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Implementing Calendar Reform in a Suburban Catholic Elementary School: A Case Study

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Implementing Calendar Reform in a Suburban Catholic Elementary School: A Case Study

by

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DEDICATION

To my beloved family…

Lily, Mary Catherine, and Tommy Muzzy—three amazing children

Stephen Muzzy—friend, confidant, and partner

Lost time is never found again.

Benjamin Franklin

Time you enjoyed wasting was not wasted.

John Lennon

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ABSTRACT

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Time-based reform proposals are founded on the assumption that more time in school will produce great learning outcomes. Research shows that when schools adopt time-based reform initiatives, there are certain considerations that they should make and methods they should follow to ensure the change produces the outcomes intended. This was not the case in a local Archdiocese where a calendar extension was adopted by several elementary schools.

This qualitative case study focused on the adoption of a calendar extension at one Catholic elementary school. The researcher gathered data from the pastor, principal, teachers, parents, and students to determine how these stakeholders envisioned the outcomes of this change, how they perceived the time was being used for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes, and the challenges and opportunities that they felt existed after three years of implementation. Data collected over a four-month period included classroom observations, stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, and document analysis.

An inductive analysis of the data collected was used to determine emergent themes and domains within the school. The seven themes that emerged include: decision

making, planning and implementation, advantages, financial motivations, the culture of teaching, leadership, challenges and complications of the extended calendar.

Recommendations include the need for school leaders to familiarize themselves with change management techniques including setting a shared vision, establishing a collaborative implementation plan, and developing a system of assessment prior to embarking on school reform.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Media and federally-sponsored research initiatives alike showcase the apparent deficiencies in the education of American students. This portrayal is consistently frightening and provokes concern from parents, educators, politicians, and researchers. As a result, the past few decades have been spent evaluating schools, preparing reports, and imposing legislation aimed at regulation and improvement (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). However, Berliner and Biddle (1995) suggested that this is a "groundless and damaging message" (p. 3) that has been promulgated by government leaders, business leaders, and a compliant media, leaving Americans with the illusion that "the public schools of their nation are in a crisis state" (p. 3). They further noted that, every year new programs and reforms are introduced in American schools and that most of these programs will result in needless disruption of students and teachers lives and a complete waste of funding. Berliner and Biddle (1995) suggested this happens because most reform measures in schools commence "without benefit of relevant research" (p. 347). Fullan (2009) asserted that school leaders often adopt reform initiatives or change without knowledge of change management techniques. One pressing issue and suggested reform in education involves the use of time: time on task, time in school, modified school schedules, and extended or modified school calendars.

Focusing on Time

Since publication of the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and the

subsequent 1994 report *Prisoners of Time* (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994), educators have considered the apparent time-oriented instructional challenge American students face simply because they spend less time in school than their peers in other nations. Both reports posited a link between achievement and time spent in school as the potential cause of American students' comparatively lower scores on internationally recognized achievement tests. Comparative reviews of international education trends and practices point to structural differences, and time spent in school remains on that list. For example, the report stated,

> Time is learning's warden. Our time-bound mentality has fooled us all into believing that schools can educate all of the people all of the time in a school year of 180 six-hour days. The consequence of our self-deception has been to ask the impossible of our students. We expect them to learn as much as their counterparts abroad in only half the time. (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 5)

As if time alone is the cause of this disparity, some educational theorists suggest that calendar modifications and more time spent in schools will address the challenge resulting in three decades of calendar-based reform initiatives employed across the country including: school-day extension, school-year extension, and adjustment of the calendar to enable year-round schooling (Farbman, 2011; Johnson & Spradlin, 2007). This seems basic on the surface: "the logic of time reform is simple—more time in school should result in more learning and better student performance" (Silva, 2007, p. 1) and "time devoted to school learning appears to be a modest predictor of achievement" (Fredrick & Walberg, 1980, p. 193).

Available research on time-based educational reform suggests that the kind of time added to the school calendar, how additional time is spent in school, and the unique and diverse needs of the students must all be considered before educators can assess how effectively time alone can improve student learning and achievement (Bishop, Worner, & Weber, 1988). Berliner and Biddle remarked that time-based reform "proposals are based on the assumption that students will learn more if only they are exposed to more classroom hours" (1995, p. 184). Silva (2007) noted, "time's potential as a reform depends largely on whether the time is used effectively and on its use as a resource to serve students most in need of extra learning opportunities, both inside and outside of school" (p. 9).

When researchers compare the actual hours spent in school versus the number of days in the school year, the international comparisons tell a very different story. In fact, when considering the number of hours spent in school, students in the United States average "over 1,100 hours, almost double that of children in Finland;" however, "[d]espite much longer school days, American students routinely score 10% to 20% lower than Finnish students on international tests of achievement" (Baines, 2007, p. 98). Cuban (2008) shared that "convincing evidence drawn from research that more time in school would lead to a stronger economy, less inequalities in family income, and that elusive edge in global competitiveness—much less a higher rank in international tests—remains missing in action" (p. 245).

Quality versus Quantity

In the case of time-based reform, previous studies found that it is the quality and nature of the time and not the quantity that matters (Baines, 2007; Silva, 2007, 2012; Worsnop, 1996). American teachers reported that "time at school is often wasted on performing nonteaching tasks,

organizing paperwork, maintaining discipline, and keeping students 'busy'" (Baines, 2007, p. 98). Therefore, in an effort to be accountable and to accurately assess the impact of time-based reform, it is essential to examine the use of time in schools that have adopted calendar extensions if the desired outcomes are to be considered and recognized. Karweit (1984) noted that "time is a necessary but not sufficient, condition for learning" and "learning takes time, but providing time does not in itself ensure that learning will take place" (p. 33).

Use of Time Matters

Time matters, the school calendar and the clock govern "how families organize their lives, how administrators oversee their schools, and how teachers work their way through the curriculum" (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994). Ben-Peretz and Bromme (1990) suggested that "time is a useful variable for measuring the processes of schooling ... it plays a substantive role in the culture of schools" (p. v). However, more time in school for students does not necessarily equate to better learning because there are many factors at play in school including the quality of instruction, the curriculum used, and the background of the teacher (Worsnop, 1996). Baines (2007) reported that American teachers often remark that time in schools is wasted on administrative tasks and discipline. Cuban (2008) suggested that "proving time in school is the crucial variable in raising academic achievement is difficult because so many other variables must be considered—the local context itself, available resources, teacher quality, administrative leadership, socioeconomic background of students and their families, and what is taught" (p. 244).

Reform proposals focused on time should also consider the kind of time that is being added because "research shows that the correlation between time and student achievement gets

stronger with more engaged time" (Silva, 2007, p. 2). Prior research also indicated a "complicated relationship between time and learning and suggests that improving the quality of instructional time is at least as important as increasing the quantity of time in school" (Silva, 2007, p. 1). Researchers also noted that when "manipulating time is itself the primary reform, it is critical to understand the processes that such actions set in motion and it is necessary to pay attention to the different, and often conflicting, notions of time that people in schools hold" (Gándara, 2000, p. 10). The manner in which time is added and how it is used matters, as the U.S. Department of Education indicated:

> By far the most important part of this Commission's charge relates not to time but to student learning. The first issue is not "How much time is enough?" but "What are we trying to accomplish?" As witnesses repeatedly told the Commission, there is no point to adding more time to today's schools if it is used in the same way. We must use time in new, different, and better ways. (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 30)

Structuring Time and Instruction

Some researchers also considered different school schedule options including block scheduling (longer blocks of instruction) and year-round schedules that do not increase the amount of time spent in school but play with the existing time that schools use (Silva, 2007). Other uses of time need to be considered such as understanding how the time in school is allocated to various subjects, content, and instructional activities. One must also consider how time is to address administrative needs including classroom management activities, attendance, collection and distribution of materials, and other administrative tasks. Differentiation should

also be considered because every classroom in America includes a diverse population of learners; therefore, "there is extraordinary variety in types of intelligence, so too is there extraordinary variety in how people learn" (Senge et al., 2012, p. 44). The appropriateness of instruction for all learners and the individual needs of learners should be considered because both of these factors impact the effectiveness of the time spent in the classroom and ultimately student learning (Aronson, Zimmerman, & Carlos, 1999, p. 9). Other researchers noted a negative correlation between additional time spent in school and achievement when that time was used to make up for previous ineffective instruction or a student's inability to master curricular objectives (Fredrick & Walberg, 1980).

Continuity and Resources

Another aspect to consider with time-based reform and calendar extensions is whether schools practice consistency with their additional instruction throughout the school year and during the extended period. Consistency in this context means that all of the teachers in the school have consistent goals and objectives for how instructional time should be used and that they adhere to a specific, sequential set of standards. Likewise, the teachers would implement their use of the additional time consistently to deliver curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs that meet the objectives of the use of extended time. Without consistency and continuity, effective teaching is compromised. However, continuity and collaboration alone will not ensure that "all outcomes will be positive" (Shields & Olberg, 2000, p. 32). Adhering to objectives is critical to the use of extended time; however, Berliner and Biddle (1995) indicated that the lockstep nature of the American curriculum approach may impact the effectiveness of time-based reform because "instruction in the classrooms was controlled not so much by the

available time as by curricular material and by the teachers' perceptions of student learning" (p. 185). They also noted that "proposals for extending the school day or year have not generally provided guidance and resources to help teachers use the additional time wisely" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 186).

Communication, Planning, and Implementation of Time-Based Reform

The nature in which an academic calendar change is decided, communicated, and planned for by the school community proves critical to the effectiveness of the reform initiative. Fullan (2009) noted that educational leaders who are interested in effectively introducing change to their organizations should have an "understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice" (p. 9). Understanding the change process includes determining and engaging people's moral purpose, which "in educational change is about improving society through improving educational systems" (Fullan, 2009, p. 10), as well as building capacity for the change. By building capacity, a leader helps to facilitate the change, devising "policies, strategies, resources, and actions designed to increase people's collective power to move the system forward" (Fullan, 2009, p. 10). Change management should also include an understanding of the change process. Educational leaders interested in effecting and sustaining a change such as a calendar extension reform initiative should ensure that the "change process is about establishing the condition for continuous improvement in order to persist and overcome inevitable barriers to reform" (Fullan, 2009, p. 11).

Local Extended Calendar Initiative Adopted

In January 2011 an Archdiocese within the western region of the United States announced a calendar extension initiative for the elementary schools within its region (Baxter,

2011; Landsberg, 2011). The decision to lengthen the school year in this Archdiocese was made in a top-down format that did not involve the consultation of Archdiocesan principals or pastors prior to the announcement. Further complicating matters, this initiative was first introduced as a mandate by the Department of Catholic Schools, the educational governance office of the Archdiocese. Given the inherent nature of parish-based, pastor-led, Catholic schools, which are governed by Canon Law, the mandate was viewed by many as a violation of the governance protocol that permits pastors "autonomy in the internal management of their schools" (Canon Law Society of America, 1983, Can. 806 §1). Pastors and principals alike argued that the Department of Catholic Schools did not have the jurisdiction to function like a public school district where the school board and the superintendent could impose mandates. Given the site-based management model used within Catholic education, the mandate was altered within a few days to a suggestion for schools within the Archdiocese. Sabatino, Huchting, and Dell'Olio (2013) suggested that in turn, the pastor hire a principal to serve as "the chief operating officer of the school" (p. 393). The suggestion from the Archdiocese asked pastors and principals to determine, at their individual school sites, whether they would adopt the reform initiative or not.

Approximately 60% of the elementary schools within the Archdiocese adopted the initiative and extended their calendars from 180 days to 200 days (Sabatino et al., 2013) or in varied degrees of that additional days in compliance with the suggestion from the Department of Catholic Schools (Baxter, 2011). Baxter (2011) noted that the Department of Catholic Schools "announced a new vision for its elementary schools: to have all of them move to a 200-day academic calendar year" (p. 16) from the traditional 180-day calendar. Baxter (2011) indicated that this initiative, as defined by the Department of Catholic Schools, was designed to "augment

interest in the school, with an increase in enrollment" and to "establish a foundation for enhanced student success in all areas of education—academic, spiritual, social, and emotional" (p. 17). Baxter (2011) also suggested that this initiative would "reduce greatly the need for academic summer school," "increase 'time on task,'" and finally "add depth and richness to the curriculum already being taught so that students and teachers both have a more satisfying educational experience" (p. 17-18).

However, despite the goals presented by the Department of Catholic Schools, a pilot study of three schools that adopted the extended calendar initiative discovered that some schools extended their calendars as suggested without having developed a clear plan for how the time would be used (Sabatino, Huchting, & Dell'Olio, 2012). The pilot study noted that "school communities were comfortable at the time of the interviews in May 2011 in not having a clearly defined and/or designed plan for using the extra days in the school calendar" (Sabatino et al., 2012, p. 4).

Likewise, the schools in the pilot study noted that they did not initially have a formal assessment plan in place to measure the effectiveness of the implementation and progress with the calendar extension. All three of the schools in the pilot study followed a unique decision-making processes at their sites when considering the adoption of this initiative, and they varied in how they sought community buy-in and consent, as well as how they funded their calendar extension. Despite their implementation differences, the three schools shared the same primary reasons for implementing the extended calendar including: providing more instructional time for enrichment, reducing summer learning loss, and improving student learning (Sabatino et al., 2012).

Missing Implementation Plan

Given that all three schools involved in the pilot study (Sabatino et al., 2012) cited improving student learning as their ultimate reason for implementing the extended calendar, one would assume that they had a plan in place for how to use the time to ensure that student learning was impacted. However, all three schools indicated that they did not have a plan in place when they adopted this reform initiative (Sabatino et al., 2012). Research relative to time-based reform indicated that how the time is used matters if student learning is to be influenced positively (Silva, 2007, 2012). Research relative to organizational change also indicated that**:**

> The history of educational reform and innovation is replete with good ideas or policies that fail to get implemented or that are successful in one situation but not in another. A missing ingredient in more failed cases is appreciation and use of what we call *change knowledge*: understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice. (Fullan, 2009, p. 9)

Measuring the Impact of Reform Requires Planning

McCullough, Graf, Leung, Stroud, and Orlando (2008) argued that implementation of an educational reform initiative should include a comprehensive plan that incorporates three components of systemic change: vision, implementation plan, and assessment. However, often schools do not consider how the change will be assessed and analyzed "until well into the implementation ... [and] this creates a lack of baseline data and missed opportunities to track progress" (McCullough, Graf, Leung, Stroud, & Orlando, 2008, p. 20). There is great pressure in America for schools to adopt reform that might improve achievement, but sadly many schools

adopt “reforms for which they did not have the capacity (individually or organizationally) to put (the reforms) into practice” (Fullan, 2000, p. 103).

Research relative to school calendar initiatives suggested that when a public or private elementary school adopts an extended or modified calendar there are many challenges that the school is required to consider and plan to navigate the reform (Aronson et al., 1999; Ballinger & Kneese, 2006; Davies & Kerry, 1999; Fredrick & Walberg, 1980; Gándara, 2000; Kneese & Ballinger, 2009; Rowan, 2009; Shields & Oberg, 2000; Silva, 2007, 2012). This includes formulating the increased costs of plant maintenance and teacher compensation for the extra term, building and maintaining community consent and support for the program, and assessing the manner in which the extra time is utilized in classrooms to ensure that it is meaningful for the students.

Going in with an implementation plan that considers many factors and addresses how the plan will be assessed is fundamental to implementing change (McCullough et al., 2008). However, Silva (2007) indicated that many schools only partially consider their plan and the full extent of the expenses that they will incur as the result of the extended calendar. Many consider the increase in staffing costs but not the additional plant management costs such as, building maintenance, insurance, transportation, electricity, and telephone expenses (Silva, 2007).

Building community assent is another critical aspect if the intervention is going to be successful, “[t]hose who study school calendar change have often reported considerable difficulty in getting school communities on board—even when the change is intended to promote the greater good of the school and community” (Kneese & Ballinger, 2009, p. 21). Teacher, parent, and student buy-in for a time-based school reform measure should be considered. The

manner in which reform measures are evaluated should consider both quantitative data relative to student achievement as well as qualitative data relative to perception of time initiative, teacher and student attitudes, and how the additional time is used as perceived by both the teachers and the students. Ross, McDonald, Alberg, and McSparrin-Gallagher (2007) noted that "many of the schools attempting to enact reforms appeared to lack a clearly stated mission, a safe environment, high expectations, instructional leadership, opportunity to learn, monitoring of progress, formative evaluation activity, external partners, and effective communication" (p. 138).

How the time is used is critical not only to the planning and implementation, but also to the analysis of the intervention and its effectiveness. As Silva (2007) noted, "time's potential as a reform depends largely on whether the time is used effectively" (p. 9). Adding time alone will not ensure increased learning opportunities because time as a measurement factor is "the crudest and least helpful measure in trying to assess how time relates to learning precisely because it fails to consider how schools, teachers, and students are using time and the quality of instructional activities" (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 8).

Reform and Accountability

In a society where accountability and assessment have been part of the school culture since the adoption of *No Child Left Behind* (2001) a systematic plan for implementation and for measurement of the intervention's impact is fundamental to such reform (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Travers, 2009). However, research indicated that systematic planning is not always part of a school's adoption of a reform measure (Fullan, 2009; Sabatino et al., 2012).

As previously noted, the schools in the archdiocesan pilot study of the 200-day initiative (Sabatino et al., 2012) did not have a formal plan in place for how the time would be used or how

use of that time would be assessed or measured. Research conducted at Loyola Marymount University documented challenges acknowledged by teachers in Catholic schools that have just adopted an extended calendar without a plan (Dell'Olio, Huchting, Aldana, & Muzzy, 2014; Sabatino et al., 2013). As a means of easing schools in their transition to the 200-day calendar, as well as the new adopted Common Core Standards, the Archdiocese contracted with professional development provider, *Catapault Learning,* to prepare a document titled "Roadmap to 200 Days of Excellence: Supporting Student Achievement All Year Long" (Archdiocese of Los Angeles & Catapult Learning, 2011). This standards-oriented guide was provided to Catholic schools within the Archdiocese in an effort to demonstrate how schools could realign and pace their English language arts and math curriculum when using the extended calendar. It also was designed to help ease teachers into the standards realignment from the California state standards to the new Common Core Standards. However, fieldwork data from this study (Sabatino et al., 2013) indicated that this resource was not fully utilized, but the "Roadmap to 200 Days of Excellence" is now being used in some schools to help pace instruction with the extra time. In these schools this resource is also being used to help realign the curriculum to the Common Core Standards (Kendall, 2011). Schools involved in the initial pilot study and the larger research project lacked implementation plans and may not have followed the suggestions for curricular implementation of the extended time (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al., 2012; Sabatino et al. 2013). Researchers who published results from this large 200-day pilot program found that some teachers independently and autonomously determined how the additional time would be used in their classrooms (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al., 2012; Sabatino, et al. 2013). The use of time varies by school and by teacher to include elective classes, enrichment

classes, increased core curriculum instruction, and Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) instruction (Breiner, Harkness, Johnson, & Koehler, 2012). How the time is used often lacks a school-wide, unified, objective-driven, measurable direction, and what happens in one classroom may be quite different from what happens in another because of the lack of a cohesive, quantifiable plan (Murphy, 1992).

For example, one school that adopted the extended calendar chose to use the time for STEM instruction, but the implementation of how time is used to instruct in these areas varies in each classroom at the site. Furthermore, when the school administrator and the faculty and the school were asked how they would assess progress in this area, they suggested that they would use the fall of 2012 *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* (ITBS) standardized assessment data (Hoover, Dunbar, & Frisbie, 2005). This is problematic in several ways. First, these assessments do not align fully with the STEM standards and objectives. Second, the ITBS battery has been re-normed in 2011 so longitudinal measurement of achievement growth since the adoption of the extended calendar is difficult. Third, the Archdiocesan schools were required to use the new *Iowa Form E* assessment in the fall of 2012 and the standards to which these assessments are aligned as well as that the assessment categories are not identical to the former ITBS assessments making measurement of achievement growth a challenge.

Statement of the Problem

National commissions on education have proposed the need for schools in America to increase instructional time as a means of improving educational performance (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994). Time-based reform initiatives are problematic, however, because adding time

alone will not ensure improvement (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Karweit, 1984; Silva, 2007). Educators need to consider the quality of instructional time, in addition to the quantity of instruction (Baines, 2007; Silva, 2007; Worsnop, 1996). Educational researchers explored various time-based reform models over the past few decades and found that most have minimal impact on achievement growth (Aronson et al., 1999; Silva, 2007). Consistency in how the time is used throughout a school matters if the objectives of the reform are to be met (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Shields & Olberg, 2000). There are many factors for schools to consider when introducing a change including communicating the change, setting the vision, implementing a plan, and assessing the plan (Fullan, 2009; Kneese & Ballinger, 2009; McCullough et al., 2008). Research in the area of time-based reform is flawed by weak designs (Cooper, Valentine, Charlton, & Melson, 2003; Cuban, 2008). Schools within the Archdiocese have adopted an extended calendar without having developed an implementation plan for how the time would be used and without having a developed a plan to measure the impact of this change (Sabatino et al., 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine how a suburban Catholic elementary school implemented a calendar extension initiative that was directed by the leadership of the Archdiocese. The study investigated how the school's stakeholders envisioned using the additional time extension when the policy was initially communicated to them. It examined how the school personnel responded to the initiative including the implementation plan that was devised and how they intended to measure the success of the implementation plan. The research also considered the impact of the calendar extension on curricular, co-curricular, and

extra-curricular activities for teachers and students. The ultimate goal of this research was to provide an overall picture of the challenges and opportunities that one particular Catholic school faced as a result of the calendar extension.

Achievement, as measured by standardized assessments, was not a factor considered within the study. The school recently adopted a new standardized assessment that aligns to new standards. As a result, longitudinal quantitative data on student achievement was not available for analysis. Thus, this research focused solely on qualitative data.

This research was conducted at St. Agape Catholic School (pseudonym), a Catholic elementary school located in a suburban area in Southern California. Following the mandate and subsequent suggestion that schools within the Archdiocese extend their calendars, St. Agape adjusted its academic calendar by twenty days at the beginning of the 2011-2012 year. At the time of data collection, the school was in its third year of implementation of the extended calendar initiative. Through field observations, interviews, focus groups, and analyses of documents, this case study aimed to discover teachers' and students' experiences with and opinions about the calendar change. This study considered the challenges and opportunities teachers and students faced when the school adopted the extended calendar, as well as how they have adjusted curriculum and instruction. Ultimately, the purpose of this study was to use this Catholic school as a case study to inform other schools in the initial stages of implementing a calendar extension initiative. This study also gave a voice to the experiences of administrators, teachers, students, and parents who experienced a calendar change within their schools.

Research Questions

By exploring the manner in which one suburban, Catholic elementary school negotiated an adoption of time-based reform, this study addressed the following questions:

1) How did the pastor, administrator, and teachers initially envision and plan to use the extended time at St. Agape Catholic School?
2) After implementing calendar extension for two full academic years, how did the teachers and students use the extended time for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes?
3) What were the pastor's, administrator's, teachers', parents', and students' perceptions of the outcomes associated with the calendar extension including, challenges and opportunities at St. Agape Catholic School?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the field of Catholic education by demonstrating how the pastor, administrators, and teachers at one suburban school with an extended calendar, adapted their pedagogical approach given an additional twenty days of school. Research evidence available on the outcomes of extended calendars has been limited by weak designs, and "[because] of the weak designs, it is simply not possible to make strong inferences about the effects of modified calendars" (Cooper et al., 2003, p. 37), and so this in-depth case study of one site helps to fill this gap in the literature. Previous literature has not linked the time-based reform initiatives to what is known about organizational change and change theory. This gap, when filled, can inform schools in a local Archdiocese that have elected to extend school calendars about the implementation of this initiative and how to manage the change.

This contributes to the field of Catholic education in that the extended calendar initiatives at some school sites may result in positive outcomes, such as increased enrollment in an era when many Catholic schools are challenged by declining enrollment (DeFiore, Convey, & Schuttloffel, 2009, p. 11).

This study also contributes essential information regarding how an elementary school can successfully navigate the implementation of a calendar change within a Catholic school setting to decrease summer learning loss and increase and enhance learning opportunities for all students when these objectives are collaboratively envisioned, planned for, and assessed. Finally, the study provides an opportunity for the stakeholders at the school site to share their perceptions as they relate to the adoption of a calendar extension within their school including how the decision was made, how it was communicated, and how the change has impacted the curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular offerings, and the challenges and opportunities that exist as the result of this change.

Extended and modified calendar initiatives may help to equalize the summer learning loss that occurs with students who have special learning needs and those who do not, as well as those who come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds or who have limited English language skills (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Cooper et al., 2003; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010; Stein & Rose, 2011).

Conceptual Frameworks

Conceptually, the design for the present study was informed by work conducted at the Institute of Education at the University of London on school effectiveness, improvement, and

planning theory (MacGilchrist, Mortimore, Savage, & Beresford, 1995), which articulated several essential components of school reform and school effectiveness. These include the need for the school or organization to perform a pre-reform audit that helps the organization better understand the need for change. The audit "is an information-gathering exercise: a means whereby current strengths and weaknesses are identified to enable a school to make informed decisions about future planning priorities" and the need for change (MacGilchrist et al., 1995, p. 11). The next part of the planning is the construction of a plan. MacGilchrist, Mortimore, Savage, and Beresford (1995) noted in their research, there "is the need for the plan to be realistic and achievable" (p. 13). Within the plan there is a need for a list of the priorities to be established in the form of an action plan with targets, tasks, measurement metrics, or success criteria that allows a school to judge whether the implementation was successful and the financial implications of the plan. The plan should then be published and communicated to the stakeholders including the administration, faculty, parents, and students of the school.

MacGilchrist et al. (1995) drew upon the work of Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) in identifying the parts of the implementation plan that need to be considered in the planning and evaluation stages, such as, what will be required to sustain the commitment of the school community during implementation, how the progress will be monitored, and how the progress will be communicated to the stakeholders.

This research was also conceptually grounded in the framework of the "VIA model" for school change articulated by McCullough et al. (2008), which includes formulation of a vision, articulation of a plan, and a means by which the progress can be assessed. This model or lens is important to consider in the case of school reform because "what unfolds in one classroom may

be quite different from what happens in another" (Murphy, 1992, pp. 95-96). Schools that effectively engage in reform "are more tightly linked—structurally, symbolically, and culturally" (Murphy, 1992, p. 96). Research indicates that when a consistent approach to learning is employed, "components of the curriculum—objectives, materials, assessment strategies—are tightly aligned," the teachers and administrators "share a common instructional language" and the "expectations for performance are similar throughout the school community" (Murphy, 1992, p. 96), which in turn positively impact student learning.

This study also utilized Carroll's model of school learning (1963), which noted that "the learner will succeed in learning a given task to the extent that he spends the amount of time that he needs to learn the task" (p. 724). Berliner (1990) explained that Carroll "turned [the] opportunity to learn into an instructional time concept" (p. 13). Berliner (1990) stated that "school learning in some particular content areas is defined by Carroll as time spent learning in that content area divided by the time needed to learn that kind of content" (p. 13). Berliner (1990) also suggested that "understanding the concept of instructional time means understanding that it is a multifaceted concept" (p. 10).

Lastly, this study has considered change theory and Senge's (2006, 2012) work on organizational learning. Senge (2006) suggested that there are five disciplines of a learning organization, which include systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning that combine to enable organizations to innovate, create, and change. Senge's model for organizational learning was used as a lens through which to analyze the implementation of a calendar-extension initiative at St. Agape Catholic School. This work was useful because the disciplines provide "a different way of looking at problems and goals—not as

isolated events but as components of larger and less visible structures that affect each other" (Senge et al., 2012).

Chapter Two synthesizes all of the conceptual frameworks noted above in order to more clearly define the lens through which the data were analyzed by using select components from each framework.

Methodology

This case study incorporated qualitative research methods including interviews, field observation, focus group meetings, and analyses of documents to gather data on the implementation process and participants' perspectives of a time-based reform in a Catholic school in Southern California. The selected methodology was most suitable because extended-time initiatives include many variables and are subject to the local socio-political climate and context of the school. Additionally, to gain a substantive perspective on this reform initiative, it was necessary to view multiple data sources from several conceptual points of view. By looking through several data lenses, this research yielded a richer understanding of how the extended time is used, the perceptual outcomes, and the contextual conditions related to this phenomenon. Also, this comprehensive analysis of this change included narrative responses from the people involved in the calendar initiative, because quantitative data alone cannot tell this story. As noted by Merriam (2009), "Anchored in real-life situation, the case study results in a rich and holistic account" and plays a "role in advancing a field's knowledge base" (p. 51).

The process of data collection, which included field observations, interviews, and focus group meetings, spanned four academic months from September 2013 through December 2013. In addition, permission was granted by the Loyola Marymount University Institutional Review

Board to the researcher for the use of interview and focus group data collected from this school site prior to this case study. This same school site was studied as part of a larger study focused on the calendar initiative conducted by researchers at Loyola Marymount University (Dell'Olio et al., 2014).

The participants included the school's pastor, administrator, teachers, parents and students. Each participant group was involved in the data collection in various capacities. For example, one group of teachers was involved in the interviews and classroom observations. Others participated in only focus group meetings. The administrator and pastor were also interviewed. Parents and students were involved in focus group meetings. Both the interviews and the focus group meetings were semi-structured. Each interview and focus group meeting began with a set of predetermined questions, but the researcher instigated probing techniques to obtain clarification from the participants. As explained by Hatch (2002), "Probes are not prepared ahead of time but are created as follow-up questions during the give and take of the interview" (p. 109).

The study included data gathered in kindergarten through eighth grades. The data included school documents and written communications with parents and teachers, Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA) school self-study reports, school newsletters, and tuition letters.

Finally, field observations were recorded in three classrooms. The classrooms used for these observations coincided with the teachers selected for individual interviews. Notes were recorded during the observation periods and then used to triangulate the information gathered in the interviews and focus groups.

