexistent, but the average tuition in 1992 was \$2,800 and continues to grow (Przygocki, 2004). Though families are expected to pay for a Catholic education, it is also a common practice in Catholic schools to adjust tuition based on a family's ability to pay (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). In addition, Catholic schools often have received subsidies from their parishes or from the local diocese (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). This financial assistance has helped to alleviate some of the financial challenges of Catholic schools, especially for families.

The shift from free or nearly free Catholic schools to a tuition based financial model was a reaction to the sudden decline of the number of religious sisters in Catholic schools. The religious sisters who used to staff the schools took vows of poverty, so they did not receive a significant salary. Caruso (2012) described two reasons why religious sisters started to decrease their staffing of schools in the years follow the Second Vatican Council, an ecumenical council held from 1962 through 1965. First, he argued that there was a general decrease of vocations to religious life due to increased professional opportunities for women, decreased visibility of religious sisters due to a change in religious habits, and the decrease in the number of children

families were having. Second, he stated that the allocation of jobs in religious communities had a major impact on staffing of schools. Before the Second Vatican Council religious sisters were ordered to certain assignments without much choice for individual sisters. After the Council most religious orders switched to an open placement method of assigning jobs. This change meant that sisters could decline or suggest new assignments for themselves outside of schools. Since sisters were no longer assigned to schools as often as they were before the 1960s, the financial model of Catholic education had to shift to account for the increased employment and costs of lay teachers and staff.

This decrease of religious staffing schools has nearly come full circle since the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. In 1965 nearly all teachers were religious or priests in Catholic schools, while in 2019 only 2.8% of full-time equivalent professional staff in Catholic schools are religious or clergy (McDonald & Schultz, 2019). Due to the lack of religious in the Catholic schools, lay people were hired to take their places who often lacked formal training and who were paid very low salaries (Caruso, 2012). However, even with these low salaries, the cost of running a Catholic school increased greatly. In the early twenty-first century staffing is almost completely the opposite of what it was in 1965 in terms of religious versus lay staffing, necessitating an increase in tuition and a decrease in enrollment.

Declining Enrollment

Since tuition is the largest part of a Catholic school's income, sufficient enrollment in the school is a key element of a sound financial situation at a Catholic school. However, Catholic school enrollment has decreased from 5,200,000 students in the early 1960s to 1,789,363 students in 2019, a decrease of 65.5% (McDonald & Schultz, 2019). While there may be many

factors that have caused this drastic decline in enrollment in Catholic schools, the most significant reason is due to increased operating costs of Catholic schools due to the decreased numbers of religious sisters, which are passed onto families in tuition increases (Caruso, 2012; Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). Due to these increases in tuition, fewer families could afford Catholic education and schools can offer less aid than they could in the past. This puts the current state of Catholic education in conflict with a mission to educate students from all backgrounds. Since there are fewer families able to afford Catholic education a Catholic school's income is also affected since Catholic schools presently operate on a tuition-based model.

Significance

The significance of this study was to contribute to the body of research on governance of Catholic schools. There is limited known research examining pastors' voices in governance structures, particularly in the local-executive governance model, which is the dominant model in the United States for Catholic parochial elementary schools where the pastor holds final authority. It is unknown what pastors' perception of this model is and by speaking with individual pastors this study sought to examine how they view this governance structure. By examining the pastors' views on the local-executive governance model, other models of school governance can be examined and possibly implemented to better meet the perceptions and desires of pastors.

This issue of pastor's perceptions of the local-executive governance model also has implications for the survival of Catholic education. According to McDonald and Schultz (2019), the number of Catholic schools has been decreasing drastically since the 1960s in the United States. Pastors need to select the best principals for these principalships so that Catholic

education can flourish in the United States. Without strong leadership in the principal position, schools may continue to experience declining enrollment and the current trend of closing Catholic schools can continue. While a shift to Catholic school governance models is a highly complex endeavor, the current trends point to a need to determine how pastors perceive the local-executive governance model, other models of governance can be explored.

Statement of the Problem

Currently pastors hold ultimate authority at a parochial school (Schafer, 2004). The pastor holds the hiring authority for both teachers and the principal, but there is a lack of seminary preparation for pastors who will be in charge of parochial schools. Pastors of Catholic parishes are trained priests, however their training in the seminary in dioceses is limited. The primary seminary for Southern California only included one course in parish operations (including financial management) and no courses in managing schools in their seminary that prepare pastors for the management of schools and parishes (St. John's Seminary, 2018). This lack of training puts pastors at a disadvantage in fulfilling their role as the head of a school within the local-executive governance model. Since Canon Law puts the pastors in charge of parish schools, pastors should have some training in administering a school. However, their seminary training lacks this area of studies, so most pastors lack a framework for hiring principals or administering the school themselves. Within these seminaries this lack of training can mean that priests do not receive the appropriate training to be in charge of schools in their normal seminary training. This lack of training means that pastors need to hire quality principals who are well informed in managing a school and who have the adequate training.

Additionally, there is a lack of research in what pastors perceive as the role of the principal in the local-executive governance model. There are different ways by which pastors hire their principals around parochial schools in the United States, which makes it difficult to determine what pastors' perceptions of the role of the principal is. These range from a pastor selecting a principal with assistance from a central education office, having a committee select the principal, or having a central office propose a limited number of candidates that the pastor must choose from (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021; Diocese of Davenport, 2016). With this much variation in the selection of principals, it is clear that there is no common procedure in selecting a principal, only some common practices and no set process for hiring principals of elementary parochial schools.

Also, another problem is a lack of research that explores pastors' perceptions in hiring principals. Within this governance structure of the parochial school, there is a lack of standardized methods for hiring Catholic school principals or in assigning their duties. The principal then has to work with the pastor to advance the mission of the school and determine how much authority will be delegated from the pastor. Within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the pastor was described as responsible for the spiritual, administrative, financial, and personnel assets of the parish. In turn, the principal was charged with the immediate supervision and direction of the school program (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021). However, there are some problems that exist with the local-executive governance model. There was much research about what qualities a principal should have when it comes to public school leadership but less research in the area of Catholic education. With little research in this area, pastors' perspective has not been as researched as it should be considering their position of authority. While there

was some research on the pastor-principal relationship and case studies on the process of hiring a principal there was little research on the pastor's perspective of the local-executive governance model (Connelly, 2014). The hiring process and the pastor-principal relationship is important, since the pastors are making the final hiring decisions their criteria for picking a school leader are important elements that need to be examined. Because of this lack of research, it is unclear what criteria pastors are using in the selection process of principals. It is essential that practitioners understand the criteria pastors are using to ensure that pastors are trained in the best practices of hiring principals.

These concerns about the governance structure of Catholic schools come at a time when Catholic education's future is uncertain. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Catholic schools have closed at an increasing rate. In 2020, 209 Catholic schools closed, with the vast majority of them being elementary schools (National Catholic Educational Association, 2021). While the country is currently experiencing improving conditions, action is necessary to ensure that the promise of Catholic education continues for generations. Existing governance structures need to be examined in order to ensure Catholic education's long-term viability.

Hiring of Principals

This study also sought to examine pastors' perceptions of the role of the principal in the local-executive governance model. These perceptions are important during the hiring process since the pastor's perceptions of the principal's role will affect who is selected to the principalship. There are different procedures and processes for hiring a principal in education across the United States. While there are different methods, there were some common themes that recur throughout the literature. Among these were the processes, interviews, and committee

selection and training. There was some literature in Catholic education about the principal hiring process; however, most of the research was related to public education. Both systems of education have already existing research that complement both fields. Often the public-school-focused research applied to Catholic schools in most matters aside from the importance of Catholicity in candidates and the governing authority of parochial Catholic schools. This different focus added to the diversity of methods used to select Catholic school principals.

The selection of principals was directly tied to the Catholic Social Justice teachings of the dignity of work and the rights of workers (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, n.d., 2005). In his encyclical letter, *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II (1991) described the importance of “training of competent business leaders who are conscious of their responsibilities” (p. 35). While he was focused on business leaders in this encyclical letter the same logic can be applied to school leaders. The pastor has a duty to ensure that the principal he selects is conscious of all of his or her responsibilities and that he picks a well-trained individual to lead the school. Additionally, Pope John Paul II also wrote in *Laborem Exercens* (1981) that proper training is essential for employees and is a right for individuals.

While Pope John Paul II (1991) focused on training, this concept can also be applied to the idea that the principal needs to be properly qualified for the position. Pastors need to select a principal who has the right balance of qualities, skills, and dispositions needed to lead a Catholic school. However, there has been little research into what qualities pastors are seeking in these principals. Once pastor’s preferences are understood one can compare their preferences with what is considered good practice in hiring school principals in the framework of Catholic Social Justice teachings.

Research Question

This dissertation sought to answer the following research question: What are pastors' perspectives of the local executive governance model of parochial elementary schools?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the pastor's perceptions of the local executive governance model in Catholic parochial elementary schools. In order to examine this topic, this study also sought to examine pastors' perceptions of the role of the principal in this model. It was important to examine the pastors' perceptions of the local executive governance model as that will affect the pastors' perspectives of the role in the model.

This research can later be used to examine the role of the pastor in the local executive governance model and help determine if it is a model worth keeping in the current day. There was no research on pastors' perceptions of this model and by giving pastors a voice to speak to this model further research and considerations can be made in looking at alternative governance models.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation featured a theoretical framework partially based on the skills approach for leadership described by Katz (2009) and his theories as described in Northouse (2018). This framework was selected because it fits well into the leadership structures of Catholic education. The pastor, principal, teachers, and other staff all held different skills and levels of responsibility that mirror Katz's (2009) framework. This division of skills is especially important since the skills needed for Catholic school leadership can vary greatly depending on the site (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2013). Some school sites will require different skills than others due to the variety of

contexts and responsibilities pastors those to delegate. For example, the pastor of a school serving a primarily Hispanic population may require a principal to speak Spanish as a skill while the pastor of another school may not require that skill. By looking at specific skills for leadership one can look closer at what type of skills pastor's value and which ones are more challenging for them.

According to Northouse (2018), the skills approach proposed by Katz "is a leader-centric perspective that emphasizes the competencies of leaders" (p. 69). Northouse argued that the skills model was based on three competencies, which he described as technical, human, and conceptual. He argued that while a lower-level employee may have required more technical skills, a higher-ranking leader needs more conceptual skills to lead the organization. At the middle level, one had individuals who do the hiring for the organizations at the lowest levels, so they needed to have human skills in managing human capital. By categorizing these skills among three different levels one can examine what competencies are needed for different leadership roles in an organization.

This skills approach was combined with Ciriello's (1996) outline of the three roles of the Catholic school principal: the principal as a spiritual leader, the principal as an educational leader, and the principal as a managerial leader. She argued that the spiritual leadership a principal brings to a community is focused on faith development, building Christian community, moral and ethical development, and an understanding of the history and philosophy of Catholic school. For educational leadership, the principal needed to have strong grasps of leadership, curriculum, and instruction. Lastly as a managerial leader the principal needed to understand personnel management, institutional management, and financial development. Ciriello's (1996)

framework combined with Katz's (2009) skills approach to accurately describe the role of the principal of a Catholic school. While Ciriello (1996) framed her model with the principal as head of the school, it can be adapted as a model for pastors' leadership of a school since they hold final authority at their schools.

This study used both of these models for its theoretical framework. Each of Katz's (2009) skills approach competencies will be paired with Ciriello's (1996) three roles of the Catholic school principal. One change that occurs is the rewording of the Northouse (2018) competency technical skills, which will be called skills to relate better to the skills necessary to operate a Catholic school. Each of the roles of the Catholic school principals were connected with Northouse's revised framework so that, for example, the role of being the spiritual leader was connected to the conceptual, skills, and human competencies needed to meet that role's needs.

Research Design and Methodology

The research methodology in this study was a qualitative study that used an interview tool to examine pastor viewpoints on their perceptions of the local-executive governance model. Nine pastors were interviewed using purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to determine their responses to these questions. Using Mills and Gay's (2019) framework the pastor responses were analyzed and coded using Dedoose (Version 4.12, www.dedoose.com), a web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data.

Positionality of Researcher

The researcher spent nine years in Catholic education at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels in the West Coast Diocese (a pseudonym) and in other dioceses around the country. He previously served as a teacher, department chair, and principal at various school

sites, though he is currently serving in a non-Catholic education role. The researcher has many years of previous experience in Catholic education and in the West Coast Diocese where this study took place, so he brought in his own biases into this research.

Limitations

There were some limitations to this project. One limitation is the purposeful sampling of the pastors. This study used a small sample size and may not be representative of other pastor's views. Another limitation is that since pastors had to agree to be interviewed, this study included only pastors willing to speak about their leadership at their schools. Lastly, interviews will occur only within one diocese so the views expressed may not apply to other dioceses.

Delimitations

Two delimitations in this study were:

1. This study was conducted with nine pastors within a West Coast Diocese. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to other locations.
2. This study was conducted at a particular point in time with nine pastors. Therefore, the results will not be longitudinal in scope.

Definitions of Key Terms

- *Archdiocese or diocese*: a unit of organization in the Catholic Church headed by an archbishop or bishop
- *Canon law*: The system of laws governing the Catholic Church.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: A compilation of church teaching for purposes of catechesis.

- ***Encyclical:*** A letter written by the Pope to the world, usually on an important theological, social, or moral issue of the day.
- ***Local-executive governance model:*** A form of Catholic school governance where the pastor holds final authority at his school and each school operates independent of each other.
- ***Parochial school:*** A school, usually elementary, that is attached to a Catholic parish.
- ***Seminary:*** A Catholic institution of higher education dedicated to training men to become priests over a period of four to eight years.
- ***Seminarian:*** A man who is in training to become a priest for the Catholic church

Organization of Dissertation

This study was divided into five chapters. The first chapter presented background for the study, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research question, limitations, delimitations, definitions of terms, and organization of the study. The second chapter presents a review of the literature concerning the Catholic school governance models, the role of the pastor and their training, pastor's opinions about Catholic schools, the role of the Catholic school principal and their qualifications, the principal hiring process, and the theoretical framework. The third chapter describes the research question and the case study methodology. The methodology goes into detail about the participants and data collection. The fourth chapter presents how the data was collected and the interview results. The fifth chapter discusses the significance of the study's main findings. It provides implications and makes recommendations flowing from this study in the area of Catholic school governance.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to better understand this study, this second chapter examined various topics in Catholic school governance. First, this chapter examined the various Catholic school governance models and defines the local-executive governance model. Then the chapter discussed the role of the pastor within this governance model along with their training and perceptions of the schools they administer. Next, the chapter looked at the role of the Catholic school principal and the principal's qualifications since he or she is a key element in the governance of Catholic schools as the delegated leader of the school. Following this part, the principal hiring process and principal evaluation method were examined since these are key responsibilities of the pastor. Finally, this study's theoretical framework was discussed in detail.

Catholic School Governance Models

Two Axes

This study used a framework developed by the Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA) in their publication (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities [FADICA], 2015). In a study done by FADICA they found that there are five main governance roles: planning, policy, finance, public relations, and evaluation. These governing duties are generally assigned to a bishop or his designee, a pastor, or a board. While there are many different types of governance in Catholic schools in the United States, all governance models fall onto two axes: executive versus collegial governance and local versus central governance.

Executive Versus Collegial

On this axis governance models were examined through the lens of the individuals or groups governing the Catholic school (FADICA, 2015). On one end of the axis was an executive governance model where the authority was centered on an individual instead of a committee. While there may be an advisory council assisting this authority, the individual made the final decisions. The executive model has been dominant in the United States for decades and is commonly seen in parochial elementary schools.

