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### Introduction

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## REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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### INTRODUCTION

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*Boston College*

In *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, educators in all sectors now have a central source of reliable information about the current status and future prospects of Catholic educational institutions. Along with refereed articles and book reviews, the journal provides an overview of ongoing scholarly initiatives in a section entitled "Review of Research."

Normally, the "Review of Research" section will have two parts. The first will be panoramic. Here, I and other editors will offer information that will help researchers and practitioners learn about issues of common concern. In light of the World Wide Web, ERIC, NEXIS, and other technological innovations, information about Catholic-school research is more readily available. In each issue of the journal, we will provide readers with an overview of published works, including those in major newspapers or magazines, as well as significant planning documents and similar reports from schools or dioceses. We will also provide information about works in progress, including papers from annual educational conferences such as the Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, the Convention of the National Catholic Educational Association, the Meeting of the Association of Catholic Institutes of the Science of Education (ACISE), and "Conversations in Excellence," a component of SPICE (Selected Programs for Improving Catholic Education). Likewise, we will provide information about other important gatherings, such as the upcoming conference "Private Schools: Reconciling Pluralism and the Common Good" at the University of Dayton in October, 1997. Finally, in this panoramic section we will publish calls for papers, requests for grant proposals, and invitations to upcoming conferences.

The second part of the Review of Research section is more focused. In each issue there will be one article about a research initiative that is of broad

interest. In this issue, Catholic University professors James Youniss, John Convey, and David Baker describe their Lilly-funded initiative called "Legacy at the Crossroads: The Future of Catholic School." This project examines a wide range of topics, including: spiritual leadership of Catholic school principals; emerging models of sponsorship of Catholic schools by religious communities; religion curriculum in the schools; parish religious education programs; elementary school teachers' knowledge of Catholic teaching; the perceptions of parents, bishops, and priests about the value of a Catholic education; analysis of budgets, costs, and income; innovations in development and fundraising; ethnically diverse schools; inner-city schools; students and families in Catholic schools; teachers and employment patterns; emerging models of governance; meta-analysis of academic achievement; quantitative growth and decline of schools; philosophies of school choice; the present legal status of vouchers; historical trends; and community service learning. The research methodologies also vary. They include secondary analysis of large government-sponsored data sets; data from survey instruments designed specifically for the project; document analysis; interview and observational data; as well as historical, philosophical, and theological inquiry.

In a forthcoming issue of *Catholic Education*, Dr. Thomas Hunt of the University of Dayton will offer a bibliographic essay on dissertations about Catholic schools that have been produced during the 1990s. Using the UMI database, he found 173 doctoral dissertations about K-12 Catholic schooling in the U.S. or its territories (not Canada). Ninety of these were from Catholic universities, 58 from state universities, and 25 from private, non-Catholic universities.

Central among the wide range of topics in subsequent issues is research on Catholic schools outside of the United States. One article will describe an emerging research network sponsored by ACISE, a European-based division of the International Federation of Catholic Universities that focuses on departments and schools of education. Among the universities represented in this effort are: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Universidade Catolica Portuguesa in Lisbon, Institut Supérieur de Pédagogie (Institut Catholique de Paris), Università Pontificia Salesiana in Rome, Université Catholique de Louvain, Université Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, Newman College in Birmingham, St. Mary's University College in London, and St. Andrew's College of Education in Glasgow. Dr. Bart McGittrick (St. Andrew College in Glasgow) and Michel Suétard (Université Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers), president and secretary of ACISE, plan to include in this network researchers from sister organizations in East Asia (ASEACCU), South Asia (Xavier Board of Higher Education), and Africa (ASUNICAM) as well as North and South America.

Another article will focus on current research efforts in the United Kingdom, especially as these relate to inner-city education. Included will be information about a study published in April, 1997, by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales entitled *A Struggle for Excellence: Catholic Secondary Schools in Urban Poverty Areas*. Prominent in this domain is the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education at the University of London, Institute of Education, founded by Dr. Gerald Grace in September, 1996.

In another issue, we will invite Dr. Harry Judge of Oxford University to describe a project for which he received funding from the Spencer Foundation, a comparison of government policies relating to Catholic schools in the U.S., the U.K., and France. We likewise hope to provide an overview of current research efforts in Australia.

These are but a few examples of the type of information about research that can assist Catholic educators in their work. The Review of Research section of the journal will be helpful only to the extent that people from a wide variety of settings submit material and offer their suggestions. In that vein, I encourage you to send information for the first part of the review that offers a panorama of research issues or proposals for an article in the second part of the review that focuses on one particular theme or initiative. Please send correspondence to:

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