Limitations

This study focused on data collected from a single case: a suburban Catholic school site. The data were collected from the teachers who were employed on site during the data collection period. This study examined retrospectively the change that was implemented from its inception during the 2011-2012 academic year through December 2013. The researcher was not employed at the school site and positioned herself in the field site as a visiting observer from a different school and diocese. The researcher attempted to remain as objective and detached as possible; however, given the duration of the data collection and the fact that "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection, subjectivity and interaction are assumed" (Merriam, 2009, p. 127). The researcher's presence as an observer at the school may have "affect[ed] the climate of the setting, often affecting a more formal atmosphere than is usually the case" but with extended exposure in the setting "over time, the stability of a social setting is rarely disrupted by the presence of an observer" (Merriam, 2009, p. 127).

At the time of the data collection, the researcher was a Catholic school administrator at a school without an extended calendar. Concurrent with this study, the researcher served as a member of a university research team examining the 200-day extended calendar initiative (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al., 2013).

The decision to probe within the context of an interview is naturally subjective to the researcher's bias. Likewise, within an interview the participant may exhibit reflexivity and tell the researcher what they believe the researcher wants to hear (Yin, 2009). In every interview, the researcher attempted to "balance valuing the informants' desire to talk about certain subjects

with using the interview time to get at information directly tied to the research topic" (Hatch, 2002, p. 109).

The observations were partial and selective in that the researcher could only be in one place at a time and without the support of other observers was limited to events taking place in the classroom or environment selected. Similar to the reflexivity that occurs in an interview, the observations may have "proceed[ed] differently because [subjects were] being observed" (Yin, 2009, p. 102).

Because the implementation of the calendar change was concurrent with changes in curricular standards within the school, the outcomes perceived by the teachers may have been the result of multiple changes that have taken place at the school and not limited to the calendar extension.

Delimitations

The factors that limited the validity and generalizability of the study center on the reality that this study focused on how extended time is used at one site. The school site studied is located in a suburban area, and the school site features a distinct ethnic population and socio-economic background. The characteristics of the site selected for the case study may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sites. Similarly, the site selected is a Catholic elementary school with one classroom or homeroom per grade level. The findings may not be generalizable to public institutions or larger school populations. As noted by Merriam, "It is the reader, not the researcher, who determines what can apply to his or her context" (p. 51).

Assumptions

The researcher assumed St. Agape School's use of extended time was planned by the pastor, administration, and teachers. It was also assumed that their planning and implementation can be linked to measureable criteria, which enabled analysis as to whether the objectives of the reform initiative were met. For the purpose of the study, it was also assumed that St. Agape School had a vision for this reform and a plan in place when the reform initiative commenced.

Definitions of Curriculum-Related Terms

For the purpose of defining curriculum-related activities and those that complement the school's total program offering, the researcher will draw upon terms defined in the *Improving Student Learning: A Self-Study Process for Catholic Elementary Schools* (Western Catholic Educational Association, 2012).

Curricular Activities

These are defined as "Instructional and other activities focused on student learning … generally meant to cover the core curriculum including physical education and fine arts" (Western Catholic Educational Association, 2012, p. 17).

Co-Curricular Activities

These activities are defined as "activities that complement, but are not part of the core curriculum" (Western Catholic Educational Association, 2012, p. 17). An example of this kind of activity would be a speech and debate club that complements the school's language arts curriculum.

Extra-Curricular Activities

These activities include those that do not fall "within the scope of the regular curriculum" (Western Catholic Educational Association, 2012, p. 17). An example of this kind of activity would be an after-school sports program. The Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA) recognizes that the definitions for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities overlap and suggest that some researchers may consider these terms interchangeable. They note however, that as used within the self-study protocol, "they both refer to activities outside the normal curricular activities that take place in the classroom during the school day" (Western Catholic Educational Association, 2012, p. 17).

Definitions of Instruction-Related Terms

For the purpose of defining instruction-related terms and instruction observed at the site during the study, the researcher drew upon the work of Berliner (1990) and Carroll (1963, 1989). From these perspectives, time in schools is seen as multifaceted including but not limited to the definitions that follow.

Allocated Time

Berliner (1990) explained this as the time "that the state, district, school, or teacher provides the student for instruction" (p. 4). Allocated time is the time planned and proportioned for certain subject matter. For example, the district may suggest that a student's schedule include 60 minutes per day of mathematics instruction. This concept is based upon "the model of school learning" presented by theorist Carroll (1963, 1989). Carroll (1963) defined this element of time as time allowed for the opportunity to learn.

Engaged Time

This concept of time is described as "the time that students appear to be paying attention to materials or presentations that have instructional goals" (Berliner, 1990, p. 4).

Time-on-task

Berliner (1990) stated that "Time-on-task, usually defined as engaged time on particular learning tasks. The concept is not synonymous with engaged time" (p. 5); however, and he pointedly made a distinction between engaged time and time-on-task. Berliner (1990) explained that a student could be engaged in a task unrelated to the learning objectives identified by the teacher. Berliner exemplified this time as when a student spending "engaged time" in a science classroom on a comic book. In this example, "[time-on-task], however, would not be recorded because the task in which students were to be attentive was science" (p. 5).

Academic Learning Time

> According to Berliner (1990), academic learning time is
>
> usually defined as that part of the allocated time in a subject-matter area (physical education, science, or mathematics, for example) in which a student is engaged successfully in the activities or with the materials to which he or she is exposed, and in which those activities and materials are related to educational outcomes that are valued. (p. 5)

The focus of time-based reform should be on academic learning time which was also explained as time when students are engaged in learning or "those moments when learning is actually taking place" (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 6). Many researchers looked only at the quantity of time

being used, “because quantity is easier to identify and measure than is quality” (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 6).

Transition Time

This is defined as “the non-instructional time before and after some instructional activity” (Berliner, 1990, p. 5). Examples of this kind of time would be when students putting their books away or getting settled in a class before the lesson begins.

Organization of the Dissertation

The purpose of this case study was to examine how time is used at a school site utilizing an extended academic calendar from the perspective of the pastor, an administrator, teachers, students, and parents. The study also considered the plan and assessment tools that the pastor, administrator, and teachers used to measure whether the objectives of their plan for using the time are being met. Lastly, this study provides an explanatory view of the pedagogical and social, curricular and co-curricular opportunities and challenges that emerged from the field observations and interviews with the pastor, administrator, teachers, students, and parents.

The school site chosen for this study is based in a suburban area and had been using an extended calendar for two full school years and was in the middle of their third year at the time of data collection. Beginning in August of the 2011-2012 academic year, the calendar was augmented to include twenty additional days for a total of 200 days in contrast to their traditional 180-day calendar. The study investigated the challenges that the school faced based upon the perceptions of the stakeholders in adopting the extended calendar. The study also considered how the teachers have adjusted the curriculum and instructional practices since the adoption of the extension. Ultimately, the purpose of this study was to learn from this school site as a means

of informing school leaders and other school sites that are considering adopting and extended calendar or those in the initial stages of implementation of a calendar extension.

In Chapter Two the researcher reviews relevant literature including a history of time-based reform studies, time-on-task studies, definitions of time in school, international calendar trends and achievement comparisons, school reform theories and practices, and an overview of research relative to seasonal learning rates and summer learning loss. The review also provides an overview of organizational change theories and information about landmark studies and key sources within the field (Hart, 1998; Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). Chapter Two contextualizes time-based reform thematically in an effort to clarify the problem and shape the conceptual and methodological focus of the study (Cresswell, 2003; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009; Jimenez, McCullough, & Clemons, 2012).

Chapter Three describes the research methodology, including information about the site chose for the case study, how the researcher obtained access to the site, the participants, the timeline for fieldwork, and the research tools employed in the study (Cresswell, 2003). Chapter Three also explains the data collection procedures including a description of the interview questions, interview structure, and the manner in which the interview data were recorded and coded. Because this study also included other forms of data for the purpose of triangulation, Chapter Three describes the additional methods of data collection that were used (Gay et al., 2009; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). The manner in which the researcher "maintained confidentiality and lowest risk to participants" (Jimenez et al., 2012, p. 21) and the timeline of the study (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005) is also discussed. Lastly, the data analysis procedures are described.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study, as supported by evidence gathered in the field. Within this chapter the purpose of the study is revisited in relationship to the data collected and the methodology utilized. This chapter provides an explanation of how the data was coded and organized thematically in response to the research questions. Finally, the chapter provides a narrative interpretation of the data collected as a means of reducing the volume to a manageable set of findings (Jimenez et al., 2012).

Within Chapter Five, the researcher concludes the presentation of evidence by connecting the findings to the purpose and questions. A discussion of the findings and the significance of the findings are presented in this chapter. Lastly, the researcher provides recommendations for other schools that may be considering changes to their academic calendar and suggestions for further research relative to this topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A comprehensive review of the literature on research related to this study is contained in this chapter. For organizational purposes, the review of literature occurs in the following categories:

a) historical background of the length of the school year in America,

b) school calendar terms,

c) student achievement and time,

d) seasonal learning rates and foundational differences,

e) factors involved in time-based reform initiatives,

f) Carroll's theory of time spent in school,

g) factors involved in organizational change, and

h) theories relative to organizational change.

Each section contains pertinent research subdivided by related themes to help provide context to the study.

Gaps exist in time-based reform literature because evidence available on the outcomes of extended calendars is limited by weak designs or by designs that are tied to socio-economic status and poverty, both of which educators have little to no control. Cuban (2008) suggested that research linking gains in achievement to additional time spent in school is sparse and the studies that can be found area readily contested. He also noted that "studies that exist are challenged repeatedly for being weakly designed" (Cuban, 2008, p. 244). Cooper et al. (2003)

noted, "It is important to point out that the quality of evidence available on modified school calendars leaves much to be desired" (p. 36). The literature relative to modified or extended calendars reform does not relate to what we know about organizational change or change theory and this literature review aims to link the two ideas. Further, Gándara (2000) pointed out that while educators may acknowledge that time may be a factor in school reform,

> most school reform efforts do not go any deeper into trying to understand how, when activities are reordered or new items are added to the agenda of the school, all of the content and the process of schooling are affected. When manipulating time *is itself the primary reform*, it is critical to understand the processes that such actions set in motion and it is necessary to pay attention to the different, and often conflicting, notions of time and people in schools hold. When the content of reform focuses on other aspects of schooling, it is nonetheless imperative that reformers consider the ways in which perceptions and experiences of time can become a key variable in the success or failure of their efforts. (p. 10)

Educators employing time-based reform need to consider all of the aspects of the educational experience that are shaped by the additional time and not just the superficial aspects. Perceptions of time within the school may be different and therefore assessment of the reform may be challenging.

Historical Background of the School Year in the United States

This section reviews the history of the academic calendar in the United States. It provides a brief account of the country's agrarian roots and how schools have developed their calendars as a result of this history. Gold (2002) remarked that "this is a nation where summer

vacation has carved out a powerful cultural and professional niche through the closing of schools, the slowdown in economic activity, and the hastening of leisure pursuits" (p. 1). Johnson and Spradlin (2007) said that "the common conception of the origins of America's traditional school calendar emphasizes a strong connection to the country's agrarian traditions with students needing time off from school to assist with the summer harvesting or crops" (p. 2). However, Johnson and Spradlin further noted that this conception is only part of the reason time spent in school has developed in manner in which it has in America and that "education in the early days of the country largely accommodated the needs of the [varying] local community interests" (2007, p. 2).

Traditional School Calendar

The calendar that Americans consider "traditional" was not designed to be a learning calendar; students can learn in all seasons and months of the year. Rather, the widely-accepted calendar emerged as

> an amalgam of responses to the economic and social needs of a nation both rural and urban. Original intents—to provide helping hands on the farms and ranches of a bygone era, to provide extended instruction in English for young European immigrants, or to offer special interest classes to children of wealthy urbanites—have long since been surpassed by events in the 20th and 21st centuries. (Ballinger & Kneese, 2006, p. 3)

Students in the United States currently "experience formal education approximately 180 days out of 365 annually" (Kneese & Ballinger, 2009, p. vii). Kneese and Ballinger (2009) explained that maintaining the summer vacation schedule that is featured within the traditional school calendar made sense at one time in our nation's history when our economy was based on physical labor.

Conditions in school during the summer months were challenging due to high summer temperatures and the absence of air conditioning, and mothers stayed home to be with their children.

Gold (2002) suggested that summer vacation and the length of the school year has also been shaped by perceptions about the fragile health of children and that "many citizens, citing fears of mental and physical fragility—argued that students (and their teachers) needed a substantial break from learning" (p. 3). Additionally, "Agrarian labor needs helped determine the student population associated with each term" and "country children over the age of ten only attended school during the winter term because farm activity compelled them to work through the summer" (Gold, 2002, p. 8)

Historical Background of Time-based Reform Initiatives in the United States

This section reviews the history of time-based reform in the United States including national reports that called for such reform. Despite such national reports, it is important to note that school calendars remain under the jurisdiction of local and state governments.

A Nation at Risk

This 1983 report identified findings that the commission made regarding education and solutions for how teaching and learning might be improved in America. The report identified three time-oriented educational challenges that were present in America when the report was crafted:

1) Compared to other nations, American students spend much less time on school work,
2) Time spent in the classroom and on homework is often used ineffectively, and

3) Schools are not doing enough to help students develop either the study skills required to use time well or the willingness to spend more time on school work. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 11).

The report also provided international comparisons of time spent in school and observations about the kind of time American students spend in school. For example, the report cited:

> In England and other industrialized countries, it is not unusual for academic high school students to spend eight hours per day at school, 220 days per year. In the United States, by contrast, the typical school day lasts six hours and the school year is 180 days. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 12)

Similarly, the report indicated that the schools in the United States provided similar allotments of time for classes such as, cooking and driving, to that of the core courses such as English, mathematics, and science. The report also commented on the number of actual instructional hours within American schools, which ranged from 17 to 22 hours per week, which in the opinion of the commission were too few hours.

Prisoners of Time

In 1994 the National Educational Commission on Time and Learning prepared a report titled Prisoners of Time which "acknowledged a disconnect between the way that students learn and forget and the currently-used school calendar, which has little relationship to that understanding" (Ballinger & Kneese, 2006, p. 3). The report noted,

> Our time-bound mentality has fooled us all into believing that schools can educate all of the people all of the time in a school year of 180 six-hour days. The consequence of our

> self-deception has been to ask the impossible of our students. (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 5)

International comparisons were used to highlight the deficiency of the American academic calendar. In the United States we expect our students "to learn as much as their counterparts abroad in only half the time" (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 5). The commissioners also "expressed serious concerns about the implications of additional time students have allotted to them to study core subjects in friendly countries that are nevertheless competitors educationally, politically, and economically" (Ballinger & Kneese, 2006, p. 41).

The report highlighted the degree to which education in America is controlled by the clock:

> The school clock governs how families organize their lives, how administrators oversee their schools, and how teachers work their way through the curriculum. Above all, it governs how material is presented to students and the opportunity they have to comprehend and master it. (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 6)

In binding the educational system to time, the commission used time to explore the challenges of education in America, "unyielding and relentless, the time available in a uniform six-hour day and a 180-day year is the unacknowledged design flaw in American education" (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 6). By pinpointing the challenges of using time as a factor for evaluating education, the report diminished time's overall effectiveness as a reform mechanism while also highlighting how time can change educational outcomes. The

paradox presented in this report suggests that time is an enemy and that it can be a tool to improve education when used with other elements of reform.

Johnson and Spradlin (2007) shared that while the report identified "a number of design flaws in America's education system with regard to the way that time is utilized, the report questioned whether or not current modifications to school calendars accommodate the learning needs of American students" (p. 1).

A Nation Accountable: Twenty-five Years after A Nation at Risk

In April of 2008 the U.S. Department of Education issued *A Nation Accountable* (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), a follow-up report to *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In this report, the committee reviewed the recommendations set forth in the original report published 25 years earlier against the data that was available. One of the areas considered included the amount of time that students in the United States spend in school. The report noted, "our children do not spend more days in school than they did in 1983, save for those in some charter schools or in a few state or local pilot programs" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 6). The report also indicated, "We know now that the amount of time on task is important, yet as important is *how effectively* that time is spent" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 6). The recommendations of this report pointed at the effective use of time and the quality of instruction as critical factors that must be considered by reformers. Both of these elements parallel with research relative to time-based reform and the importance of quality versus quantity when it comes to instructional time (Baines, 2007; Silva, 2007; Worsnop, 1996).

Each of the national commission reports notes time as a factor to consider, but in each report the importance of time takes on a different aspect or point of consideration. In *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), time alone appeared to be a measure that should be considered to improve education. In *Prisoners of Time* (National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994), time was seen both as a possible reform mechanism and a vice that binds and ties the hands of educators. It is paradoxical in its approach to time and suggests that other factors be considered when using time as a means for improvement. Lastly, *A Nation Accountable* (U.S. Department of Education, 2008) encouraged reform to focus less on time and more on the quality and effectiveness of instruction.

Models of Calendar Reform

Since reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) have highlighted time as a possible means of reform, educators have constructed many calendar options and models. This section explores various models of calendar reform that have been employed in the United States.

Year-round School or Balanced Plans

The term year-round school does not indicate that students attend school all year without breaks. Rather it is a restructuring of the school sessions and vacation periods to provide a more balanced approach to the time in which students spend in school and the manner in which their vacations fall between those sessions. The terms "balanced calendar" or "modified school calendar" are more accurate names for the practice of balancing school sessions with vacation periods. Within these practices, "the traditional school calendar is tweaked slightly, or modified, so that vacations, including summers, are no longer than" (Ballinger & Kneese, 2006, p. 78) eight weeks. Within this approach, the vacation periods are carefully balanced between the

learning periods. Johnson and Spradlin (2007) indicated that year-round education is "different from an extended school year" and that it "redistributes the school days uniformly throughout the year, eliminating a long summer vacation in lieu of shorter breaks called intersessions" (p. 3).

Multi-track Year-round

Multi-track calendars provide year-round education that is "implemented to provide additional capacity within already-existing space to accommodate for over enrollment of students, maximize the efficient use of current resources, solve one more administrative or logistical problems, or a variation of these three" (Ballinger & Kneese, 2006, p. 60). These types of calendars are similar to the single track balanced calendar in that they have spread the vacation and learning periods throughout the year more evenly. The difference is that there are multiple tracks of students who attend differently timed and spaced sessions.

Extended School Day

Charter schools lead the way when it comes to extending the school day. Farbman (2011) suggested that,

> A majority of charter educators decide that the traditional calendar provides insufficient time for their students to achieve proficiency in the state's learning standards. So, not bound by the fixed district policies related to school time, a longer day and/or year becomes the option of choice. (p. 19)

One example of an extended day program can be found in the charter *Knowledge is Power Program* (KIPP). Designed and founded by Dave Levin and Mike Feinberg, KIPP utilizes an extended school day for all students. This program runs as a charter school organization through the local school districts but features extended days for its students. For

example, students may arrive as early as 7:00 a.m. and may remain with their teachers in the classroom or in co-curricular programs until 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. While the hours may vary by school site, the program is built upon five pillars including "more time in school" (Mathews, 2009, p. 265) because of a longer school day. Mathews (2009) pointed out that "KIPP parents get what is in essence free child care for the two hours each afternoon from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. when their children would have been home if they attended regular school" (p. 282).

Extended School Year

Johnson and Spradlin (2007) suggested that "extending a school year merely indicates that a compulsory number of school days will be added to the current school year, thereby shortening the summer vacation" (p. 3). Some arguments for extending the school year center on the reduction of summer learning loss (Baxter, 2011; Johnson & Spradlin, 2007).

Extended school year initiatives such as the one adopted by some schools within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles include additional days of school beyond the 180 days associated with the traditional school calendar (Landsberg, 2011). In the case of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the number of days added to the school year varied by site and the decision to add days was left up to the discretion of the school (Sabatino et al., 2012). In the case of the school site used for the purpose of this case study, an additional twenty days were added to the traditional calendar. Some programs including the KIPP program noted under the extended school day section of this review of literature extend both the school day and the school year (Mathews, 2009).

Student Achievement and Time

Student achievement and the connections made in research to the time that students spend in school are considered in this section.

Defining Time

The use of time and the kind of time added to a school day or school calendar must be defined when attempting to determine time's potential impact on student learning and achievement. Based upon the literature, there exist four different types of time spent in school including: 1) allocated school time, 2) allocated class time, 3) instructional time, and 4) academic learning time (Gándara, 2000: Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010; Silva, 2007). Allocated time is the time that schools provide the student for instruction in full. Allocated class time relates to the specific allotment of time dedicated to each subject area. Instructional time considers the time that the teacher is actively engaged in teaching the students. Academic learning time relates to the time that the students are actively engaged in the learning (Gándara, 2000).

The focus of reform should be on academic learning time, which is also explained as time when students are engaged in learning or "those moments when learning is actually taking place" (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 6). Many researchers have looked only at the quantity of time being used, "because quantity is easier to identify and measure than is quality" (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 6).

Seasonal Learning Rates and Foundational Differences

Seminal meta-analytic research, conducted in 1996, reviewed previous studies relative to achievement and summer vacation and reported that achievement scores decline over summer vacation and that "the long summer break can have a greater negative effect on the learning of

children with special education needs" including acquisition of English language skills (Cooper et al., 1996, p. 228). This research also indicated "that whatever negative impact summer vacations have on learning might be uneven across children from different economic groups" (Cooper et al., 1996, p. 229). In another seminal piece of research, Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2007), explored the seasonal rates of learning. Their study focused on the consequences of seasonal learning differences during the elementary school years for children's later years of schooling, and they presented two conclusions: 1) prior to secondary levels of schooling the achievement gap relative to family socio-economic status (SES) can be traced to unequal learning opportunities outside of school including summer time, and 2) learning gains throughout the school year are more equal across social lines partially offsetting the out of school learning that takes place.

Alexander et al. (2007) also suggested that the early years of schooling provide a foundational base that supports later learning and that summer can impact a student's foundation base and that achievement levels at the start of high school trace back to the early years. They noted that for students of low socioeconomic (SES) most learning happens when students are in school, so schooling makes a difference. Experiences outside of school in the early years make an even bigger difference in that the gap substantially originates over the years before grade one and the summer periods during the elementary school years. Downey, von Hippel, and Broh (2004) have suggested that "[the] SES gap continues to grow after schooling starts, but it grows much more slowly when school is in session than when it is not" (p. 624). They also stated that, "schools temper socioeconomic inequality" (Downey et al., 2004, p. 624). Once in school, disadvantaged children benefit from year-round, extended calendar options or supplemental

programs that can counter the continuing out of school conditions and summer setback that further widen the achievement gap but close attention must be paid to how the extra learning time is used. Furthermore, if intended to support disadvantaged children, then the program should target their specific needs (Alexander et al., 2007).

Literature illustrated the impact that time in schools has on achievement and the roles played by families, neighborhoods, and schools in the cognitive development of students (Ross, McDonald, Alberg, & McSparrin-Gallagher, 2007). The literature also indicated that there is a difference in seasonal learning rates (Alexander et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 1996). It suggested "the effect of calendar modification on student achievement is cumulative" and "modified calendar programs do noticeably improve achievement for economically disadvantaged or poor-achieving students" (Cooper et al., 2003, p. 43).

Carroll's Theory of Time Spent in School

Anderson (2000) referenced Carroll's (1963) Model of School Learning, noting that it has "proven extremely useful in understanding the relationship between time and student learning" (p. 14). According to Carroll (1963), time spent learning will be equal to the smallest of the following three quantities:

1) opportunity—the time allowed for learning,
2) perseverance—the amount of time the learner is willing to engage actively in learning, and
3) aptitude—the amount of time needed to learn, increased by whatever amount necessary in view of poor quality instruction and lack of ability to understand less than optimal instruction. (p. 730)

Anderson (2000) suggested that "current reform efforts pertaining to time generally focus on increasing students' opportunity to learn" (p. 16). She also asserted that "the other factors of the Carroll model—aptitude, ability to understand instruction, and the quality of instruction—tend to be ignored in many reform efforts" (Anderson , 2000, p. 17). These comments are consistent with the work of other researchers who call for the quality of education to be considered when reviewing time-based reform initiatives (Aronson et al., 1999; Silva, 2007).

School Effectiveness

MacBeath and Mortimore (2001) suggested that "school improvement is a slow process because it is about maturation" (p. 17). They further noted that change in schools happens over time and schools that are strategic with change have long-term goals and greater impact on student learning (MacBeath & Mortimore, 2001). They shared some of the characteristics of effective schools including that they have professional leadership, all constituents understand the shared vision and goals, they monitor progress, and they are considered a learning organization (MacBeath & Mortimore, 2001). MacGilchrist et al. (1995) shared that the effectiveness of a school's plan for change is impacted by many factors including "the degree of shared ownership, purpose, leadership, and management of the plan" (p. 194).

Schools involved in self-evaluation practices while implementing change have data that can inform and improve their implementation. One form of data that can help impact the implementation of change is teacher perception. MacBeath and Mortimore (2001) shared that "having access to, and working with, teachers' perceptions is an important part of the process for school improvement, providing one potentially rich source of data" (p. 86) and suggested that this data point be considered in case studies focused on the effectiveness of schools that

implement change. MacGilchrist et al. (1995) identified "a link between the extent to which there was a shared sense of agreement" between the teachers and the administration "about the purposes and priorities of the plan and the effectiveness of the plan" (p. 196). They further indicated that "shared ownership and involvement and shared leadership and management" of the plan "were noticeable characteristics of the most effective plan" (MacGilchrist, 1995, p. 196). Teacher perception can help gauge the extent to which shared ownership and shared leadership are present at a school site involved in change.

This study incorporated elements of the change profile developed by the HM Inspectors in Scotland, and the modified version used by the Improving School Effectiveness Project (MacBeath & Mortimore, 2001) provided a foundation for the interview protocol that was used.

The VIA Model

McCullough et al. (2008) indicated that "research on school change is clear and that certain elements must be present for the reform to succeed" (p. 18). These elements include setting a vision, implementing a plan, creating a system of assessment, and ensuring a feedback loop that informs adjustments as needed (McCullough et al., 2008). They proposed the Vision-Implementation-Assessment (VIA) model as "the way" to successfully engage in organizational change (McCullough et al., 2008). The primary stage of this model is setting the vision and "the vision does not belong only to the leader … all stakeholders must agree on what they hope to gain by implementing a new program or change" (McCullough et al., 2008, p. 19).

McCullough et al. (2008) suggested that data be used to inform the vision because "data is a powerful tool for promoting change" (p. 19). The second stage of the VIA model is creating the implementation plan. The plan should include "identification of the process steps or plans"

and "careful planning around action steps, personnel involved, resources required, and realistic timelines" (McCullough et al., 2008, p. 20). The third component involves assessment, which provides the organization with data that can be used to measure the impact of the implementation and can help inform adjustments to the plan. The three elements are tied together through a loop of on-going feedback, "this on-going feedback loop informs best practice and ensures success of the school reform" (McCullough et al., 2008, p. 21).

Factors Involved in Time-based Reform Initiatives

There are many factors involved in implementing reform. Those factors include considering the fiscal impact, working with the people who will be affected by the change, and rallying community support for the change.

Fiscal Impact of Calendar Reform

Extending the school year can be expensive. Research relative to the investment of time reform is considered in some of the literature reviewed. Silva (2007) noted that most calculations consider that a school year extension of 10% would represent a 6% to 7% increase in cost. However, the research also suggested that most cost calculations only consider the increase in staffing costs and not the plant management costs including building maintenance, transportation, electricity, and telephone expenses (Silva, 2007). Silva (2012) reviewed one cost-effective option: staggered teacher scheduling which keeps the teacher's hours the same but staggers their instructional schedules to enable longer school hours for students (p. 6). Silva (2012) also remarked that "paying teachers for extra time usually also means revising contracts, a process often marked by arduous union negotiations" (p. 5)

Attitudes about Calendar Initiatives

When community members and school stakeholders are involved in the calendar reform decision-making process, the transition from a traditional calendar to a modified or extended calendar can be more successful (Cooper et al., 2003). Johnson and Spradlin (2007) noted that when a principal informed her constituents of the calendar options and potential benefits for students and then gave them a choice, the cooperation that she encouraged helped the community embrace and successfully adapt to the change (p. 9). Silva (2007) shared that opinions vary when it comes to time-based reform:

> Recent opinion polls show the public is almost evenly divided about extending school time, with 48 percent in favor and 49 percent opposed. When asked if they would favor a one-hour extension of the school day, 67 percent of those polled said yes. (p. 8)

Educators can invoke the support of parents to help reform take shape because "achievement increases when parents are aware of what their children are doing in school and outside of school" (Johnson & Spradlin, 2007, p. 15).

Teacher burnout is another concern voiced by opponents of calendar extension initiatives. Silva (2007) reported that teachers like students need time to rejuvenate and relax. The literature also suggested that the long summer vacation is one of the reasons that teachers choose the profession. In a qualitative study conducted in California relative to calendar reform, "[teachers] reported being happy with the additional pay that extended time provided, as well as the additional planning time it afforded" (Silva, 2007, p. 9).

Some studies reported setbacks in getting school communities on board with calendar changes, "even when the change is intended to promote the greater good of the school and

community" (Kneese & Ballinger, 2009, p. 21). Likewise, some studies noted that calendar change initiatives cause "positive wellness conditions for teachers, better attendance, fewer suspensions and disciplinary incidents, and hence safer learning environments for students" (Kneese & Ballinger, 2009, p. 21).

Capacity Building

Gaining capacity for change within an organization is an integral part of change management. Capacity building as noted by Fullan (2009), "can be defined as any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning" (p. 195). He also explained that building capacity is not done in isolation and that "it needs to be linked explicitly to results" (Fullan, 2009, p. 197). Teachers and administrators should focus on capacity building that is "any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group" (Fullan, 2009, p. 195). Fullan (2009) suggested that capacity building involves developing both individual and collective "1) knowledge and competencies, 2) resources, and 3) motivation" (p. 195). Another strategy that leaders can employ to help build capacity and momentum is to maintain transparency through stakeholder communication and feedback. Fullan (2009) advised that during times of change, when the status quo is being challenged, communication is essential and that communication should be "frequent, honest, two-way… about the successes and challenges, about what is being attempted and its challenges and setbacks as well as accomplishments" (p. 198).