Alternatively, there was also a collegial model that differs from the executive model (FADICA, 2015). In this model governance was vested in a group such as a board or a religious congregation. However, it was rare to see schools using a completely collegial model due to the limitations of Canon Law due to the canonical roles clergy are given. One possible limitation of this model was that the board might be occupied by individuals without appropriate qualifications. Additionally, the vision for a school may not be as clear as it would be under an executive model with an individual due to the many opinions that may exist on the board. An example of this model would be a religious congregation who, through an education committee consisting of members of the congregation, operate a school.

Local Versus Central

A second axis used to examine governance structures of Catholic schools is their central authority, or lack thereof (FADICA, 2015). A completely local school was rare in the United States due to Canon Law and the responsibilities of bishops in the Catholic Church. While a parish school may be governed by a pastor, it would still be subject to the supervision of a bishop. There was a tendency for Catholic schools to operate on the local end of the spectrum

due to the Catholic social teaching of subsidiarity, which teaches that governance models should be dealt with at the most local level possible. Most parochial schools are governed locally by the pastor who is the canonical head of the parish with which the school is affiliated.

In contrast, a central governance model places governance authority in a central office that oversees multiple school sites (FADICA, 2015). There are some models of this governance structure in the United States including consortium schools, network schools, and schools directly governed by a central diocesan office. One advantage of this model is that schools can pool resources in ways not normally possible. However, a central governance model runs the risk of ignoring the unique needs of individual school sites.

The Local-executive Governance Model

The parochial school normally has a local-executive governance model (FADICA, 2015). However, this model is questioned today, and some schools have shifted to different models of governance. While a strong leader who engages the community and knows his job well may be an excellent choice to be the executive of the school, a weak leader can have a negative impact on the school. In contrast, under a central governance model if there were a weak leader the central office might be able to mitigate the leader's negative effects. Additionally, this model faces challenges in today's environment due to the shortage of priests and the lack of training pastors have in running schools.

Role of the Pastor

The Catholic Church has a unique hierarchy that affects Catholic school governance. At the top of this governance structure is the Pope, who is the Bishop of Rome and has final authority in all matters in the Church (Catholic Church, 1984). However, since the Catholic

Church is a huge organization, most governance occurs at the local level. The Catholic Church erects dioceses and archdioceses around the world that are headed by bishops and archbishops, respectively. These bishops have all “ordinary, proper, and immediate power” (Catholic Church, 1984, canon 381) except in matters reserved to the Pope. There is only a small difference between archbishops and bishops since archbishops hold very limited authority over suffragan bishops within the same ecclesiastical province in their roles as metropolitans. These bishops and archbishops further divide their diocese or archdiocese into parishes headed by a pastor who are primarily responsible for the management of a parish and the governance of parochial schools.

Catholic parishes are the basic units of organization in the Catholic Church. Parishes are communities of Catholics where all are welcome for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, charity is performed, and teaches Christ’s doctrine (Catholic Church, 2016). These parishes are normally territorial, meaning that all areas of a diocese or archdiocese are assigned to a particular parish (Catholic Church, 1984). Parishes also record baptisms, marriages, and confirmations in addition to allowing the faithful to participate in the liturgical life of the Church. Within the parish, there may be an advisory pastoral council that assists the pastor in the life of the parish, though this is not required under Canon Law. However, every parish is required to have a finance council that advises the pastor on the proper use of the material and monetary goods of the parish. Both pastoral and finance councils (if present) are advisory in nature and while the pastor is obliged to consult them, he may overrule these councils. The management of the councils along with the sacramental duties of pastors all fall under the purview of the pastor who governs the parish.

Parishes are governed by a pastor, who has been ordained to the presbyterate (Catholic Church, 1984). Those ordained to the presbyterate are called priests and consist of one of the three orders of clerics in the Catholic Church. This priesthood is descended from the Jewish tribe of Levi in the Old Testament and Christ himself (Catholic Church, 2016). Priests are co-workers with their bishops and offer the sacrifice of the Mass to the faithful. Within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, pastors are normally appointed to a six-year term that is renewable once (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021). In addition to the parish governing role of pastors they also have a role in Catholic education when they have parochial schools attached to their parishes.

The pastor has a special relationship to Catholic education. According to the Code of Canon Law the pastor of a parish has “the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a Catholic education” (Catholic Church, 1984, canon 794). This relationship tied into Pope Paul VI’s (1965) encyclical where he stated that all Christians have a right to a Christian education because “all Christians have become by rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit a new creature so that they should be called and should be children of God” (p. 2). Pastors who have parochial schools assigned to their care live out this calling in a unique way under the Code of Canon Law, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and papal teachings.

According to Schafer (2004), the pastor’s relationship to a parochial school was described as the “ultimate authority within the school” (p. 241). Due to this canonical authority, the pastor has the authority to hire and fire all staff, faculty, and administration at will in addition to determining curriculum and financial matters. According to the West Coast Diocese personnel handbook, the pastor was described as the “ex officio the chief administrative officer of the parish school”; however, he “delegates the immediate direction and supervision of the school

program to the principal”. The relationship in relation to the delegated authority of the pastor to the principal varied greatly (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2013). This delegation of authority was consistent with the Catholic principle of subsidiarity since pastors are not education experts (Jacobs, 1997). While the pastor delegates his authority to the principal he remains the governing authority of a parochial school.

Pastoral Training and Perceptions of Catholic Schools

As the leaders of the parishes these Catholic elementary schools are associated with, the pastors’ perceptions on Catholic schools are an important area of research. Part of these perceptions come from pastors’ training, which comes in the form of seminary. Seminary training takes place over a period of six years where candidates to the priesthood, called seminarians, and was outlined by documents from the Holy See and structured in the United States by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (2006).

Training in Seminaries

In the United States, the *Program of Priestly Formation* governs the education of priests in seminaries, which includes a limited amount of training in the governance of parochial schools (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). This document outlined the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation of priests in the United States. Concerningly, the document lacked any reference to preparing seminarians for the challenges of assuming the role of “ex officio the chief administrative officer of the parish school” that they will take on as pastor of a parish with an elementary school. While the *Program of Priestly Formation* was not an exhaustive outline of seminary education, there was a lack of proper preparation for pastors to be chief administrative officers of their schools. In an analysis of syllabi of courses in American

seminaries, one study found that 86% of seminary syllabi had no reference to Catholic schools (Boyle & Dosen, 2017). Additionally, at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California, the primary seminary in Southern California, their course catalogue lacked any mention of Catholic Schools (St. John's Seminary, 2018). This lack of formal training for priests to assume their role as chief administrative officers of parish schools is consistent with the *Program of Priestly Formation*, which focuses on other matters.

Pastor Perspectives Past and Present

In addition to this lack of training for pastors, pastor opinions of Catholic schools have evolved over time. In a 1987 survey of priests, 80% stated that they disagreed with the statement “the differences between Catholic and public schools are no longer great enough to justify two separate schools systems” (O'Brien, 1987, p. 60). Additionally, 66.2% of priests in the same study agreed that “Catholic schools make effective use of the church's resources” (O'Brien, 1987, p. 79). These opinions changed slightly in a 1999 survey. In Convey's (1999) study 84% of priests agreed that “the need for Catholic schools is at least as great today as in the past” (p. 262), 11% stated that “Catholic and public schools are not different enough to justify the continuation of most Catholic schools” (p. 263), and 33.8% stated that “supporting a Catholic school drains money from the parish that it should spend on other ministries” (p. 262). In a 2019 study, 88% of seminarians agreed that Catholic schools are an essential part of the Church's mission (Calkins & Convey, 2019). In the same study 69% of seminarians surveyed agreed that Catholic schools are worth the cost to operate. With this much variation in pastor's viewpoints on Catholic education it is clear that their opinions and support for Catholic education may vary greatly.

Thus, the data showed that the perceptions of Catholic schools by the pastors and seminarians who will someday be responsible for them has shifted slightly in the direction where pastors and seminarians still view the operation of these schools worthwhile not only as part of the mission of the church but also in financial operations. However, the fact remains that the literature indicated that these future “chief administrative officers” do not receive much, if any, training to operate these schools within their parish communities. The literature demonstrated that the role of the principal is of paramount importance since the pastor will most likely lack training in school operations.

Defining the Role of School Principal

The role of the school principal is complex across all sectors. Public, private, and Catholic school principals faced increasing accountability measures (Grissom et al., 2015), enrollment challenges, funding, and financial challenges (McDonald & Schultz, 2019). Public school principals are hired and held to standards as set by their state. Catholic school principals have varied degrees of minimal requirements to the principalship and differing expectations when it comes to evaluation. Additionally, due to the lack of research in this area, it is unknown what the pastor’s perceptions are of their own places in the local-executive governance model.

Public School Principal Standards

There are a few different sets of standards for public school educator preparation programs. One was the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2019). This organization serves as a national accrediting body for educator preparation programs. CAEP was formed in 2013, with the consolidation of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and

the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The CAEP standards focused on content and pedagogical knowledge, clinical partnerships, program impact, and more.

Another set of standards were the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Educational Leadership Program Recognition Standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2011). These were nationally recognized educational leadership program standards that were revised in 2015 and renamed The National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Recognition Standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). These eight standards included topics such as mission, vision, and improvement, ethics and professional norms, learning and instruction, operations and management, and an internship.

A final set of standards was the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) Standards that focus on principals themselves (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). These standards have their origin in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards which were nationally recognized school leadership standards first developed in 1996 and revised in 2008 and 2015. The 2015 version of the standards were renamed Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). These ten standards focus on topics such as mission, vision, and core values, ethical norms, cultural responsiveness, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, engagement of families, and operations. These standards built on the NELP Program Recognition Standards and called on principals to build on the skills they learned in NELP programs.

The Catholic School Principal Standards

While frameworks and standards are not standardized across dioceses in the United States, these have begun to define the work and role of the principal. Examples were in the Dioceses of Orlando and Milwaukee (Fortier, 2019; Kiely, 2019). However, there are some frameworks that help to define the work and role of the principal. Exactly what responsibilities the principal has varied due to the different styles of delegation of a pastor (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2013). Most Catholic school frameworks described the principal role as encompassing spiritual, managerial, and educational roles.

Ciriello's Framework

A broadly used framework in defining the work of a Catholic school principal was from the work of Ciriello (1996). The framework of Ciriello defined the role of the Catholic school principal. In her defining work *Expectations for the Catholic School Principal*, Ciriello framed the role of the Catholic school principal in three roles: spiritual leader, educational leader, and managerial leader. While Ciriello's framework predated the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic and Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012) the two frameworks complement each other. The NSBECS were a guide and assessment tool created in 2012 for preschool through twelfth Catholic school effectiveness and sustainability. Ciriello's framework was much more specific than the NSBECS (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). For example, while standard 6.1 in the NSBECS called for the principal to articulate "a clear mission and vision for the school and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision" (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012, p. 9),

which would be a necessary skill to have as a school principal seeking to be a spiritual, educational, and managerial leader (Ciriello, 1996).

Ciriello's (1996) first role of the Catholic school principal is the spiritual leadership he or she needs to have. This tied into Brock and Fraser's (2001) idea that leaders in Catholic schools were responsible for creating school cultures that embrace the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. Also, Huchting et al. (2017) argued that the principal is responsible for the Catholic identity of the school and that is a key part of the school's vitality. According to Ciriello (1996), the principal needed to develop the faith of the community. This requirement included the faith life of the faculty along with ensuring that there are opportunities for the school community to perform Christian service to others. As a spiritual leader of the school, the principal was also called to build Christian community where parents are empowered to fulfill their roles as the primary educators of their children. Additionally, the spiritual leader of the school was responsible for the moral and ethical development of the students and teachers through the selection of curriculum and life of the school. Lastly, the principal was expected to know the history and purpose of Catholic schools in the United States. Though all of these elements Ciriello argued that the principal should be a spiritual leader at his or her school.

Ciriello's (1996) second role of the principal was being an educational leader. Being an educational leader involved leadership for implementing curriculum and fostering leadership among the staff and faculty. Leadership in curriculum tied into her second element of being an educational leader, which is a focus on curriculum and instruction. Through educational leadership, Ciriello argued that the principal ensures that the right methods are used by teachers and that teachers are evaluated according to their teaching. After describing the educational role

of the principal, she described his or her managerial role and distinct from the educational role of the principal.

Lastly, Ciriello (1996) argued that the third role of the principal is being a managerial leader. This role described by Ciriello included personnel management, which was the recruitment, development, and evaluation of staff and faculty. Also, Ciriello argued that institutional management was part of this role where the principal should seek partnerships with the local community and the greater Catholic Church. Finally, she stated that finance and development are essential to continue the long-term stability of a Catholic school as key elements of being a managerial leader.

Both Ciriello (1996) and the NSBECS formed a framework that helped to describe the leadership roles and responsibilities of a Catholic school principal. However, in addition to this framework at the intersection of both of those sources, there was a skills approach described by Katz (2009) that provides a framework to categorize each of the responsibilities described.

NSBECS and Catholic School Leadership

While these NSBECS are not currently in force as an evaluation tool in all dioceses, they were considered an important national framework for Catholic school leadership (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). The NSBECS looked at all elements of a Catholic school, but one standard in particular, standard six, stated that “an excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school’s mission and vision” (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012, p. 9). The NSBECS were an important tool used around the country and continue to spread to different dioceses.

NSBECS Standard Six

Standard six was then broken up into seven benchmarks that further delineate the role of the school leader (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). One of these requirements was that the school leader meet the requirements to serve as a school leader in terms of his or her role as a faith and instructional leader. Another requirement was that the leader had a clear mission and vision for the school and took responsibility for the recruitment, growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of the faculty and staff of the school. Additionally, standards 6.4 and 6.5 asked the school leader to establish collaborative networks and to direct the development and improvement of curriculum and instruction. Also, standard 6.6 asked the school leader to work in collaboration with the governing body (which would be the pastor in a parochial school) to create programs and infrastructure to ensure the operational vitality of the school. Lastly, standard 6.7 called on the school leader to communicate new initiatives and programs to all constituents of the school community. While these NSBECS standards were not in and of themselves evaluative tools, some parts such as standard six can be used as a basis for delineating the role of the school leader.

Other Pertinent NSBECS Standards

In addition to the sixth standard in the NSBECS, there were other standards that address leadership in Catholic education in an ideal situation. One such standard is 1.2, which stated that the “governing body and leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning” (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012, p. 5). Additionally, standard 4.5 stated that “Every administrator . . . visibly supports the faith life for the school community” (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012, p. 6). Another standard that related to Catholic

school leadership was 10.1, which asked the school leader to engage in financial planning together with experts in non-profit management and funding. One final example was standard 10.7, which called upon the leader to provide families with information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for Catholic school expenses. These additional NSBECS standards helped to form an idea of what an ideal Catholic school principal should be.

Catholic School Principal Competencies

Loyola University Chicago's Catholic Principal Preparation Program has developed Catholic School Principal Competencies as a framework that uses the NSBECS (Boyle et al., 2013). While the NSBECS were school focused the Catholic School Principal Competencies modify the NSBECS to be principal focused. These Catholic School Principal Competencies were created to be a universal set of responsibilities of the Catholic school principal that take into account potential differences in governance, staffing, and funding structures (Morten & Geralyn, 2016).

Catholic School Principal Competencies had four different domains including mission and identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality (Morten & Geralyn, 2016). Each of these were broken down into further standards and align with the NSBECS. These Catholic School Principal Competencies could be used as not only a tool to help define the Catholic school principalship but also possessed the possibility of being used as an evaluative tool for principals. Additionally, these domains were common themes among job descriptions for Catholic school principal positions.