Managing the Change

Time and Reform

Time plays in important role in school reform measures in two distinct ways. It can be part of the reform itself, the very content of the reform measure. It can also be an important part of the reform process. As Hall and Hord (2011) shared,

> change is not accomplished by having a one-time announcement … instead, change is a process through which people and organizations move as they gradually learn, come to understand, and become skilled in and competent in the use of new ways. (p. 8)

They further noted that "most changes in education take three to five years to be implemented at a high level" (p. 8).

Context Matters When It Comes to Change

For the successful implementation of change within a school, teachers and administrators need to access and understand the context of their work and the school community before considering challenges, making decisions, and initiating change or reform. To do this, there are several things that they must consider including that every leader is limited by their "own background, values, and perspectives" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 115), and this causes them to be "limited in their ability to make sense of problems, in their ability to frame them, and by the number and variety of frames with which they are familiar" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 115). Thus, the leaders must first acknowledge their own limitations and recognize that they need others to help them understand the context of the organization more fully. Then, by working with and learning from others within an organization, the teachers and administrators can gain a more complete understanding of the organizational culture including the "*norms* that inform

people about what is acceptable and what is not, the *dominant values* that the organization cherishes … the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared … *the rules* … and the *philosophy* that guides the organization" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 126). The organizational culture of a school "informs the teachers about what it means to teach, what teaching methods are available and approved for use, what pupils or students are like—what is possible, and what is not" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 126) within a school. Leaders must gain an understanding of the culture in order to bring context and meaning to their surroundings.

Context matters when a leader begins to consider his or her work and reform within an organization. The school "is in constant dynamic interaction with the larger external environment in which it exists" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 107). Teachers and administrators must consider the demographics of the school, the composition of the students, the faculty and the parents. The nature of the school, such as whether it is private, Catholic, or public, also matters greatly. For example, a Catholic or private school may consider enrollment when making decisions.

When faced with the challenges of declining enrollment, time-based reform initiatives may enable schools to seem more attractive to working parents who require daily child care. Thus, enrollment may be at least one of the factors driving decisions around reform (DeFiore et al., 2009). Conversely, in the public sector enrollment is less of a force because students are provided within school boundaries. Likewise, the economy must be considered when a leader attempts to understand the school climate and the context of his or her work within that school. In both the public and the private or Catholic sectors the economy impacts the school budget and

the budgets of those students and their families enrolled in the school. When families suffer because of the economy, the students are impacted and thus the school is impacted.

Lastly, the political climate of the nation must be considered as must the climate of the local area. Hall and Hord (2011) indicated that "change is a complex, dynamic, and resource-consuming endeavor" and no school "is likely to have all the expertise and resources needed to succeed in change" (p. 9). In the case of implementing calendar reform in a Catholic school, the teachers and administrators look to the local public school district to better understand the calendar characteristics of the schools within their local community.

Owens and Valesky (2011) noted that, "one way that the social, political, and cultural environment of the school district or school has an impact is in setting goals to be achieved" (p. 107). They noted that this process falls within the political realm. Teachers and administrators witnessed this influence with the shift in focus on school accountability and high stakes testing as prompted by legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* (2001). School goals, at least in the public arena focus on test scores and practices that will bring about better results because of this legislation (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Research has pointed to several characteristics that are evident in high performing schools and these relate to leadership's ability to understand the context of the school because many of them center on trust and understanding within the community. For example, "school-site management and democratic decision making" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 128) is found at the top of the list. Practicing a democratic decision making process within a school assumes that the leader knows and trusts those around him or her and that he or she involves the teachers in the change process. Leaders who employ this process place value in the ideas that others within

the community have and this can lead to building capacity for the change. Similarly on the list is "parental involvement" which like the democratic process for decision-making requires the leader to listen and place trust in others.

School Culture and Climate

Teachers and administrators need to consider essential aspects of their school in order to foster a positive organizational climate, change an organizational culture, motivate people within the organization, and continually assess progress. These aspects include first gaining a sense of the unique organizational environment because that is "a key to influencing organizational behavior" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 136). Educational leaders can have considerable influence over the organizational environment because it is a "socially constructed reality" and the organization "exists largely in the eye and the mind of the beholder" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 136).

If teachers and administrators hope to affect change within an organization, the culture of the school must be understood because only that understanding will arm the leader with the tools he or she will need to influence change. Change within an organization is not easy. People resist change because it takes them out of their comfort zone and away from the established norms (Heath & Heath, 2010) within a culture. However, the study of organizational culture is problematic to researchers because it can sometimes be "subtle, unseen, and so familiar to persons inside the organization as to be considered self-evident and, in effect, invisible" it can also be challenging to the leaders within that organization (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 153).

Knowing a school's organizational culture is fundamental to the overall effectiveness of the school "in terms of student learning and development" because all aspects of the school are

"significantly influenced by the quality and characteristics of the organizational culture" (Owens & Valesky, 2011, p. 162).

Facilitating Change

Change literature provides many concepts, strategies, and theories that can help teachers and administrators frame and guide organizational change. However, to do this work, educators must understand the nature of change within an organization and the factors at play when change or reform is initiated. As Michael Fullan (2009) noted, teachers and administrators must have knowledge of "change knowledge: understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice" (p. 9). Researchers have approached change differently in terms of the stages that they identify and articulate, but common to all research on change has been the underlying notion that change involves a process. Bridges (2009) described it as "transition" which involves "a three-phase process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that change brings about" (Bridges, 2009, p. 3) in the environment. Bridges classified the three phases of this process as "ending, losing, letting go," "the neutral zone," and "the new beginning" (Bridges, 2009, p. 5). Another author, Fullan, identified eight guiding principles and stated, "if you don't know the eight guiding principles/drivers of change, even the best ideas will not take hold" (Fullan, 2009, p. 16).

Change researchers Heath and Heath (2010) suggested that it is part of our human nature to focus on the negative when experiencing change. They called it "problem focus" and suggested that people focus on the negative by nature, especially when facing change, "this 'bad is stronger than good' bias is critical when it comes to tackling change" (Heath & Heath, 2010, p.

47). Bridges (2009) suggested that people are not resisting the change itself, but rather "it's the losses and ending that they have experienced and the transition that they are resisting" (p. 24). He encouraged school communities to directly talk about the change and what it will mean in terms of loss to everyone within the organization. Acknowledging that there are losses and that things are different is important to the process. Bridges also noted that change and loss are subjective and that teachers and administrators should not challenge how people perceive the loss that they are facing. Likewise, they should not be surprised if some people overreact to the change because, this "comes from the experience that people have had with loss in the past" (Bridges, 2009, p. 27) with losses that have not been properly confronted and these people may not have had a chance to properly grieve.

When school communities openly and directly acknowledge and discuss the losses that people within the organization face, those people are able to recover from the loss themselves more readily according to Bridges (2009). Teachers and administrators can also help people through the transition if they can identify areas where they can compensate for the loss. Bridges (2009) urged school leaders to ask the question, "[What] can I give back to balance what's been taken away?" (p. 30) in an effort to bring balance and help counterbalance the feelings of pain. In the transition phase, transparency and communication is critical to help people through the grieving process and allows them to recognize what they are losing and how things are changing which in turn allows them to confront and handle the changes openly and in unity with other people. Hall and Hord (2011) explained that "when people must change, they have to stop doing some things that they know how to do well and in fact like doing, which creates a sense of sadness" (p. 8). Teachers and administrators can help to ensure successful change when they

think about the endings that people will encounter as part of the transition management and with the implementation of reform.

The process of change must also involve a vision that includes and encourages all individuals to work collectively toward the achievement of the vision. Owens and Valesky (2011) argued that change within an organization involves planning and direction toward "the achievement of specific new, higher organizational outcomes" (p. 168), that it "involves the whole organization … increases the capacity of the organization to confront more effectively the continuing need for change now and in the future" (p. 168) and that it is "sustainable over time" (p. 169).

Creating Shared Vision

Educational leaders are responsible for developing a shared vision and mission but the responsibility is deep and goes well beyond the present because it also must encompass a road map for the organization in the future. As Owens and Valesky (2011) noted, "educational leaders not only need to develop responses to the urgencies of the moment but also to develop a set of values, beliefs, and principles to guide them in developing effective strategies and actions in the uncertain future" (p. 23). School communities need to look beyond what is presently happening and consider the organization in terms of what can be. Setting the vision and managing change associated with that vision are integral to educational leaders' responsibility. In order for schools to sustain their role in complex times of change, the teachers and administrators must be adept at "defining, shaping, and refining the shared vision of the school … the more that beliefs are shared, the greater the ongoing effort and the efficiency of the effort" toward implementing change (Fullan, 2009, p. 169).

Hall and Hord (2011) combined these aspects of leadership: "a first step in moving toward a changed and improved future is the development of a shared dream or vision of what will be—that is, a vision of the future" (p. 148). However, setting the vision alone is not enough. According to Heath and Heath (2010) organizational leaders, in the case of schools, the teachers and administrators, are proficient in setting a vision, but lack in supporting their schools with the details associated with the vision. Planning for change is essential and "big-picture, hands-off leadership isn't likely to work in a change situation because the hardest part of change —the paralyzing part—is precisely in the details" (p. 53). Teachers and administrators must set the vision for the present and the future and must also provide the details for how the school will actualize that vision.

After setting the vision for the school, teachers and administrators need to reinforce that vision through clear and effective communication. Bridges (2009) indicated that the "first form of reinforcement is consistency of message" (p. 69). Schools need to recognize that communication takes many forms including organizational policies, procedures, and priorities. When communication is not clear or lacks consistency then people are able to find "excuses to argue that the new beginning isn't for real" (Bridges, 2009, p. 70). An example that Bridges provided of inconsistent communication is an organization that calls for paperless automation and then requires the employees to submit paper reports. Bridges also noted that consistent communication also encompasses the actions and behavior of a leader.

School leaders, including teachers and administrators, need to reinforce the change through their own action. Bridges (2009) cited the example of a leader who verbally promotes teamwork as part of the change and then negotiates decisions from a top-down perspective with

little interaction or input from the team. Lastly, Bridges (2009) suggested that administrators and teachers within the school community need to be consistent in the behaviors that they reward and recognize during the change. Bridges stated, "[It] is common (and always disastrous) to tell people to act and react in new ways—and then to reward them acting and reacting in the old ways" (2009, p. 70). As school communities prepare and plan for change, they need to also consider their communication effort and remember that "most people live at a much more practical level that is full of details" (Bridges, 2009, p. 151). The school needs to communicate the details of the plan for change fully and consistently to all stakeholders.

Effective educational leaders possess many definable attributes and incorporate a myriad of strategies when working within their organization. Some of the characteristics include the ability to set the vision, manage change, sustain change, distribute and build leadership, foster relationships, and use data to make decisions.

Fullan (2009) defined "distributive leadership" as the ability to foster additional or secondary change agents. He urged leaders to establish a "culture of ongoing learning" (Fullan, 2009, p. 170) where second change agents can help to sustain the momentum within the school by providing many levels of support. Effective educational leaders possess definable qualities and employ strategies that help them manage and sustain change.

Theory Relative to Change

Fullan (2008) reported that schools suffer when they do not consider how change effort after change effort impact and interact with each other. Such efforts, without consideration of their connectedness, often cause teachers and school leaders to become frustrated and exhausted with little impact or improvement resulting from the effort. Evans, Thornton, and Usinger

(2012) suggested that grounding school improvement initiatives in change theory can arm leaders with the tools they need to make change successful. They asserted that, "central to the ability of leaders to understand and implement complex change is a solid foundation in the theory of change" (Evans, Thornton, & Usinger, 2012, p. 155). They also stated that, "a firm grounding in change theory can provide educational leaders with an opportunity to orchestrate meaningful organizational improvements" (Evans et al., 2012, p. 155). Senge's work (2006, 2012) and change theory will now be explored relative to the implementation of school calendar change.

Peter Senge's Change Theory—The Learning Organization

As Roland Barth (1990) suggested that "schools have the capacity to improve themselves" and "when the need and the purpose is there, when conditions are right, adults and students alike learn and each energizes and contributes to the learning of the other" (p. 45). Senge (2006) in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* presented a theoretical framework for learning organizations that included five essential components: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. The components are interdependent and, according to Senge (2006), "the five disciplines develop as an ensemble" (p. 11) and through systems thinking, "a learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality" (p. 12). Personal mastery is described as the "discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively" (Senge, 2006, p. 7). Senge (2006) explained that "the discipline of working with mental models starts with turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of

the world … it also includes the ability to carry on 'learningful' conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others" (pp. 8-9). Building shared vision involves binding people together who are willing to share, learn, and excel because they want to do so and because they have a "common identity and sense of destiny" (Senge, 2006, p. 9). Lastly, team learning "starts with 'dialogue,' the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine 'thinking together'" which also "involves learning how to recognize the patterns of interaction in teams that undermine learning" (Senge, 2006, p. 10). Systems thinking allows for a new way of seeing the world around us. It is "a discipline for seeing wholes … a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns rather than static 'snapshots'" (p. 68).

When asked whether schools are naturally considered to be learning organizations, Senge remarked, "[Definitely] not. A learning organization is an organization in which people at all levels are, collectively, continually enhancing their capacity to create … most educators don't feel they are doing this" (O'Neil, 1995, p. 20). Senge went on to note that schools that use the traditional learning approach focus on individual refinement of skills and a true learning organization needs to consider "the collective capacity of people to create and pursue overall visions" (O'Neil, 1995, p. 20). When asked how schools can apply the five disciplines, Senge noted that, "we feel that our work does apply to education" because "it's about how human beings learn, and about the new ways we will need to think and interact in the 21st century" (O'Neil, 1995, p. 23).

Senge et al. (2012) noted that "schools can be made sustainably vital and creative…by adopting a learning orientation" (p. 5). They further suggested that "it is possible to create organizations that learn through the ongoing practice of 'learning disciplines' for changing the way people think and act together" (p. 5).

Synthesis of the Frameworks

As noted in Chapter One, the researcher has elected to more narrowly define the lens by which the data will be analyzed within this study by selecting portions of the frameworks shared within this chapter. For this purpose, the following parts will be synthesized to create the lens used for analysis within this study.

Preparation for the Change

The researcher drew upon the works of McCullough et al. (2008) to determine if the data was part of the vision setting or planning phases of the implementation. The work of MacBeath and Mortimore (2001) and MacGilchrist et al. (1995) was also used to help determine what the data suggested with regard to shared ownership of the change and the development of the plan for change as it relates to constituent involvement in the plan. Data related to these aspects of the change were sought through interviews and focus group meetings. The interview protocols were designed with both frameworks in mind. Capacity building prior to the change as well as throughout the implementation phase was considered using one of Senge's (2006, 2012) five disciplines: building shared vision.

Implementation of the Change

When analyzing the observational data, school calendars, lesson plans, curriculum maps, and student assessment documents, Carroll's (1963) Model of Time Spent in School was

employed to define the type of time being used in the classrooms. In addition, Berliner (1990) was used to further define the type of time being used within the classrooms. The data relative to the implementation of the change was also considered using the work of Fullan (2009) and his eight guiding principles of change.

Assessment of the Change

Outcomes of the change and assessment of the implementation plan were considered using Senge's (2006) discipline called systems thinking. This discipline calls for "seeing wholes … seeing interrelationships … seeing patterns rather than static 'snapshots'" (p. 68).

Conclusion

The implementation of change involves a process and this process has definable stages and it requires time (Bridges, 2009; Fullan 2009). Educational leaders need to understand that process and the elements that help bring about change within an organization if they hope to enact improvement (Fullan, 2009). There are many factors for leaders to consider when implementing change (Owens & Valesky, 2011). School reform and change is best managed when educational leaders approach such change with some knowledge of organizational change and change theory (Fullan, 2009). The extended calendar initiative adopted by St. Agape School was considered through the VIA Model (McCullough et al., 2008) which includes setting the vision, implementing the plan, and assessing the work. It also used the school effectiveness work conducted in Great Britain (McGilchrist et al., 1995; MacBeath & Mortimore, 2001) and the stages used by effective schools for implementing reform. Lastly, the study was considered using Senge's (2006) theory of change or the five disciplines of a learning organization. By using this theory, educational leaders can critically consider in the implementation of reform

including the challenges, successes of such ventures. Senge's work can help an educator construct meaning and make sense of the change or reform initiative and the impact that it has on the school community.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with a statement of the central research questions and a discussion of the methodology selected for this case study. It addresses why a qualitative case study was the most effective method to address the research questions. The chapter closes with a consideration of potential threats to the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the study and how the researcher ensured trustworthiness during the research process.

Background

National commissions on education proposed the need for schools in America to increase instructional time as a means of improving educational performance (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994). Time-based reform initiatives are problematic because adding time alone will not ensure improvement (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Karweit, 1984; Silva, 2007). Educators need to consider the quality of instructional time in addition to the quantity of instruction (Baines, 2007; Silva, 2007; Worsnop, 1996). Educators and researchers explored various time-based reform models over the past few decades (Aronson et al., 1999; Silva, 2007); however, some research in this area was flawed by weak designs (Cooper et al., 2003; Cuban, 2008). Consistency in how time is used throughout a school matters if the objectives of the reform are to be met (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Shields & Olberg, 2000). There are many factors for schools to consider when introducing a change, including communicating the new policy, setting the vision, implementing the plan, and assessing its effectiveness (Fullan, 2009; Kneese & Ballinger, 2009; McCullough et al., 2008).

The challenge that specifically prompted this study began when a local Archdiocese mandated a calendar extension initiative for its elementary schools (Landsberg, 2011). Some schools adopted this plan and extended their calendars from 180 days to 200 days in compliance with the mandate that eventually changed to a suggestion from the Department of Catholic Schools (Baxter, 2011). However, despite the goals presented by the Department of Catholic Schools which prompted this change, the pilot study revealed that some schools extended their calendars without having developed a clear plan for how the time would be used (Sabatino et al., 2012). Sabatino et al. (2012) noted, "[s]chool communities were comfortable at the time of the interviews in May 2011 in not having a clearly defined and/or designed plan for using the extra days in the school calendar" (p. 4). Implementing a new policy without planning its implementation and assessment can be ineffective (Fullan, 2009; Owens & Valesky, 2011).

This case study examined how a suburban Catholic elementary school implemented a calendar extension initiative. It investigated how the school envisioned using the additional time extension when the policy was communicated to them. It examined how the school personnel including the pastor, administrator, and teachers responded to the initiative and what kind of planning and assessment of the implementation was prepared. This research also examined the impact of the calendar extension on curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities for teachers, students, and parents. The ultimate goal of this research was to provide an overall picture of the challenges and opportunities that this Catholic school faced as a result of the calendar extension.

Research Questions

By exploring the manner in which one suburban, Catholic elementary school negotiated an adoption of time-based reform, this study aimed to address the following questions:

1) How did the pastor, administrator, and teachers initially envision and plan to use the extended time at St. Agape Catholic School?
2) After implementing calendar extension for two full academic years, how were the teachers and students using the extended time for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes?
3) What were the pastor's, administrator's, teachers', parents', and students' perceptions of the outcomes associated with the calendar extension including, challenges and opportunities at St. Agape Catholic School?

Research Design

Qualitative Methodology

This intrinsic case study incorporated qualitative research methods including field observation, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis to gather data about the implementation process of a time-based educational reform. Case study was the most suitable methodology because the implementation of reform initiatives is best understood in context. A case study approach allowed for the perspectives of all the stakeholders involved in the change to be considered and for several data points to be explored. The study comprehensively and holistically investigated how the extended time was visualized and used at this school, and analyzed the contextual conditions related to this phenomenon. As noted by Merriam (2009),

"anchored in real-life situation, the case study results in a rich and holistic account" and plays a "role in advancing a field's knowledge base" (p. 51).

A qualitative approach enabled comprehensive analysis of this change because the study included narrative responses from the people involved in the change, namely the pastor, administrator, teachers, parents, and students. The school's pastor, administrator, and some of the teachers were interviewed. Both teachers and students were observed during data collection periods in the classroom observations. Some of the teachers, students, and parents participated in focus groups. Data collection also included the collection of relevant documents from kindergarten through eighth-grade classrooms. Additional materials such as school documents and written communications with parents and teachers, WCEA-WASC school self-study reports, school newsletters, and tuition letters were also analyzed. As needed follow-up questions were employed during the focus group meetings to provide additional data related to themes and trends that emerged from the interviews and classroom observations.

The researcher spent four months at St. Agape. Extended immersion in the field site enabled the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of how the pastor, administrator, and teachers perceived this calendar change when it was first proposed to them. Information about their initial perceptions was garnered using interview questions that required the pastor, administrator, and the teachers to reflect upon the communication of this change and how it impacted learning, curriculum planning, and assessment at their school site. The interviews (See Appendix A) also asked questions of the teachers related to how this change was communicated to the parents and students at the school site. Lesson plans and curriculum maps that were used prior to the extended calendar were also reviewed. Likewise, the researcher analyzed the

documents that were used by the school site to communicate the change and the goals for this change to the stakeholders.

The first research question was addressed through pastor, administrator, and teacher interviews as well as in the review of documents including lesson plans, curriculum maps, and pacing guides. It was also informed by an analysis of school documents that were used to communicate the calendar change to the community. The second research question was addressed using classroom observations and interviews with the teachers. A goal of the research was to understand the perceptions of the teachers regarding the calendar extension once it had been in place for over a year. The classroom observations provided the researcher with an understanding of how the extended time was being used at the school site. This question was also addressed in the teacher interviews and focus group meetings. Finally, a review of curriculum maps, lesson plans, and school communications was utilized to illuminate teachers' perceptions of how the extended time was being used.

Answers to the last research question emerged from the data collection procedures directed toward the first two research questions. As these data emerged, they were coded and used to develop questions for the focus group meetings, which involved additional teachers, students, and parents to discuss the challenges and opportunities they have noticed at their school as a result of the calendar change (See Appendix B).

The decision to extend academic calendars was driven by several goals as noted by the superintendent and the Department of Catholic Schools: the extended calendar "will augment interest in the school, with an increase in enrollment" (p. 17), "establish a foundation for enhanced student success in all areas of education—academic, spiritual, social, and emotional"

(p. 17), “reduce greatly the need for academic summer school,” “increase ‘time on task,” and finally “add depth and richness to the curriculum already being taught so that students and teachers both have a more satisfying educational experience” (p. 18).

The research questions were designed to better understand from the perspective of the teachers whether the opportunities that they identify are consistent with the goals established by the Department of Catholic Schools and with their school’s own vision for the extended time. Answers to these questions also yielded information about whether the teachers’ and students’ perceptions have changed regarding the calendar extension since it was announced to them.

Research Setting

St. Agape Catholic School. St. Agape Catholic School, founded in 1957, is located in a suburban area of Los Angeles County. The school is connected to a single parish. The principal and faculty are all members of the laity. The principal supervises the day-to-day operations of the school with consultation of the parish pastor. In the school year prior to the calendar extension, the school’s enrollment was at 118 students (2010-2011). In the 2013-2014 school year when this study was conducted, there were 135 students enrolled the school, spanning kindergarten through eighth grade. The student population is ethnically diverse and includes both Catholics and non-Catholics. In the 2013-2014 school year, the school employed nine teachers. The ethnic characteristics of the faculty are not reflective of the student population. The student population includes a high percentage of Latino and Pacific Islander students, whereas the faculty is predominantly White.

This school site has a single classroom per grade, and it is located in an area surrounded by public and charter schools that have been impacted by furlough days. Enrollment at this

school site has been steady and even increased slightly since the adoption of the calendar extension. The change in calendar was announced to the school community in the spring of 2011. The school began using the calendar change at the beginning of the 2011-2012.

Site Selection

St. Agape Catholic School was purposefully chosen as the site for this case study for several reasons. First, the site was selected because the school adopted an extended calendar in the 2011-2012 academic year. Second, the researcher was known to the administrator and teachers at the site through the site's involvement in the 200-day study that was being conducted at Loyola Marymount University (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al., 2013). Third, the administration and teachers at this site demonstrated openness in working with researchers to explore the outcomes of their adoption of an extended calendar. In interviews that were conducted as part of the 200-day study (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al. 2013), the principal expressed interest in opening this school site to further research with the hope that said research could provide her with supporting documentation relative to the calendar extension. The principal wanted to share findings from this research with her school community and with other principals in her deanery who are deciding whether to extend their calendar year.

Participant Selection and Sampling Criteria

A total of nineteen respondents participated in this study: one pastor, one administrator, nine teachers, five students, and three parents. The pastor, the principal, and three teachers were interviewed individually. Fourteen teachers, parents, and students participated in focus group meetings. All three of the teachers who were interviewed individually were also observed in their classrooms for approximately three hours each. The three teachers who were interviewed have

been employed at the school since prior to the adoption of the calendar extension. All of the parent and student focus group participants have also been at the school since prior to the adoption of the extended calendar. The teacher focus group participants included all members of the faculty exclusive of the three who were involved in classroom observations and individual interviews. Of the teacher focus group participants, only one had been at the school since the adoption of the calendar extension, but she was not selected for individual interview participation because she had since changed her grade-level teaching assignment.

Field observations with three teachers. This case study incorporated a purposeful convenience sample of teachers who participated in the field observations. These teachers met the following criteria: 1) employed by the school at the time that the calendar extension was announced and throughout the subsequent implementation, and 2) remained in the same grade level for the duration of the implementation of the calendar extension. These criteria ensured that respondents could speak about the planning, implementation, and outcomes attributed to the calendar extension. These teachers also had curriculum maps and pacing plans that had been updated with regard to the Common Core Standards for English language arts and mathematics, and lesson plans, so that a review of curriculum documentation relative to the post adoption of the calendar extension could take place. At the time of the study, only four of the teachers who were employed by the school at the time the calendar extension was adopted were still employed at the school. Of those four teachers, three were still in the positions or grade levels that they taught when the calendar was initially extended. This factor limited the available pool teachers to exactly the three who were observed.

Interviews with three teachers. The same criteria applied to sample the teachers for observation were also used to select teachers to interview. In other words, the three teachers who were observed in class were also interviewed one-on-one by the researcher. The interviews took place between periods of field observation in two cases and at the end of the three hours of field observation in one case. Following the transcription of each interview, the researcher followed-up as needed with each participant in person or via email to clarify data and interpretation. Each respondent was also invited to submit additional information to the researcher following the interview if the questions encouraged such as reaction. One of the three teachers later submitted additional lesson plans, class newsletters, and samples of student work as means of supporting the interview commentary.

Interviews with the pastor and principal. In addition to the interviews with three current teachers, both the principal and the pastor were interviewed individually. Both of these participants were present when the calendar extension was originally adopted and were still employed by the school or parish at the time of this study. This participant sample was convenient and purposive.

Focus group meeting with current teachers. Prior to the completion of the field observations and individual interviews, the researcher held a focus group meeting with the current teachers who were employed by the school but had not been part of the classroom observations or individual interview sample. This group included six teachers who represented the primary, intermediate, and middle school grade levels. Of this group, only one teacher was present at the time that the calendar was adopted, and the balance of the group had been hired since that adoption. The one teacher who had been employed by the school at the time the

calendar was adopted was included in this group instead of the interview group because she had changed grade levels in the past three years from the intermediate level to the primary level.

Focus group meeting with current parents. The three parents who participated in the parent focus group meeting met the following criteria: 1) they had children enrolled at the school at the time that the calendar extension was announced, 2) the children had remained enrolled at the school for the three years that the calendar extension had been in place, 3) they had children in multiple grade levels spanning from the intermediate grades through middle school. The site principal provided the names of parent stakeholders who satisfied these criteria. These parents received an open invitation to participate in the focus group. Three parent stakeholders responded to the invitation and were included in this meeting. This sample was also convenient and purposive.

Focus group meeting with current students. The five students who participated in the parent focus group meeting met the following criteria: 1) they had been enrolled at the school at the time that the calendar extension was announced, 2) they had remained enrolled at the school for the three years that the calendar extension had been in place, 3) they represented multiple grade levels spanning from fourth through eighth, 4) they represented the ethnic and gender characteristics of the students enrolled in the school. The students were related to the parents who participated in the in the parent focus group. This sample was also convenient and purposive.

Participants

The participants for this study (See Table 1) included the school principal, the parish pastor, nine teachers at the school, three parents, and a group of five students from different

grade levels. The pastor, three teachers, and the principal were interviewed in-depth, using long semi-structured interviews. Three teachers were both interviewed and observed including one teacher from the primary grade level (Kindergarten through Second Grade) and two from the intermediate level (Third through Sixth Grades). The remaining teachers were included in the focus group meetings.

The students selected for participation were purposefully selected because they had been enrolled at the school site when the calendar extension was adopted. These students were also selected because they were representative of the larger student population in terms of gender and ethnicity. As reported by the teachers and parents, the students also reflected a range of learning abilities. Lastly, these students were chosen because their parents had served as the parent focus group participants and had granted permission for the researcher to involve them in the study. The student participants were selected from grades four through eight (ages 10 to 14).

The adults who participated in the study included the pastor, administrator, teachers, and parents. They ranged in age from 32 to 60. The sample included both male and female participants. The teacher population at this school site reflects the student and parent population; however, of those teachers who met the sample criteria, all but one was White.