Catholic Principal Job Descriptions

There were different levels of development of Catholic elementary school principal job descriptions in the United States. Some ranged from a few paragraphs (Diocese of Oakland, 2020) to multiple pages (Archdiocese of San Francisco, n.d.). Most job descriptions organized the responsibilities of a principal in two to four different roles using terms such as “systemness,” spiritual, religious, and administrator. While there were some differences among these job descriptions, there were common elements too. Though there were some common elements, pastors’ perceptions on their own roles, and thus the role of the principal and their schools, may create situations where these job descriptions vary among school sites.

Some of these job descriptions delineated the role of the principal into two to four different roles. On one end of this role spectrum the Diocese of San Diego (2017) listed only two roles: religious and professional. Other dioceses showed a possible influence of Ciriello (1996) in the roles they described. For example, the Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.) described three principal roles organized as educational, spiritual, and managerial. The Archdiocese of Chicago (2012) used similar language with the roles of administrator, faith, and instructional. On the other end of this role spectrum the Archdiocese of Portland (2016) listed four roles: spiritual, instructional, administrator, and communicator. Additionally, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (2020) listed faith, stewardship, (academic) excellence, and systemness. Lastly, the Diocese of Oakland (2020) listed no roles for the principal.

Instructional Role

In job descriptions these roles were often broken down into different elements that further develop what the role includes. One area that was common among some dioceses was the

instructional or academic leadership role the principal takes on as leaders of the school. A common element among dioceses for the instructional role of a principal was in the area of providing professional growth. In the Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.) the principal simply “attends to personal and professional development” (p. 1) while in the Archdiocese of Portland (2016) the principal “[f]acilitates the professional growth of staff by initiating, providing, and participating in weekly staff meetings, curriculum in-service days, educational, and cultural conferences” (p. 1) in addition to supervising the instructional program.

Another part of the instructional role that is common among dioceses was related to instruction and curriculum. In the Diocese of San Diego (2017) the principal “provides instructional leadership” (p. 2), while in the Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.) the principal used “a variety of educational and pedagogical skills” (p. 1). Additionally, some dioceses explicitly required the principal to implement a curriculum from the central office such as the Archdiocese of Chicago (2012), while others such as the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (2020) and the Archdiocese of Portland (2016) required principals to supervise or direct a curriculum.

Lastly, some dioceses mentioned the importance of assessment in the instructional role of the principal. For example, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (2020) required their principals to adhere to a high standard:

Assess academic program effectiveness based on results rather than intentions. Inspire a data mindset of efficacy and transparency and engage individuals and teams to seek relevant data and draw informed conclusions, assume responsibility for action to improve results, and ensure use of that information to promote continuous improvement. (p. 2)

However, other dioceses, such as the Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.), asked principals to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's academic program by having procedures for student assessment.

Spiritual Role

Certain dioceses required their principals to perform a spiritual role at their school. One of these areas commonly mentioned in job descriptions was faith development. The Archdioceses of San Francisco (n.d.), Chicago (2012), and Los Angeles (2020) required their principals to develop the faith and religious education of the faculty and staff. Some dioceses such as the Archdioceses of Chicago (2012) and Los Angeles (2020) expected more than faith development and asked principals to ensure that the faculty was well versed in catechetical skills. The Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.) additionally created another level of faith formation by asking their principals to communicate to parents the faith formation opportunities at the parish and in the Archdiocese.

Another commonly mentioned area of the spiritual role was developing a Catholic identity of a school. Some dioceses, such as the Archdiocese of Chicago (2012) listed multiple ways a principal should have developed the Catholic identity of a school such as training for the faculty, linking the Catholic identity to the mission of the school, and encouraging families to attend Sunday Masses. Other diocese mentioned Catholic identity less, such as the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (2020), that listed Catholic identity as an attribute for the candidate rather than the school, or the Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.) that required principals to create a vision and culture that was consistent with the school's Catholic identity.

Managerial or Administrative Role

Many dioceses listed a managerial or administrative role for the principal and incorporate different elements. One common element was the recruitment and evaluation of faculty (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2020; Archdiocese of San Francisco, n.d.). Another common element among job descriptions was a focus on school enrollment for financial viability, which may include enrollment teams or enrollment plans (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2020). Lastly, some mentioned planning and monitoring budgets as a required skill for the principal (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2020; Archdiocese of Portland, 2016; Archdiocese of San Francisco, n.d.).

Role as a Member of the Parish

A unique requirement in some job descriptions was the relationship among the principal, school, parish, and the pastor. While the pastor was the final authority in a school, the exact relationship between the principal and pastor are only delineated in a few job descriptions (Schafer, 2004). The Archdiocese of San Francisco (n.d.) explicitly required the principal to communicate to parents “that the school is an essential ministry of the parish” (p. 2) and the Archdiocese of Portland required the principal to maintain the school as a mission of the parish (2016). Uniquely, the Diocese of Oakland (2020) described the principal as a member of the parish staff. Lastly some dioceses required the principal to connect or inform the parish about the school and school community (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2020).

Principal Qualifications

Depending on the context of the school and location, there are different requirements for principals to serve. In public education requirements were mostly determined by each state (Education Commission of the States, 2020). All states have standards to guide school leadership policies, which are described in their credentialing processes. Also, 39 states allowed for alternative routes to school leader certification, commonly through experimental or nontraditional programs. Field experience is required in 38 states and 37 states required a school leader to hold a master's degree and to have three years of teaching experience.

Similar to how public schools have different qualifications for principals dependent on the state, Catholic school requirements for principals varied by diocese. For example, in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles candidates were required to have five years of teaching experience, a master's degree, and a California credential. Similarly, the Archdiocese of Seattle (2020) required a master's degree, a Washington credential, and additionally a Washington State Principal Certification. Like the Archdiocese of Seattle, the Archdiocese of Chicago (2012) required a master's degree, three years of experience in a Catholic school, and a state certification in administration.

There are some variants to the specifics of the process of selecting an elementary school principal in Catholic education in the United States. Within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (2021), elementary school principals were selected by the pastor who is assisted by the Department of Catholic Schools. Though the pastor had the final authority in selecting a principal, most candidates go through a vetting process by the Department of Catholic Schools and then recommended to pastors. The Diocese of Davenport (2016) in Iowa followed a process

similar to what Ash et al. (2013) recommend with recommending a committee, identifying positive qualities of a principal, and interviewing candidates. Unlike the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a board of education, consisting of elected members in addition to the pastor, had the final authority to hire a principal rather than the pastor. Additionally, in the Diocese of Yakima (2014), Washington, the diocesan offices and the bishop himself approved candidates for principalships before local parishes received candidates for vacancies. Lastly, in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (2012) their Catholic Schools Office pre-screens candidates and committees were limited to interviewing these candidates to recommend a candidate for the pastor to select. These extensive procedures for selecting a Catholic school principal seem to heed the advice of Clifford (2010) to avoid making a quick or emotional decision and instead following a process that allows for much thought to be put into the selection. The specifics of hiring a Catholic school principal varied greatly among the dioceses in the United States.

Principal Hiring Process

The current research demonstrated different ways to hire principals including using selection committees, identifying desired characteristics, and timing the hiring process to allow for an effective transition. Ash et al. (2013) developed a ten-step process to hire a new principal in a public-school context. Among these steps were identifying and training a selection committee, identifying preferred qualities, recruiting candidates, interviewing, and the final selection. Clifford (2010) recommended setting expectations for candidates ideally using some kind of common standard, creating a search committee, screening with interviews, and resisting quick or emotion-based decisions. Later, Clifford (2012) recommended that the committee provide for a blind review of applications and have applicants visit the school to participate in

activities such as a teacher evaluation or a data review. One aspect both Ash et al. (2013) and Clifford (2012) agreed on was that there should be enough time to hire a candidate, ideally up to a year ahead of time. While these steps were extensive and existed in an ideal environment, they provided an outline that corresponds to what educational groups use in public and Catholic education. In both Catholic and public education, the research demonstrated some common elements but there are also some differences among Catholic schools.

While there are variations in the specifics of selecting a Catholic school principal within the local-executive governance model, the processes had some commonalities such as the use of committees, episcopal approval, and vetting by central offices (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021; Diocese of Davenport, 2016; Diocese of Yakima, 2014). First, there was a focus on the creation of a committee. All of the above-mentioned dioceses had some kind of committee that helped identify candidates for the governing authority to select. However, some dioceses like the Diocese of Yakima added another layer of episcopal approval before candidates are sent to committees, while other archdioceses such as Los Angeles and Cincinnati had their offices or department for Catholic schools vetted candidates before they were sent to committees (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021; Diocese of Yakima, 2014). Except for the Diocese of Davenport (2016), the committee nominated one or two candidates for the pastor to select as principal of his school, which demonstrated how around the country a pastor normally holds final authority at his parochial school. While there were many differences among the hiring processes in Catholic dioceses in the United States, the use of committees, episcopal approval, and vetting by central offices were common themes.

Interviews

Another common element among dioceses was that the principal selection procedures usually included interviews with candidates. These selection procedures were important within the local-executive governance model since the pastor retained his ultimate authority over the school. Some dioceses developed questions for committees or pastors to ask candidates (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Diocese of Davenport, 2016; Diocese of Yakima, 2014).

Many of these questions relate to improving student learning but some also related to faith and financial management, which are areas that a pastor might choose to delegate to a principal in the local-executive governance model. This preference for interviewing was in contrast to a public school study done by Bailey and Qualls (2018) who surveyed superintendents and found that no superintendent interviewed mentioned the importance of interviews and instead valued knowledge and experience. While there was a preference in Catholic education for interviewing it was a controversial tool.

However, there was some disagreement in the literature about the effectiveness of interviews for these positions. Palmer (2017) argued that while interviews are one of the most common tools used in the principal selection process, it may not be an effective tool. In Palmer's study he surveyed public school district administrators about what attributes they would like to see in their school principals. In this study, respondents stated that raising student achievement, people skills, instructional expertise, and integrity as important qualities for a principal. Palmer argued qualities they identified are difficult for a candidate to demonstrate in an interview and that districts lack the ability to objectively measure the same attributes they desire. For example, it would be challenging for an interview committee to ask a candidate to demonstrate integrity

before them in an interview. Even with this controversial tool, interviews are still a common practice among Catholic schools.

The research described interviews in two categories: structured or unstructured, each with different characteristics. A structured interview has the same questions for all candidates for the position, while an unstructured interview does not have a specific list of questions. According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (2008) unstructured interviews had a low degree of reliability and validity while structured interviews had a higher degree of reliability, validity, and legal defensibility. However, Ash et al. (2013) disagreed with this assessment and argued that even highly structured interviews have low predictability of success and validity. Ash et al. (2013) also argued that interview questions are too general to actually demonstrate how a candidate can affect student learning. For example, asking a principal candidate their education philosophy is not as useful as asking about specific steps they took in a previous leadership position to improve student learning. Clifford (2012) also argued that interviews are a screening tool and that activities done by the candidate at the school site are better tools to use in the selection process. However, in looking at the hiring processes of the Archdioceses of Los Angeles and Cincinnati and the Dioceses of Davenport and Yakima there was strong focus on interviewing candidates, which Clifford (2012) and Ash et al. (2013) would probably disagree. While there are two types of interviews, they remain an important part of the hiring process along with committees.

Hiring Committees

Another common element between the public and Catholic school models of hiring principals is the selection committee. While the pastor retains final authority in the local-

executive governance model, he may choose to enlist the assistance of a committee to hire a principal. Clifford (2012) warned about the pitfalls of committees arguing that they can fail to determine the needs of the school, overlook selection criteria or standards, and cast a narrow net for candidates. Clifford's warnings suggested a need for training of committee members in the selection of a Catholic school principal. Additionally, Ash et al.'s (2013) first step was to train committee members. However, while certain dioceses recommend having a committee to help the pastor select a principal, they lacked a formal committee training process (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Diocese of Davenport, 2016; Diocese of Yakima, 2014). The training of committee members to make them qualified and effective in selecting a new principal appears to be a gap in the current research. With effective training, committees can be the core of a hiring process for a new principal.

Much of the research in the area of principal selection recommend selecting five to eight important stakeholders to be on the committee include parents, parishioners, teachers, and other important stakeholders (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Ash et al., 2013; Clifford, 2012; Diocese of Davenport, 2016; Diocese of Yakima, 2014). The committee in the principal hiring process can be an important tool to bring many different aspects of the parish community together, though it should be noted that under the local-executive governance model the use of a committee was not necessary. Aside from including parishioners, the use of stakeholders for the committee seems to be a common point between Catholic and public school principal selection processes.

Evaluation of Principals

Defining the role of the Catholic school principal within the local executive governance model is foundational to effective and meaningful evaluation and supervision on principals. The evaluation of principals is important in the examination of pastors' perceptions of the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the Catholic elementary school principal because these attributes should be reflected in the evaluation process.

Principal evaluation can take different forms depending on the school context. However, in the context of education as a whole, there are some common best practices identified in the literature. Due to the decentralized nature of Catholic education, there is no universal principal evaluation system. However, the literature identified a movement to move to the NSBECS as a tool that could aid in principal evaluation. Currently there are efforts to attempt to quantify principal evaluation based on the role of the principal, however these efforts were in only a few dioceses in the United States (Kiely, 2019).

Best Practices in Principal Evaluation

Multiple sources in the literature note that while teacher evaluation has been a key part of federal legislation the area of principal evaluation was under researched and implemented different ways (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014; Grissom et al., 2015; Superville, 2014; Tran & Bon, 2015). Within the context of public education some principal evaluation systems included the use of student achievement through standardized tests as a tool by which superintendents measure the effectiveness of their principals (Superville, 2014; Tran & Bon, 2015). Additionally, Tran and Bon argued that most stakeholders are unaware of the principal evaluation process and what superintendents valued was not aligned to the tools used to evaluate principals. While these

researchers had made some progress on examining principal evaluation there was still the controversial element of the use of student achievement in principal evaluation.

Within the context of public education, the core disagreement among scholars is the level of student achievement that should be included in principal evaluation. Superville (2014) described how there are primarily three different approaches. First, a model where 50% of the principal's evaluation comes from student achievement and 50% comes from a performance rubric based on a formula. A second model also included 50% student achievement but has 50% from a rubric based on a matrix as opposed to a formula. Lastly there was a model where student performance might be less than 50% but high student achievement may override performance on other factors. Though there are different methods to use student achievement in principal evaluation, it remains a controversial issue.

Grissom et al. (2015) also developed three models that can be used to evaluate principals that Fuller and Hollingworth (2014) discussed through different views of what and when the principal is accountable for at his or her school. The first model assumed that the principal has direct control over all factors that affect student learning. Under this model the principal is evaluated solely by student achievement. One unique aspect of this model was that there was a laggard effect taken into account from the time the principal assumes his or her position to when he or she starts to be responsible for the student data. Fuller and Hollingworth argued that there was no way to accurately measure the effectiveness of a principal based on test scores and that it should not be used to evaluate principals. The second model was focused on the local context of a school. The principal was evaluated compared to another principal who held the same position at the same school. Grissom et al.'s (2015) last model measured a principal by looking at overall

school effectiveness, also taking into account a laggard effect. These three models looked at what the principal was accountable for at his school and when he or she was accountable for student achievement.