Table 1

List of Participants

Pseudonym	Role at School	Participation	Grade Level	Notes
Principal Joyce	Principal	Interview	NA	
Fr. James	Pastor	Interview	NA	
Jane	Teacher	Interview, Field Observations	Primary	8 Years at school
Jennifer	Teacher	Interview, Field Observations	Intermediate	11Years at school
Jessica	Teacher	Interview, Field Observations	Intermediate	9 Years at school
Elizabeth	Teacher	Focus Group	Primary	8 Years at school
Chelsea	Teacher	Focus Group	Primary	2 Years at school
Mary	Teacher	Focus Group	Middle	1 Year at school
Cristin	Teacher	Focus Group	Intermediate	1 Year at school
Stephanie	Teacher	Focus Group	Middle	2 Years at school
John	Teacher	Focus Group	Middle	1 Year at school
Mrs. Jones	Parent/Volunteer	Focus Group	NA	1 Child (Grade 5)
Mrs. Jackson	Parent/Volunteer	Focus Group	NA	3 Children (Grades 5, 7, & 8)
Mrs. Jacinto	Parent/Staff Member	Focus Group	NA	2 Children (Graduate & Grade 7)
Christopher	Student	Focus Group	Middle	Grade 7
Garrett	Student	Focus Group	Intermediate	Grade 5
Emily	Student	Focus Group	Middle	Grade 7
Susie	Student	Focus Group	Middle	Grade 8
Mark	Student	Focus Group	Intermediate	Grade 5

Methods of Data Collection

The data gathered via observation, interview, document analysis, and focus group meetings spanned a period of four months from September 2013 through December 2013. Interviews with teachers followed a protocol, but the researcher also instigated probing

techniques to obtain clarification from respondents. As explained by Hatch (2002), "Probes are not prepared ahead of time but are created as follow-up questions during the give and take of the interview" (p. 109).

Prior to involvement in interviews, field observations, or focus groups, the teachers and students involved in this study received a written and oral overview of the study and an informed consent form outlining the activities included in the study (See Appendices C through E). In the case of teachers, this overview took place in person, and informed consent was collected directly. In the case of students, the researcher prepared a letter outlining the purpose of the research, the scope of the study as it related to student participation, the potential risks within the study, an acknowledgement of the discomfort that participants may feel when being interviewed, and the protection of confidentiality of participants within the study. This letter was shared with the parents of the students via written and verbal communication by the researcher. The researcher provided contact information including a telephone number and email address and was available to the parents to answer questions about the study as needed to obtain their consent or denial of participation on behalf of their student(s).

The researcher received the Institutional Review Board approval for the procedures described here, based on an application package that included a complete research application, certification from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative on protection of human subjects, copies of the informed consent forms, and a copy of the proposed interview protocol.

The data were collected in the following sequence:

1) collection of documents,
2) field observations in three classrooms,

3) standardized open-ended interviews with the pastor, administrator, and individual teachers who represented the classrooms where field observations took place,
4) focus group meetings with the teachers,
5) additional classroom observations,
6) focus group meeting with parents, and
7) focus group meeting with students.

Document collection and review took place throughout the entire data collection process. To triangulate the data collected in the interviews, field observations, and focus group meetings, the researcher also reviewed documents and school communications.

Field Observations

Data collection. The research began with one-hour classroom observation sessions in three grade levels. During the initial classroom observation period in each room, the researcher was seated at the side or the back of the classroom. The first hour in each classroom enabled the researcher to note some general details about how the classroom setting was arranged, the teacher's instructional approach, classroom management practices, and the student population within the room. Hatch (2002) noted that "[getting] close to social phenomena allows the researcher to add his or her own experience in the setting to the analysis of what is happening" (p. 72). As the observation proceeded in each classroom, the students and teacher became increasingly interactive with the researcher and as such, the researcher had "the opportunity to see things that are taken for granted by participants and would be less likely to come to the surface using interviewing" alone (Hatch, 2002, p. 72). Likewise, as the researcher gained a

deeper understanding of the classroom expectations, dynamics, procedures, and instructional practices, interaction became more authentic and emic in nature.

In total, three hours of formal observation time were spent in each of the three classrooms for a total of nine documented hours. However, more informal time was spent in classrooms when the researcher dropped in during other campus visits or as interaction happened with the students and teacher on the playground during recess and lunch. Prolonged engagement, "lengthy and intensive contact with the phenomena (or respondents) in the field to assess possible sources of distortion and especially to identify saliencies in the situation" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77) was utilized as the themes that initially began to emerge were vastly different than what the researcher had expected. The observation notes were taken via computer in two of the classrooms and via paper and pencil in one of the classrooms as each method was determined suitable by the researcher for that particular environment. Following each one-hour visitation, the researcher reviewed the observation notes and added notations, observations, and additional inquiry in the margin. During the observations, field notes were taken. These notes were highly descriptive in nature so as to give the readers "the feel as if they are there, seeing what the observer sees" (Merriam, 2009, p. 130). The field notes contained descriptions of the setting including the teacher and students involved, the classroom space, and the activities that are involved; direct quotations for the experience; and comments and questions for further investigation in follow-up interviews with the students and teachers (Merriam, 2009).

Interviews

Data collection. The interviews with three teachers who were present at the school site at the time that the calendar extension was announced to the present occurred in October 2013

and November 2013 following at least two hours of formal classroom observation time in each classroom. Each of the interviews followed a protocol of questions designed to reduce researcher bias within the study (Turner, 2010). The first interview followed the protocol precisely and the participant indicated that she felt the questions were redundant and repetitive. The researcher found that this was happening because as the participant responded to the early questions within the protocol, she added details that also partially answered later questions within the protocol. As such, it was sometimes necessary to rephrase the later questions. Similarly, when the participant hinted at a response without explaining it in detail the researcher utilized probes to clarify the information. Hatch (2002) noted, "Probing questions are designed to encourage informants to go more deeply into a topic, and they can be used to reshape the direction of the interview segment" (p. 109) and this is precisely how they were used within this study. Data was collected using a digital recording device and field notes. The researcher personally transcribed the audio recording and used the field notes to add commentary and notations to the margin of the transcripts. Teacher respondents were given a gift card following the meeting in appreciation for their participation in the study.

The principal and pastor interviews took place following the individual teacher interviews. Both of these individual interviews followed an interview protocol and, as in the second and third teacher interviews, as the respondents began to answer later questions in their early responses, questions were rephrased or the researcher took the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The researcher followed-up with the principal via email and in person to ask demographic questions and clarify other details (e.g., the number of teachers who possessed teaching credentials or advanced degrees, professional development information). The pastor

and principal were both given gift cards following the meeting in appreciation for their participation in the study.

Interviews were the second data source used in this study. All interviews followed a standardized open-ended format or protocol (Turner, 2010). The protocols (See Appendices A, B, and C) followed a similar format that was established and driven by the research questions. All interviews included this standardized set of questions, but the researcher instigated probing techniques to obtain clarification from the interview participants. As Patten (2010) indicated, "some questions [were] developed in advance with follow-up questions developed on the spot in light of the participants' responses" (p. 77). The interviews were "guided by (the) list of questions or issues to be explored" (Merriam, 2009, p. 89). Interview protocol design was additionally informed by prior literature on organizational change and calendar reform (Fullan, 2009; Sabatino et al., 2012, 2013).

The interview protocol within this study was unique to this inquiry because previous research reports conducted on school change do not relate specifically to calendar extension, and because previous studies conducted on calendar change focus on achievement measures and or more quantitative measures. This study was unique in that it included a qualitative approach, and it focused on the holistic aspects of the lived calendar extension experience. This approach made possible a nuanced picture of the outcomes of the extension through the perceptions of all stakeholders within the school.

The questions used in the interview protocol were designed to discover the stakeholders' perceptions of how the calendar change was communicated to them. They also considered how the stakeholders perceived the extension taking shape within their school as it related to

pedagogical practices. Finally, the interview questions considered perceptions of the outcomes including challenges and opportunities resulting from the calendar change both within the curriculum and outside of the curriculum (co-curricular and extra-curricular). Within the curriculum, the research questions were designed to determine to what extent the goals of the Department of Catholic Schools have been met including that the extended time was designed to "augment interest in the school, with an increase in enrollment" and to "establish a foundation for enhanced student success in all areas of education—academic, spiritual, social, and emotional" (Baxter, 2011, p. 17). Baxter (2011) also suggested that this initiative would "reduce greatly the need for academic summer school," "increase 'time on task,'" and finally "add depth and richness to the curriculum already being taught so that students and teachers both have a more satisfying educational experience" (p. 17-18).

The language used in the interviews was intended to be clear and concise and "using words that make sense to the interviewee, works that reflect the respondent's world view, will improve the quality of data obtained during the interview" (Patton, 2002, p. 312).

The teacher interviews were conducted on the St. Agape campus after school in a face-to-face format in each teacher's classroom. The researcher consulted with each teacher to select a mutually convenient time for the interview. The student interviews took place during the regular school day and included questions pre-determined by the researcher.

Within an interview, participants may exhibit reflexivity and tell the researcher what they believe the researcher wants to hear (Yin, 2009). As each interview proceeded, the researcher attempted to "balance valuing the informants' desire to talk about certain subjects with using the interview time to get at information directly tied to the research topic" (Hatch, 2002, p. 109).

With each respondent's consent, the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Additionally, the researcher recorded handwritten field notes during each interview.

Focus Groups

Data collection. After conducting a few hours of classroom observation and two of the individual teacher interviews, the researcher met with the six remaining members of the faculty in a focus group meeting in November 2013. The meeting took place on campus in the school's community room that also serves as the faculty lunch area. All of the participants joined the meeting during their regular 45-minute lunch break, and lunch was provided by the researcher in order to maximize the meeting time available and as a gesture of appreciation to the participants who gave up their lunchtimes to meet with the researcher. A focus meeting protocol was used to conduct this meeting.

A focus group meeting with three parent stakeholders also took place in November 2013. All three of these parents came to the campus during the regular school day and met with the researcher in the community room that had been reserved by the school's administrative assistant for the purpose of this meeting. Each of the parent participants was given a gift card following the meeting in appreciation for their participation in the study. This meeting also followed a meeting protocol and lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Lastly, a focus group meeting with current students took place in December 2013. The students met the researcher during their regular school day in the community room that had been reserved by the school's administrative assistant for the purpose of this meeting. The student meeting followed a meeting protocol and lasted approximately 35 minutes.

For all three focus group meetings, a digital recording device was used to document the meeting. Field notes were also taken by the researcher at each meeting. In some cases during the meetings, while the participants responded to the protocol questions, side conversations between the participants occurred. At these points in the digital recording portions of the meeting became inaudible, and the researcher notes that some responses may have been truncated as the result.

The focus group interview data was collected using field notes and a recording device. Transcripts from the focus group interviews were manually transcribed then coded by the researcher. The teacher focus group included all teachers at the school who were not already interviewed, students from the classrooms that were being observed, and parents representative of the classrooms being observed.

Focus group interviews about the extended calendar have already been conducted at this school site as part of the 200-day study by Loyola Marymount University (Dell'Olio et al., 2014). This fact serves as a limitation of the study.

Document Collection

Data collection. Documents including calendars, parent communications, lesson plans, curriculum maps, class newsletters, school handbook, lists of classroom rules and guidelines, samples of student work, and photographs of classrooms (exclusive of students) were collected from the school site beginning in September 2013 and spanning through December 2013. In addition to the documents that were collected within the scope of this study, documents collected in another, earlier study (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al., 2013) in which the researcher was involved, were used; these documents included WCEA school accreditation documents,

school-home communications, calendars from previous school years, and historical enrollment data. In addition, within the scope of the previous study, transcripts from a principal interview and teacher focus group meeting from June 2012 were created. Those transcripts were used as document data in this study.

The data also included school documents and written communications with parents, students, and teachers, *Western Catholic Educational Association* and *Western Association of Schools and Colleges* (WCEA-WASC) school self-study reports, and school newsletters, calendars, and tuition letters. The researcher reviewed and analyzed the school's documents in an effort to triangulate the data. As Merriam (2009) indicated, "one of the greatest advantages in using documentary material is its stability" and "unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied" (p. 155).

The researcher also collected and coded documents from the school related to the calendar extension including calendars, correspondence, curriculum maps, lesson plans, and information available to stakeholders on the schools website.

Methods of Data Analysis

Field Observations

Data analysis. The notes taken during each of the observation sessions were formally transcribed by the researcher following the visit, and peer debriefing was conducted to help the researcher prepare more comprehensive notes and analysis. As Lincoln and Guba (1986) noted, peer debriefing involves, "exposing oneself to a disinterested professional peer to 'keep the inquirer honest', assist in developing working hypothesis, develop and test the emerging design, and obtain emotional catharsis" (p. 77). From the initial analysis of these transcriptions, themes

and patterns began to emerge that helped the researcher better shape the interview and focus group questions as well as the inquiries that were employed during future observation sessions. All of the observation notes were read and reviewed first individually by the researcher and then again with a peer. Segments of data were discussed and codes were assigned to them as the units naturally emerged. The analysis of the field observation data took place in October 2013 and November 2013 as the sessions occurred. Each classroom observation session was followed by time for transcription and analysis as well as various individual interviews, document analysis, and focus group meetings for triangulation.

Interviews

Data analysis. Once the interview transcriptions were complete, the researcher followed up with individual teachers, the pastor, and the principal to confirm details and clarify portions of the interview where the recording device may not have clearly documented the responses as a form of member check. The interview transcripts were then read and reviewed by the researcher independently and coded by hand. Following the initial review of the transcripts, the researcher reviewed them again with a peer and an advisor. During the subsequent review of this data, segments of data were broken into smaller units and additional coding was incorporated. Additionally, this data was coded and themes that emerged were noted for later cross reference and member checks in focus group meetings, observations, and document analysis.

Focus Group Meetings

Data analysis. The researcher personally transcribed the meeting recording adding notations from the field notes to the margins of the transcripts. Following each transcription, the researcher began to code the data into segments by hand. As with the interview and field

observation data, peer debriefing was utilized and as needed, data was broken into smaller units of analysis. Both the parent and student focus group meetings yielded some new codes that were later explored more fully through document analysis and in the principal interview. However, overall similar codes emerged in all three focus group meetings and saturation became apparent.

Documents

Data analysis. Document data analysis took place within this study beginning in September 2013, and it occurred on an on-going basis through December 2013 as more documents were collected. In addition to the documents collected for this study, the researcher also used documents collected during a previous study (Sabatino et al., 2013). All of these data were coded by hand by the researcher and again, these data were peer reviewed and reviewed in conjunction with interview and observation transcriptions or notes as a means of confirming or refuting codes and themes.

All interview recordings were transcribed manually by the researcher and then placed into tables. The data in the tables was analyzed in an effort to discover themes and domains. The use of the data tables helped identify emergent themes, domains, and trends as they authentically occurred within the data.

Field notes taken during the observation were typed and reviewed following each classroom observation period. Following a review of the field notes, the notes were then coded and classifications that naturally emerged from the data were identified manually.

Data analysis was inductive in nature. As Hatch (2002) suggested, "inductive analysis begins with an examination of the particulars within data" (p. 161). The early review of data will be done with a "key initial question in mind: What will be my frames of analysis?" (Hatch, 2002,

p. 163). The researcher began the analysis process by inductively identifying codes—topics that emerged from the data that specifically related to the research questions. The codes addressed the manner in which the calendar extension was communicated to the school's stakeholders and the goals that were provided for this change.

Hatch (2002) explained that "data analysis is a systematic search for meaning" that involves "organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories" (p. 148). Merriam (2009) described data analysis as "the process of making sense out of the data" which also "involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning" (pp. 175-176). In this study, the aim of analysis was to make meaning out of the data and to respond to the research questions.

The researcher reviewed and compared the data in search of "recurring regularities" (Merriam, 2009, p. 177). These topics became the codes by which the data were organized into themes and then broken down further into domains. Merriam (2009) suggested that "categories are conceptual elements that 'cover' or span many individual examples" or topics (p. 181).

Triangulation of Data

Because data were collected in cycles of observations, interviews, and focus groups, early data collection impacted later collection in terms of the codes that emerged and required further exploration and triangulation. Triangulation of data involves including multiple data points in order to ensure that the study is considering the whole picture and an authentic representation of the phenomenon. Shenton (2004) and Guba (1981) suggested using different methods of data

collection in concert to accommodate for the individual shortcomings or limitations of any one form of data. In this study, triangulation was employed to reduce the effect of the researcher's bias.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Prior researchers employed a variety of techniques to increase the rigor and trustworthiness of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). To increase trustworthiness within this study, the researcher utilized prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checks, and negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The data that was collected from the site included school document analysis, field notes from classroom observations, interview notes and transcripts, and focus group notes and transcripts. The field notes were used in conjunction with a recording device in an effort to help capture facial expressions, body language, and other non-verbal details that were missed in the digital recording. The data was collected in a sequence that enabled transcription and analysis between each visit to the school site. Because of this sequence, peer debriefing occurred regularly as the data was collected, and follow-up inquiries were added to each subsequent visit as the result of this interaction. As patterns and relationships within the data began to emerge, triangulation through other forms of data was used to ensure trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) and Guba (1981) suggested combining multiple data sources to accommodate for the limitations of any one form of data. Data collection spanned a period of four academic months and was analyzed along with data collected by Sabatino et al. (2013). Furthermore, because the data were collected in cycles of observations, interviews, and focus groups, early data collection prompted the researcher to ask clarifying questions and request specific documentation for document analysis.

According to Guba (1981), researchers can ensure the trustworthiness of their work by addressing four factors including: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through the selection of well-established research methods. Credibility also involved getting familiar with the culture of the school site and using purposeful sampling within the study. Triangulation of data helped ensure the credibility of the study. Lastly, credibility was ensured through informed consent procedures whereby prospective participants had the opportunity to decline participation because with choice, participants may be more inclined to be honest (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability relates to the importance of a "researcher's conveying to the reader the boundaries of the study" and the study's findings with reference to other settings (Shenton, 2004, p. 70). Transferability and the external validity of a study is the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other settings (Merriam, 2009).

Dependability involves the care that a researcher takes to note all practices employed within the study and whether the study can be replicated in other settings given these practices and the documentation. The researcher accomplishes this by intricately describing what is planned and executed within the study (Shenton, 2004).

Lastly, confirmability must be approached. Confirmability relates to the objectivity that the researcher maintains. According to Shenton (2004) it is important, and "steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (p. 72).

The researcher aimed to maintain all aspects of trustworthiness within this study including credibility by utilizing established methods of data collection and analysis and by

becoming familiar with the school site. Likewise, the researcher attempted to maintain transferability through a detailed explanation of the school site and boundaries of this site. The researcher maintained dependability by carefully detailing the data collection and analysis practices utilized so that the study can be replicated at other sites. Lastly, the researcher ensured confirmability by allowing the story of this site to be told by the data that emerged rather than the researcher's notions of what was taking place at this site.

Positionality and Reflexivity

The researcher attempted to remain as objective and detached as possible; however, given the duration of the fieldwork and the fact that "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection, subjectivity and interaction are assumed" (Merriam, 2009, p. 127). The researcher's presence as an observer at the school may have "affect[ed] the climate of the setting, often effecting a more formal atmosphere than is usually the case," but with extended exposure in the setting "over time, the stability of a social setting is rarely disrupted by the presence of an observer" (Merriam, 2009, p. 127). The researcher had already established a relationship with the school community through her work with the 200-day study and as such remained sensitive to the level of involvement and questioning that the faculty has already experienced with the larger study (Sabatino et al., 2013).

Researcher and participant trust was initially established during the 200-day study (Sabatino et al., 2013). The goal of this case study was to achieve an emic perspective through long-term, immersive exposure to the site through field observations, participation in teacher meetings, and attendance in the lunch room during the site visits. Within the classroom setting, the researcher was positioned as a nonparticipant observer who remained relatively passive and

unobtrusive in an effort to put the participants at ease. Within the faculty room and in scheduled school meetings among the teachers, the researcher sometimes acted as a participant observer depending upon the topic(s) of discussion.

The researcher is a Catholic school administrator at a school that, at the time of the research, did not have an extended calendar. Moreover, the researcher was employed by a diocese other than the one that adopted the calendar initiative. Concurrent with this study, the researcher was serving as a member of a research team examining the 200-day extended calendar initiative adopted within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 2011 (Baxter, 2011; Landsberg, 2011).

As a Catholic educator from another diocese, the researcher hoped to develop a deeper understanding of time-oriented reform initiatives including the development of a plan for how the additional time is used, how the use of time is measured and assessed, and finally the pedagogical and social outcomes of a time-based reform initiative. The study thus contributes nuanced, qualitative information to assist schools in their implementation plan of the extended calendar, to help school leaders manage the change within their organizations, and to help schools consider the various outcomes associated with such change.

The researcher's interest in this calendar extension study was influenced by the mixed perceptions of colleagues who work within the Archdiocese that adopted this calendar change. It was the intention of the researcher to remain unbiased in retelling the story of how the change took shape at St. Agape School. However, to acknowledge that the perception of the researcher was not in some part influenced by the position that colleagues have taken on this topic as well as the research studied would be remiss. It is the ultimate goal of the research to allow the data

to unfold authentically so that the bias of the researcher does not taint the trustworthiness of the findings. Triangulation of data and use of established forms of data collection and analysis assisted in this regard.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study examined a specific phenomenon at a suburban school that adopted an extended calendar. This study explored how the change was perceived by the pastor, the administrator, and the teachers when it was first communicated to them. It also considered how, after one full year of implementation of the calendar extension, the teachers and students were using the extended time for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes at the school site. Lastly, the study aimed to provide information about the pastor's, administrator's, teachers', students', and parents' perceptions of the outcomes related to the calendar change including the challenges and opportunities.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

This qualitative case study focused on how one suburban Catholic elementary school implemented a calendar extension initiative that was first imposed and then later suggested by the leadership of the local Archdiocese. The study examined how the school personnel responded to the initiative, whether they designed an implementation plan, and how they planned to measure the progress toward implementation of that plan. The study investigated how the school envisioned using the additional time when the policy was first communicated to them and the impact of the calendar extension on curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. This study captured the voices of the pastor, administrator, teachers, students, and parents who were involved in this calendar extension including their expectations, experiences, and perceptions regarding the change.

The study was conducted at St. Agape Catholic School (pseudonym), a Catholic elementary school located in a suburb of Southern California. Following what was initially announced as a mandate and the subsequent suggestion that schools within the Archdiocese extend their calendars, St. Agape extended its academic calendar by twenty days starting with the 2011-2012 academic year. At the time of data collection, the school was in its third year of implementing the extended calendar initiative. In each of those years, the August and June calendars were adjusted to accommodate the additional time. Through field observations, interviews, focus groups, and analyses of documents, this case study aimed to discover stakeholders' perceptions of the calendar change. This study considered the challenges and

opportunities presented by the extended calendar, as well as how the school community has modified curriculum and instruction with the additional time. Ultimately, the knowledge gained from this St. Agape case study can be useful to other schools that are implementing or considering calendar extensions.

Research Questions

By exploring how one suburban, Catholic elementary school navigated its adoption of time-based reform, this study addressed the following questions:

1) How did the pastor, administrator, and teachers initially envision and plan to use the extended time at St. Agape Catholic School?
2) After implementing calendar extension for two full academic years, how have the teachers and students used the extended time for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes?
3) What were the pastor's, administrator's, teachers', parents', and students' perceptions of the outcomes associated with the calendar extension including, challenges and opportunities at St. Agape Catholic School?

The Context for this Study

Time spent in school, extended time initiatives, summer learning loss, and year-round school options have been the subjects of many studies. In the past few decades, time-based reform initiatives have been broadly explored within America as a means of improving education. However, educators and researchers have found little identifiable impact to achievement growth (Aronson et al., 1999; Silva, 2007). Consistency in how the time is used throughout a school matters if the objectives of the reform are to be met (Berliner & Biddle,

1995; Shields & Olberg, 2000). There are many factors for schools to consider when introducing a change including communicating the change, setting the vision, implementing a plan, and assessing the plan (Fullan, 2009; Kneese & Ballinger, 2009; McCullough et al., 2008). Research on time-based reform is flawed by weak designs (Cooper et al., 2003; Cuban, 2008). Few studies have considered how the decision to add time to the academic calendar was made, the implementation process, and assessment of the implementation. Those that exist mainly focus on planning or achievement outcomes. This study was intended to fill a niche by considering the perceptions of those involved in the adoption and implementation more holistically. This study documented the perceptions, experiences, and voice of all stakeholder groups at the school including the administrator, pastor, teachers, parents, and students.

Setting: St. Agape Catholic School

This single-parish, Catholic school is located in a suburban area. The area around the school is mostly residential featuring single-family homes and apartment buildings. The median price for homes in this zip code is $499,000 for 1,400 square feet of living space (www.movoto.com). The neighborhood also includes two large recreational parks and shopping areas. The commercial shopping areas appear to be newly renovated and feature major retail chains, restaurants, and grocery stores. There are no industrial areas within that same one-mile radius.

According to the data provided by the principal, there are 24 families within the school who receive a tuition discount or financial assistance toward tuition. The school does not presently collect data relative to family income exclusive of those families who have applied for

this assistance. The average family income for this group is $75,000 per year. This figure may not be reflective of the entire school community.

There are three other parish-based, Catholic elementary schools within a three-mile radius of this school. None of the other Catholic schools within the immediate area adopted an extended calendar like St. Agape had with twenty additional days. One of the local, Catholic schools did add five additional days to their academic calendar. None of the local public or other private schools had extended their calendars. At the time of this study, several of the local public schools had shortened their academic calendar using furlough days due to budgetary constraints (Mrs. Joyce, Principal Interview #1).

The school is located directly adjacent to the church building and parish offices. All of these buildings are situated curbside along a single-loaded portion of a main thoroughfare within the city. Signage from the street is limited to a small, street level sign attached to the school building, a banner posted along the chain-linked fencing which totally encloses the school campus, and a street level sign for the church. The parking lot is accessible from a side street and is located next to and behind the church. The landscape is aesthetically pleasing and features two rose gardens and manicured shrubs, giving visitors the impression that the area is well-maintained, safe, and inviting. To access the school office, the visitor must press a doorbell and be admitted by the school's administrative assistant. The campus and classrooms are shared by the parish religious education program.

Most of the students enrolled in the school commute to school from the local area. During the period of field research, it was observed that a few students walked or rode their bike

to school, but most arrived via parent vehicle or carpool. About half of the parents walked their children to the parish hall where the morning assembly took place and classes gathered.

The school had been practicing an open or rolling admissions process whereby students can be admitted and enrolled at any time throughout the academic year. They use this because the school is not fully enrolled and has space for additional students. An "intent to return" form is sent to all registered school families in January. The formal registration period and re-enrollment of all current students takes place annually beginning in February. The registration period is used to gauge enrollment for the following school year for budgetary and staffing purposes. However, the principal shared that the culture of the school is such that many families wait to submit these forms and deposits until after the deadline. According to the principal, this has become a conditioned response because over the years, despite missing the deadline, enrollment has been granted to all who wish to re-enroll exclusive of those who have been asked to leave the school for disciplinary reasons. Admissions preference is given to students whose families are members of parish but the student census does include non-parishioners and non-Catholics. According to the principal, only one of the currently enrolled students in K-8 was classified as eligible for Title I (economically disadvantaged) services and one of the students in K-8 was classified as English Language Learners as reported by the principal. St. Agape Catholic School, in accordance with the Archdiocesan mission, strives to serve children with special learning needs.

The school was founded in 1957 with a starting enrollment of 276 students in first grade through fourth grade only. The first faculty roster consisted entirely of members of the laity. The second year, they were joined by religious personnel who assumed the administration of the

school from its second year through 1987. Since that time, the school's administration has been assumed by members of the laity. The school was expanded to include grades kindergarten through eighth and based upon narrative information gathered from the principal, has a capacity for enrollment of 300 students. The school has not had an enrollment of this size since the 1980s. The principal explained that since 2006 the enrollment has spanned from 152 students to its current enrollment of 135 students for the 2013-2014 academic year (See Table 2).

There is one teacher at every grade level with an average class size of 15 students. The school employs nine full-time teachers, one administrator, an extended care director, a librarian, and a lunch supervisor who also works in the extended care program. Based upon information provided by the principal, 55% of the teachers possess a valid teaching credential, and 11% have earned a Master of Arts in Education degree.

The principal, Mrs. Joyce, shared that the school was nearly closed due to financial challenges and low enrollment prior to her tenure in administration:

> This is how I became principal; we had…we had a series of principals. We had one who was at the end of her career and liked to hide from parents. People left in masses then, because she would not deal with the problems, she literally hid in seventh grade, and then asked, "Are they gone yet?" People left, it was because of their perception of quality of the school that they left, which was not true, but it was a perception. Then we had a gentleman who was a principal for a year, half way through the year he decided to run for L.A. city council, he mentally checked out, and was nothing the rest of the year. Then we had another gentleman who had gotten shifted around the Archdiocese, and we found out why later. He was here for a year, then the second year he had worked up quite a bit of

> debt and just by September or October he said, "We can't pay; we can't make payroll; we can't pay our debts, so we were just going to close the school." And the kindergarten teacher I said, "Oh no, we're not," the secretary said, "Oh no, we're not," so we started working with him [the principal] and we actually worked with the Archdiocese. (Mrs. Joyce, Principal Interview 1)

Presently, there are only half as many students enrolled as there were at the school's peak capacity of 300 students in the 1980s. St. Agape's viability and sustainability hinges on tuition revenue, which is closely tied to enrollment. The teachers who began working at St. Agape prior to the calendar extension shared that they have experienced salary freezes and reductions. They have learned careful stewardship of their resources as the result of the school's enrollment fluctuation and strained financial situation.

Table 2

Enrollment Trends

Academic Year	K-8 Student Enrollment	Notes
2013—2014	135	
2012—2013	150	
2011—2012	134	First year of the extended calendar
2010—2011	118	Calendar extension announced May 2011
2009—2010	129	
2008—2009	135	
2007—2008	137	
2006—2007	152	

Summary of Key Findings

Seven themes emerged from this study regarding the adoption of the calendar extension at St. Agape Catholic School:

1) decision making,
2) planning and implementation,
3) advantages of the extended calendar,
4) financial motivations of the extended calendar,
5) culture of teaching,
6) leadership, and
7) challenges and complications.

These seven themes were further divided into domains that serve to develop the story of the calendar adoption at St. Agape Catholic School. The domains will be further explained within this chapter.

The Research Process

The corpus of data that informs this analysis included information gathered through interviews, field observation, focus group meetings, and school documents. A qualitative case study methodology was ideally suited for a holistic analysis of an extended-time initiative because many variables, including the local socio-political climate and context of the school, meaningfully impact stakeholders' experiences as well as the overall outcome of the initiative.

By looking through several data lenses, this research study was able to more comprehensively analyze how the extended time was used, the perceptual outcomes, and the contextual conditions related to this phenomenon. This study provided an in-depth illustration of

St. Agape School's unique experience. The analysis of this change and subsequent experience included narrative responses from the people directly involved in a way that quantitative data alone would have excluded.

Access

Because of the researcher's involvement as a research assistant in another study being conducted by Loyola Marymount University on the 200-day initiative (Sabatino et al., 2012, 2013), initial contact with St. Agape's teachers and principal had already been made prior to the commencement of the present study.

The researcher gained an emic status throughout the research process by spending time on campus, observing and working in the classrooms, visiting with students and teachers at recess and lunchtime, and by spending time in the community room that also served as a teachers' lunchroom during the school day. Trust was gained over time with the various participants, and in some cases, access to the classrooms was expanded over time as the teacher participants learned more about the purpose of the study, the researcher, and her similar Catholic school experiences. Student participants were eager to share their experiences immediately. Over time, all of the participants became more open and candid in their responses, but this trust took a few months to build.

Themes Emerging in the Data

Hatch (2002) suggested that, "All qualitative research is characterized by an emphasis on inductive rather than deductive information processing" (p. 161). He describes inductive thinking as originating in specific facts which are then organized into generalizations. As such, a researcher using inductive reasoning should "begin with particular pieces of evidence, then pull

them together into a meaningful whole" (Hatch, 2002, p. 161). In the current study, the researcher employed inductive data analysis by creating domains or codes which were grouped into themes. Through this inductive process, seven themes emerged to illustrate the experience at one school that adopted an extended calendar. They are:

1) Decision making characterized by the domains of a) stakeholders involved, and b) communication.
2) Planning and implementation characterized by the domains of a) perceptions about the initial vision, b) how the initiative was planned, c) perceptions of the current use of time, and d) perceptions related to the existing outcomes associated with the extended calendar.
3) Advantages of the extended calendar characterized by the domains of a) teacher perspective, b) parent perspective, c) student perspective, d) curricular aspects, e) co-curricular aspects, and f) extra-curricular aspects.
4) Financial motivations of the extended calendar characterized by the domains of a) dire financial state of the school, b) enrollment, c) benefit to parents, d) benefit to teachers, e) fundraising, and f) marketing.
5) Culture of teaching characterized by the domains of a) how the extended time has impacted instructional practices, curricular planning, assessment, b) the learning environment and culture of the classroom, c) classroom management and administrative practices, and d) prevalent instructional practices.
6) Leadership characterized by the domains of a) leadership practices, b) leadership style, and c) school culture based upon various perspectives.

7) Challenges and complications of the extended calendar characterized by the domains of a) burnout, b) inconvenience, and c) finance.

Theme One Decision-making—No Consultation, No Choice, No Voice

When the calendar extension initiative was first announced by the local Archdiocese, it was presented as a mandate. A few days later, it was changed to a suggestion for each school site to consider. In many schools the site principal and the pastor consulted with members of their community to determine whether they would adopt the initiation. In the case of St. Agape, little consultation or discussion took place.

Stakeholders involved

According to the teachers, the pastor, the parents, and the principal, the decision to adopt the extended calendar was made by the principal in brief consultation with the parent board and the pastor. The principal, Mrs. Joyce, indicated,

> We had been looking for something to set our school apart from the other schools in the area, and I heard about the extended calendar at that principals' meeting, I thought, this is our thing, this is what will help set us apart. (Mrs. Joyce, Principal Interview 1)

She acknowledged that she spoke with the pastor, and he was supportive of the idea, and then she spoke to a small number of parent board members who were also very supportive.

Based upon the data gathered in this study, the principal did not appear to involve the teachers in the decision to adopt the extended calendar; rather, it was announced to them in a "top-down" format. One teacher shared, "The principal made the announcement. There was no discussion prior to that with the teachers, we had no choice." This recollection was confirmed by the other two teachers in interviews. Another shared, "There really wasn't anything for me to

say. The decision was already made. It was clear that if I wanted to work here I was going to be teaching 200 days."

The parents concurred that the decision was made already: "We learned about it from the principal. There really wasn't any discussion, we just heard about it from Principal Joyce." Based upon the data collected within this study, involvement of the teacher and parent stakeholders in this decision was very limited.

Communication

According to the teachers, the principal verbally shared the decision to extend the calendar with them in a faculty meeting. They noted that it was presented positively because of the potential financial ramifications that she shared, "The way it was explained to us by our principal was to look at it as extra income. The extra income was my initial thought." Another teacher shared that when the change was communicated by the principal, it was spun positively by adding details about how the change could potentially impact the school, "Principal Joyce announced it to the parents ... It was also presented in our school bulletin. When it was announced, she also said that we would increase the amount of technology that we were using with the students." Another teacher explained that when Principal Joyce shared the decision, she communicated it as a marketing opportunity, "We can add 20 days to our calendar, and it can help us market the school."

The parents indicated that the teachers heard about the change first and then the principal later announced the decision to the parents via the school bulletin,

> Yes, [the principal] announced it first in a faculty meeting. Apparently, she presented it very positively. Then she announced it to the parents. It was a shock, but we did feel

like it was positive. As a parent, I was for it. I thought the 200 days was good for our kids. It sounded positive. (Mrs. Jones, Parent Focus Group Meeting)

Based upon the document data collected in this study, the printed communication to stakeholders was limited to the calendar extension announcement that was sent via a school newsletter to the parents. This document, which was sent as part of the regular weekly correspondence to parents, included very ambiguous remarks regarding how the extra time could be used including adding access to technology, augmenting math instruction time, adding collaborative exercises, and problem-solving activities. The school newsletter includes the following information:

> Extended school year redesign supports a clear, school-wide academic focus. The school's plan for implementation of the extended school year is aligned with the school's overall academic focus. This academic focus drives instructional improvement and continuous measurable growth in student learning throughout the redesigned day and year … school will use the additional time in order to accelerate learning in core academic subjects by making meaningful improvements to the quality of instruction in support of school-wide achievement goals. (School Newsletter)

The achievement goals, and benchmarks for measureable growth in student learning are conspicuously missing from all other documentation, teacher recollection, and the principal could not speak to these metrics during her interview as the school's standardized assessments had changed since the implementation of the extended calendar.

The teachers indicated that the email and verbal communication they received in addition to the printed school correspondence included some additional motivations which prompted the

principal to make the decision including marketing, increasing enrollment, and improving finance.

Theme Two: Planning and implementation—Promises, Promises

When the calendar extension was announced at St. Agape Catholic School, it was presented in a manner that gave stakeholders the impression that the school's curriculum would be enhanced and that student retention of material would be improved. Interestingly, although first presented as a mandate by the Archdiocese and then days later as a suggestion, the school's administration embraced the opportunity and positively communicated the potential outcomes of this initiative to the parents, teachers, and students.

Mrs. Jacinto, a parent, noted during the parent focus group meeting, "Our school's math scores were lower than the principal and teachers felt they should be, and so they said that the additional time would allow them to spend more time teaching math, getting our children caught up, and helping our kids prepare for high school." According to the parents and students involved in the focus group meetings, the calendar extension was also positively received by the majority of the school's stakeholders. The parents explained that within this community, most of the families have dual incomes because both parents work. They further explained that because of this, many families are required to arrange childcare during the summer break. Therefore, they explained that the calendar change was well-received because it extended the opportunity for their children to stay at school in a "safe" and enriching environment. Mrs. Jackson, another parent, noted during the parent focus group meeting, "There is a difference between the working and non-working parent communities." She further explained that the working parents supported the change, while the single-income families were mixed in their support.

Perceptions about the Initial Vision

Perceptual data collected related to how the stakeholders envisioned that the time would be used varied by group. The pastor, principal, and teachers felt that the time would be used to support math and reading, the integration of technology, and the addition of problem-based learning projects. The parents shared that when the calendar extension was announced they were positive about the opportunities that the change would bring. Mrs. Jones, a parent, shared during the focus group meeting, "My thought was always they will get to the end of the textbooks. They had never finished their textbooks or workbooks and I thought, 'They will finish the books with the extra days.'" Meanwhile, the students envisioned the additional days differently. Christopher, a student, shared this during the student focus group meeting, "I wasn't happy about it (the change). To me it meant less summer, more work, more tests, more stress, more projects, and more things to do. School is really hard for me. It's stressful for me to do everything."

How the Initiative was Planned

Once the decision was made to extend the calendar and the change was communicated to the teachers and parents, the planning phase began. According to the teachers, the planning phase began individually in each classroom. The principal noted, "Each teacher was able to plan how the time would be used in his or her own classroom. Many teachers worked together to come up with plans for how to use the time" (Mrs. Joyce, Principal Interview 1). Jane, a teacher, indicated that the planning was comprehensive in that it included revising curriculum maps but that it was also different for each teacher and each classroom:

> I planned for more interactive activities. Yes, these activities were on top of my list. I also planned for more collaboration. Among them were technology-based projects that

> incorporated computers, web interaction such as email, web homework that included virtual research and email, digitally designed posters, and virtual field trips. I also planned some project-based learning activities and more meaningful projects. I planned to add more flexible group activities and collaborative student-to-student mentoring opportunities such as clock buddies … and anchor activities such as stage plays, role plays, and reader's theater. I also planned global and community service outreach projects such as Earth Day, Earth Hour participation, *Catholic Relief Services*, and *Stamp-Out Hunger*. (Jane, Teacher Interview)

The plans that this teacher described in her interview were not applied school wide. Rather, planning varied from teacher to teacher because they were each responsible for interpreting how the time would be used in their own classrooms. Jessica, another teacher, shared other details about how involved the teachers became in the planning of how the time would be used as well as what would be changed in each of their classrooms. She noted, "We were very involved in planning because we create our own lesson plans and curriculum maps. We also had been given the Common Core Standards pacing guide from the Archdiocese" (Jessica, Teacher Interview). The Common Core Standards pacing guide resource referenced by Jessica was given to all teachers. At the time of the individual interviews and the focus group meetings, only three teachers had seen this document. Only two of the nine teachers were using it in their classrooms for math and English language arts planning. The small number of teachers within the faculty who were using the pacing guide as a resource limited the continuity of how these standards were being incorporated into each classroom.

According to the principal, Mrs. Joyce, the faculty worked together to develop a general plan about how the time could be used but that it was left up to each teacher to plan the individual activities and lessons for their classrooms. In April 2011, the faculty read *Time for a Change: The Promise of Extended-Time Schools for Promoting Student Achievement* (Farbman & Kaplan, 2005), a report by the Massachusetts 2020 project (http://www.mass2020.org/) focused on time-based reform and expanded learning time in school. The faculty reviewed this report and created some objectives for their use of extended time for what they called "core academics." According to the teachers, their involvement in developing what is later referred to as the school-wide implementation plan was isolated to a single faculty meeting where the Massachusetts 2020 report was reviewed and a brainstorming activity took place. The document, created at this meeting and referred to as "the school's implementation plan" was provided to the researcher by Principal Joyce during the previous study (Sabatino et al., 2013). This document (See Appendix F) indicates that the faculty intended the following curricular focus areas:

1) Shift from a textbook-driven curriculum to a standards-based curriculum at all grade levels.
2) The use and integration of technology must be a priority in order to support a learning environment that prepares students to be successful in today's world.
3) Data collected from ITBS scores and *EasyCBM* shows a weakness in math and reading comprehension. Increase math instructional time for grades K-four.
4) Focus on essential standards allowing students more time practicing and working with particular information and ideas.

5) Emphasis on science and social studies for grades one and two.

6) Use additional time for enrichment:

- Integrate fine arts (music and art) and technology in religion, science, and social studies for grades three-eight.
- Introduce extra-curricular, multi-age activities according to student interest.
- Equip students with teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Only two of the teachers recalled a plan being developed. They noted their limited involvement in its development was isolated to this one faculty meeting. They remembered that the faculty was supposed to meet again to review these goals but they did not recall a follow-up meeting taking place. Neither of these teachers recalled the specific details of this plan nor could they locate official documentation of the plan. When discussing the plan during her interview, Jane, one of the teachers who referenced the plan, recalled,

> The formal vision and plan must have been written to use as evidence for WASC. It must be in our WASC evidence box. It was a big part of the agenda in our meetings to always talk about what's new and what we have been doing with our time. It was an important part of our meetings (Jane, Teacher Interview).

The only other teacher who recalled the plan being developed, Jessica, said this about the plan,

> We didn't really have a formal plan that was written ... there were some general goals for how we would use the time. Our principal instructed us to give more time to mathematics and to create more projects. That is what I did. It is my understanding that the other teachers did the same. Our principal checks our schedules, our curriculum maps, and our lesson plans (Jessica, Teacher Interview).

During the teacher focus group meeting, the group was asked about the implementation plan. Not one teacher within that group recalled there being a formal implementation plan that had been developed by the school. This may have been due in part to the fact that most of these teachers had been hired following the first year of the calendar extension. Interestingly, while most of the teachers who were involved in the focus group meeting had been hired after the calendar had been changed to include extended time, one of the participants had actually attended the faculty meeting where "the implementation plan" had been created. However, she neither recalled the plan being developed or printed for the faculty as a guide which may serve to illustrate the faculty's token involvement in the development of this plan.

Perceptions about the Current Use of Time

When the teachers were asked how they were using the extra time in their classrooms, the responses varied which was consistent with the manner in which the implementation of the extended time was planned. As noted by the principal, each teacher was independently responsible for planning for how the time would be used. One teacher, Jane, commented,

> In a nutshell, we have more time for collaboration [with our students]. The extended calendar has offered us, teachers, more time to get to know our learners, and to try to reach them with more opportunities like test re-takes, wait time to get a proper response from them, student's error analysis, re-dos, more communication, more one-on-one conference time with our students, more hands on approach, and more (Jane, Teacher Interview).

Another teacher, Jessica, shared,

> I was able to block out full project periods. Before this I tried to work on projects during "allotted minutes" for each subject that the project related to in content. I also added more math and integrated math into the other subjects as often as I could. I added a Math review, math centers, and math game time on Fridays so that I could concentrate on math skills that had been difficult for the class (Jessica, Teacher Interview).

Jane, another teacher, also said that although she felt there were differences in how the instructional time was being used since adding twenty more days, she was not sure that these differences would be evident to the researcher on the lesson plans alone,

> Not sure that this will come through in the lesson plans, but the biggest thing was that I didn't feel as stressed in math. It is still a struggle to fit everything in, but I can reteach concepts. Also, I added some art into the social studies plans. There is more opportunity for cross curricular integration. The biggest difference however was in math (Jane, Teacher Interview).

Jane suggested later in her interview that feeling less pressure to rush through the mathematics curriculum was a common feeling among the teachers now that the calendar had been extended. This sentiment was echoed by the two other teachers who were interviewed as well as by those who participated in the focus group meeting. The lesson plans and curriculum maps did not indicate that more content had been added since the calendar extension was adopted, rather it appeared as if the content had remained basically identical but that more time had been allocated to each unit within the curriculum maps. Furthermore, in two of classrooms that were observed, the researcher found that projects detailed in the lesson plans remained the same as they had been

prior to the calendar extension, but the teacher provided the students more time to complete the project.

The parents indicated that they have not found noticeable differences at the school with the extended time. Mrs. Jacinto shared, "I'm not sure that there have been any changes. No, I think that these are exactly the same as they were with 180 days (Mrs. Jacinto, Parent Focus Group Meeting)." When asked about how they envisioned the extra time being used, parents shared that they hoped the students would be able to finish their textbooks and workbooks. This vision of completing the textbooks and workbooks had not been realized at the time of this study and the parents' perspective on how the additional time may have changed instructional practices or content was based solely on that aspect. Therefore, their perspective of the curricular changes is limited in scope and may not be reflective of changes that may have occurred outside the confines of text-based instruction.

Perceptions Related to the Existing Outcomes

The teachers' perceptions about the outcomes of the extended time varied slightly but were generally positive in stance. They reported feeling less pressure to speed through the curriculum, spending more time on challenging concepts, and adding more projects. From the teachers' perspectives, there were also a few drawbacks to the extended time. Specifically, they reported exhaustion and burnout as outcomes that they did not anticipate but were experiencing.

The parent participants were less positive about the outcomes than the teacher participants. The initial vision that they had for how the extended time would be used centered on textbook and workbook completion and that had not been realized. Since the adoption of the

calendar extension, the parents indicated that they had not noticed any of the enhancements initially promised by the school. A parent, Mrs. Jacinto, shared,

> They might have finished [the workbooks] if there were not other problems. But I also figured they would cover more. I thought there was going to be more academics. History ended at WWII, and I thought they would get through more material. But compared to before, I don't think that they have gone past the lessons that they would have with 180 days (Mrs Jacinto, Parent Focus Group).

Another parent, Mrs. Jackson, reflected on how the change was presented in relation to the current use of time and outcomes,

> Well I remember a selling point that the principal used when she announced the change. She said, "By the time your child is in eighth grade, if he or she has been here since kindergarten, your child will have an extra year by the time they graduate." But now I wonder if they will feel this in a positive way? (Mrs. Jackson, Parent Focus Group)

Even with the use of probes, the parent interview data did not yield outcomes consistent with those shared by the teachers.

The student participants had yet another perspective relative to the outcomes of the calendar extension. One student shared, "I felt good and bad about it [the extended calendar]. There is more to do but we also have more time with our friends at school" (Garret, Student Focus Group). Another student noted,

> I like the extra days. We have more fun projects and we are more prepared than other students. I mean my friends from the neighborhood go to the public school, and they have less school days and less homework than I do. (Mark, Student Focus Group)

When this student was asked if he felt that his homework assignments and additional time in school directly caused him to feel more prepared than his friends, he responded, "Yes" but was unable to articulate how these made him more prepared other than that they were greater in quantity.

Theme Three: Advantages—All that Glitters

Parent Perspective

Parents reported that, in terms of the curriculum, students' retention has improved. Mrs. Jackson, a parent, noted in the parent focus group meeting that her son "seemed to like that the teachers felt they could take a step back and re-teach concepts as needed." Parents believed that their children's reading skills seem to have improved. The parents shared that their children felt decreased pressure to move through material and standards. They suggested that perhaps the teachers were able to develop greater instructional depth on lessons and projects but the parents could not provide examples of where or when this may have happened. Parents believed that the extended calendar allowed students to complete their workbooks by the end of the school of year, and for them, this indicated greater mastery of the curriculum.

Student Perspective

Students said that since the calendar extension, their teachers are more open to students' ideas and have incorporated those ideas into projects and assignments. Students indicated that the additional time spent in school enabled them to be more prepared than their public school peers. One student, Mark, said in the student focus group meeting, "We have more time in school, and so we have more knowledge." They also indicated that they enjoyed spending more time with their friends at school because some of their classmates commute to school and are

inaccessible when school is not in session. Another student shared during the focus group meeting that he felt his grades had improved since the calendar was extended because he has more time to practice concepts and learn study skills. Other students within the focus group meeting concurred with this statement and shared that their teachers have introduced more study-skill lessons since the change. Students felt that their teachers were able to slow down the pace of instruction and give them more time for projects and mastery of concepts.

Curricular Aspects

In both the individual teacher interviews and the focus group meeting, teachers indicated that they feel less pressure to deliver mathematic instruction because they have more time. Teachers also noted that they have incorporated new instructional techniques for mathematics and they have more time for both foundational and grade-level skills. For example, they indicated that they are using daily math reviews, creating math centers, using instructional manipulative tools, and conducting math games on Fridays. One teacher, Jessica, shared,

> I think that the calendar allows the teachers to be more creative, integrate more projects, and spend more time with math. Math is often the hardest subject for classes to master and the extra days give us time to bring in other ways of teaching a skill such as daily math practice, daily fact practice, math games, etc. For the students, I think the benefit is that a slower pace on some skills helps them master it better. I think that they enjoy and are more engaged in subject matter that is project-based. (Jessica, Teacher Interview)

While these benefits were shared by the teacher participants in both the interviews and the focus group meeting, evidence of these benefits such as the use of math centers or innovative instructional techniques were not observed by the researcher during classroom observations. In

fact, the data gathered during classroom observations indicated a dominance of exercises aimed at the rote memorization of basic mathematics facts and direct instruction whereby the teacher presented, and the students were passively attentive.

Students and teachers also explained that the extended time allowed for "error analysis" activities to take place within the classroom, which helps students improve mastery of mathematical concepts. Error analysis, as described by the teachers, encourages mastery of concepts and is a technique that they gleaned from a book that their principal purchased for the faculty to read during the summer of 2011-2012. Jackson (2009) suggested that giving students effective feedback improves concept mastery and that "giving students the opportunity to try again when they didn't learn it the first time helps students learn how to use feedback in a way that will lead to more effective effort in the future" (p. 148). Jackson (2009) further noted that grade categories should include a "not yet" category, "Students who earn a 'Not Yet' will need to redo and resubmit their work" (p. 148). The teachers explained that this activity caused their students to take more care the first time they were assessed so that they were not later required to complete revisions. Pedagogically, this practice is advantageous for if a student has not mastered a concept yet, he/she is not punitively impacted, rather he/she may take more time to reach that benchmark and demonstrate mastery. The teachers also shared that by using this technique the students were able to take more time and more care in their work. They also shared that the students demonstrated increased mastery. Jackson (2009) indicated that requiring students to go back will cause them to "re-engage with the material and will see that your emphasis is on learning rather than on grades" and "engage in some sort of corrective action before they retake a test" (p. 149).

Teachers stated that as a result of the calendar extension they have been able to devote more time to technology and incorporate additional software and hardware as part of the instructional practices, such as *ELMO* document cameras which allow the teacher to display documents or textbook pages up on the classroom white board and use of the newly added technology lab. They indicated that prior to the extension they did not have a computer lab and that the computers for this lab space were donated so that the students could use more technology. Previously, students' access to computers was limited to the classrooms, and moreover, these computers were often broken. After the calendar extension, each class was given scheduled periods each week to use the computer lab. The teachers also indicated that newly designed projects include digital components such as conducting research online, digital presentation, and digital assessment when feasible.

Co-curricular Aspects

Since the calendar extension, St. Agape has more fully developed the student council program. A study hall session was added to each school day, Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., wherein students receive additional support from their teachers. One teacher shared that when the extension was first announced the teachers envisioned implementing several co-curricular opportunities,

> We have envisioned using the extra time for really productive activities for our school community. We have talked about more collaboration—not only with the school staff but with the Church community and the St. Agape community as a whole—by getting more involved in Community projects (i.e., beach clean-up, soup kitchen, etc.) to educate

> the "whole" student. We looked at it as an opportunity to reach out to the whole community. (Jane, Teacher Interview)

However, after three years of implementation, she noted that these ideas and visions have not come to fruition.

Extra-curricular Aspects

Students shared that as a result of the calendar extension their lunchtime was extended by ten minutes per day. This change was viewed positively by all of the students who participated in the focus group, and they concurred that this was a general sentiment among their peers. In addition, the students and parents shared that the school added new field trip opportunities, such as the eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C. for the upcoming school year.

Theme Four: Financial Needs and Motivations—Increase Enrollment for Survival

Before the adoption of the calendar extension the school was in a dire financial situation, and closure was a consideration according to the principal. She shared that the school was nearly closed due to financial challenges and low enrollment prior to her tenure in administration and that the struggle to maintain sufficient enrollment has been a concern ever since that time. The viability and sustainability of the school hinges on tuition revenue that is closely tied to enrollment. The implementation, which was announced in the spring of 2011 and began in 2011-2012, has coincided with a small increase in enrollment during that same year (2011-2012). It is possible that some new families were drawn to the school by the appeal of the extended calendar. However, it is also worth noting that enrollment again declined between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 (See Table 2).

Dire Financial State of the School

The teachers involved in this study who have been employed at the school prior to and since the calendar extension shared that they have experienced salary freezes and reductions in salary in the years preceding the adoption of the calendar extension. These cuts and freezes were deemed necessary based upon the school's low enrollment and were made in an effort to keep the school open. They also noted that the cost of their health and dental benefits have risen substantially over the past three years adding to the financial burdens that they experienced as a faculty. Accordingly, they have learned to carefully take care of the resources available in their classrooms and noted that they often spend their own money for supplies. Jennifer, a teacher, noted during her interview that the year prior to the adoption of the calendar extension, "The faculty took a 5% pay reduction in 2009, and they agreed to this because they loved the school" in an effort to help the school stay open. According to the principal in her first interview, she even cut her own salary to compensate for the low enrollment and keep the school open, "The way we keep open in many ways is because what I pay myself, which is less than when I was teaching, and my husband and I give lots of money."

The financial crisis also affected the resources available in each classroom. For example, many of the teachers who were interviewed or who participated in the focus group meeting noted that they spend their personal money on teaching and student supplies. In addition, teachers take care of the teaching equipment by covering books, projectors, and coloring supplies with pillowcases and covers, and limiting the students' use of these items for fear of damaging them. One teacher who was interviewed showed the researcher how she maintained the school's property and her own by locking each individual cabinet and by carefully storing away all

materials that were not in current use making the classroom appear sparse and institutional. Conversely in another classroom involved in the observations, the teacher appeared to be a "hoarder" who stored any and all resources within the classroom regardless of their usefulness. Within this classroom, there were multiple boxes stacked above each cabinet, along the back wall of the classroom, and under the teacher's desk area, giving the third-party observer the impression that nothing could be thrown away for fear that it might become useful again. These divergent strategies for storing materials were driven by the common fear that the school was not in a financial position to replace even the most essential supplies.

Enrollment

The administration recognized that changes needed to be made to increase enrollment. Prior to the calendar extension, the Archdiocese had contracted with a consultant and a deanery supervisor to help the school principal increase enrollment. The strategies that were suggested focused the school's marketing initiatives on the traditional needs of working class families and on the benefits associated with low student to teacher ratios (i.e., small classes). In this case, the class size, which was a challenge to the school fiscally, was deemed as a marketing advantage. Ironically, while the small sizes were touted as advantageous, the school would not turn students away even their enrollment caused the size to increase and no maximum class size was shared. Meaning that if ten more students chose to enroll, the school would take them and the advantage of the small size would be diminished. The adoption of the calendar extension by the school, unlike the other Catholic schools in the area, became the central focus of the marketing initiative in an effort to increase enrollment.

Teachers indicated that the decision to adopt the calendar extension was primarily enrollment-driven and presented as a solution for improving in this area. One teacher noted,

> She [our principal] was very stressed about enrollment and she sort of blamed us too for the low enrollment, so when she presented this it was seen as a way for all of us to market the school. She said that we could encourage enrollment by focusing on the providing school time in lieu of babysitting time. She said that the cost would work out for the parents. It was only like $27 more per month and the kids would get more education. (Jessica, Teacher Interview)

The enrollment increased over the first two years of the adoption of the calendar extension (See Table 2). The principal reported that the change did not cause any families to leave the school; rather, in the first year it proved to be a marketable benefit to parents.

Teacher commentary indicated that the push for increased enrollment led to lower admission standards so that the school could accept more students. The teachers suggested that this may have contributed to increased behavioral challenges within the school. One teacher remarked,

> Well, these are not really curricular challenges, but when there are behavioral problems like we experienced last year, and you have more time to spend with those students, you and the other students are tired. Last year was especially challenging with behavior problems. There were many new students who came to the school. The more time that you spend with students that are challenging, the more tired you are by the time Christmas break comes and then the time from January to the end of the school year seems very long to me. (Jennifer, Teacher Interview)

Similarly, one student noted that the increase in student enrollment may have resulted in some additional behavioral challenges,

> Since our school year became longer we got some new students. Sometimes these new kids are discipline problems. They don't even care when the teacher tells them to be quiet. They just laugh and are really disrespectful. I feel like the students should give the teachers a break and listen. (Christopher, Student Focus Group)

Given the initial growth in enrollment and then the decline that has been witnessed over the past year, the enrollment motivation for adopting the change may not have yielded the anticipated benefit. Likewise, the benefit of having more students enrolled may be negated when that increase yields other challenges including increased distractions and classroom management issues.

Financial Benefit for Parents: "I Prefer School to Babysitting."

The school features primarily dual-income families, and the parents reported that the extended calendar has provided these families with affordable summer childcare options. One parent commented, "I would rather have my child in school than at a summer camp." There was evidence that this sentiment was felt more broadly by the other parents, with comments such as "I prefer school to babysitting." Parents explained that they had an increase in tuition that was approximately $27 per student per month the first year, which represented an annual increase of approximately $300 per year for the additional twenty days of school or four weeks of school. However, parents shared that camps and babysitting services often exceed this amount so that the extension provided a more financially palatable option.

Benefit to Teachers

Initially some teachers felt that with an additional month of salary, they would not need to find summer employment. Some noted that they had always worked the summer school program provided by the school so the benefit, from their perception, remained the same. For example, Jennifer, a teacher shared,

> I would get a summer job that would help supplement my income. Now, it's hard to find work for six weeks … nobody wants to hire someone for that short amount of time. At first we all thought that we would make a lot more money with the extra 20 days, but it has not really worked out that way. (Jennifer, Teacher Interview)

Although the teachers do make roughly 10% more in salary for working the 20 extra days, they did not feel that this increase compensated for the loss of summer employment.

Fundraising

Efforts to augment additional funding beyond what is collected as tuition and fees were essential to the sustainability of the school prior to the calendar extension, and they have increased since the adoption of the policy. In fact, fundraising efforts creep into the classroom taking valuable instructional time according to the parent perspective and based upon classroom observations. For example, during one field observation, the teacher spent approximately 20 minutes discussing with the students the upcoming *See's Candy* drive, the *Yankee Candle* fundraiser, the Christmas Tree fundraiser, and the Thanksgiving Fest Fundraiser. Some school events were moved to increase parish and community participation. For example, the School/Parish carnival was moved from March 2013 to June 2013 when there is a better weather and public students are out of school. The students and parents alike shared that the carnival

raised much-needed funding and provided opportunities for fellowship and community service hours. Students shared that they enjoyed the carnival because they could volunteer to work with their parents and because people from outside their school community, including their peers from their neighborhoods, could attend the event.