These three models lack stakeholder input that Tran and Bon (2015) argued was an important element in principal evaluation with the effect of a principal apart from the school context and the input of stakeholders. They stated that there was a push to solely use student achievement data to evaluate principals but that this data may not accurately depict the independent effects of a principal apart from the school context. In their study they also found that most stakeholders, such as families were unaware about the principal evaluation process. This is an important criticism since some sources suggest that stakeholders should be involved in the hiring process so it logically follows that these same stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation process of principals (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2012; Ash et al., 2013; Clifford, 2012; Diocese of Davenport, 2016; Diocese of Yakima, 2014). In looking at the principal apart from the school context and using the input of stakeholders Tran and Bon offered a piece of the principal evaluation process that Grissom et al. (2015) were missing.

Within the principal evaluation process there was also the viewpoint of what principals desire from the process. Due to the primacy of the role of the pastor in the local-executive governance model the voice of the principal can be drown out. Tran and Bon (2015) studied what principals want in their evaluation processes and their participants said that they want evaluations to be deep and meaningful, but that their current evaluations were more cursory. Their participants also said that it is important for the principal to have buy in the process also. This sentiment was also echoed by Hvidston et al.'s (2018) work where they looked at principal

recommendations for improving evaluation and supervision. In their study they found that principals want regular observations and the ability to set their own goals. Additionally, they found that trust and a high degree of communication is necessary between the principal and superintendent. By examining what principals desire from the evaluation process Tran and Bon (2015) found another concern with the current common models of principal evaluation.

Principal Evaluation in Catholic Education

While much of this research in the area of public education is probably applicable to Catholic schools, there are some movements within Catholic education to establish more common norms in principal evaluation. This movement is centered on adapting the NSBECS into an evaluative tool for principals. As the NSBECS are a national tool these standards have the potential to create a more national framework as opposed to the patchwork of systems in place in the United States.

Fortier (2019) looked at how the Diocese of Orlando moved to a school evaluation system based on the NSBECS. While this system focused on school accreditation it also included a segment for the creation of a new principal growth instrument based on four domains of the NSBECS. This started when the new superintendent arrived at the Diocese of Orlando; he saw that there were up to four different tools being used to evaluate principals. Additionally, by adopting the NSBECS as the framework for evaluating schools and principals, this allowed the Diocese of Orlando to avoid a common practice of using public school accreditation procedures and just adding in the Catholic components. Fortier argued that using the NSBECS is a way to make sure all of the principals in the Diocese of Orlando are evaluated in a similar manner since the standards became all the same.

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee there has been a similar shift to the use of the NSBECS for Catholic school principal evaluation. Kiely (2019) examined how this process was accomplished, which was focused on creating an evaluation process for principal growth as opposed to deciding to dismiss a principal. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee developed a new principal evaluation protocol using the NSBECS as a framework that had different levels of categories derived from the NSBECS based on how much the principal can affect the category. For example, Kiely wrote that enrollment management is categorized under level IV, which is for items that may or may not be under the principal's direct purview, while articulating a clear mission and vision for the school is categorized under level I since that principal has direct control over that area. Each of these categories are divided into three sections that are leadership traits (including social justice, a data dashboard, and professional development.) Lastly, a key part of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's new principal evaluation protocol was that the reviewer of the principal needs to be trained in evaluating the principal. This would mean that in the case of a parochial school the pastor, who holds final authority, would need to be trained in evaluating the principal within the framework of the NSBECS (Kiely, 2019).

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles had a principal evaluation system that was not based on the NSBECS like the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Diocese of Orlando. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles principals were given preliminary evaluations after at least 90 days and no later than 180 days (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2021). Pastors were to evaluate principals with input from the assistant superintendent using the supervisory/managerial personnel annual performance review.

Ignatian Leadership Inventory as a Reflection Tool

Loyola University Chicago developed a reflective tool using the Ignatian Leadership Inventory based on the NSBECS but in the Ignatian tradition (Boyle et al., 2013). The Ignatian Leadership Inventory described both competencies and dispositions necessary for the Catholic school principal in addition to placing them within an organizational schema of four domains: *examen*, *vita agilis*, *cura personalis*, and *magis*. This tool could be used to complement the NSBECS and other frameworks to be a reflective tool for principals.

The first two domains were *examen* and *vita agilis*. *Examen* focused on a principal knowing his or her strengths, weaknesses, motivations, affectivity, and worldview (Boyle et al., 2013). A principal who excelled in the domain *examen* would have dispositions that facilitated resilience, self-management, and being open to growth. For the domain *vita agilis*, a principal should embrace change free from bias in addition to adapting to it with discernment and agility. The principal should have dispositions such as ingenuity and indifference.

The last two domains were *cura personalis* and *magis*. *Cura personalis* called a principal to engage others with emotional intelligence, care, and ethical maturity (Boyle et al., 2013). A principal who performed well in the domain of *cura personalis* had dispositions that cultivated relationships, addressed conflict management, and nurtured talent. Lastly, *magis* asked the principal to determine the greater good for the school community by taking risks to change current conditions and to energize oneself and others with a passion for excellence. This required the principal to have the dispositions of visioning that created an inspirational vision to others and nurtured courageous action in conjunction with stakeholders with the pastor's own visions due to the nature of the local-executive governance model.

Theoretical Framework

This research used a theoretical framework based on Katz's (2009) skills approach to leadership. According to Northouse (2018), this approach was first developed in the 1950s by Katz but has been developed since then by many organizational theorists. This approach argued that there are three sets of skills in leadership: technical, human, and conceptual. Depending on one's position in the organization (top management, middle management, or supervisory management) the importance of these individual skills varies. For example, someone in top management may need less technical skills than someone in supervisory management. Northouse (2018) compared the skills approach against the idea of great man leadership where leadership was reserved to a small class of people. Instead, many people have the capacity to learn the skills necessary for leadership.

The skills approach was an appropriate framework for looking at the Catholic school principalship. Katz's (2009) framework with technical, human, and conceptual skills tied into Ciriello's (1996) expectations model with spiritual, managerial, and instructional roles for the principal. Ciriello's (1996) three roles could be broken down into conceptual, technical, and human skills. While the pastor also held these roles as head of the school under the local-executive governance model, he may choose to delegate many of these roles to his principal. For example, in the instructional role of a principal he or she would need to have technical, human, and conceptual skills to advance the school's educational mission. The same would apply to the managerial and spiritual roles since they all require the principal to master conceptual, technical, and human skills.

Katz's (2009) skills approach to leadership was applied to factory and business training programs. Katz developed his approach from his observations of business executives and executive training programs. Katz's theory was originally put into the context of industrial work such as at factories, though some elements of it may also apply to other organizations such as schools. From his observations he developed ideas about how to train future business executives both in their coursework and in company-wide training programs. Katz revised the theory in 1974 with some changes to his lenses of technical, human, and conceptual skills, however the core of his ideas remained the same.

Katz (2009) used the word skill the core of this theory. According to him, "skill [is] an ability to translate knowledge into action [and] should enable one to distinguish between the three skills" (p. 24). Katz acknowledged that these skills are primarily tools of analysis and that all three are interrelated, so determining where one begins and where one ends can be challenging.

Technical skills were defined by Northouse (2018) as knowledge and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity. Katz (2009) related these skills to on-the-job training and technical schools. For Katz (2009) these skills were indispensable and important at the lowest levels of an operation.

Within the Catholic context, Katz's (2009) theoretical framework can be applied to understand the complex role of the principal. Within Ciriello's (1996) framework this would stretch across her framework of the spiritual, instructional, and managerial roles of the Catholic school principal. These would be specific skills such as knowing Catholic doctrine,

understanding different pedagogical techniques in the classroom, and understanding how to create a budget for a school.

However, Katz (2009) argued that as one goes further from the physical operations of an organization these skills become less important for a leader. This part of Katz's (2009) theory may be a limitation on his model when it applies to Catholic school leadership. While his model may be true as one moves from teacher to principal to district leadership, it may not apply on the shift from teacher to principal. For example, in the NSBECS standard seven calls on an effective Catholic school to have effective instruction and curriculum for the student population (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). If the principal is the only administrator at the school, then the principal must also have solid technical skills to work with the teachers. Unlike Katz's (2009) idea that technical skills become less important as one ascends a ladder of leadership in Catholic education technical skills remain relevant.

Katz (2009) described human skill as the leader's "ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads" (p. 8). To Katz (2009) the ideal leader with good human skills was aware of his or her own attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs about others, especially those on his or her team. While the leader with good human skills would be effective with communicating to others, he or she must also model the ideal behaviors for the members of the team. Northouse (2018) also added that human skills included being sensitive to the needs of others in decision making as a leader. This sensitivity also tied into the pastoral role that the pastor has by virtue of being a priest in addition to being head of both school and parish under the local-executive governance model. Within the Catholic school context this would be related to NSBECS standard 6.3 where the leader should develop and oversee personnel, which

would include recruitment, growth, and assessment (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). These human skills would also be important in Ciriello's (1996) spiritual, instructional, and managerial leadership framework since all three of those areas involve working with the principal's faculty.

Katz (2009) similarly described conceptual leadership as the ability to see various functions of the organization depend on one another and the visualization of the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic elements of the nation as a whole. He also argued that since this is an important skill for those serving at the executive level in an organization, the focus of executive education should be on conceptual skills. Northouse (2018) also stated that conceptual skills are the ability to work with ideas and concepts.

This idea of conceptual leadership could take a few forms in Catholic school leadership. While there is an element of conceptual leadership between both the parish and the school that the pastor should hold as head of both, the NSBECS offer a lens to look at this type of leadership through the principal. The NSBECS frequently focus on the importance of stakeholder input and involving the whole community, which can include families, students, the local community, parishes, and the rest of the Catholic Church (Ozar & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2012). Additionally, Ciriello's (1996) framework made extensive use of conceptual skills. As an instructional leader the principal needs to keep abreast of new developments in pedagogy and in coaching teachers. As a spiritual leader the principal also needs to see how students' spiritual needs may change due to factors outside of the school and church environment. Lastly, as the managerial leader the principal needed to remain up to date in legal and policy requirements that change in relation to

running a Catholic school. All of Ciriello's (1996) roles required the leader to closely examine all of the moving parts of the Catholic school.

Keeping in mind that Katz's (2009) theories were originally developed over 60 years ago for the business world, these skills have applicability to the context of Catholic school leadership. While the goal of business may be profit, the goal of Catholic education is more student and Christ centered. However, one of the major differences between Katz' (2009) business world and the world of Catholic education is the focus Catholic schools have on being examples of and imparting on students the ideas of Catholic social teaching.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation examined pastors' perceptions of the Local Executive governance model. In order to do this research this dissertation also looked at the pastors' perceptions of the role of the principal in this governance model. So that this area could be explored nine pastors were interviewed in a qualitative study. All research was conducted within a West Coast Diocese.

Research Question

This dissertation sought to answer the following research question: What are pastors' perspectives of the local executive governance model of parochial elementary schools?

Context

This study took place in a West Coast Diocese consisting of about 280 parishes in over 100 cities. In this diocese there are about 250 schools with fewer than 80,000 students enrolled across this diocese. There are over 200 elementary schools in this diocese and with just under 52,000 students. According to demographic data from the West Coast Diocese 46% of students are Hispanic/Latino, 23% White, 10% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 9% African American.

Participants

This qualitative study used interviews with nine pastors within the West coast Diocese. These pastors were the chief administrative officers of the elementary schools at their parishes and have been in their current roles for a minimum of one year. All of these pastors were males and ordained priests in the Catholic Church of various ages and ethnic backgrounds. Their elementary schools served various size parishes with the goal of representation on financial

stability. Each of these schools has been assigned a financial level by the West Coast Diocese according to an internal document. This financial level was based on the median income within a two-mile radius around the school. The financial level of a school is one of many tools the West Coast Diocese uses to help determine the financial capacity of different school. The following is a table with more information about the pastors and their schools.

Table 1*Pastor and School Background*

Pastor	Race	Previous education experience	Governance model	Enrollment	Grade levels	Financial level
Father Peter	White	None	Local-executive	103	Elementary	4
Father Andrew	White	High school teacher	Local-executive	283	Elementary	4
Father James	White	None	Local-executive	226	Elementary and high school	5
Father John	White	None	Local-executive	248	Elementary	1
Father Philip	Pacific Islander	Seminary instructor	Local-executive	235	Elementary	4
Father Thomas	White	None	Local-executive	246	Elementary	2
Father Matthew	White	None	Local-collegial	217	Elementary and high school	2
Father Simon	White	High school teacher and principal	Local-executive	169	Elementary	1
Father Paul	White	None	Local-executive	223	Elementary	4

Note: The West Coast Diocese uses a five-point scale to determine the financial level of each school, which is determined by the median income within a two-mile radius around each school. The income brackets for each financial level are: 5: \$20,000-\$34,999; 4: \$35,000-\$49,999; 3: \$50,000-\$64,999; 2: \$65,000-\$79,999; 1: \$80,000 or more.

Procedures

The primary units of study were the pastors in a West Coast Diocese whose parishes have a parochial school attached. I contacted pastors in a variety of ways. First, a letter was sent to the parish office of the pastor. Second, a follow-up email was sent a week after sending the letter.

Thirdly, parish offices were contacted via phone. Additionally, pastors were selected based on recommendations from the West Coast Diocese's staff. Before the interview I gave each participant a letter explaining the purpose of the study and the role they will play in it. Due to the busy nature of pastors, I interviewed each pastor once for about a half hour.

I started the interview with a brief introduction of myself and explained my research. I also informed that participant that they may end the interview at any point and may decline to answer any question. After this introduction I went into the interview questions (see Appendix) and asked them to the participant. I used prompts such as "tell me more" when interviewing the participant. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participant and asked them if I could contact them if I had additional questions.

The interviews took place using the Zoom (2020, <http://zoom.com>) videoconferencing and transcription application. Zoom created first drafts transcriptions of the interview, which were later checked for accuracy. After each interview was transcribed, it was downloaded as a text file onto my Google Drive, which was password protected. After my research was completed, I destroyed the transcripts.

Recruitment

I used purposeful sampling for this study. According to Mills and Gay (2019) purposeful sampling "is the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population" (p. 159). Also, according to Mills and Gay (2019), clear criteria should be in place when selecting participants. In this study I selected only pastors who have been in their positions for at least one year and who have authority at the parochial school. This limitation means that I excluded pastors of schools run by a central office or governed by a religious order. In selecting

these pastors, I used recommendations from my committee along with recommendations from practitioners in the field. By selecting pastors carefully from recommendations, I was able to better ensure that these pastors are willing to share their experiences with me. I also asked at the end of each interview for pastors to recommend any other pastors in the West Coast Diocese they know who might be interested in speaking with me.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interviews were the instrumentation used in this study. According to Leavy (2017) interviews are a commonly used research method across disciplines. Interviews use conversation as a learning tool. Both Leavy and Mills and Gay (2019) argued that interviews are distinguished by their structure. Interviews can vary from unstructured, to semi-structured, to structured. This research took on a semi-structured interview approach. By using a semi-structured approach there was enough flexibility for participants to give their views on the questions asked.

Ethical Considerations

There are ethical considerations to articulate about my research. Prior to collecting data, I submitted my research proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Loyola Marymount University. Additionally, I followed the recommendations of the Belmont Report (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979) in my research. The Belmont Report listed three ethical principles: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. I included these three ethical principals in my research.

There were risks and benefits to participating. One risk to the participant was their comments about Catholic education, individuals, or to diocesan offices being made public. The

risk was mitigated by keeping the names of the pastors confidential by using pseudonyms and refraining from writing about defining characteristics that may allow a reader to identify the participant. The benefits to the participant were highlighting or spotlighting best practices in principal hiring for fellow pastors.

Each of these three ethical principles played a part in my research. First, for respect for persons, I included informed voluntary consent in my research. Participants, as autonomous agents, could end the interview at any time. Additionally, the research methodology and purpose of the study was explained to each participant before starting the interview. Second, for beneficence, I ensured that I did not harm my participants and that I maintained confidentiality. Confidentiality was safeguarded through the use of securing record keeping and the use of pseudonyms for people, places, and organizations. All recordings were destroyed after the study was completed to help ensure confidentiality. I also ensured that participants had an opportunity to review the transcript and notes from the interview and that the recordings were destroyed after the study was complete. Third, for justice, I ensured that subjects were treated fairly regardless of their ethnic, racial, or age classes.

Analytical Plan

The analysis of this study used Mills and Gay's (2019) steps in analyzing qualitative research data. They used three steps to examine qualitative data starting with examining the data and identifying possible themes, which they called reading or memoing. This involved writing notes on all interviews and reading them carefully. The second step was examining the data to provide descriptions of the setting, participants, and activities, which Mills and Gay called describing. In this step the researcher writes thorough and comprehensive descriptions from the

data. This step allowed the researcher to provide a narrative picture of the settings and events of the topic being studied. The final product was a description of how participants define situations and explain their actions. The third step was categorizing and coding pieces of data and groupings into themes, which is also called classifying. Classifying involves breaking the data into small units, determining what is important, and putting the units back together into a more general analytical form.

Within these three steps there are different data analysis strategies that Mills and Gay suggested (2019). One strategy that was used is identifying themes. In this strategy the researcher searches for patterns in the literature and in the data collected. With these themes the researcher can use coding, another strategy recommended by Mills and Gay. Coding involves using codes and labels as a way to identify and indicate patterns in the data. This was accomplished using the program Dedoose where I coded my interview data. Additionally, I used the strategy of doing an organizational review. In doing an organizational review the researcher focuses on reviewing the focuses of an organization such as their mission, vision, goals, structure, operation, and concerns. The organizations I examined were the local dioceses and central school offices. Lastly, I used Mills and Gay's (2019) strategy of stating what is missing. I looked at what data the interviews created but also stated, using the literature as a basis, what was missing from what the pastors said in the interviews.

After all of my interviews are transcribed, I analyzed them using the web application Dedoose. With Dedoose I was able to code the data from the transcripts as Mills and Gay (2019) recommended. This allowed me to categorize the data from smaller pieces and find common

themes. Dedoose allowed me to present my research by putting these smaller pieces together into a more general analytical form.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS

This study aimed to examine pastors' perspective of their role in the Catholic schools they govern under the local-executive governance model. The schools examined fall under the local-executive governance model where each school is independent of each other and there is a single person in charge, in this case the pastor. The findings of this study sought to discover pastors' attitudes toward this model as to be a basis for further discussions on elementary school governance. The research question that framed the study was: What are pastors' perspectives of the local-executive governance model of parochial elementary schools?

This study took place in a West Coast Diocese consisting of about 280 parishes in over 100 cities. In this diocese there are about 250 schools with fewer than 80,000 students enrolled. There are over 200 elementary schools in this diocese and with just under 52,000 students. In this diocese 46% of students are Hispanic/Latino, 23% White, 10% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 9% African American.

The dominant model of governance of elementary Catholic schools in the West Coast Diocese is the Local-executive governance model. The schools examined were all locally governed, meaning they were not part of a larger network or consortium of schools. These elementary schools also have an executive form of governance, which means that the final authority in the organization is an individual pastor with near absolute power (FADICA, 2015). In this diocese's handbook, the pastor is described as the "chief administrative officer of the parish school;" however, he "delegates the immediate direction and supervision of the school program to the principal".

Method and Analysis

The data for this study was collected from nine interviews with pastors in a West Coast Diocese. Each of these pastors held a governing role under the local-executive governance model and had an elementary school attached to their parish, though one had delegated a certain amount of responsibility to a school board, and one was considering a different governance model. Two of the pastors also governed high schools located at their parishes, but the interviews with these pastors focused on their elementary schools only. Potential pastors were identified through recommendations of the dissertation committee, experts in the field, and through snowball sampling. A total of 24 pastors were contacted via mail, email, and phone calls; nine were interviewed. The pastors were supplied with the interview questions ahead of the interview via email and were interviewed using the videoconferencing platform Zoom. Interviews were then transcribed and analyzed using the web application Dedoose.

In Dedoose, the transcripts were uploaded without any information that would identify the pastor, parish, or school and synonyms assigned for each participant to protect their identities. The data were then coded according to common themes identified in the interviews. Quotes from the text were made into excerpts and memos were written about the data. Then the excerpts and memos were organized into a logical manner as to make clear the voices of the pastors who were interviewed.

Themes

Four themes arose from this research concerning the research question. First, there was a preference for pastors' spiritual leadership of the school, which included students, families, and staff. Second, there was a strong theme of delegation of the managerial and educational roles that

Ciriello (1996) outlined. Third, there was a theme of pastors carrying the burden of a school. Lastly, the challenges of the pastoral role as chief administrative officer at the elementary parochial school were discussed by many of the pastors.

Preference for Spiritual Leadership

The pastors interviewed frequently mentioned their spiritual leadership of their schools and parishes as their favorite role in the local-executive governance model. Pastors perform two roles when they have a parochial school, the spiritual leadership of the parish and the spiritual leadership of the school as a ministry of the parish. Additionally, when it comes to their spiritual leadership of the school their interpretation of their roles varied. For example, Father Peter described himself as chaplain of the school—“that’s another dimension of being the pastor and that’s to be a religious support person.” While Father John stated that “a lot of schools want a chaplain but not a pastor.” In the local-executive governance model this role can be shared with the principal, though Ciriello (1996) argued that this is a responsibility of the principal, too. The spiritual leadership role of pastors was their more desired role at the parochial school, however they also had varying ideas on how the principal shares in that role also.

Spiritual Leadership of Families, Students, Staff, and Faculty

These pastors’ preference for their spiritual roles extended to their spiritual leadership of families and students. However, multiple pastors mentioned challenges with families and students in their spiritual leadership of the school. One of these challenges is the secularization of families at their schools. Father James mentioned that families at his parish school chose his school because “Catholic schools are cheaper than private schools” and that some families “you’ll never see at church, that’s not a part of their spirituality.” Father Philip felt this challenge

when he attended school board meetings, he felt like he was “apologizing every time [he spoke] about Jesus” and lamented that lack of discussion about Catholic formation. Father Simon also mentioned this challenge with students since they “have been totally influenced by the new religion of secularism.”

Despite this challenge the pastors mentioned their favorite parts of their spiritual leadership of families and students in their schools. One part of their favorite parts was their involvement in liturgical celebrations at the school. Father Paul mentioned how he enjoyed praying the Stations of the Cross with the students during Lent since it allows him to become animated with the students in the form of a skit. Father Simon uniquely described how he teaches the eighth-grade class regularly as he is a former teacher himself. Lastly, Father James stated that at the Parent-Teacher Organization meetings he not only attended them but has transformed a few into nights of spirituality, though it came at the “dismay of a few.”

Spiritual Leadership of Families and Students

The pastors interviewed took their role as spiritual leaders of the families and students seriously. Father Thomas described his leadership in the framework of promoting priestly vocations. He stated that when it came to the students at his school, “Presidents live in their imagination, football, basketball, sports stars live in their imagination. Video game developers live in their imagination. Priests, however, do not.” He felt that due to the lack of interest of his students in the vocation of being a priest “our numbers have dwindled and our presence at the school has diminished.”

A few of the pastors mentioned the importance of visiting classrooms at their school as part of their spiritual role. Father Philip described how he knows the schedule of the school and

visits the religion classes for a few minutes when appropriate. Like Father Philip, Father Paul enjoyed visiting classes for a few moments but shied away from actually giving grades since he did not want to be put into the position of giving students bad grades. Father Thomas described a greater involvement in the religion classes as he teaches a religion class once a month to each class. Similarly, Father Matthew taught eighth-grade religion once a week as part of his spiritual role at the school.

In spiritually leading the families of the school, Father Andrew said part of his role was to “give parents a spiritual understanding of love.” Father Philip mentioned a similar mission at his parish where he exercised his spiritual role. There, they are implementing a new form of evangelization creating a culture of prayer, discipleship, and teamwork among both parish and school families. He also mentioned his challenge of evangelizing the parents of the students at the school and laments the fact that so few parents attend the parish masses. Father James connects with his parents by turning some of the evening parent meetings into nights of spirituality.

Lastly, some pastors also discussed the importance of prayer in the spiritual leadership of the families as part of their role as spiritual leaders. Father John and Father Peter mentioned the importance of being aware about students with sick family members and taking time to visit with the families and offering prayers for their loved ones. Additionally, Father Peter described himself as a “spiritual resource person” with a responsibility to the entire school community.

Spiritual Leadership of the Staff and Faculty

Multiple pastors mentioned that part of their spiritual leadership extended to the staff and faculty of their parochial schools. Father John mentioned the importance of formation training

with the faculty and staff and “walking with the teachers” in addition to praying with the faculty. Father Thomas stated that he attends all of his school’s faculty meetings in addition to being at their morning assemblies as part of his efforts to minister to the staff and faculty. Additionally, Father Andrew mentioned how he works with teachers to help meet their own spiritual needs and ensure that they are meeting the spiritual needs of the students.

Ministry of Presence

Many of the pastors mentioned the importance of their spiritual leadership in relation to a ministry of presence. One of the most significant ways pastors were present with the school community that nearly every pastor mentioned was by saying weekly masses for the school community. Father Matthew described how he greeted families and students every day on the car line in addition to assisting with retreats for the students. Also, Father Thomas described this ministry of presence as giving him the ability to “get a feel of their Catholicity.”

Principal as Spiritual Leader

While the pastors viewed themselves as the spiritual leaders of the school, many also saw the principal as having a role in spiritual leadership also. Father Philip described how the principal should be able to share a vision of “why we are forming hearts and minds, according to the image of Jesus.” Father John explained that he expects his principal to ensure that there are regular opportunities for prayer such as in the classroom and in the school assemblies.

Sharing Spiritual Leadership

Father James spoke about how he shared this spiritual leadership with his principal and how he had few expectations for his principal in this matter. He said that he does not think that the principal can give pastoral care to the school community and instead prefers that his principal

focuses on academics and finances. This idea is in contrast to Ciriello's (1996) framework that described the principal as having a spiritual leadership role at his or her school. Father Andrew also described how he wanted to require his families to attend the same amount of evening religious preparation events as the families in the after school religious education program. However, he understood that the principal also shares in this spiritual leadership, so they worked together to find an appropriate requirement for the school families.

Delegation of Educational and Managerial Roles

While the pastors interviewed described their interest being spiritual leaders of the school community, most chose to delegate the managerial and educational responsibilities to their principals. Areas of responsibility around budgeting, enrollment, management of a school board, and hiring of faculty were commonly delegates in some form to the principal the pastor selected for his school. In these areas the pastors retained their ultimate authority, but their involvement in these topics was very different from their roles as spiritual leaders.

Involvement in School Finances

The role of the pastors varied when it came to their involvement in the school's finances, though most pastors interviewed preferred to delegate many of the responsibilities to the principal. At one end of the spectrum Father Peter, who stated that he worked at a lower-income parish, described how he took an active role looking at the budget decision of the school since they receive a significant subsidy from the parish. Interestingly, he stated that when he was pastor of a wealthier parish, he was not as involved, and it was more a matter of "rubber stamping the budget."

In the middle, there were many pastors who took a small amount of involvement in the finances but mostly delegated those responsibilities to the principal. Father Philip described how he reviewed monthly statements from the school and approved the budget every year. However, he admitted that he does not “sit and look at every aspect of it” arguing that he has let “my principal do the job, that’s not by job.” Also involving himself to a minimal degree was Father Philip who stated that “just because I’m a pastor doesn’t mean that I know anything about finances” and described his role as mostly oversight. While his parish and school shared the same bookkeeper, the principal makes most of the financial decisions. Lastly, Father Simon described his role as “steward of the people’s money” and that he has a right to know where the money is going when he approves the annual budget but did not involve himself in the details of the budget nor finances.

At the other end of the spectrum there was a model where the pastor was very far removed from the financial decisions. At Father Matthew’s school, which has shifted from the local-executive governance model slightly, the financial board reviewed the finances of the school eight times a year. He stated that their role was to ensure that all financial matters were in order and that any financial surprises are avoided. Though he remains intricately involved in the finances, many of these responsibilities have been delegated out to this committee.

One unique involvement in school finances, especially in relation to financial aid families was Father Andrew. He took a role that involved less delegation of his responsibility for the finances of his parish school. At his school families do not receive any financial support from the school and instead receive assistance directly from the parish. According to him, this allowed the principal to concern him or herself with the school’s non-aid finances and emphasizes the unity

of the parish and the school in finances. He also added that this helps to remove tension among the families applying for aid, the principal, and the school's budget since aid comes from the parish budget.

Role of the Finance Council and Development Board. While under the local-executive governance model the pastor retains final financial responsibility and authority, many of the pastors described a role for a finance council. Parish finance councils are established at every parish as they are required under Canon 537 and are consultative in nature (Catholic Church, 1984). Many pastors mentioned that the finance councils hold an important role that Father Peter described as “parallel for both the parish and the school.” While the meetings of the finance council ranged from quarterly to monthly, most pastors mentioned that the same parish finance council was looking at the financial records of the school also.

The role of the finance council varied only slightly among the pastors. It was described as a “check and balance” by Father Philip. Fathers Peter and John described how the financial reports are reviewed by the council regularly. Similarly, Father Simon described how his principal was an *ex officio* member of the finance council and presented reports regularly. Additionally, many pastors saw the role of the finance council as giving warning about potential financial issues that could arise in the future. While the pastors agreed with the canonical consultative role of the finance council, they clearly valued the skills and input given by its members.

Additionally, a few pastors mentioned development boards in their interviews. While Father Peter was looking into creating one Fathers John and Philip had already established development boards. The pastors that had development boards described how they were

consultative like the finance council but held a prominent role in fundraising for the school. Father John described his board as being very important since, in his view, one cannot run a school on tuition alone.

Enrollment. While not directly related to governance, two pastors described their role in enrollment at their parochial schools which was not delegated like in the same manner as their fellow pastors did. Multiple pastors mentioned the importance of enrollment since that is the primary source of income for their schools, including Father Andrew who enrollment as “the central barometer of the economy, if you don’t have the students you don’t have the tuition.” Expanding on his role, Father John described himself as “Recruiter-in-Chief” of the school. He stated that he considers “most marketing . . . a waste of time” and that the pastor should be coordinating with other parish leaders to recruit students. He stated that the conversation about enrolling in the parochial school should start at baptism and include information about financial aid available. Additionally, Father Philip described how his principal was so concerned about enrollment that the principal was fearful of upsetting parents by requiring them to be more active in the parish. However, Father Philip also stated that his school does not currently have an enrollment issue.

Principal as Managerial Leader

Ciriello’s (1996) framework described the principal as a managerial leader, which Katz (2009) would describe as someone having the human skills necessary to be principal. Ciriello (1996) spoke about the principal managing the faculty and staff in terms of evaluation and training in addition to managing the financial resources of the school. Katz (2009) wrote about

the importance of the management of human resources in terms of filling positions appropriately at one's firm.