Marketing

According to the principal, Mrs. Joyce, while local public schools experienced approximately 10 furlough days and curricular cutbacks, St. Agape School increased its instructional days. When the calendar at St. Agape School was compared to the calendar of the local public school, the principal explained that her students were in school approximately 30 days more. This perceived advantage was touted by the principal when the calendar extension was first announced, and according to the parents, this benefit is still extolled to prospective applicants. While the extended calendar is a feature that distinguishes St. Agape from the local public schools, the school lacked a formal marketing plan to explain how this advantage could be used positively.

At the time of data collection, the school did not have signage visible from the main street, and efforts to make the school more visible were underway according to the principal. She noted, "I feel like if people drove by and saw that we were here, they would inquire about our programs. We need more signage on the street because presently we just blend in." According to the parent stakeholders, the school does not have any formal marketing campaign and knowledge about the school is via word of mouth. They noted that prospective families have come to the school to inquire about enrollment specifically because they know this is a school with an extended calendar and that aspect was found appealing.

Theme Five: Culture of Teaching—The Sage on the Stage

Teachers Speak of the Differences

Teachers reported that the additional time has allowed them to become more creative in their instructional practices, planning, and assessment. Teachers believed that the additional time afforded them the opportunity to work on collaborative projects, project-based learning, and multi-grade experiences. Post-extension, they were able to plan to more cross-curricular integration of language arts, fine arts, mathematics, and social studies. Teachers also added reading activities such as literature circles to enhance reading comprehension and student engagement. While these aspects were noted in the interviews and focus group meetings, the researcher did not observe evidence of these changes in the classroom observations.

Teachers reported that they feel there is more time now for students to ask questions. They have realigned and integrated the Common Core State Standards into the language arts and math curriculum. They have crafted rubrics to assess students' projects, and they are spending more time on multiple forms of student assessments. Teachers also reported allowing student learning to dictate the pace of instruction and completion of projects, which has in turn allowed students to build their confidence and develop presentation skills.

As a result of the calendar extension, the first week of the school year was modified to include five shorter days (early dismissal days) to help ease teachers' and students' return to school after the summer recess. The change in the academic calendar has caused the school to be open during all of August which has impacted the school fiscally in terms of additional utility costs, so the first week being adjusted to a minimum day schedules has helped ease this

challenge. Teachers mentioned that this reduced the school's air conditioning costs, as August is one of the hottest months of the year.

As a result of the calendar extension, the school added a new program called JumpStart, a kind of transitional or junior kindergarten. This program has helped to augment the school's kindergarten enrollment. Teachers reported that they thought a pre-school program and not a transitional kindergarten would be added once the calendar was extended; however, the anticipated program was delayed because state regulations made it cost prohibitive for the school. Parent stakeholders affirmed that the JumpStart program was a positive attribute associated with the extended calendar:

> Then in January we have JumpStarters come in. This program started in 2011-2012. We wanted a preschool but there were too many hoops to jump through apparently. We wanted to take advantage of the siblings. JumpStart and K are full-day programs and it helps the families who want their children together at the school. It is mostly for siblings but it has helped us fill our kindergarten classroom. (Mrs. Jones, Parent Focus Group)

Impact on Instruction, Planning, and Assessment

Nine hours of field observations yielded little evidence of the perceived advantages that the teachers indicated in their interviews. Instead, the observational data demonstrated instances where only direct instruction was used by the teachers. Preference of this instructional methodology was also documented in lesson plans and assessment samples. There appeared to be an established relationship between the teachers and students whereby the teachers provided information and the students received the information. None of the field observations gave

evidence of student-centered or problem-based learning. However, adding problem-based learning opportunities was noted as an objective for the school within the plan that they created.

Another goal in the initiative was to increase the integration of educational technology in the learning process. All three of the classrooms involved in the field observations included *ELMO* document cameras that are used to post items such as workbook pages, textbook pages, or other media on the classroom white boards and computers. However, only twice did the teachers employ these tools in their delivery of instruction. In both cases, the technology was used by the teacher to share information in a manner that simply substituted what could have been done on the white board. It did not engage the students any differently than regular classroom white board.

Learning Environment and Culture of the Classroom

All three of the classrooms involved in the field observations were teacher-managed in terms of behavioral expectations, instruction, and established routines. Parents commended the teachers for their strict discipline. Based upon parents' commentary, they clearly valued order, control, and teacher-directed learning.

The parents also demonstrated an appreciation for completing textbooks and workbooks by the end of the school year as a means of measuring whether the students were meeting the curricular expectations and learning objectives.

The published plan for implementation of the extra days noted the desired shift from learning based upon textbooks to that which is standards-based. In all of the observations where textbooks were used, the researcher found the lessons to be fully oriented toward the content and presentation available in the textbook or workbook. There appeared to be little deviation from

that content or the directions provided in the text. In the case of social studies, the books that were being used in the classroom were at least twenty years old, they were visibly worn, and the teacher accompanied the lesson with a workbook page that had been photocopied multiple times since its origin.

When using the textbooks, the instruction followed a similar pattern: students either read the material as a class or individually and then completed the review questions in pairs or individually. When the partner activities were employed, the teacher's "to-do list" indicated directions for the students to "Complete the workbook page 48 with a partner." When the teacher later discussed this practice with the researcher at the recess break, she indicated that "collaborative learning opportunities" such as the one that had been witnessed were plentiful in her classroom. Interestingly, the researcher witnessed little collaboration when the partner groups worked. There existed two scenarios: 1) the partners sat together but worked independently aside from the shared reading, or 2) one partner wholly relied upon the other partner to complete the work and simple duplication occurred. Benchmarks or standards were not referenced in the lessons or collaborative projects that were observed nor did the lessons and or projects extend beyond that which was presented in the textbook.

Within both the parent and student focus group meetings, there was evidence that both groups well respected the teachers. One student, Christopher, noted during the student focus group meeting, "The teachers here really care about us. They give us work so that we can be successful. Sometimes they even assign homework on holidays even if it means more work for them because they want us to be successful." Another student, Emily, shared, **"**The teachers

help us so much, they give us many chances to improve and they even help us if we get a bad grade."

During one of the observation sessions in the second grade classroom, the students participated in a classroom job election. The prior day, all nine of the students were "invited" to participate in this election by choosing the position that appealed to them, writing a campaign speech, and preparing their delivery of that speech to the class. The students prepared written speeches and retuned with them to school the next day. It appeared that each student received a stamp from the teacher the prior day, indicating that the work was complete and that she reviewed the content of each speech.

The positions available to the students included: 1) president, 2) vice president, 3) secretary, 4) treasurer, and 5) sergeant at arms. This lesson took place around Veteran's Day and prior to delivering their speeches the teachers provided commentary about what it means to be a Veteran, how students should exercise their right of freedom, and the democratic election process. When later asked if the students had a choice to abstain from running for an office, the teacher indicated that their choice in this lesson was limited to the selection of the office they desired.

When the students began to deliver their speeches, there were common elements that each speech shared regardless of the position being considered. Students shared wishes for the class such as, "I would like to help our class be peaceful," and "I can help my friends follow the rules too and make sure they do their work right." Themes of order, quiet, discipline, and support of the teacher's rules and expectations dominated each speech as if a suggested template had been provided to the students by the teacher. Short of providing a template, these thematic

elements may have authentically portrayed the aspects of a classroom that these students, their teacher, and their parents deemed critical for learning. Although this aspect of the data was not directly related to the research questions, the findings help provide context for this study in that they demonstrate the values and behavior of this school community.

Classroom Management and Administrative Practices

Field notes include several notations about discipline and order within each classroom. The researcher witnessed on numerous occasions, that the teachers established classroom routines, the students well understood these routines, and there was little deviation from these expectations. Again, while these findings do not directly relate to the research questions, they provide rich context regarding the values of this school and its stakeholders. Ritual, procedures, and established rote patterns dominated the classroom instructional time. Prayers were recited from an established and accepted canon of prayers and there was no instance of spontaneity or deviation from this canon. Two of the three classrooms involved in the classroom observations were very quiet. The teacher dominated over the students and directed all activity. Each classroom evidenced a reward and punishment based behavior management system. Two of the classrooms included all student names on the front board with either tally marks or Popsicle sticks adjacent to their names. The other classroom included an index card that was present at all times on the students' desk. As they earned rewards or were commended the teacher would add a stamp to their card. When a student demonstrated behavior that was not in keeping with the classroom expectations, they were asked to deduct a point from the list of points. In the case of the classroom with the index cards, when a student demonstrated behavior outside the expectation for the class, that student was removed from the group and required to sit on the

"time-out" rug near the classroom door. This removal occurred twice during observations and while the method appeared effective in curbing the behavior on a short-term basis, the physical removal of that student from the group also meant that he or she did not have access to the instruction that was taking place at the time.

In these classrooms, established patterns were followed daily. One teacher, Jane, commented during a classroom observation, "I use routines so that a substitute could come in and teach my class as needed because the students know exactly what to do." The students completed rote exercises independently with little or no interaction with the teacher. The exercises required very little creativity or critical thinking on the part of the student. There was no evidence of differentiated instruction; each and every student received the same list of tasks, the same assignments, and the same homework. In one observation, the teacher remained seated at her desk for the duration of the lesson while she directed students to independently follow the "to do list" posted on the board.

Another phenomena that was observed campus-wide was the practice of having students gather in straight lines in designated locations while waiting for their teacher after morning assembly, recess, and lunch breaks. Each class that was observed had a student "line leader" who stood at the front of the procession and directed the class in a single-file fashion to their next destination as advised by the teacher. The students formed lines in the classroom when they were departing for recess, lunch, the library, and the computer lab. Acting upon a signal from the teacher, the students quickly gathered in this single-file queue. It was from their position in line that prior to recess the students would quiet and recite their snack or meal time prayer. As the lines moved around the campus, the students walked in a hushed fashion, many times with

their hands folded behind their backs (mainly in the primary grades) or with their arms at their sides. Order and discipline were evident in this practice. Spending more time in school gave the students more time to experience these practices. While not directly related to the research questions, these practices illustrate the climate and culture of the school. The more time that students spent within these structures, the more time there was for the students' behaviors to be formed.

Prevalent Instructional Practices

As noted previously, direct instruction was the most prevalent methodology employed in the classrooms that were involved in observations. This methodology lends itself to the notion that teachers are the source of knowledge, and they bestow it upon their students. During all of the observations (which took place over a three-month span of time), there appeared to be a rigid lesson plan that was used and one approach for all instruction that was taking place within the classroom. There was one exception to this practice, but in general, not one of the teachers deviated from their plans. In the single case where a teacher deviated from the plan, the students demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the concept. The teacher recognized this, extended the class period, re-approached the lesson, and assigned additional independent practice problems (in mathematics). The teacher decided to re-teach the concept and provide some additional guided practice so as to ensure that the students understood the concept because the independent work that they were sharing with her included missteps and incorrect responses.

The instruction that was observed included very little critical-thinking or problem-solving elements and no elements of choice or differentiation. Again, the students and parents alike expressed satisfaction with the school and the teachers despite these omissions.

Theme Six: Leadership—Look Before You Leap

Leadership Practices

The teachers who have been at the school since the calendar extension was implemented speculated about whether issues of leadership played a role in the decreasing enrollment. Although this commentary was shared outside the scope of the formal interviews, this sentiment was echoed by three teachers in casual conversations. Based upon the decision-making style practiced with relation to how the calendar extension was adopted at St. Agape, there exists a hierarchical leadership structure. The principal consults with the pastor and some parents, but decision-making appears to be within the jurisdiction of the principal. Within the data collected for this study, the principal appeared to involve the teachers in the development of the vision for how the extra time would be used as well as in the implementation of that vision but only after the decision to adopt the change had been made. Building buy-in for the change did not appear to take place. Rather, it seemed that the teachers and parents had the option to stay at the school and accept the change or leave the school.

Leadership Style

Not unlike the leadership style or instructional practices employed in the classroom, this school site featured a top-down management approach where the principal, with little consultation from the pastor, directed the school. In the teacher interviews, there was indication that they felt pressure related to the school's enrollment because of the principal's commentary. In an informal conversation with one of the teachers after her interview, she shared that the climate at the school was getting very hostile toward the end of the previous year, and she and other teachers felt that pastor should know about it. The teacher indicated that they felt like the

principal was bordering on abusive behavior. According to this teacher, the principal would frequently tell them that enrollment was their fault and that they were lucky have jobs. This teacher also shared that the principal reminded the teachers regularly that they were "at-will" employees. This observation has been included in the discussion because the principal who made these comments has since been replaced and this information adds context to the story of this school site and the climate therein.

Teachers explained that they were burned out and discipline challenges were adding to the pressure. They felt like the principal was just taking any student who applied to help increase the tuition income. One teacher, Jessica, explained a time when her co-worker sent a student to the office because he "terrorized other students" by stealing their things, kicking kids, and punching other students. The teacher visited the principal to get guidance and support in disciplining this boy. The principal called him to her office and talked to him for few minutes and then he came back later to the classroom with candy. The teacher shared that it was as if she made a deal with the student, but the other students felt that she was rewarding him.

Another teacher causally shared that two teachers resigned or were fired before the end of the school year and that about 15-20 students left the school at the end of the year. She said that she thought the eighth grade teacher was fired for complaining and then the pastor found out information later that might have saved his job. However it was too late at that point. She explained that the seventh grade teacher resigned soon after because he was upset about the dismissal of the eighth grade teacher.

School Culture

Parent and teacher participants shared that burnout contributed to the challenges that the school had recently experienced. These challenges were explained by the parents and teachers in informal conversations that followed the formal interviews. One parent, Mrs. Jacinto, shared during the parent focus group meeting, "The problems that we had at our school were driven by teacher burnout. I felt it, and I am not a teacher." They went on to elaborate on some of the faculty attrition that had occurred,

> Apparently, the seventh grade teacher went to the pastor to complain about how the principal was handling or not handling student discipline matters. He felt that he was not supported. He left abruptly at the beginning of May 2013. His departure was followed a few days later by the seventh-grade teacher. The seventh-grade teacher just left a note in the teacher's lounge/community room and did not return. The kids felt like they have been abandoned. (Mrs. Jones, Parent Focus Group)

Another parent, Mrs. Jackson, added that her daughter felt abandoned by the teacher. She reported that her daughter said, "He didn't even say goodbye to us." She explained that the kids felt hurt and surprised.

The new teachers were hired late in the summer prior to the start of the 2013-2014 academic year. Mrs. Jones, a parent, commented, "The new eighth-grade teacher is new to teaching. She is an alumnus of the school. She gives much more homework than the previous teacher. The philosophy has really changed in middle school." The parents shared that many families left the school at the end of the school year because of these abrupt changes but in general shared sentiments of satisfaction for the school.

Throughout the observations, interviews, and focus group meetings, student obedience appeared to be valued by the participants. Discipline and order also appeared to be valued within the community. These were traits that the parents and teachers expected of their students.

Theme Seven: Challenges and Complications—Be Careful What You Wish For

Burnout

Teacher and student participants all noted that they feel exhausted by the time that the school is closed for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. One teacher remarked during the teacher focus group meeting, "We are so ready for this break, and then you look at the span of time that we will have when we return through to the Easter break, and it's almost unbearable to think about because we are already so tired." Another noted, "The extended calendar compounds how we feel normally by the end of the school year, and then add to that the shortened break times like we had last year at Christmas (eight days), and it's a recipe for burnout." Here, it is important to note that the parents and teachers alike hinted that the high rate of recent teacher turn-over at the school was attributed at least partially to the extended calendar. The Christmas recess for 2012-2013 was shortened to eight days because Christmas and New Year's Day fell in the middle of the week. The principal condensed this break so as to have the eighth graders graduate sooner than they did the previous year.

Both the teachers and the parents noted that alternative calendar models would be less exhausting to the students and teachers including a year-round format or a calendar that provided for more frequent breaks throughout the year, including more three-day or four-day weekends. Mrs. Jones, a parent, shared,

> You kind of wonder what a schedule like this does…all their lives these kids and their teachers have sort of lived a cycle. When we add time this changes that cycle … The kids feel like they are stuck in the classroom but their friends are all still out [of school]. (Mrs. Jones, Parent Focus Group)

She explained that her child does not feel ready to return to school in early August. Although he is very ready to get out for summer by early June, school remains in session almost through the end of the month.

Inconvenience

In the parent focus group, Mrs. Jones commented, "I feel like this was a financial change for the school and not much more …You expect things to be added but if they're not, you don't feel the difference until you go to plan a summer trip." She explained that the summer season rates from the end of June through the beginning of August are peak around the county and as a result, she and her family end up spending more money on their travel than they save on the cost of summer camps and childcare versus the extra tuition. The parent stakeholders also shared that they experienced greater inconvenience in scheduling their children's routine medical well visits and dental visits given the shortened window of time when the school was closed for the summer. One parent, Mrs. Jackson, noted, "Figuring out when to schedule my child's doctor's visits has been a challenge" if one intends to schedule them for times when school is not in session or instructional time is not impacted.

It was also noted in the parent focus group meeting that last year many of the school's graduates were not able to attend the full summer camps or summer school programs that were

required for participation in athletics and academic programs at the high school level due to the late graduation date at St. Agape School.

Mrs. Jacinto, a parent, shared, "the high schools have programs that start in mid-June and our kids missed them or they had to miss school [at St. Agape] to attend." They also shared that many of the camps that parents in the area preferred such as the local Y.M.C.A. camp started prior to the school's summer dismissal date because they were based upon the calendars of the local public school districts.

Finance

Two teachers indicated that prior to the extended calendar they sought summer employment outside of the school. Both noted that they would work seasonal retail positions in the area to augment their annual salaries. However, after the school year was extended, they were no longer able to secure summer retail employment because of their limited availability (six weeks) which, according to the teachers, occurred well after the college students came home for summer break and teachers from the public sector were out of school for the year. Like the parent stakeholders, the teachers also indicated that summer travel costs from late June through early July were considerably higher because both domestically and internationally these were considered "peak" times to travel.

Another negative financial aspect associated with the extended calendar is the increase in summer utilities. The geographic area where the school is located is inland from the coast by about four miles. The summer months feature high temperatures, and air condition is required in order to make the classrooms comfortable learning environments. Mrs. Jones, a parent, shared,

> When they get back to school in early August the classrooms are stifling hot. They have air…but I wonder, does anything really get done? They are hot and we have to get the air on early to keep the classroom cool. (Mrs. Jones, Parent Focus Group)

The utilities are paid by the parish, according to the pastor, and with the extended calendar they have experienced a spike in their electricity and water bills for the extra days in August.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four detailed the experiences and perceptions of the pastor, administrator, teachers, students, and parents who experienced the adoption of a calendar extension. Seven themes emerged from the data collection and analysis: decision-making, planning and implementation, advantages, financial motivations, the culture of teaching, leadership, challenges and complications of the extended calendar. Chapter Five will provide a summary of the study, answers to the research questions, a discussion of the findings, implications, recommendations for future studies, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The researcher is a principal at a Catholic elementary school and has been employed by the Church in the ministry of Catholic education for the past sixteen years. As an educator, the researcher has appreciated the opportunities that Catholic school principals have to affect change and practice social justice, given the site-based governance structures of parish schools. This research project was selected by the researcher partly because of the nature in which the 200-day initiative was first announced. It was communicated first as a mandate and then changed to a strong recommendation by the Department of Catholic Schools. The sheer manner in which this initiative was communicated challenged the autonomy enjoyed by pastors, principals, and valued by the researcher within the Catholic Church. The researcher assumes that autonomy can be both a blessing and a challenge for the students who find themselves within these schools. It is a blessing in an effective, transformative school and a challenge in a school that stifles learning and subjects learners to the confines of oppressive instructional practices.

Another assumption that the researcher held when this project commenced was that Catholic educators taught to the whole child. Catholic schools, to this researcher, represented inclusive centers of learning that promoted the development of a student's social, spiritual, emotional, academic, and creative being. At the school where the researcher works, teachers are expected, like their students, to be life-long learners. Lesson plans are developed based upon the latest content standards and the unique academic, social, and emotional needs of the learners, which vary greatly within each class and content area. Parent stakeholders are involved in the

learning process as partners. The teachers appreciate the diverse and unique perspectives and cultures that each student brings to the classroom. Working in this kind of environment demands constant re-invention of lessons, it assumes that students need to create their own meaning, and therefore, must be actively engaged in the learning. Here it is important to note that these experiences and assumptions accompanied the researcher into this project and provided a background from which observations were made, assumptions were drawn, and suggestions were made.

Chapter Five is organized into six parts: a summary of the study, the main findings, a discussion of the findings, implications of the study, recommendations, and conclusion. Within the summary, the purpose and research questions that guided the study are reviewed. The discussion of the findings includes answers to the research questions and explores themes and domains that emerged from the inductive analysis. Implications of the study focus on how this case study informs the community of St. Agape School and other Catholic schools that are considering time-based reform initiatives. Lastly, recommendations for future studies are provided along with a reflection of how this study has influenced the researcher's work as a school administrator and leader focused on social justice.

Summary of the Study

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative case study focused on how one suburban Catholic elementary school implemented a calendar extension initiative that was directed by the leadership of the Archdiocese. The study investigated how the school envisioned using the additional time extension when the policy was first communicated to them. The study examined how the school

personnel responded to the initiative including the implementation plan that was devised and how they planned to measure the progress toward implementation of that plan. The research study also examined the impact of the calendar extension on curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities for teachers and students. This study captured the voices of the pastor, administrator, teachers, students, and parents who were involved in this calendar extension including their expectations, experiences, and perceptions about the change.

The research was conducted at St. Agape Catholic School, a Catholic elementary school located in a suburban area in Southern California. Following the mandate and subsequent suggestion that schools within the Archdiocese extend their calendars, St. Agape extended its academic calendar by twenty days at the beginning of the 2011-2012 year. Presently the school is in its third year of implementation of the extended calendar initiative. Through field observations, interviews, focus groups, and analysis of documents, this study examined the pastor's, principal's, parents', teachers', and students' perceptions as they related to the calendar change. The researcher also analyzed the challenges and opportunities the teachers and students faced when the school adopted the extended calendar, as well as how they have adjusted curriculum and instruction. Ultimately, the purpose of this study was to learn from the adoption of a calendar initiative at this Catholic school as a means of informing other schools that are in the initial stages of implementation of a calendar extension initiative. This study also gives voice to the stakeholders who experienced the adoption of a school calendar extension including their initial vision for the how the extra time would be used, their perceptions about the curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular outcomes related to the extension, and finally the challenges and opportunities that exist as the result of this calendar extension.

Research Questions

By exploring how one suburban, Catholic elementary school negotiated an adoption of time-based reform, this study addressed the following questions:

1) How did the pastor, administrator, and teachers initially envision and plan to use the extended time at St. Agape Catholic School?
2) After implementing calendar extension for two full academic years, how did the teachers and students use the extended time for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes?
3) What were the pastor's, administrator's, teachers', parents', and students' perceptions of the outcomes associated with the calendar extension including, challenges and opportunities at St. Agape Catholic School?

Findings

In a four-month period, the researcher conducted field observations, interviews, focus group meetings, and document analysis at one Catholic elementary school. The researcher also used data collected from a previous study (Dell'Olio et al., 2014; Sabatino et al., 2013) including principal interview transcripts, teacher focus group transcripts, and documents. Through an inductive analysis the researcher was able to identify themes and domains, as they naturally emerged from the data. The qualitative methodology chosen for this research project enabled the voice of the participants to authentically develop through this inductive process. The seven themes that emerged include: decision making, planning and implementation, advantages, financial motivations, the culture of teaching, leadership, challenges and complications of the extended calendar. The themes were identified through inductive analysis and were coded and

organized as they emerged from the data. In some cases, data that were outside the scope of the research questions surfaced, including the perceptions of parent stakeholders on how they envisioned the extended time would be used. These parent perceptions about the vision were also incorporated into the study as they add richness to the findings and help complete the story. Similarly, some of the classroom observation data were outside the scope of the research questions, but these observations were also included to provide a more complete and contextualized picture of the situation at this school site.

Discussion of the Findings

The researcher served as a participant observer by gaining the trust of the participants over time and by joining the activities at the school site including recess and lunch duty, and the lunch period in the community room where the teachers enjoyed their break. Through this emic perspective, the researcher was able to gather the perspectives of the principal, pastor, teachers, students, and parents at a school where a calendar extension has been implemented.

The researcher focused on data that enabled a response to the research questions; however, given the exploratory and open-ended nature of the case study design as well as the choice of data collected and analysis, more information emerged which adds richness to the story of St. Agape School. For example, the researcher did not initially plan to delve into the decision-making process that was used by the school to adopt the calendar extension but these events provide a significant background and context for how the plan was initially envisioned, carried out, and later evaluated by the stakeholders. Likewise, the researcher did not set out to discover the culture of teaching or the pedagogical climate of each classroom, but these details bring nuance and context to the analysis. Lastly as this is a qualitative study, there was prolonged

engagement between the researcher and the participants. Although the initial assumption of the researcher was that the fieldwork would yield information solely related to the implementation of an extended calendar initiative, other unintended findings were discovered. These unintended findings allow the researcher to put aside assumptions in an effort to allow the real story to emerge.

What follows are the three research questions that were developed for this research study along with the responses that resulted from the data collection and analysis.

Question One: How did the pastor, administrator, and teachers initially envision and plan to use the extended time at St. Agape Catholic School?

The researcher assumed that each of these stakeholder groups had a vision for how the extra time would be used. Discovering these visions required the stakeholders to reflect back to the spring of 2010-2011 when the school's decision to adopt the calendar extension was first announced. The vision that the principal and teachers initially shared was documented in a school bulletin. Throughout the research process, this document was referenced interchangeably as the vision for how the time would be used as well as their general implementation plan. The document (See Appendix F) indicates that the faculty intended the following curricular focal areas:

1) Shift from a textbook-driven curriculum to a standards-based curriculum at all grade levels.
2) The use and integration of technology must be a priority in order to support a learning environment that prepares students to be successful in today's world.

3) Data collected from ITBS scores and *EasyCBM* shows a weakness in math and reading comprehension. Increase math instructional time for grades K-four.
4) Focus on essential standards allowing students more time practicing and working with particular information and ideas.
5) Emphasis on science and social studies for grades one and two.
6) Use additional time for enrichment:
    - Integrate fine arts (music and art) and technology in religion, science, and social studies for grades three through eight.
    - Introduce extra-curricular, multi-age activities according to student interest.
    - Equip students with teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Although this document includes a vision for how the time would be used, the researcher asked each stakeholder group what they recalled as the vision. These reflections included information relative to both the vision, as each perceived it, and the decision-making process that was used by the school.

Unique and distinct visions between stakeholder groups. In direct response to the research question, the pastor, principal, and teachers all expressed unique visions for how the time would be used. Each group's perspective centered upon that which they found most advantageous, including the parent group which was not initially included within the scope of this research question. No formal vision was established by the school that collectively represented all participant groups. Rather, a general plan was documented by the principal and the faculty in a meeting. This plan focused on instructional changes that would be made by the

school. Marketing, enrollment, convenience to the dual-income families, and completion of the textbooks were not part of this plan.

Decision making. Decision making was not directly included within the scope of this research question. However, this detail emerged repeatedly when the teachers were asked about how they initially envisioned the extra time to be used and it adds context to how the different stakeholder groups envisioned the change. The decision to adopt the calendar was made in a top-down format with little consultation from the stakeholders and little discussion about how the initiative would be implemented. The implementation plans were created after the adoption.

Initiative sold to stakeholders. Although little discussion took place prior to the decision, the principal made the decision to extend the calendar at St. Agape School. All participants acknowledged that the announcement of the calendar extension centered on positive possible outcomes. This change in calendar was "sold" to the stakeholders when it was announced by the principal in that she highlighted the potential benefits to their students or children. For the teachers, this one-sided dialogue included that they would earn an extra month of salary. For the parents, they were told that their children would spend twenty more days in a safe and affordable setting where they would focus on mastering content that would make the students more prepared for high school.

The pastor agreed to the calendar extension when the principal suggested it because it had also been previously suggested by the Archdiocesan officials who believed such a change could increase enrollment. While the pastor understood there to be potential instructional advantages, he primarily viewed this change as a means of better serving the needs of dual-income families within his parish school that needed affordable summer child care options. The pastor also felt

the calendar extension could be used as a marketing tool that would help increase enrollment and therefore, improve the sustainability of the school. He recognized that the school needed to do something to improve and increase enrollment.

Promises made do not match reality. Data gathered from the parent and teacher participants reveal that promises were made by the principal and that some planning took place among the entire faculty including the development of very broad goals. However, the reality of how the extended time has been used does not match what was promised initially by the principal nor does it match the broad goals that were developed by the faculty. Also, while the principal indicated that there was a school-wide plan prepared, little evidence from the classrooms or stakeholders demonstrated that this plan was acted upon or even referenced within each classroom. In fact, planning and implementation of the extended time is accomplished independently within each classroom. While collaborative efforts to plan projects and events do take place, each teacher creates his or her own lessons plans and little reference is made to the calendar extension implementation plan that was broadly discussed in a faculty meeting. In addition, there is no assessment plan associated with that broad implementation plan developed at a faculty meeting and later presented to the researcher by the principal, so measurement of the plan's efficacy has not taken place.

Underdeveloped implementation plan. Following the spring 2011 announcement of the calendar extension at St. Agape School, the faculty and administration used suggestions provided by the Massachusetts 2020 project and a related report (Farbman & Kaplan, 2005) to develop their broad implementation plan. In reality, the "implementation plan" amounted to a list of goals and a general vision for how the extra time would be used school-wide (See

Appendix F). Little detail was provided within this document for how the teachers and the school would actually implement these goals or vision. No metrics were listed for how the implementation could later be measured, and the parties responsible for each goal as well as timelines related to the goals were not prepared. Similarly, there was no formal professional development plan associated with the extended calendar initiative and so the teachers were on their own to use the extra time within each of the classrooms as they deemed appropriate in light of the vision.

Paradoxes existed between stakeholder visions. Although parent stakeholders were not initially included within the scope of this research question, their responses during the focus group meetings aligned well with this question and provide additional context for understanding the school's vision. Parents who were interviewed shared that they had their own vision for how the extended time would be used at the school. This vision was guided by the communications they received from the principal at the time the calendar extension was announced. Based upon this communication, the parents assumed that the extra time would enable students to complete their workbooks and textbooks prior to the end of the school year. These parents placed some importance or value on the completion of texts indicating that they felt completion of a textbook resource equated somehow to mastery of grade level concepts and or satisfaction of grade level competencies. When asked by the researcher if they felt the textbooks represented the material that was expected to be mastered at each grade level the parents affirmed that they did. Here it is important to note that the teachers were using textbooks published several years prior to this research study, for example, the social studies textbooks were over 15 years old. The textbooks being used at this school do not reflect the new Common Core State Standards nor do they

reflect content that is aligned specifically to the former state standards. Suggesting that the completion of the texts equates to mastery of grade level requirements represents misinformation on the part of this stakeholder group. In addition, even if completion did represent mastery and satisfaction of grade-level requirements, based upon the evidence gathered in classroom observations, the workbooks and textbooks were not being used at a pace that would enable completion of the entire text by the end of the school year. Therefore, the parents' vision was not being realized.

Ironically given the parents' desire to see the textbook completed, the administration and teachers noted that they felt the time could be used to "shift from a textbook-driven curriculum to a standards-based curriculum at all grade levels." Therefore, completing the textbooks, which is what the parents wanted, did not match how the teachers envisioned that the extra time would be used. In other words, textbook completion was reported to be a higher priority for parents than for teachers or administrators. Despite teachers' stated interest in shifting away from a textbook-based curriculum, they were observed basing their classroom instruction almost entirely on textbook materials. In field observations, instruction was usually based solely on the content of the textbook. The researcher also observed that little to no differentiation (customization to meet the unique needs of the learners) within the content or instructional approach took place, so the material was being presented in a one-size-fits-all format. Also, as stated previously because the textbooks that were being used had been published prior to 2008, they were not aligned with the new Common Core State Standards or even the former state standards. Therefore, deviation from the text or supplementation with other better standards-aligned resources should have been a priority for the teachers.

Several additional paradoxes existed among stakeholder groups. The example of completing textbooks and workbooks and conversely shifting from textbook instruction provides one example of this difference. Another example of this paradox was evidenced in the way the parents felt mathematics instruction would be enhanced versus the manner in which it was planned by the teachers and administration. Parents stated that the instructional time for mathematics would increase, that the school would provide more opportunities for students to practice their basic or foundational skills and participate in hands-on projects to increase critical thinking skills, test-taking strategies, and retention. Like the parents, the teachers and principal hoped for an increase in instructional time focused on mathematics. However, while more time was afforded to this content area, what was observed in the classrooms and through lesson plan analysis was quite different in practice from what the parents envisioned. Teachers allocated time in their lesson plans for rote practice and memorization of basic skills, timed "one-minute" basic skill assessments, and use of computer games that enabled additional practice of the same basic skills. Enhancement of the curriculum in this area including the addition of hands-on, critical thinking activities involving mathematics were not observed by the researcher. Again, instruction closely matched what was presented in the textbooks, and in all cases where new concepts were being presented, the textbook remained the sole resource despite the teachers' stated desire to move away from textbook-based instruction.

Underdeveloped plan hampers consistent implementation. When first announced, the goals of the calendar extension were presented to stakeholders in a school bulletin as follows:

> Extended school year redesign supports a clear, school-wide academic focus. The school's plan for implementation of the extended school year is aligned with the school's

> overall academic focus. This academic focus drives instructional improvement and continuous measurable growth in student learning throughout the redesigned day and year … The school will use the additional time in order to accelerate learning in core academic subjects by making meaningful improvements to the quality of instruction in support of school-wide achievement goals. (School Bulletin)

The academic focus was ambiguously presented, just as it was ambiguously planned for and implemented. The principal shared that, "Each teacher was able to plan how the time would be used in his or her own classroom. Many teachers worked together to come up with plans for how to use the time." When the principal noted that "many teachers worked together" she meant at the faculty meeting where the very general, very ambiguous implementation plan was developed. From the point the plan was documented, it was up to each teacher to decide how to implement that plan in his or her classroom. Individualization led to implementation that was inconsistent from classroom to classroom as evidenced in the lesson plans, curriculum maps, teacher interviews, and teacher focus group meeting.

Question Two: After implementing calendar extension for two full academic years, how are the teachers and students using the extended time for curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular purposes?

No consensus for how the extra time is used. Each teacher was expected to develop his or her own lesson plans and curriculum maps. While teachers indicated that some collaboration took place, this collaboration was isolated to projects and presentations that happened between grade levels. For example a safety project was reviewed by the researcher. This project included an overview and rubric which incorporated the involvement of students in grades three and four.

The project asked the students to create a poster and to present their findings related to a "safety" topic to the class. While this project was collaborative in that it involved students from two grade levels, it did not involve standards orientated toward the two grade levels, nor did it include a learning objective. Students were open to share anything related to safety. The rubric used to assess their work focused on mundane skills such as formatting the text, formatting the poster, number of instructions, grammar, spelling, and the quantity of their written passages (number of sentences) versus the quality of their presentation or the content of their work. This project, like others that were presented to the researcher centered on following directions and conforming to the guidelines. Spending time developing rote skills and on having students follow explicit directions, simply served to further conformity efforts within these classrooms. It was as if the two teachers used this project to simply fill, or rather "kill," time versus encouraging creative exploration and authentic learning.

In another grade level, another project was found. This project, like the previous one shared, did not align with the goals of the "implementation plan" for how the additional time would be used. That plan indicated that time would be allocated to problem-based learning and projects. It is assumed by the researcher that problem-based projects require critical thinking to actively engage the learner. This other project, like the first described above also did not employ critical thinking. It was not aligned to any learning objectives that the researcher could find within the curriculum map and or the lesson plans. This project required the students to prepare a timeline listing eight events that had occurred in their lives. A copy of the project outline and the assessment rubric was provided to the researcher. Within this project the students were assessed on whether they completed a rough draft of their project in pencil and handed that in to

the teacher. They were also assessed on whether they wrote each year in a box, that they chose "only" eight events to document, whether they had documented some of the events above the line and others underneath the time line, whether their line was straight and drawn with a ruler, whether the writing was completed in black pen with no pencil marks, and then also for spelling and grammar. Content, clarity, quality of the written expression, providing descriptive details, developing a response to a problem, and critical thinking were not considered worthy of assessment on this project as they were not listed on the rubric. Rather the entire project, which was valued at 200 points in social studies, was based upon following rules, adhering to guidelines, and following direction explicitly. Again, authentic problem solving was not assessed, nor was it apparently valued on this project.

Lesson plans were created independently by each teacher in part because each teacher taught a distinct grade level but also because this was the expectation of the principal and part of the culture of the school. Independently created plans led to a unique use of the extended time within each classroom or grade level. When the researcher compared the general implementation plan against the lesson plans and curriculum maps at each grade level, additional ambiguity existed. The goal of incorporating problem-based learning had taken on a unique and different meaning in each of the classrooms. No evidence of a consistent, implementation plan-based approached to lesson planning was found in any of the classrooms involved in observations.

Goals of the "Implementation Plan" are unrealized. As noted previously, the faculty prepared a general implementation plan but it was really more of a list of goals. It lacked specific information as to how the teachers would implement these goals that likely contributed

to the unique interpretation of how the time could be used within each classroom. Attention to the goals haphazardly happened in each classroom but as a community, there was no set plan for how each classroom or teacher would address the goals. In addition, as new faculty members joined the instructional team, the list of goals was not provided to them. Therefore, the newer faculty members were free to plan the extra time has they wished.

The first goal noted on "the implementation plan" was, "Shift from a textbook-driven curriculum to a standards-based curriculum at all grade levels." As noted in response to the first research question, the researcher did not find evidence of this goal being achieved.

The second goal relates to integrating technology within the curriculum. This goal is explored later within the co-curricular section. Elaboration as to how the teachers were expected to accomplish this goal was not found by the researcher and so again, the teachers independently determined how this would happen.

Little evidence of the proposed changes to curriculum is found. The teachers commented that the academic planning was comprehensive and that it included revising their curriculum maps but that it was also different for each teacher and each classroom. As noted in Chapter Four, one teacher shared that she planned to use the time for interactive activities, student collaboration, technology integration, service based learning activities, and anchor activities which she described as such as stage plays, role plays, and reader's workshop. The plans noted by this teacher in her interview were not consistent from teacher to teacher based upon the data collected within this study. In addition, when the researcher reviewed the teacher's curriculum maps and lesson plans there was little evidence that these ideas had actually become part of the instructional reality in her classroom.

Within the school there were also no set plans for how the curricular enhancements would be assessed or measured which further enabled the approach in each classroom to be unique and sporadic as described by the teacher later in her interview. Another teacher shared, "We were very involved in planning because we create our own lesson plans and curriculum maps. We also had been given the Common Core Standards pacing guide from the Archdiocese."

The Common Core Standards pacing guide resource referenced in this interview was given to all teachers during the 2011-2012 academic year, which was the same year that the calendar extension was implemented. However, at the time of the individual interviews and the focus group meetings, only three teachers had seen this document and only two teachers were using it in their classrooms for math and English language arts planning. In some classrooms the curricular changes centered on mathematics and English language arts, while in others they centered on science or social studies. Another teacher shared that she started her planning approach with social studies, "I looked at my social studies standards and created units using them." When asked whether she also approached English language arts and mathematics, she noted that she did adjust these plans but that she completed her science and social studies first using state standards and the resources that she had available such as textbooks and workbooks.

A few of the teachers suggested that the additional time has enabled them more time to include projects and project-based learning. One teacher noted, "I am able to let the project and the children dictate the time frame with the additional time." She also indicated that she has added more projects to the grade level curriculum plans. However, when the researcher reviewed the teacher's instructional plans and project rubrics, there appeared to be little creative

freedom, no element of technology, and limited critical thinking involved in any of the projects. Again, there appeared to be a focus and value placed upon rote regurgitation of content, one-dimensional, and aesthetic presentation. The researcher was dismayed to find that there was little opportunity for the projects to extend tangibly to students' lives, backgrounds, or areas of interest. There was also no element of creative freedom within the projects and they were in some cases historically inaccurate. For example, the second grade teacher shared a Christopher Columbus project with the researcher. This project asked the students to summarize a story that they read as a class and to draw a picture. Each of the nine drawings and summaries were nearly identical. There appeared to be no opportunity for creative thought nor did there appear to be a deviation from the story that the teacher chose to share, which included historical inaccuracies.

Within the school there existed a notion that any project which was completed within the classroom constituted an increase in the students' project-based learning opportunities, even when that project provided no problem-solving or creative elements. The other aspect of these projects that deviated from the intended vision was that they were to be new to the curriculum. In at least two classrooms the researcher found that the projects remained the same as they had been prior to the calendar extension but that the teacher provided the students more time to complete the work. It was unclear to the researcher whether the project and student learning needs warranted extended time, or if the teacher simply extended the time that the class spent on this project because no other plans were developed. Both cases appeared linked to the culture of teaching and the climate of the school where teacher-centered, non-critical instructional practices dominated the classroom experience.

Co-curricular time. One of the goals introduced to the school community right after the announcement of the calendar extension suggested that the use of educational technology would be enhanced with the extra time, "The use and integration of technology must be a priority in order to support a learning environment that prepares students to be successful in today's world." At the time of this research study, the school added a computer lab where students can access the Internet for research, they can prepare documents and presentations, and they can play mathematics and language arts games. However, the use of these tools is fully directed by the teacher. There was little evidence that the technology was being used in manner which would "prepare students to be successful in today's world." Using *The International Society for Technology in Education* (http://www.iste.org) student standards which have been designed to support 21st century preparation of students, technology use aimed at preparing students for their future should enhance students' "creativity and innovation," "communication and collaboration," "research and information fluency," "critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making," "digital citizenship," and "technology operations and concepts." The use of technology at St. Agape School is limited in its scope and includes only basic elements of digital citizenship and technology operations.

The goal presented by the school relative to their incorporation of technology demonstrates that they are preparing students for their future in a very limited and restrained capacity when it comes to using these educational tools. One teacher noted, "We have implemented computer lab time, but I am not sure that this was directly linked to the 200-day calendar because we had been moving towards working with technology before we started the new schedule." Given this statement that was confirmed by other teachers it was unclear to the

researcher how the extended time enabled the use of the new computer lab or the development of the technology lessons. In fact, there appears to be no relationship between the increased resources in this area and the calendar extension.

Another aspect of co-curricular change that the students shared was the development of an after-school homework support program called Study Hall. These Study Hall sessions, according to the students, are available Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Within these study hall sessions, students receive additional support from teachers on assignments. This program has become more formal since the extended calendar was adopted. Students formerly could make appointments to visit their teachers after school. Now the teachers host these sessions regularly like office hours are formatted and the students simply drop-in as needed. Study Hall has become more formalized in part because teachers were encouraged by the principal to provide homework support at school so that when the students went home the homework was either finished already or minimal now that the students spent more time in school.

Extra-curricular time. In terms of extra-curricular enhancements, the school recently announced that the class of 2015 will have the opportunity to register for a trip to Washington, D.C. which is a new option for students. The school has not provided this kind of opportunity to its students in the past primarily because of cost. While parents and teachers wanted to add a trip like this in the past, it took a few years to gain momentum and interest. In addition, the teachers note that the expense was one that required time for families to save up money and so they delayed the announcement until ample time could be given. This trip is tentatively scheduled to take place during the 2014-2015 school year, which is one deviation from the traditional

academic calendar of events that had not formerly included out-of-state excursions. However, as this trip has not yet taken place and fundraising efforts are underway, it is unclear how many eighth grade students will be impacted by this proposed change. The data presented by the principal and teachers relative to this trip suggests that it was a result of the extended calendar.

Another extra-curricular enhancement noted by the teachers was that the school's student council program was expanded to include more students at more grade levels. Student council was a program that included elected student representatives from grades three through eight. It was moderated by two teachers. The students within this program were involved in planning school events along with their moderators. The students and teachers noted that since the extended calendar was adopted, they have grown the program to include more activities and events. One teacher shared, "We have added to our student council program. We now have class representatives from third grade through eighth grade. We also have added more activities to events such as Red Ribbon Week." Although the teachers attributed the changes in the student council program to the additional time, it is unclear as to whether this is the direct cause, because both of the moderators are new to the program since the calendar change was implemented. The data indicated that time is really being used for behavior management and rote practice.

Reality of how time is being used does not match the "Plan." Another aspect of the calendar change that emerged is the increased opportunity for the school community to fundraise. Because the teachers and students are in school longer, there is more time for fundraising activities that the school facilitates. Likewise, the school has been able to move its largest fundraiser, the carnival, to a later time in the school year where the weather is more

predictable, and the attendance is greater due to increased availability of the attendees due to summer vacation in the local area. For example, students from the local public schools are able to attend the carnival during the afternoon on Friday because they are already out of school.

More time for behavior management and rote practice. The reality of what is being done at this school site does not match their plan. It was difficult to determine exactly how the instructional practices of this school have been enhanced, if at all, even with the additional time. The culture of teaching that emerged through data collected at St. Agape School reflected practices aimed at the socialization and preparation of children within the working class. Direct instruction dominated the approach within each classroom observed, and the teachers' focus on rote exercise, memorization of basic facts and skills, and the prevalence of strict classroom management practices all suggest that this suburban school is simply "reinforcing the values and personality characteristics of the social class of their [the students'] families" (Oakes, 2005, p. 119). All of these practices were likely being utilized prior to the calendar extension in the three classrooms where observations took place. These practices related more to the style and approach of the teacher versus the amount of time those teachers had to instruct their students.

Question Three: What are the pastor's, administrator's, teachers', parents', and students' perceptions of the outcomes associated with the calendar extension including, challenges and opportunities at St. Agape Catholic School?

The researcher sought to gauge the challenges and opportunities that each stakeholder group perceived however, again within the scope of responses related to this question, additional information emerged. In some cases where the additional information enriches the context of this school's story, it was included in the discussion.

Perceptions of opportunities from adults are finance-driven. The perceptual outcomes associated with the calendar extension centered mainly on the financial aspects of the change. Parents, teachers, the principal, and the pastor all shared how this change potentially benefitted the school and its stakeholders. From the principal and the pastor's perspectives, the change afforded many of the dual-income families with a viable alternative to summer childcare. In their opinion this alternative was reasonably priced and desirable for families because their children felt safe at school. The principal also noted that the extended calendar provided a marketing advantage when prospective families came to see the school. She explained that many of the local public schools had shortened their academic calendars using furlough days due to budget constraints, and those prospective parents welcomed the additional school days. Enrollment figures initially increased but have since declined, the data indicates increased enrollment has not in fact been an outcome associated with the change.

Teachers think they have improved their instructional practices. The teachers indicated that the additional time afforded them flexibility in terms of pacing the curriculum to better meet the needs of their students. They also indicated that the additional time enabled them to add projects. However, as noted previously, the flexibility may have been a simple slowdown of instruction versus an instructional change based upon differentiated need. The addition of new projects was limited and those that were added included few critical thinking opportunities or creative exercise.

Perceptual challenges from teachers center on burnout. The teachers also indicated that they and the students experienced burnout as the result of the calendar change. The commentary relative to burnout suggested that the school year began early in August and

continued without a break until Thanksgiving. The Christmas break was shortened to eight days, and they experienced a long stretch of uninterrupted academic time from January until Easter break (which occurred in mid-April). By the time summer finally came, the teachers explained that they and the students were exhausted. The teachers suggested that a change in the format of the calendar to a more year-round model would enable more frequent breaks with shorter periods of academic time. The teachers and parents alike suggested that more frequent breaks in academic time are essential for the students and teachers to be refreshed and receptive to learning and or instruction. They suggested that with the 200-day calendar, the teachers and students both show signs of stress and burnout right before Christmas and in the early part of June, so this impacts the efficacy of those instructional periods. The parents and teachers alike noted that if the breaks were more frequent, then teachers and students alike would have time to refresh, rejuvenate, and relax so as to be more prepared for instruction and learning to take place.

When the calendar extension was first presented, the teachers felt that they would increase their income because they would be paid for an additional month of instruction. This did happen and their salaries were raised by 10% to compensate for the additional month of school. However, the teachers also noted that because their summer break was truncated, their ability to find seasonal summer employment that supplemented their income became difficult. Compared to public school teachers and college students—both of whom have longer summer breaks—the St. Agape teachers found that their smaller window of availability made them less appealing to potential summer employers.

Perceptions of opportunities from students are socially oriented. The students noted that they enjoyed spending more time with their school friends. They explained that because the

student population was dispersed over a large geographic area, social interaction was often limited to their time spent in school. Social aspects aside, the majority of the students shared that they did not feel that that change in calendar had been beneficial to their learning. One student shared that because of the extra time that he spent in school he felt more prepared for high school than his public school peers. When asked to elaborate on this preparedness, he was unable to provide examples of where or how he might be better prepared but claimed that just the extra time spent in school should give the students at St. Agape School an advantage.

Promises do not align with outcomes. The parents indicated that they believed in the promises that were presented when the calendar change was announced but that they had not seen these promises come to fruition. They shared that the mathematics instruction and student test scores remain an area of growth for the school. They also shared that they do not believe the school has prepared their students for the expectations of high school homework because of the changes that were made following the adoption of the calendar extension for homework and the availability of support from teachers after school. The parents shared that this kind of support does not happen at the high school level but that their students have not learned independence.

Perceptual challenges from parents center on burnout and disconnect. Like the teachers, the parents indicated that they felt either a 200-day year-round format with the academic time being spread out more with larger breaks in between each academic session or going back to the 180-day calendar were preferred by most families. The parents alluded to the high rate of teacher attrition that was experienced at the school and suggested that teacher burnout played a role in this situation. The parents also shared that challenges have arisen since the calendar was changed that they had not anticipated. For example, major concerns arose

when it seemed that the eighth grade graduates from St. Agape School might not complete eighth grade in time to participate in summer school or sports camps and tryouts at the high school level. Parent participants who had children enrolled at local Catholic high schools as well as St. Agape noted that the academic calendars were not synchronized. These parents questioned why the elementary schools chose to extend their calendars while the high school calendars remained the same.

Here it is interesting to note that the calendar extension initiative within this Archdiocese was directed at the elementary level only, and the high schools were never involved in this mandate. Even when the mandate was changed to a suggestion, the high schools remained exempt from consideration. This disconnect between the elementary and high schools was one that, according to the principal, was not discussed at the time of the decision to adopt the calendar extension at St. Agape School. As shared by the parents, this oversight caused challenges to the eighth graders' ability to participate in high school summer preparatory programs, high school summer school, athletic camps, and team tryouts.

Another challenge reported by parents with children enrolled at both levels of school (high school and elementary) was that their opportunity to travel was very limited because the school vacation periods were not compatible. For example, one parent who had children at the high school and at St. Agape said by the time the high school summer session was complete it was almost time for their son at the elementary level to return to school. This aspect limited the available time they had to take a vacation as a family, and it happened to coincide with the most costly vacation rates.

Parents also indicated that the out of school time that they had available to make doctor and dental well-check appointment was limited. One parent shared that her child's pediatrician took off time right when the school was released for summer thereby shortening the already challenging availability. This parent also noted that after the first year, she had been required to take her daughter out of school in order to schedule these appointments but that "at the end of the year everyone was tired anyway, so not much was going on in the classroom anyway." Accordingly, she felt that her daughter did not miss much while attending these appointments.

As noted previously, the data collection yielded information that did not directly relate to the three research questions, but the researcher believes that omitting these findings would result in an incomplete picture of this school's story. These additional findings provide meaningful context to this school's calendar extension adoption.

A Systems-Thinking Look at St. Agape School

Senge et al. (2012) noted that within every school there exists an underlying structure that may seem unrelated, be indiscernible, or difficult to recognize but that are significantly intertwined. Using a systems-thinking approach, Senge et al. (2012) noted that,

> Behind each pattern of behavior is a systematic structure—a set of seemingly unrelated factors that interact, even though they may be widely separated in time and place, and even though their relationships may be difficult to recognize … To redesign the system requires an understanding of existing structures and practices. (p. 129)

In the case of St. Agape School when the calendar extension was adopted, there was no effort to discover and understand the existing structures and practices that would be at play as the change was implemented. Therefore, these structures and practices were not addressed prior to the

change being adopted. These same structures were also not taken into account when the vision was set by stakeholders. Had these structures been considered, the stakeholders might have realized that the implementation plan needed to be more comprehensive. Similarly, they might have considered taking a pre-adoption assessment of the school community including instructional practices, school climate and culture, and stakeholder perspectives that may have contributed to a better plan.

Summary of Discussion

Calendar extension did not work. Based upon the data that were analyzed in this study, at this particular school site, the calendar extension seems to have added little to students' learning opportunities. Educational reformers have, for over three decades, called for calendar extensions, calendar modifications, and year-round schooling options as a means of improving achievement (Farbman, 2011; Johnson & Spradlin, 2007). While the logic behind these reform measures seems simple, "more time in school should result in more learning and better student performance" (Silva, 2007, p. 1), the logic does not translate to reality and as Fredrick and Walberg (1980) noted, "time devoted to school learning appears to be a modest predictor of achievement" (p. 193).

Efficacy of time. Research available on time-based educational reform suggests that the kind of time added to the school calendar, how additional time is spent in school, and the unique and diverse needs of the students must all be considered before educators can assess how effectively time alone can improve student learning and achievement (Bishop, Worner, & Weber, 1988). In the case of St. Agape School, none of these aspects were considered.

Berliner and Biddle (1995) suggested that typically time-based reform "proposals are based on the assumption that students will learn more if only they are exposed to more classroom hours" (p. 184). Silva (2007) noted, "time's potential as a reform depends largely on whether the time is used effectively and on its use as a resource to serve students most in need of extra learning opportunities, both inside and outside of school" (p. 9). In the case of St. Agape School, the efficacy of the time spent in school is questionable based upon the data gathered in this study.

As Karweit (1984) suggested, "time is a necessary but not sufficient, condition for learning" and "learning takes time, but providing time does not in itself ensure that learning will take place" (p. 33). Such as in the case of St. Agape School, more time in school for students did not equate to a better learning environment. This is due in part because there are many factors at play in school including the quality of instruction, the curriculum used, and the background of the teacher (Worsnop, 1996).

Baine (2007) suggested that American teachers report much of the time that students spend in school is wasted on administrative tasks and discipline. Again, in the case of St. Agape School, the researcher observed significant amounts of time devoted to behavior management or discipline and administrative tasks such as collecting homework. Cuban (2008) noted that "proving time in school is the crucial variable in raising academic achievement is difficult because so many other variables must be considered—the local context itself, available resources, teacher quality, administrative leadership, socioeconomic background of students and their families, and what is taught" (p. 244).

Kind of time should have been considered. Reformers considering a time-based initiative or academic calendar extensions should first consider the kind of time that is being

added, because "research shows that the correlation between time and student achievement gets stronger with more engaged time" (Silva, 2007, p. 2). As noted earlier, the time that students spent at St. Agape School was not engaging; rather it was focused on rote skills and low levels of critical thinking. The learners at this school were passive recipients of content, not actively engaged in creating meaning and learning. Prior research also indicated a "complicated relationship between time and learning, and suggests that improving the quality of instructional time is at least as important as increasing the quantity of time in school" (Silva, 2007, p. 1).

Considering alternatives. Had the school leadership considered alternate schedule options including block scheduling (longer blocks of instruction) and year-round schedules that do not increase the amount of time spent in school but play with the existing time that schools use (Silva, 2007), they might have had the same results with lesser impact to their stakeholders. St. Agape School might have also first considered the amount of time allocated to various subjects, content, and instructional activities and adjusted those allotments instead of simply adding more days. An inventory of time spent addressing administrative needs including classroom management activities, attendance, collection and distribution of materials, and other administrative tasks might have aimed this reform initiative differently and had teachers reevaluate their practices to afford more time for learning. Lastly, differentiation should have been considered and addressed because every classroom in America includes a diverse population of learners; therefore, "there is extraordinary variety in types of intelligence, so too is there extraordinary variety in how people learn" (Senge et al., 2012, p. 44). Again, this school provided a one-size-fits-all approach which limited student learning opportunities.

Continuity and resources. Continuity and consistent use of curricular resources need to be considered when a school engages in time-based reform. At St. Agape School, these aspects were not considered and the additional instruction, which takes place throughout the school year and during the extended period, was not consistent throughout the school. Consistency in this context means that all of the teachers in the school have consistent goals and objectives for how instructional time should be used and that they adhere to a specific, sequential set of standards. Likewise, it would mean that they utilized curricular resources that were consistent which they were not at St. Agape School.

According to Silva (2007), many schools only partially consider their plan and the full extent of the expenses that they will incur as the result of the extended calendar. Many consider the increase in staffing costs but not the additional plant management costs such as, building maintenance, insurance, transportation, electricity, and telephone expenses (Silva, 2007). They do not however consider that their teachers may have summer income needs that will be impacted by the extended calendar such as the teachers at St. Agape School quickly realized their first summer into the implementation.

How the time is used is critical not only to the planning and implementation, but also to the analysis of the intervention and its effectiveness. Adding time alone will not ensure increased learning opportunities because time as a measurement factor is "the crudest and least helpful measure in trying to assess how time relates to learning precisely because it fails to consider how schools, teachers, and students are using time and the quality of instructional activities" (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 8).

Including stakeholders from the start. According to Cooper et al. (2003) when all stakeholders are involved in the calendar reform decision-making process, the transition from a traditional calendar to a modified or extended calendar can be more successful. Johnson and Spradlin (2007) also suggested that when a principal informs the stakeholders of the calendar option as well as the potential benefits for students and then gave them a choice, the cooperation that the principal encouraged helped the community embrace and successfully adapt to the change. Principals and teachers can better engage the support of parents to help reform take shape and achieve the desired outcomes, "achievement increases when parents are aware of what their children are doing in school and outside of school" (Johnson & Spradlin, 2007, p. 15).

Creating a shared vision and supporting that vision. Hall and Hord (2011) suggested that "a first step in moving toward a changed and improved future is the development of a shared dream or vision of what will be—that is, a vision of the future…" (p. 148). But they also suggested that setting the vision alone is not enough. Heath and Heath (2010) believe that teachers and administrators or leaders within a school, are proficient in setting a vision, but lack in supporting their schools with the details associated with the vision. Planning for change is essential and "big-picture, hands-off leadership isn't likely to work in a change situation because the hardest part of change—the paralyzing part—is precisely in the details" (p. 53).

After setting the vision for the school, teachers and administrators need to reinforce that vision through clear and effective communication. Bridges (2009) indicated that the "first form of reinforcement is consistency of message" (p. 69). Schools need to recognize that communication takes many forms including organizational policies, procedures, and priorities.

When communication is not clear or lacks consistency then people are able to find "excuses to argue that the new beginning isn't for real" (Bridges, 2009, p. 70).

Planning. Planning efforts were flawed by limited collaboration, individual implementation of the change within each classroom, and a lack of assessment measures associated with the implementation. Assessment of the implementation was never factored into the planning effort so measurement of the change is difficult. Offered as if an afterthought, the principal indicated that ITBS assessment data might be considered for assessment of the efficacy of the change. However, with goals related to increasing technology and problem-based learning, these assessments do not align with the anticipated changes so making any comparison of achievement data from prior to the change and after the change is impossible. The school did not have alternate forms of achievement data available so comparison and assessment of how the additional time has impacted learning is solely based on perceptions and opinions.