While in the local-executive governance model the pastor is in charge of the parochial school, all pastors interviewed chose to delegate some of that authority to an appointed principal. While there were a variety of opinions expressed by the pastors concerning the exact role of the principal in their managerial role, all agreed that the principal is the primary leader responsible for the human resources of their schools. The most discussed element of this role was the hiring and retaining of staff and faculty.

Hiring and Retaining of Staff and Faculty

There was a wide variety of opinions when it comes to the pastor's role in the hiring and retaining of staff and faculty, with many choosing to delegate this role. Though the pastor does have the authority to hire and terminate whoever he would like on the staff and faculty, it appears as though the expression of this role varied depending on the situation. Some pastors wanted to be involved in all hiring aspects of the school while others wanted to only be involved minimally in the hiring of teachers, mostly to check the Catholicity of candidates. Lastly, some pastors desired to have no role in the hiring or retaining of staff and faculty.

At one end of this spectrum there were pastors who wanted to keep this hiring and retaining authority, though sometimes in conjunction with their principals. Father Thomas described how he works closely with his principal concerning the staff and faculty, especially when it comes to the budgeting necessary for employment. Father Andrew described the desire of faculty and staff to remain at a school as a reflection of the quality of the principal. He also described how he spoke with teachers leaving his school and part of his role to retain some of the

staff and faculty at his school. Lastly, Father Philip discussed a situation where he stepped into retaining teachers who the principal wanted to remove because they were not skilled with computers. Father Philip stated that even though these teachers were not the most skilled with technology, he required the principal to retain the teachers until they retire due to them being long time teachers.

A number of the pastors remained in the middle of this spectrum of involvement in the hiring and retaining staff and faculty. Father John described how he interviews every teacher candidate but only feels comfortable asking religious questions rather than pedagogical questions. Similarly, Father Thomas described his involvement as reviewing resumes but focusing more on the religious elements of the candidates, saying that he would not ask educational questions since “I wouldn’t know anything about that anyways.” He also described how he tries to create a welcome environment for his teachers since he knows he cannot compete with public school wages for his teachers. Father John described challenges in retaining his faculty and staff due to the budgeting necessary but said he rarely gets involved in the retaining of a teacher. Father Paul thought that he should only intervene when there is a problem with a teacher or if the principal has a hard time choosing between two candidates.

Some of pastors interviewed viewed the hiring and retaining of staff and faculty to be totally in the realm of the principal. Father Simon described his principal as being strictly in charge of hiring and retaining teachers. Father Matthew echoed similar sentiments saying that he leaves that responsibility to his principal. Additionally, Father Peter described how he wanted to be informed but preferred to leave that responsibility with his principal.

Principal as Educational Leader

While the pastor does have authority over the curriculum of his parochial school in the local executive governance model all pastors indicated that they leave their role to the principal. Similar to how Katz (2009) described technical skills as being important for low and middle level workers, pastors viewed curriculum as someone they lack the skills to assess or manage. Additionally, Ciriello (1996) described this educational role of the principal to be a key element of his or her leadership, so these pastor's view on this matter would be in line with her model. Two pastors, Philip and Thomas, had experience in education either at the secondary or seminary levels, but still felt it was important to leave this responsibility to their principals. Only one pastor, James, described involvement in the curriculum at his school when he asked his principal to implement a foreign language program at his school.

Carrying the Burden of a School

In many of the interviews, pastors focused on having a school can mean carrying an extra burden in the local-executive governance model. While all made it clear that they hold their schools in high esteem, they also said that their ultimate authority over their parochial school as a ministry of the parish meant that they had additional responsibilities. However, two pastors discussed alternative forms of governance that they had implemented or were looking into implementing. Lastly, a key element of this burden was the pastors' responsibility to appoint the principal.

Pastor's Ultimate Authority

Within the local-executive governance model pastors are ultimately responsible for their schools as head of the school (FADICA, 2015). This model of governance was mentioned by

multiple pastors in the interviews demonstrating that they are aware of their role in the Local-executive Model. Father Simon described that his “school is owned and operated by the archdiocese, and the pastor in a parochial school is in charge.” Finally, this authority of the pastor also stretched to the selection of the principal, where Father Philip stated frankly that “it’s my decision who I want.” While this school may have been a burden on pastors, they held a wide degree of latitude on its operations.

This authority stretches across multiple elements of school administration. In relation specifically to the ultimate authority of the pastor in relation to the finances of the school Father Thomas argued that “if there’s malfeasance that’s the responsibility of the pastor. So, the pastor has that fiscal responsibility and he better live up to it!” Father Thomas also added that in matters relating to the school faculty he said, “It is much easier for the pastor to say to the faculty ‘you’re going to do it’ and that’s the end of that.” These quotes demonstrate how the pastors viewed having a school as an additional burden to bear as pastor. The source of the pastors’ ultimate authority over their schools stemmed from the same authority they held at their parishes. Since the Catholic parochial school was a ministry of the parish, their authority extended there too without dilution.

Ministry of the Parish

While the pastors interviewed were keenly aware of their authority at the school, many also framed their authority in relation to the fact that in a local-executive governance model the parish school is essentially a ministry of the parish in a manner not dissimilar to a parish’s religious education program or other ministries. As pastor, he is in charge of the parish, so it follows that his authority continues onto the school that is part of his parish. Father Andrew

described the pastor's role as head of the school in terms of it being a ministry of the parish "that you develop a sense of belonging, a sense of community. You have to build that up. And then from the staff at the parish and school. It's a unity." This sense of unity was also echoed by Father Thomas who stated "if you put these two camps . . . oftentimes you're going to find a division between these areas or . . . nothing in common. . . . The pastor is the person [who] has to bring these two elements together. Who else but him?"

The pastors interviewed also understood how important this ministry of the parish is. Father James described his school as "our biggest ministry in the parish in terms of quantity of people and quantity of kids" while Father Philip described his school as "an important aspect of our mission." Father Peter described the relationship between the parish and the school as "not just two institutions sharing a campus." However, one pastor had a different opinion about what this importance means. Uniquely, Father John thought the school was an important ministry but also thought:

A weakness with the school is that the school is not really responsible . . . the school is a subset of the parish in most instances, and so it has a backstop. So there's an inbuilt irresponsibility into school finances, because they're not ultimately responsible. In other words, if they go down, they don't have to pay the bill.

Father John's sentiments reflected some of the attitudes in Convey's (1999) survey of pastors, which indicated that a significant number of pastors believed that a parochial school "drain[ed] resources from the parish that it should spend on other ministries" (p. 262).

Desire to Shift to Alternative Governance Models

While pastors usually hold ultimate authority at their parochial schools, there are other governance models where this authority is partially delegated to a board, lessening the burden. These other models could help to ease the burden of having a school for a pastor. Two pastors indicated that they would like to shift or already have shifted to a different governance model. One pastor who was interviewed had developed an alternative governance model that caused a shift away from the local-executive governance model. In his interview, Father Matthew described what he believes is a shift to move to a Local-collegial model where a board of limited jurisdiction has been established. At his parish, he had both a high school and an elementary school, both of whom had separate principals. These schools were governed primarily by the board, which manages both schools and consisted of members hand selected by the pastor, president, and principals. However, as pastor he worked primarily through the president who was president of both the elementary and high school. When asked about why he shifted to this model he said:

Well, you're a fool today not to do so because I'm not a principal. I'm not an educator. I'm a pastor and if I think I have all the information, all the knowledge and all the wisdom in that area, I'm nuts! . . . I'm [age] years of age, I'm not living forever. And so, I thought that as we move along, you get another guy who is a pastor but doesn't give a flip about schools. If you're in charge of everything and making all the decisions the thing would go down like a ton of bricks. And so, I wanted to guarantee that the people that are involved and connected are the right people, and a pastor can change that but normally wouldn't change it . . . I'd say

he'd have a tough time of changing it at [Parish] because we've got such great people. It's to assure that it continues with the right people making the decisions for the schools.

Father Matthew demonstrated an awareness of alternative forms of governance and chose to embrace them. Additionally, he stated that he hoped this model will endure since he picked appropriate people to serve on his board. He also echoed the findings of Boyle and Dosen (2017) who described how pastors are not normally trained in school nor parish administration.

While Father Matthew's school implemented a form of a board of limited jurisdiction that adjusted pastoral authority, Father James also mentioned his desire to shift to a different governance model. Father James had both a parochial high school and elementary school and is in process of implementing the board for his high school and hopes to continue the process with his elementary school. He argued that "it [was] a huge responsibility and some of our parishes have very sharp dynamic lay people and they can offer a lot of expertise to help our schools thrive." Father James also mentioned the same concern Father Matthew has of succession. Both pastors feared that their successors might take their schools down the wrong path. Father James stated that the limited jurisdiction model:

[The] limited jurisdiction model . . . offers a certain amount of protection with a change in leadership because one pastor might be doing a great job and then the next one comes in and has a completely different vision which can be completely disruptive... maybe that's something we need to look into more for greater stability in our schools.

While only mentioned by two pastors, shifting from a Local-executive model to a board of limited jurisdiction is an option for pastors who wish to move away from being chief administrative officers of their schools.

Hiring and Retaining of the Principal

Many of the pastors interviewed had experience hiring principals at their school sites. While pastors chose to delegate some of their authority out to others in some areas of school administration, the selection of principals was a special duty that pastors took seriously. In this process pastors described the methods they used to hire their principals, who were involved in the hiring process, and what they expected from their principals. All pastors mentioned that they are involved in the process of hiring principals and found their role to be important.

Principal Hiring Process

This special duty of hiring principals manifested itself in the many variety of methods used to hire principals at these schools. One method Father Philip described how he had a search committee involving parents and teachers who advised him on making the final decision. He also described how he examined resumes, which no other pastor mentioned. Using a different method, Father Paul described a similar committee that consisted of a faculty member, a parent, the departing principal, a former parent, and the parish business manager. In addition to these methods Father Peter described the importance of having a committee member be someone from the outside such as someone on the local school board or a principal of another school.

The special duty of picking a principal sometimes involved working through a local office of Catholic schools. Father Andrew described his experiences hiring principals through procedures created by the West Coast Diocese. According to Father Andrew, most pastors

selected their principal from a list of vetted candidates by the West Coast Diocese, which Father Andrew argued was not appropriate since the pastor himself was not doing the vetting. Father Andrew was very critical of the candidates put forward by the West Coast Diocese calling them “losers” and that the pastors are “not going to get what they need. The pastor has to take the initiative, he has to go out and look, he has to!” In contrast Father Simon stated that he had tried private recruiting firms, the West Coast Diocese vetting process, and making the selection himself and that he preferred the West Coast Diocese vetting process. He argued that the West Coast Diocese vetted candidates with their Catholic background and educational qualifications and that he was “presented with just what is the energy, the aura between the pastor and the person you’re going to hire.” Father Simon found this process much easier than any of the alternatives.

As an alternative to the West Coast Diocese’s vetting process Father Andrew described a principal training program developed by the West Coast Diocese that he “[couldn’t] say enough about” due to its high quality. In this program principal candidates spend a year as a resident principal working under the tutelage of a master principal before being assigned his or her own schools.

Sometimes, this special duty is delegated to another party. Father Matthew, who has implemented a shift away from the local-executive governance model at his school described an additional layer of decision making with the president of his schools. He stated that the board interviews candidates with the involvement of the pastor and then a recommendation is given to the president. The president then consults with the pastor to make the final appointment of the principal.

Retaining Principals

The pastor's authority over the school as a ministry of the parish extends to the retention of principals. Only a few pastors were willing to speak about the retaining of their principals. Father Andrew described how "if the principal is not willing to work with the pastor, then you get rid of the principal . . . either I asked them to resign or I will resign them." He also added that a key indication of a good principal in his eyes was that the staff and faculty would have low turnover and that they want to work at the school. Father Paul described the challenges of keeping principal due to the demands of the job and how sometimes principals wanted to pursue different options.

Father Simon described a formal evaluation process for his principals. He stated that the principal has a formal evaluation once a year and informational ones throughout the year. He committed to letting the principal go or keeping the principal by March of each year.

Pastoral Role to the Principal

While pastors hold ultimate authority, some understood this role as coming with additional responsibilities. Two pastors specifically described their pastoral role to the principal as having a distinct responsibility of their role as a pastor. Father Peter suggested that pastors should meet with their principals "once a week, whether you feel you need it or not, and give that poor man or woman a whole hour of your time and listen with your heart." He also added that "being principal [was] a very difficult job and principals need[ed] a lot of affirmation and they need[ed] a shoulder to cry on sometimes." He stated that the "pastor has a responsibility to stand beside the principal and especially to support them in difficult moments." Father James echoed similar sentiments when he stated that he "commiserated a lot with the principals as my previous

assignments” when facing challenging situations. He also mentioned the importance of meeting weekly and getting to know his principal personally.

Challenges to the Pastoral Roles in Respect to the Local-executive Governance Model

In this local-executive governance model the governance of the school is solely within the hands of the pastor (executive) and the governing of the school is on an individual basis, meaning that other schools do not fall under the pastor’s authority (local). All of the pastors described various challenges to their role in this local-executive governance model. Some of these challenges related to pastors’ own lack of training, manpower, or time while others were more systemic such as the very nature of the local-executive governance model itself. While all pastors spoke highly of their schools and their own experiences in leading these schools, all felt they could do more for their schools but were limited by outside factors.

Limitations in Fulling the Role of Chief Administrative Officer

In the West Coast Diocese, the pastor is described as the Chief Administrative Officer of his school. This fits within the role of the local-executive governance model since the pastor is the final authority in matters relating to his school. However, the pastor also pastor of his own parish with many responsibilities. These responsibilities include the normal sacramental duties of a priest in the Catholic Church but also as pastor who manages multiple ministries along with the human and financial assets of the parish. These many responsibilities were described by all pastors in their interviews as challenges to their role at the school.

Lack of Time

Multiple pastors described a lack of time as a reason why they are not more involved at their parochial schools and a major challenge to fulfilling their leadership roles at the school.

Father Paul described the situation as “bottom line is that there isn’t enough time” and Father Thomas described how just visiting the classrooms uses most of the time he has allotted to spend at the school. Additionally, Father Simon described how his responsibilities at his parish prevent him from spending as much time as he would like at his school. Lastly, Father Matthew, who had a high school in addition to an elementary school, found it very challenging to spend enough time at all three of his entities.

Associates or Lack Thereof

While the pastor is the head of both the parish and the school in the local-executive governance model, occasionally a parish may have associate pastors or priests in residence at the parish. Formally they would not have a leadership role at the school but, as priests, certainly can help with the sacramental duties of both the parish and school. However, the number of priests assigned to each parish has been dwindling for 50 years. From 1970 to 2018, the number of active diocesan priests per parish decreased from 1.8 in 1970 to 1.0 in 2018 (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, n.d.) This means that many parishes, some of which have schools, only have one priest to take on all duties at both sites.

Some of the pastors mentioned associate pastors at their sites. Fathers Peter, Matthew, and Paul mentioned how thankful they were for having associates at their parishes, though Father Paul described how in general there were not enough priests to handle all the work. Many of the other priests mentioned that they were the only priest at their sites, so they were overwhelmed with the number of responsibilities they have. Since the priests at a parish were the only persons who could undertake the sacramental duties at a parish, the pastors were often pulled in many directions. Due to this lack of priestly manpower, time was a precious resource for these pastors.

Lack of Pastor Training on Administrative and Managerial Leadership

A major challenge for most pastors interviewed was their lack of training for their role as Chief Administrative Officer in the local-executive governance model. The primary training of priests occurs in seminaries, but when asked no pastor indicated that they had any coursework in their roles as heads of their schools. This fits within the literature since only 86% of seminary syllabi included references to Catholic schools (Boyle & Dosen, 2017). Father Matthew expressed his concern about this lack of training stating that there should be a course in seminary about Catholic schools and that associate pastors should have more than the current two years they normally have before becoming pastors themselves.

A few pastors had a small amount of relevant formal training due to unique circumstances. Father James studied accounting in college, so he felt he had some training on managing the financial elements of the parish and school. Father Simon previously was a high school teacher and principal in the West Coast Diocese and found his experiences there to be very useful in his current role. Father Paul became a priest a little later in life and had studied public administration, which he felt was useful for his role as pastor. Other pastors mentioned different opportunities for training that they had undertaken. Father Peter felt that his training as a priest benefited him in his role at the school. He stated that he learned in his seminary training “how to be a spiritual leader and a compassionate minister of the grade of the Lord and the Word of God.” Uniquely, he mentioned that he learned most of what he knows from his own principals.

Though there were some pastors who had different experiences all said that most of the training was “on the job.” Fathers Peter, James, and Philip mentioned that this on-the-job

training occurred when they were associate pastors at other parishes. They described their experiences as visiting classrooms, organizing summer camps, and sometimes teaching religion. However, the other pastors stated that their education when it comes to managing a school came when they were pastors already “on the job.”

Pastors Advice on How to Serve in the Local-executive Governance Model

Near the end of the interviews, pastors were asked what advice they would give fellow pastors about heading their own parochial schools. Father Thomas’ advice was that a pastor should invest himself in the school. He mentioned three specific actions that a pastor should take: let the principal run the school, be transparent, and be present. Father Paul stated that his advice would be the same for a pastor running a religious education program or youth ministry. He said that pastors should move away from “selling” their schools, which he felt diluted the Catholicity of his school and should move to creating personal relationships with Jesus Christ.

Father Matthew advised focusing on personal relationships. He stated that even though he was not the best at remembering names, he mentioned how he read the school yearbook to try to learn every students’ name. Building connections with all stakeholders was also an important matter to Father Matthew, especially since he has a board that assists in the management of the school. Father Peter mentioned similar advice on making an investment in the relationships at the school. He focused this investment in his relationship with the principal and ensuring that the principal feels that he or she is supported by the pastor.

Father James gave the specific pieces of advice that were wider than the other pastors interviewed. First, he suggested that pastors should understand that the school is probably your largest ministry, and that it requires a proportional amount of time from the pastor. Second, he

stated that pastors should remember that they have a fiscal, spiritual, and moral responsibility for the quality of the school. He stated that:

Parents are spending their hard-earned money to pay for school they could otherwise get in the public school system for free. They deserve a return on their investment, and I feel that as pastors, we have a moral responsibility to give our families, the kids, and the parents a quality product. We cannot neglect that responsibility. If we do, we are falling short. Big time. And we really need to ask ourselves, “Well then why are we in a parish with a school?”

Father Andrew echoed similar sentiments concerning Father James’s final question. Father Andrew mentioned the importance of a pastor being committed to his school and states that if the pastor is “not sold on Catholic education; if he’s not willing to invest his interest in the school, then the diocese needs to take the school away from him.” Both Fathers Andrew and James advised that the decision to be a pastor of a parish with a school was not a decision to be taken lightly.

Discussion of Findings

The research question sought to understand how pastors’ viewed their roles in the Catholic schools they governed, all of which operated under the local-executive governance model. Three themes emerged from this research. First, pastors strongly preferred a role of spiritual leadership at their school. Pastors interviewed indicated that this was not a role they would like to delegate to others and that they enjoyed working closely with the families and studies of their schools. Some of the pastors viewed their schools as ministries of the parish so their spiritual leadership of the school flows naturally from their leadership of their parishes.

The second theme was the pastors preferred to delegate some of their leadership roles to their appointed principals. While some pastors did have a minor interest in the academic programming of their schools, pastors preferred to leave the educational leadership role to their principals. In addition to delegating the academic leadership of the school to the principal most pastors preferred to leave most of the managerial leadership role to principals too. Most pastors did not want to become involved in the hiring processes of teachers or staff.

The final theme was one of challenges. Since the interviewed pastors were all in charge of both their parishes and their parochial schools, time was described as a limiting factor for pastors. Many pastors wish to be more involved in their parochial schools, however their constraints on their time were too great. Related to this lack of time is the pastors' lack of associate pastors at their parishes. Due to the sacramental nature of many of the pastors' duties that only priests may undertake, when pastors are the only priests at parishes they find themselves with little flexibility in their schedules. Lastly, a major challenge that pastors described was their lack of formal training to take on their roles as the Chief Administrative Officer in the local-executive governance model. Little training was provided to the interviewed pastors in their seminary education and most pastors described the learning of their roles as an on-the-job type of experience.

Summary

This chapter discussed the results of the interviews seeking to answer the research question. The findings demonstrated that pastors enjoy the more spiritual elements of their role in the local-executive governance model but prefer to delegate the managerial and educational duties to their appointed principals. Pastors also indicated that their lack of associate pastors,

time, and training all were challenges for them to fulfill their role in the local-executive governance model. Additionally, pastors believed that the principals should fulfill spiritual, managerial, and educational roles at the schools as they receive much of the delegated authority from the pastor. It is important to consider the implications of these findings. To that end, Chapter 5 includes the implications of these results and offers suggestions for future research and other implications.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined pastors' perspectives of the local-executive governance model of parochial elementary schools. Under the local-executive governance model pastors are the executive in charge of their own schools, and each school is locally governed (FADICA, 2015). This authority is rooted in Canon Law that gives pastors near absolute authority over their parishes, which would include a parochial school (Catholic Church, 1984). While the local-executive governance model is not the only model of school governance in the United States, it is the most common in the West Coast Diocese where this study took place in addition to being used in 95% of Catholic elementary schools (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). In the West Coast Diocese this specific role of the pastor in the local-executive governance model was described as the pastor being the chief administrative officer of his parochial school.

Despite the paramount role that pastors play in their parochial school their seminary training does not provide for education in school administration (Boyle & Dosen, 2017). School administration is multifaceted, and Catholic education administration could be described as having managerial, educational, and spiritual components (Ciriello, 1996). However, all pastors interviewed hired principals to lead their schools. Even though most of the day-to-day management of the schools was undertaken by the principals, the pastors had a key role in their positions as chief administrative officers. This study also looked at pastors' perspectives of their own principals in the local-executive governance model.

While there was significant research on the role of the school principal in Catholic education, there was a gap in the literature when it came to the pastor's role at the Catholic

school in this local-executive governance model. Additionally, there was a gap in the literature of pastors' own views of this model. Using a qualitative framework and through interviews with nine pastors in the West Coast Diocese, this study sought to look closer at these topics.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine pastors' perspectives of the local-executive governance model of parochial elementary schools and the role of the principals in the model. This study explored what pastors thought of their role and their principals' roles at their schools through spiritual, educational, and managerial lenses. The research also addressed the challenged pastors have in fulfilling their role and advice they have for their fellow pastors who have schools. This study hoped to contribute to the body of research on Catholic elementary school governance particularly in examining if the local-executive governance model is the strongest choice for Catholic schools currently in the United States.

Research Question

In order to better understand pastors' perspectives on the local-executive governance model this study used the following research question: What are pastors' perspectives of the local executive governance model of parochial elementary schools?

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that pastors preferred some of their roles at their parochial school and choose to delegate different roles they prefer not to take on themselves. Additionally, two pastors indicated that they would like to move away from the local-executive governance model totally and shift to a local-collegial model. The pastors indicated that their ideal roles focused more on spiritual leadership at their school sites more than the educational or

managerial leadership required at the school. While the pastors were only interested in the spiritual aspects of the school, they maintained that they kept their governing authority at both parishes and schools. All of the interviewed pastors appointed principals at their schools and chose to delegate the educational and managerial responsibilities to their principals in varying degrees.

Pastors' Ideal Roles

The pastors interviewed overwhelmingly described their preferences for a spiritual role at the school while maintaining their governing authority. Of the various roles the pastors play, this role fits most with the seminary training of the pastors and the sacramental duties only priests can undertake. Additionally, the pastors seemed content with keeping their governing role that Canon Law has assigned them as the final authority at their schools. However, most pastors described a delegation of the education and managerial roles.

Governing Authority

Only two of the pastors indicated any desire to move away from the local-executive governance model. All of the other pastors indicated that they would like to keep their formal governing authority role given to them under Canon Law (Schafer, 2004). This authority included having the ability to hire and fire the principal of the school and having the final fiduciary responsibility for the school. While some pastors indicated that they do maintain authority over the staff and faculty too, most mentioned they prefer to leave that role to the principal.

Goldschmidt and Walsh (2013) described how the delegation of authority of the pastor to the principal varies greatly, and this variance was reflected in the interviews. Some pastors chose

to manage elements of the religious program and to be involved in teacher hiring while other pastors preferred to leave these roles to the principal. While the West Coast Diocese described the principal as the delegated leader of the school, details on this relationship were lacking. In the vacuum of clearer directions, it appeared that each pastor and principal determined exactly what elements would be delegated and which would be retained by the pastor.

Spiritual Role

While there are educational, managerial, and spiritual leadership roles taken on by the leader of a Catholic school, pastors most enjoyed their role as spiritual leader of their schools (Ciriello, 1996). While Ciriello described this spiritual role in relation to the principal, in a local-executive governance model this role and the other roles traditionally assigned to the principal can all be undertaken by the pastor. This spiritual role fit with the priests' clerical role as head of a parish where all are welcome for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, charity is performed, and teaches Christ's doctrine (Catholic Church, 2016).

Since these parochial schools were viewed as ministries of the parish by some of the pastors, meeting the spiritual needs of students, families, and other community members is logical since families at the school are essentially part of the greater parish community. The pastors described their roles such as teaching in the classroom, saying weekly mass, and offering prayers for struggling members of the community.

This viewpoint of parochial schools as ministries of the parish also fit into Katz's (2009) skills approach to leadership. The pastor, being the highest-level leader at the site, should be steeped in conceptual skills. According to Katz conceptual skills and leadership involved the ability to see the various functions of the organization especially in relation to the industry as a

whole, the community, and the political, social, and economic elements of the nation as a whole. Within the context of Catholic education, this means that pastors should be aware of issues of the Church as a whole and the various elements of the parish ministries along with parents in their conceptual leadership.

Additionally, this spiritual role fit into Katz's (2009) skills approach when he spoke about conceptual leadership. According to Katz conceptual leadership was the ability to see the different elements of the organization and visualize their relationships to each other and the rest of the community. As a spiritual leader the pastors discussed the different elements of the facility, families, students, and parish and found ways to ensure that all of them work in tandem with each other. Having this wider view of the entire parish-school organization would be a key element of conceptual leadership in Katz' framework.

This preferred role of spiritual leadership also fitted into Ciriello's (1996) framework of Catholic school leadership in her description of spiritual leadership. In her model of principal leadership there are more main roles of the principal in his or her role as spiritual, educational, and managerial leadership. While Ciriello wrote about these roles for the principal, they could be applied to the pastor in his role as Chief Administrative Officer of his parish school. From these interviews it became clear that pastors desired this spiritual leadership role over the educational and managerial roles that Ciriello outlined.

Delegated Roles

Throughout the interviews most of the pastors described how they preferred to delegate educational and managerial roles to their principals. Hiring of staff and faculty along with the day-to-day financial operations of the school were among the topics within these roles that

pastors chose to delegate. This delegation of roles fits within Katz (2009) and Ciriello's (1996) frameworks in unique ways.

Katz (2009) described in his skills approach a technical area of skills that is relevant to this idea of delegation of roles. In a business, this would be the priority for workers lower on a hierarchy of roles. An example would be how a cook at a restaurant would need to have the technical skills to prepare food such as selecting the correct ingredients, understanding how long an item needs to be cooked, and the like. These skills contrast with the manager of the restaurant who may not have the technical skills to prepare a meal for the customers but has human skills as the manager of the personnel at the restaurant. This model holds true for the delegated roles of the pastor.

As the pastor concerned himself with the conceptual skills, involving multiple elements of the organization, most pastors indicated they would prefer to delegate the human and technical skills to their principals. These human and technical skills can be compared with Ciriello's (1996) model of principal leadership, which includes managerial and educational leadership distinct from spiritual leadership. While the pastors retained their authority, they chose to delegate these roles to the principals they have hired.

Pastors' View of Principals

In this West Coast Diocese, pastors delegate out the day-to-day operations of the school to the principal, though they retain the role as chief administrative officers. Though technically speaking optional, all the pastors who were interviewed chose to hire principals to manage their schools. The pastor-principal relationship described involved a mixture of delegated roles for the pastor and principal depending on their unique circumstances. These delegated roles can be

viewed through the lenses of Ciriello (1996) who proposed three roles (educational, managerial, and spiritual) for the school leader and Katz (2009) who argued that there are three sets of skills leaders might have: technical, human, and conceptual. Additionally, throughout these frameworks, there is an important element of trust that makes this pastor-principal relationship work.

Through the Lenses of Ciriello and Katz

In contrast to the pastors' ideal role of being the primary spiritual leader of the school the pastors preferred to delegate out the educational and managerial roles as head of the school that Ciriello (1996) described. All pastors described how they prefer to leave matters of curriculum and instruction to their principals with most saying that they felt they were not qualified to be in charge of such matters. Additionally, only a few pastors described how they desire to be involved in the hiring of teachers and staff. While the pastors took the spiritual role that Ciriello laid out for principals, the pastors seemed content to allow principals to retain the educational and managerial roles.

Looking at this pastor-principal relationship through Katz's (2009) one can see the outlines of his framework. Most pastors indicated a lack of interest in what Katz would describe as technical skills: reviewing lesson plans, processing payroll, and ensuring tuition was collected. This lack of interest extended to most parts of the human skills Katz described such as hiring new teachers, evaluating teachers, and providing professional development for teachers. However, one element of Katz's human skills that pastors found to be a special duty would be the hiring and retaining of their school's principal. In contrast, the pastors did indicate a preference for what would be called conceptual skills by Katz in their desire to connect members

of the community, preserve the school as a ministry of the parish, and ensure that current trends are implemented in both the parish and the school.

Trust

Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study was the importance of trust between the pastor and the principal. Frequently pastors mentioned their trust in their principals. This trust seems to be at least partially established by the fact that all of the pastors interviewed chose to appoint their principals themselves, though usually with some help from a committee. The importance of trust between these two parties was not mentioned in the literature and perhaps is an area for further research.

Pastors' Ideals Versus Local-executive Governance Model

In the local-executive governance model the governing of a parochial school is placed solely in the hands of the pastor (FADICA, 2015). While the pastors interviewed felt uncomfortable with managing the instructional program and hiring the teachers, they are ultimately accountable and in charge of those matters at their schools. A concerned parent at the school should, in theory, be able to question the pastor, as the executive of the school, about the academic program of the school. However, the reality reflected in these interviews is that pastors feel it is appropriate and prudent to delegate some of this authority to their school principals. While formally the governance model is executive, elements of it bled into a more collegial model where the pastor worked in collaboration with the school principal and his or her faculty.

Pastor Training

Most of the pastors indicated that their training for the leadership roles they held at the schools did not occur or that it was on the job. This lack of training validates what Boyle and

Dosen (2017) indicated in their research that 86% of seminary syllabi lacked any mention of Catholic schools. Within Katz's (2009) framework technical, human, and conceptual skills all require some kind of training, and while this training could be accomplished on the job, it is surprising that none of the training occurred within the many years of the pastor's seminary education as outlined in the *Program for Priestly Formation* that governs seminary education in the United States (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006).

Additionally, when looking at this lack of formal training through the lens of Ciriello's (1996) outlining of the three roles of the principal (which can and should be applied to the pastor as head of the school) it is concerning that pastors lack formal training for these roles. While all of these pastors were well intentioned, it seemed overwhelming, and perhaps unfair to the pastor, that they should be charged with educational and managerial roles without the appropriate training.

Urgency of Action

According to Pope Paul VI (1965) in his encyclical, *Gravissimum Educationis*, Christians have a right to a Christian education so that:

They are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith they have received . . . be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth . . . moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society. (p. 2)

This right to a Christian education is under assault in the United States due to many factors including include decreased enrollment and a decline of vocations to the priesthood (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, n.d.; National Catholic Educational Association, 2021).

Urgent and decisive action is necessary to maintain this right in the United States.

Enrollment Decreases

There is a high level of urgency for Catholic education to take immediate and significant steps to reform Catholic education in the United States. Catholic education has change drastically since the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 where it was mandated that every parish have a school and in 1960 when Catholic school enrollment exceeded 5,200,000 students (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2011). Since its height in 1960 Catholic school enrollment was cut by more than half by 1990 when enrollment was at 2,500,000 students (National Catholic Educational Association, 2021).

Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic school enrollment has dropped to 1,626,291 during the 2020-2021 school year (National Catholic Educational Association, 2021). In a mere 60 years, enrollment in Catholic schools in the United States has dropped by about 68%. Within the West Coast Diocese, around 9,000 students left Catholic schools in 2020. The National Catholic Educational Association also noted in their report that the brunt of this decrease has been born by elementary schools like those examined in this study. There was a decline 8.1% in elementary school enrollment in 2020 and 186 of the 209 Catholic schools closed in the United States were elementary schools. While academics and spirituality are important elements of a Catholic school, enrollment has become the number one issue in Catholic school leadership.

Some of the pastors interviewed understood their role in enrollment. Fathers Andrew, John, and Philip described their concerns about enrollment, and some described what actions they are taking to assist with recruiting students. Pastors, as heads of their schools, have a duty to ensure they protect the right Pope Paul IV (1965) described by doing all that they can to ensure that Catholic schools have the enrollment necessary to have their schools operate with sufficient tuition funds. This role stretches beyond pastors' parochial schools since a decrease in elementary enrollment will eventually have a trickle-down effect on secondary enrollment in high schools, most of which do not operate under the parochial model.

The Future of the Priesthood

Paired with this decrease in enrollment is a decrease in priestly vocations. According to the Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate the number of priests has decreased by 38% between 1970 and 2018 (n.d.). Additionally, as of 2018, the number of active diocesan priests per parish sits at 1.0, meaning that there is usually only one active priest at each parish. If this number were to drop below 1.0, there could be many increasing situations where pastors become responsible for multiple parishes, which may mean they will become chief administrative officers of more than one school. Many of the pastors described a lack of time in fulfilling their leadership roles at their schools, and this lack of time will only get worse if pastors oversee multiple schools.

There is a clear urgency with this situation with vocations to the priesthood since sacramental life in the Catholic Church revolves around the availability of priests in parishes in addition to their governing role. In a 2020 survey of ordinands in the United States, it was found that 44% of all ordained that year attended a Catholic elementary school (Do & Kramarek,

2020). This means that ordinands are 5% more likely than the average U.S. adult Catholic to have attended a Catholic elementary school. As Father Thomas described, priestly involvement in the schools is important for promoting priestly vocations.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are a few areas of future research that can stem from this project. Modifying seminary training, examining pastor's openness to different governance structures, the pastor-principal relationship, central office support, and defining the role of the Catholic school principal. All of these suggestions for future research can help to explore further how Catholic education can continue to grow, even if it means modifying its current structures. Through further research of the roles of different stakeholders, such as pastors, principals, and central offices, Catholic education will advance to preserve itself for years to come.

Developing Appropriate Training for Pastors

One area is the topic of pastor experience in relation to on-the-job-training. While many pastors mentioned that most of their training when it came to running a school comes from their previous experiences as associate pastors and pastors of different parishes with schools, there was more to the story that was not able to be covered due to the scope of this project. Future research should examine the type of experiences new priests are assigned to ensure that their experiences are well rounded and include the on-the-job-training that will be beneficial for their future appointments.

If the local-executive governance model is to continue, pastors should be trained in school administration, ideally beyond this on-the-job training. Seminary curriculum should be modified to include courses not only in leadership and general parish administration but also in

training pastors in operating schools. While Ciriello's (1996) framework was focused on principals, if pastors are to be the heads of their schools, they also should be trained in being spiritual, managerial, and educational leaders in schools. It appears that this research is currently lacking in the literature and further research is needed to develop these skills for pastors.

Exploring Pastors' Openness to Different Governance Structures

Another area of future research would be to examine pastors' openness to different governance models. While discussing potential different governance models was outside the scope of this project, some pastors may have strong feelings about the shifting of the role at the parochial school. It was clear that these pastors interviewed enjoyed their roles, but it is currently unknown whether they would be willing to part with their roles if their school governance model were to shift to a more centralized one where, for example, an (arch)diocesan office of education would manage the school.

Examining the Pastor-Principal Relationship

An additional area of future research would be to examine principal voices in this pastor-principal relationship. While the pastors indicated in their interviews that they prefer to have certain roles and delegate other roles to the principal, their words are only half of the story. It would be interesting to interview both principals and pastors, separately and confidentially, to determine how these roles exist in reality.

One way to frame this research would be to look back at Katz's (2009) skills-based leadership. In this pastor-principal relationship it is difficult to define who is primarily working with areas requiring technical, human, and conceptual skills since both the principal and pastors head the school. For example, within the area of human skills, a principal may want to hire a

certain teacher, but a pastor may not approve of the hire. Additionally, it is unclear who is heading the conceptual elements of operating a school. Both pastor and principal hold positions requiring conceptual skills, however if they were to both use these skills, they might overlap in ways that would cause conflict.

Central Office Support

While the local-executive model assumes the pastor is the final authority, in many areas of the United States a central (arch)diocesan office helps to support Catholic schools. In this study it was revealed that pastors prefer to demonstrate spiritual leadership and leave the managerial and educational roles that Ciriello (1996) defined to the principal. With this knowledge in hand, there is an opportunity for new research in how central offices can best support pastors who wish to have this role. Further research could look at how central offices could better support both principals and pastors.

It is clear from the interviews that principals usually are charged with educational and managerial roles. Since these two roles have been delegated out to the principals, research could be done to closer look at how central offices can train principals in these roles. Additionally, when it comes to pastors, central offices could train them to better understand the role of the principal so that they are aware of the principals' role and how they can support the leadership of their principals. Further research is necessary to examine what model would fit best for central offices to meet these needs of both pastors and principals.

Defining the Role of the Principal in The Local-executive Governance Model

While Ciriello (1996) assigned the principal three different roles, these assigned roles may not fit within the local-executive governance model. Since the pastor holds final authority,

Ciriello's work might be suited for both pastors and principals since the role of the principal may vary from site to site (Goldschmidt & Walsh, 2013). Because there are many different ways of defining the role of the principal at different parochial schools, it is difficult for central offices, schools of education, or Catholic school leadership preparation programs to train principals and principal candidates to meet the needs of pastors in the local-executive governance model.

Further research is necessary to better define the role of the principal in this governance model. A suggested list of principal responsibilities would be as follows:

- Managing all financial assets of the school, including tuition collection,
- Hiring, retaining, training, and developing all faculty and staff,
- Assess, monitor, and provide structures for collaboration among teachers in academic matters,
- Using conceptual skills to develop relations with all stakeholders of the community including parents, students, alumni, teachers, staff, and the neighborhood (Katz, 2009), and
- Recruit and retain students at the school.

While the principal may have these duties, the pastor may retain his duties as being the spiritual leader of the school and overseeing the spiritual formation of the schools. Since the pastors indicated in the interviews that they enjoyed the spiritual elements of their management of the school, they might be inclined to take this much narrower definition their role while formally expanding the role of the principal. Further research is necessary to define this role of the principal to find the delineation between the roles of the pastor and principal in the local-executive governance model.

Implications

The findings from this study have complications for the local-executive governance model. Within these interviews was a clear shift of authority from pastors to laypersons, which should be more widely promoted among Catholic parochial schools. Additionally, the findings in this study demonstrated a need for an examination of different governance models within the West Coast Diocese that were at the time of the study only in place at a limited number of schools.

Shifting Authority From Pastors to Laypersons in New Governance Models

Under Canon Law, the pastor of a parish is charged with the duty of ensuring that all faithful may have a Catholic education (Catholic Church, 1984). While pastors have this duty, the actual execution of a Catholic education have fallen to laypeople. The fact that all the pastors interviewed have elected to appoint principals to manage the schools in the pastors' names demonstrated an already existing shift of authority from pastors to laypeople. This process should be accelerated among parochial schools in the West Coast Diocese. Based on the interviews from the pastors and the data performed in the literature review, such a shift would benefit pastors, principals, and schools themselves.

The pastors interviewed described their lack of formal training for taking on the significant role of being chief administrative officer of their parochial schools under the local-executive governance model. This lack of training was collaborated with the research that demonstrated that the seminary training of pastors was in no way sufficient for their duties as heads of a parochial school (Boyle & Dosen, 2017). With decreasing enrollment at Catholic schools and ever-increasing financial challenges, the best leaders are required to keep Catholic

education alive, and priests may not be the best suited for this role. Rather, a well-trained layperson with education and training in the different elements of school administration would be a better choice.

Additionally, one limitation of this study demonstrated the need for a shift to layperson. The sample in this study of nine pastors was skewed since only pastors of a certain quality and interest responded to the invitation to be interviewed. Clearly the ones who were willing to be interviewed had a strong interest in the work of their school. However, one cannot assume that all pastors share the same enthusiasm for their parochial schools. Additionally, research indicated that pastors may indeed have low opinions of their Catholic schools and may not even think their schools should remain open (Calkins & Convey, 2019; Convey, 1999; O'Brien, 1987). By shifting authority from a priest, who may not even wish to have a parish school, to a layperson who is interested in education administration as evidenced by his or her training and experience, Catholic schools can better ensure they have stronger leadership.

Lastly, two major challenges described by pastors was their lack of associate pastors and the lack of time. Since priests are needed to perform many of the sacramental duties of the Catholic Church, it is better to have priests focus on those duties and parish administration rather than for them to spend time running schools. There is no sign that the steady decline of vocations to the Catholic priesthood is going to change, and as time goes on the number of priests per parish may drop below 1.0 (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, n.d.). With the coming situation where parishes may have fewer than one full time priest on hand, it makes more sense to limit their responsibilities and delegate those that can be done by a layperson, to a qualified layperson.

Considering Different Governance Models

Catholic school governance could be classified on two axes, one local versus central and another executive versus collegial (FADICA, 2015). This study only examined one of the four possible combinations of these two axes. There were local-collegial, central-executive, and central-collegial models that span many different specific governance structures. There are countless possible models for Catholic schools to be governed by that include different uses of clergy, laity, and the economies of scale that comes with involving multiple schools.

An exploration of different governance structures is essential for the West Coast Diocese. For example, a shift to a more collegial governance structure would free up much time for pastors to manage their parishes. Additionally, by including more individuals who may be better qualified to govern a school there may be added benefits of introducing different perspectives. A shift to a more centralized governance structure would also yield the benefits of economies of scale and allow smaller schools to unlock resources previously inaccessible.

There are alternative models of Catholic school governance. For example, the Archdiocese of New York has a central-collegial model where schools are no longer part of their parishes and a board of trustees governed different regions of the city (FADICA, 2015). The Healey Educational Foundation Schools in the Maryland, New Jersey, and Philadelphia has a local-collegial model where board of limited jurisdiction govern schools and the pastor retains some authority, though it is mediated through the local diocese (Healey Education Foundation, 2021).

Additionally, there are models that exist outside of FADICA's framework such as Seton Educational Partners in New York. Seton Educational Partners (2021) sponsored a secular

charter school network based on Catholic ideals but also has Catholic afterschool programming. This type of model allowed Catholic education to evolve to a new form where schools have access to public funding but are still able to serve students in the Catholic tradition after school.

However, under a local-executive governance model a parochial school has the worst of both worlds. There is a single man functioning as the executive of the school who may or may not have the training for the position and the local status of the school means it cannot have access to any economies of scale. In this great man style of leadership there is a strong potential for ineffective leadership, even if unintended. While this model does preserve local control, this benefit may not outweigh the enrollment, funding, and financial challenges facing Catholic schools today (McDonald & Schultz, 2019).

Considerations for Diocesan and National Leaders

Due to the urgency of the current state of Catholic education, action should be taken by leaders at the (arch)diocesan and national levels to ensure that the promise of Catholic education continues for future generations. It is clear from this research that pastors have a challenging time balancing both their school and parish responsibilities and because of this they are stretched thin. However, the impetus for change will not come from educators but rather from the clerical class who are in control of this system. Laypeople in Catholic education have a duty to advocate and guide (arch)bishops and other clerics to shifting to a more sustainable model.

In order to make systemic change in Catholic parochial education, where more authority is shifted to educational, rather than clerical, leaders in Catholic education need to provide structures for new designs in Catholic school leadership. Local (arch)diocesan and national leaders in Catholic education should demonstrate to bishops about how they and their priests

would benefit from more collegial models of leadership. If (arch)bishops were made aware of how being the chief administrative officer of a school imposes an undesired role on their pastors, perhaps they would consider different governance models. For example, by having a central office manage the schools led by qualified laypersons, pastors would then have more time to devote to their sacramental duties in addition to managing their parishes. Additionally, schools would probably benefit by having more qualified leaders rather than having a priest who is the leader simply by virtue of the governance structure. Ironically, it may be the job of laypeople to bring to the attention of the episcopate of the concerns and needs of priests.

This research demonstrated that pastors, in addition to lacking the time to run a school, have little interest in fulfilling their roles as educational and managerial leaders of the schools. Nearly all of the pastors interviewed discussed how they chose to delegate these roles to the principal that they have hired. Rather than pushing this duty on already overburdened priests, Catholic school leaders should show to (arch)bishops that the system already has a high degree of delegation, so the shift to an alternative governance model would formalize much of what is already in place. By working closely with the Church hierarchy, Catholic education leaders have the ability to shift responsibility for schools from pastors to qualified laypersons.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- How do you fulfill your role as spiritual leader of the school? How do you work with the principal in your role?
- Describe to me the challenges you have in fulfilling your role as spiritual leader of the school.
- In your ideal situation how does a pastor and principal service together as spiritual leaders at a Catholic school? Is your role important to you?
- How do you make decisions about the school's finances? Tell me about how you make decisions, I'd like to understand how do you work with the principal in your role.
- What are the challenges in making decisions about school's finances?
- Ideally, how does a pastor make decisions about a school's finances? Is it important to you to be involved in the school's finances?
- How do you make decisions about the hiring and retaining of the principal, teachers, and other staff at the school? How do you work with the principal in your role?
- What challenges do you encounter in making decisions about hiring and retaining the principal, teachers, and other staff?
- In your ideal leadership role as a pastor, would you like to be involved in the hiring and retaining of school staff? How important is that to you as pastor?
- How do you make decisions about school curricula and instruction? How do you work with the principal in your role?

- What are the challenges in making decisions (or delegating) about school curricula and instruction?
- What advice would you have for pastors who are in charge of schools?

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