Parent and student perceptual data do not support the position that this change has yielded benefits in terms of student learning. Teacher perception limits the benefits to increased time and opportunities for basic skill reinforcement and change in instructional pace. They also indicated that project-based learning opportunities have increased, but data to support this assertion were only occasionally found and did not represent a school-wide reality. Likewise the school-wide emphasis on discipline, control, management, and order reveals what this school community values as well as the conditions that the school reproduces. Working class parents are represented within this school and the students are learning outdated expectations of a previous social class in the industrial age. Given the one-size-fits-all instructional approach that is dated, this school is limiting the students' learning opportunities. The students are not being

prepared or encouraged to think critically or problem solve authentically. They are not actively engaging in the learning process as thinkers, rather they are being served a curriculum that causes them to be the passive receptacles of information. They are directed and managed to work solely as the teacher dictates. For these students, spending extra time in school is only these perpetuating conditions. The students at St. Agape School are simply getting more of the same and that same is outdated, one-dimensional, and limiting in scope, creativity, and critical thinking.

It is disappointing to consider that the adoption of the calendar extension stemmed from a directive presented by the Archdiocese but that same entity, according to the site principal, did not provide detailed information about how the change should be implemented. Furthermore, while the calendar extension was proposed as a means of improving instruction, those results cannot be assured without vision, planning, and assessment. Without clear vision for what the calendar extension would do for the school, the implementation plan consequently also lacked direction and clarity. In this school, the implementation plan lacked substantive detail, measureable objectives, and a form of assessment that could be used to measure the impact of the calendar change on the school. According to the principal, direction from the Archdiocese as to how the calendar change was to be implemented simply included the directions to add twenty days to the academic calendar and to use the curriculum-pacing guide provided by the Archdiocese for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Without support and professional development related to how school administrators effectively introduce and implement a change such as the calendar extension, the teachers were left to their own skills and

backgrounds when implementing this change. At this site, these skills and backgrounds appeared to fall short of being effective and transformative.

As Fullan (2009) noted, educational leaders who effectively introduce change within their organizations have an "understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice" (p. 9). Understanding the change process includes determining and engaging people's moral purpose, which "in educational change is about improving society through improving educational systems" (Fullan, 2009, p. 10).

The nature in which an academic calendar change is decided, communicated, and planned for by the school community is critical to the effectiveness of the reform initiative and for capacity building on the part of the school leader. By building capacity, a principal helps to facilitate the change, devising "policies, strategies, resources, and actions designed to increase people's collective power to move the system forward" (Fullan, 2009, p. 10). Change management should also include an understanding of the change process. Educational leaders interested in effecting and sustaining a change such as a calendar extension reform initiative should ensure that the "change process is about establishing the condition for continuous improvement in order to persist and overcome inevitable barriers to reform" (Fullan, 2009, p. 11). In the case of St. Agape School, based upon the data collected, knowledge of change management does not appear to have been considered or employed by the principal.

Some Unintended Findings

Data gathered in classroom observations suggested this school community valued order, discipline, and rote learning practices. The classrooms were quiet places where instruction followed rigid patterns. Differentiation was extremely limited to special projects, and the day-to-

day instruction focused on activities which centered primarily on low levels of critical thinking such as listing, describing, and defining versus high critical thinking skills such as analyzing, comparing and contrasting, or synthesizing. Special projects that incorporated creativity, critical-thinking, and problem-based learning were limited in number and in scope. Memorization and basic skill formation dominated the classroom instructional practices in a one-size-fits-all format. This suburban Catholic school was unknowingly replicating social confines and limiting student growth opportunities. The instructional and behavior shaping practices that were observed in every classroom involved in this study, as well as on the playground, the morning assemblies, and the transition times were conditioning the students with skills appropriate to industrial class workers not innovators or 21st century learners. Trilling and Fadel (2009) suggested that 21st century skills are critical and problem-solving oriented. Students who possess 21st century skills are able to reason effectively, practice systems-thinking, make judgments and decisions, and solve problems. Trilling and Fadel (2009) also suggested that there has been a "monumental shift from Industrial Age production to that of the Knowledge Age economy—information-driven, globally networked" (p. 3).

Behavior shaping and structured inequality. Behavior shaping practices focused on discipline and order. Each classroom had an established management or behavioral incentive system based upon rewards and punishments. Bowles and Gintis (2011) asserted that "[since] its inception, in the United States, the public-school system has been seen as a method of disciplining children in the interest of producing a properly subordinate adult population" (p. 37). The teacher in each classroom was the sole figure of authority and within the school the principal reigned supreme. Kohn (1999) suggested that when teachers or figures of authority in the

classroom use rewards to shape behavior: "They must acknowledge their lack of absolute control with respect to things like motivation" (p. 17). He also noted that, "There is comfort in sticking to what we have power over, and the use of punishments and rewards is nothing if not an exercise of power" (Kohn, 1999, p. 17). Bowles and Gintis (2011) share that "[the] forms of school discipline, the position of the teacher, and the moral conception of the child have all changed over the years, but the overriding objective has remained" (p. 37).

Each classroom that was observed within this school included a very rigid classroom management, behavior-shaping plan that included rewards and consequences. Kohn (1999) notes that, "We have been taught that ethical conduct will be rewarded and evil acts punished" (p. 14), and that classroom punishment "provokes resistance and resentment…leads children to feel worse about themselves … and it spoils the relationship between the child and the adult" (p. 167).

When a teacher relies on punishment and rewards in the classroom, Kohn (1999) suggested that students can begin to view the teacher as "a rule enforcer, someone who may cause unpleasant things to happen—in short, someone to be avoided" (p. 167). Kohn (1999) suggested that rather than using punishments and rewards, teachers can use collaboration, content, and choice to help motivate students.

For at least some of the students observed, such as the second grade boy who was sent to the time out rug twice in an hour span, school was mundane, uninteresting, and attentionally challenging. The relationships between teachers and their students were power and authority-driven. Students were rewarded for staying within the boundaries offered to them by their

teachers. As also observed in second grade, there was a structure of rewards and punishments that permeated every aspect of the students' time within the classroom.

System-limiting motivation. As Senge et al. (2012) shared, "Systems often take shape from the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people in them" (p. 131). The classrooms at St. Agape School are shaping the students they serve. Each classroom that was observed within this study provided a "one-size-fits-all" instructional approach. Interestingly, the students noted that they liked their teachers and felt that their teachers helped them learn. They also indicated that they felt safe at school. However, their motivation was limited to completing the prescribed work. Little to no evidence was found within the school of instructional differentiation or openness to creativity so the students were required to fit into what was offered. The first of Kohn's "three C's of motivation" is collaboration (p. 187). When collaboration happens, he asserted, "[people] are able to do a better job in well-functioning groups than they can on their own" (1999, pp. 187-188). Kohn (1999) noted that the content matters when it comes to motivation:

> For people to care about their work, it is necessary to attend to what that work consists of —the content … Motivation is typically highest when the job offers an opportunity to learn new skills, to experience some variation in tasks, and to acquire and demonstrate competence. (pp. 189-190)

Lastly, according to Kohn (1999), choice is critical to motivation because "[we] are most likely to become enthusiastic about what we are doing—and all else being equal, to do it well—when we are free to make decisions about the way we carry out a task" (p. 193).

Assembly-line school. Senge et al. (2012) suggested that there are "practical challenges posed by the mismatch between assembly-line schools and the variety of children's ways of learning" (p. 47). They also suggested that, "The 'one-size-fits-all' classroom probably also accounts for by, for so many students, motivation for school learning drops off within a few years of starting formal schooling" (Senge et al., 2012, p. 47). Senge et al. (2012) also shared that there are inherent assumptions and organizational aspects that are taken for granted in an "industrial-age school" (p. 47) including that the school is run by specialists who maintain control.

This division of labor is deemed by some as necessity in order to ease operations and delineate responsibility. In this environment, "Instead, it is assumed that if each person does his or her highly specialized job, then things will work out" (Senge et al., 2012, p. 50). Subscribing to this notion supports what is actually a very fragmented system where individuals act in solo roles that are rigidly defined. Senge et al. (2012) suggested that, "In this fragmented system, the unilateralness of adult authority creates little in any voice for student leadership" (p. 50).

In the case of St. Agape School, the content, choice, and opportunities for collaboration were limited, therefore student motivation and true leadership opportunities were also limited. The instructional practices observed within the classrooms were also oppressive in that they did not meet the diverse needs of every learner, nor did they consider the backgrounds or learning styles of the students.

Leadership matters. As data were collected and analyzed within this study, the researcher found that the data often yet unintentionally alluded to elements of leadership. For example, when participants shared the manner in which the decision to extend the calendar was

made as well as how that decision was announced, these details spoke to the leadership style of the school principal. The principal at this school site demonstrated little knowledge of change management or the forces that effective leaders employ when introducing change. Fullan (2009) noted that leaders should "engage people's moral purpose" (p. 10), "build capacity" (p. 10), "understand the change process" (p. 11), "develop a culture for learning" (p. 12), "develop a culture for evaluation" (p. 13), "focusing on leadership for change" (p. 14). In this case, very few, if any, of these elements of effective leadership were considered or developed. For change to productively and successfully take place, the leader matters in the equation.

The challenge of instituting change at St. Agape School was seemingly compounded by elements of the school's leadership. For example, the high rates of teacher attrition added to the challenge that the school faced as they developed plans for how the additional time would be used. Likewise, the faculty that remained at the school since the adoption noted that there was an authoritative climate that forced teachers to accept the change rather than buy-into what was being proposed. According to the teachers who had been at the school since the adoption of the calendar change, there were pressures they endured not only related to the extra time they spent at work, but also pressures related to the leadership style of the principal and the climate that her style caused.

Implications

Change Management

Understanding the change process includes determining and engaging people's moral purpose. Fullan (2009) suggested that, "change is about improving society through improving educational systems" (p. 10), as well as building capacity for the change. A principal can help to

facilitate the change by devising "policies, strategies, resources, and actions designed to increase people's collective power to move the system forward" (Fullan, 2009, p. 10).

Knowledge of change management and the elements of effective change implementation seem to be missing at this school site. Better managing the change might have helped this school community assess how the calendar extension would be implemented as well as the potential outcomes. Prior to making the decision to adopt the calendar extension, the principal would have increased the school's ability to adapt to this change had she involved the school community in the decision making process. Involvement in the process might have enabled the principal and the pastor to recognize the complexity of the school setting and the different visions that existed between the parent and teacher stakeholders. For example, the parents hoped that the calendar extension would enable completion of the workbooks and textbooks, while the teachers hoped that the change would afford them time to expand their instruction beyond the textbook. For change to be implemented and managed positively at a school, a systems thinking approach (Senge et al., 2012) might have enabled the leadership at the school to "develop an awareness of the complexity, interdependencies, change, and leverage—the ability to get maximum results with minimal expense and effort—of that system" (p. 125).

Collaboration limited. Leadership style also played a role in how the decision to adopt the calendar change took place, how the change was communicated to the community, and how the change was planned. Community consent was assumed at this school. For the most part, the stakeholders supported the plan when it was shared with them. However, their visions for how the plan would take shape as well as the potential outcomes varied greatly. A more collaborative discussion might have helped the principal better involve all stakeholders in the decision making,

vision setting, planning, and assessment. Involvement may have resulted in a more intense buy-in from the community.

Building a comprehensive plan. The development of a more comprehensive plan would have better ensured that the change was implemented for the purposes in which the change was promised and envisioned. Likewise, the development of a plan might have included measures that would have enabled assessment of the implementation and measurement of its effectiveness. McCullough et al. (2008) suggested that "research on school change is clear and that certain elements must be present for the reform to succeed" (p. 18). These elements include setting a vision, implementing a plan, creating a system of assessment, and ensuring a feedback loop that informs adjustments as needed (McCullough et al., 2008). The vision for the calendar change at St. Agape School was not set by the community, but rather by a small group of stakeholders including the principal and teachers. The implementation plan was weak in that it did not include substantive content or detail, and the assessment plan was missing completely. These aspects of the change at St. Agape School jeopardized the success of the implementation of the calendar extension as well as the outcomes associated with this change.

Teacher supervision and professional development. Teacher professional development related to implementing curricular changes and developing problem-based learning projects might have enhanced the instruction at St. Agape School had the teachers been provided these opportunities. They were not provided. Teachers shared that while they had access to professional development, it was not provided in this regard (relative to the calendar extension).

Teacher supervision and effectiveness should have also been considered prior to adopting the change. In this school, the teachers who were involved in the field observations shared that

they regularly turned in lesson plans and curriculum maps to the principal. The feedback that they received was minimal and they questioned the level to which the principal reviewed the plans. The manner in which they taught their lessons was only formally observed once annually. So supervision was limited to paperwork for the majority of the school year. There appeared to be a disconnect between what the principal thought was happening in each classroom and what was actually taking place.

Alternate options should have been considered. Alternative calendar options such as a year-round or extended-day format might also have been considered within the decision-making and planning phases of this adoption. Burnout, on the part of the teacher and the students, is a reality that the school faced. To the researcher it was clear that both the format of the school year with few breaks and the prevalent instructional practices that caused the teachers to be the constant center of attention contributed to the burnout. Alternate calendar options, had they been explored, might have addressed fatigue and burnout that the students and teachers both claimed to feel.

According to research, teacher is burnout often a concern voiced by opponents of calendar extension initiatives. Silva (2007) reported that teachers, like students, need time to rejuvenate and relax. The literature also suggested that the long summer vacation is one of the reasons that teachers choose the profession. In a qualitative study conducted in California relative to calendar reform, "Teachers reported being happy with the additional pay that extended time provided, as well as the additional planning time it afforded" (Silva, 2007, p. 9).

Recommendations for Future Research

This case study included many opportunities for further study with regard to time-based reform initiatives, leadership, decision making, and consensus building. The researcher hopes to develop some follow-up studies related to these elements that emerged from this study.

Decision-Making Processes

Based upon the perceptions and feedback gained from teachers and parents at St. Agape School, consensus building and planning for implementation is critical to the successful implementation of change within a school. When decisions are made in a top-down format, the stakeholders who are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of change are far removed from the planning and do not immediately take ownership. Conversely, they should be brought into the decision-making discussion so that they can feel accountable for how the change takes shape.

When the change was made at this suburban school, societal expectations associated with the background of the families were at play. The stakeholders did not think to resist the change, and they blindly accepted the manner in which the decision was made. This worked at a suburban school where few thought to question the change. The top-down decision-making format would likely not have worked in other settings. In fact, schools in the more affluent areas of this Archdiocese resisted the calendar extension when they were offered a choice of adoption. One of the parent stakeholders at this school alluded to this resistance,

> There is a difference between the working and non-working parent communities. Most of our families have dual incomes. It was different at the more wealthy schools. For

example, my sister-in-law at [school] where they have mostly single income families … they were outraged.

Another parent shared, "It was the same at [school] where my friend works. The parents said no to the change because it impacted their summer travel plans. We did not really have that here." But the parents at this school accepted the change, like their students who were conditioned to accept decisions made by figures of authority and power.

A study revolving around the decision-making process would help inform other schools as they consider adopting educational reform initiatives such as a calendar extension.

Know the Community and Build Consensus

As an education leader within a school, this researcher questions how effectively the principal at this site considered the needs and desires of her school community. Consensus for the change was assumed. These data indicate that the stakeholders were easily swayed by the positive manner in which the principal presented the change. No discussions took place, and no thought of consensus building took place. The decision was made in a top-down format based upon ambiguously proposed learning, marketing, and financial outcomes. In reality, outcomes that were promised have not come to fruition within this school.

Building community assent is critical to the successful implementation of reform initiatives. Kneese and Ballinger (2009) noted, "[t]hose who study school calendar change have often reported considerable difficulty in getting school communities on board—even when the change is intended to promote the greater good of the school and community" (p. 21).

Johnson and Spradlin (2007) shared that when a principal informs his or her constituents of the calendar options and potential benefits for students and then gave them a choice, the

cooperation that principal encouraged helped the community embrace and successfully adapt to the change. The researcher wonders if the teachers could have been more effective in their implementation of the change and in developing the intended outcomes if they have been part of the change in the first place. The principal should have known that more of the same instruction was not going to bring about the desired outcomes, but teacher effectiveness did not seem to be a factor considered in this venture. Future research should consider what exists at a school prior to the change. It should consider how the involvement of all stakeholders can impact such change.

Seek Alternative Models

The calendar extension proposed by the Department of Catholic Schools that was adopted by this school was simple: add twenty days. By studying extended calendar and extended day models within other school settings, this school site might have better prepared for their change. They might also have formatted their adoption to better fit the needs of its school community. Future research on this topic might explore time-based reform alternatives that have been adopted by other suburban, urban, and or Catholic schools using both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative research in this area is limited.

Recommendations for Educational Practice

Consider Needs First

Based upon the findings of this study, it is recommended that Catholic educators consider the needs of their learners and their school community prior to adopting time-based reform initiatives. As Silva (2007) suggested, "time's potential as a reform depends largely on whether the time is used effectively and on its use as a resource to serve students most in need of extra learning opportunities, both inside and outside of school" (p. 9). In the case of St. Agape School,

evidence did not support that time was being used effectively to provide additional learning opportunities that matched the needs or desires of their school community. While the learning outcomes sought at this school site were admirable in their presentation, they completely reflect disconnectedness between what the students in this community desired and what they received.

Ensure Continuity

Instructional continuity is essential when schools adopt time-based initiatives so that the use of the additional time equally benefits the students within that community. Continuity begins with a shared vision and extends to the implementation plan and evaluation methods. Continuity means that all of the teachers in the school have consistent goals and objectives for how instructional time should be used and that they adhere to a specific, sequential set of standards. These goals and objectives should enable the teachers to implement their use of the additional time consistently to deliver curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs that meet the objectives of the use of extended time. Without consistency and continuity, effective teaching is compromised. Continuity and collaboration alone will not ensure that all "all outcomes will be positive" (Shields & Olberg, 2000, p. 32), but they are essential if the school hopes for positive outcomes to be achieved.

Know Thyself … Be Reflective

At this school choice, collaboration, and relative content were not considered yet the school's administration and teachers noted that they hoped to "prepare students for their future." Ironically, the future for which they were preparing their students was not one that reflected growth or departure from the working class elements of their current homes. The instructional practices observed were oppressive, demeaning, and bereft of tangible benefit to the students.

These elements of the school should have been addressed prior to adopting the change and the school might have realized the increased enrollment and improvement of learning they sought. Had the principal evaluated the teacher effectiveness and the outcomes of the curriculum prior to the change, the change within the school might have been directed at instructional practices as a means of improving the student learning and the school's sustainability.

Leadership

In terms of leadership, this site was mismanaged by an authoritative principal who did not appear to have the best interest of her students or teachers in mind when she made the decision to adopt this calendar extension. Evidence suggests that her decision was primarily motivated by the desire to increase enrollment and that she did not work collaboratively with her community to build capacity for the initiative through dialogue, shared vision, planning, and assessment.

Recommendations for Superintendents

Professional Development

When superintendents propose district or diocese system changes that impact individual school sites, it is recommended they involve the school-site leadership or principals in professional development opportunities focused on change management. Such opportunities should include insight and support for setting a vision, building capacity within the school, providing meaningful communication to stakeholders, developing an implementation plan, engaging in on-going assessment, and making adjustments to the plan as needed. This support would also be enhanced by providing principals with resources and research relative to change.

Collaborative Support

Another recommendation for superintendents involves the use of collaborative partnerships among school leaders. For example, when two or more sites engage in change, those principals might help support each other by being brought together to discuss the challenges, obstacles, concerns, potential benefits, communication, and more. They might be able to learn from each other and work collaboratively to prepare joint plans and professional development for their teachers.

Reflection

The researcher completed this research project as one of the requirements of the Loyola Marymount University's doctoral program for Educational Leadership for Social Justice. Therefore, the findings of the study, for the researcher, are more striking because the school site chosen for the case study represented practices that are not in keeping with an instructional style centered on social justice and transformative teaching. Rather, this school served to perpetuate social confines, reinforce authoritative structures, and limit the learning that was taking place. These students were not being prepared for an open-ended and creative future rather they were being prepared for an industrial future that no longer exists. The teachers clearly viewed teaching within a Catholic school as a job, a means to sustenance and security, not as a ministry. They did not demonstrate the transformative opportunity that a teacher focused on socially just practices can ignite. Instead, they demonstrated the less informed group of teachers who teach because they can, not because they want to help students change their lives, find their gifts and talents, and encourage them to explore the possibilities.

This study has influenced the researcher's work as a school administrator and leader focused on social justice. Going forward, the researcher will recall the oppressive environment that was experienced and the potential impact that environment had upon the students and teachers. School leadership comes with a responsibility of developing a culture of learning—a culture where people learn from each other and become collaboratively involved in improvement and change. School leaders cannot assume that they have all the knowledge; they must seek input from and collaboration with others. They must involve the whole of the school community in vision setting so that the vision can be authentically shared. They must involve the community in planning for and assessment of change so that the entire school can become a learning organization. As Senge (2006) suggested, "A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality" (p. 12). This kind of organization promotes social justice by teaching through learning. It takes teachers and leaders who recognize that "to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge" (Freire, 2000, p. 30).

The findings highlight the importance of planning which includes developing an implementation plan that considers professional development and assessment. A reflective and responsive leader continues to seek evaluative opportunities and to make adjustments as needed based upon the needs of the community. Without the development of a professional development and assessment plan, such evaluation is limited.

The researcher will use these findings to become a more responsive leader—one who is open and interested in discussion, dialogue, and seeking alternatives that consider the needs of the school community and all of its stakeholders.

Conclusion

School reform initiatives and change within a school require the school leaders to practice change management if they hope for the change to be effectively introduced. The situation at St. Agape School is not unlike other schools where change has been adopted in isolation of a learning organization or systems-thinking approach that should have better involved all stakeholders from the decision making stage, to setting a shared vision, developing an implementation plan, through assessing the implementation. Such an approach might have caused the school community as a whole to better recognize and seize the opportunities that the calendar extension offered in terms of improving student learning, diversifying the co-curricular and extra-curricular programs, marketing the school to potential applicants, and strengthening enrollment. More of the same, if that same is not transformative and of the highest quality, does not represent growth, development, or improvement.

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocols

Pastor Interview Protocol

1. How long have you served as the pastor of this Church and school?
2. How would you describe the congregation of your Church?
3. How is the school's population reflective of the Church congregation?
4. During the 2010-2011 school year the Department of Catholic Schools and St. Agape School announced a calendar extension initiative. How were you involved in the decision that was made at St. Agape School to extend the calendar?
5. How did the parish and school community learn about the calendar extension adopted by St. Agape School?
6. How would you explain the reaction of the community in general when the extended calendar was first announced at your school?
7. When the calendar extension was first announced at your school, how did you envision that the school would use the extra time?
8. Please explain the implementation plan that your school had for how the extended time would be used in all classrooms across the school.
9. How have the school's curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar adoption?
10. How have the school's co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar adoption?
11. What are some of the opportunities that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular development?
12. What are some of the challenges that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular experiences?
13. What are the advantages of having an extended calendar for teachers and students, the school, and the parish?
14. What are the challenges of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?

Administrator Interview Protocol

1. How long have you served as the principal at this school?
2. How would you describe the population of your school and is this reflective of the parish congregation?

3. During the 2010-2011 school year the Department of Catholic Schools and St. Agape School announced a calendar extension in initiative. How were you involved in the decision that was made at St. Agape School to extend the calendar?
4. How did the parish and school community learn about the calendar extension adopted by St. Agape School?
5. How would you explain the reaction of the community in general when the extended calendar was first announced at your school?
6. When the calendar extension was first announced at your school, how did you envision using the extra time as a school community?
7. Please articulate the vision that was established by the school for how the extended time would be used.
8. Please explain the implementation plan that your school had for how the extended time would be used in all classrooms across the school.
9. How have the school's curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar adoption?
10. How have the school's co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar adoption?
11. What are some of the opportunities that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular development?
12. What are some of the challenges that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular experiences?
13. What are the advantages of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?
14. What are the challenges of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?

Teacher Interview Protocol

1. What grade level(s) do you instruct at this school?
2. What subject areas are you responsible for teaching within the scope of your position?
3. How long have you been employed as a teacher at this school?
4. During the 2010-2011 school year the Department of Catholic Schools and St. Agape School announced a calendar extension in initiative. How and when did you first learn of the calendar extension initiative that was adopted by your school?
5. How did the parents and students learn about the calendar extension adopted by St. Agape School?
6. What was your initial reaction to the adoption of the extended calendar when you first learned of the change?
7. How would you explain the reaction of the faculty in general when the extended calendar was first announced at your school?

8. When the calendar extension was first announced at your school, how did you envision using the extra time as a school community and within your own classroom?
9. How was the faculty involved in the setting the vision for how the time would be used as a school and within each classroom?
10. Please articulate the vision that was established by the school for how the extended time would be used.
11. In the summer of 2011, when you were preparing for your school's first extended year, how did you plan to use the extended time in your classroom?
12. Please explain the implementation plan that your school had for how the extended time would be used in all classrooms across the school.
13. How did you document (lesson plans, curriculum maps, etc.) your planned use of curricular or instructional time throughout the first year of the extended calendar initiative?
14. During the first year of the extended calendar what were that changes that were made to the curriculum used in your classroom compared to the year prior when you did not use extended time?
15. Please explain how your curricular plans have changed from year one to year two of the calendar extension?
16. How have the school's co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar adoption?
17. What are some of the opportunities that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular development?
18. What are some of the challenges that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular experiences?
19. What are the advantages of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?
20. What are the challenges of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?

APPENDIX B

Teacher Focus Group Meeting Protocol

1. What grade level(s) do you instruct at this school?
2. What subject areas are you responsible for teaching within the scope of your position?
3. How long have you been employed as a teacher at this school?
4. During the 2010-2011 school year the Department of Catholic Schools and St. Agape School announced a calendar extension in initiative. How and when did you first learn of the calendar extension initiative that was adopted by your school?
5. How did the parents and students learn about the calendar extension adopted by St. Agape School?
6. What was your initial reaction to the adoption of the extended calendar when you first learned of the change?
7. How would you explain the reaction of the faculty in general when the extended calendar was first announced at your school?
8. When the calendar extension was first announced at your school, how did you envision using the extra time as a school community and within your own classroom?
9. How was the faculty involved in the setting the vision for how the time would be used as a school and within each classroom?
10. Please articulate the vision that was established by the school for how the extended time would be used.
11. In the summer of 2011, when you were preparing for your school's first extended year, how did you plan to use the extended time in your classroom?
12. Please explain the implementation plan that your school had for how the extended time would be used in all classrooms across the school.
13. How did you document (lesson plans, curriculum maps, etc.) your planned use of curricular or instructional time throughout the first year of the extended calendar initiative?
14. During the first year of the extended calendar what were that changes that were made to the curriculum used in your classroom compared to the year prior when you did not use extended time?
15. Please explain how your curricular plans have changed from year one to year two of the calendar extension?
16. How have the school's co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar adoption?
17. What are some of the opportunities that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular development?

18. What are some of the challenges that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular experiences?
19. What are the advantages of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?
20. What are the challenges of having an extended calendar for teachers and students?

Parent Focus Group Meeting Protocol

1. During the 2010-2011 school year the Department of Catholic Schools and St. Agape School announced a calendar extension in initiative. How and when did you first learn of the calendar extension initiative that was adopted by your school?
2. How have the school's co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings changed since the extended calendar was adopted by the school?
3. What are some of the advantages or benefits that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of the school's academic offering?
4. What are some of the advantages or benefits that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of the school's extra programs that take place during the school day and after school?
5. What are some of the challenges or disadvantages that you believe the extended calendar has caused in terms of the school's curriculum?
6. What are some of the challenges or disadvantages that you believe the extended calendar has caused in terms of the school's co-curricular and extra-curricular offering?
7. What are the benefits of having an extended calendar for teachers, students, and parents?
8. What are the benefits of the extended calendar for the school, the parish, and the Archdiocese?
9. What are the disadvantages of having an extended calendar for teachers, students, and parents?

Student Focus Group Meeting Protocol

1. During the 2010-2011 school year the Department of Catholic Schools and St. Agape School announced a calendar extension in initiative. How and when did you first learn of the calendar extension initiative that was adopted by your school?
2. When you learned of this change, how did you feel about it?
3. What changes have you experienced since your school extended the calendar by 20 days per year?
4. What are some of the advantages or benefits that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of academics?

5. What are some of the advantages or benefits that you believe the extended calendar has provided in terms of the school's extra programs during the school day and after school?
6. What are some of the challenges or disadvantages that you believe the extended calendar has caused in terms of academics?
7. What are some of the challenges or disadvantages that you believe the extended calendar has caused in terms of the school's academic program?
8. What are some of the challenges or disadvantages that the extended calendar has caused for the schools extra programs within the school day and after school?
9. What are the positive aspects or benefits of having an extended calendar for teachers, students, and parents?
10. What are the challenges or disadvantages of having an extended calendar for teachers, students, and parents?

APPENDIX C

Letter of Introduction to Participants

September 2013

Dear _____:

As you may have heard from Principal _____, I have been granted permission by the school and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to conduct a research study at _____ Catholic School. Presently I am a Catholic School Principal in the Diocese of Orange and a doctoral candidate at Loyola Marymount University. I am doing this research as part of the Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice at Loyola Marymount University.

The purpose of the study is to examine the adoption of an extended calendar initiative in the Catholic elementary school. As part of the study I will be conducting classroom observations, interviews, and focus group meetings with representatives from the school including Pastor _____, Principal _____, the teachers, and a small group of parents and students who were present at the school when the calendar change took place.

Participation in this study is optional and those who choose to participate will complete an Informed Consent form and will be given a Subject Bill of Rights that clarify the rights of each participant the protections that I will use to maintain the confidentiality of the school site and all study participants. Parent and student participants will be chosen from the group of families who have been enrolled at the school since the 2010-2011 school year and who remained enrolled to the present so that the adoption of the calendar extension can be fully explored. Participants will be asked to join small group meetings where 6-8 questions about the calendar extension will be asked.

Your school has been chosen because of its adoption of an extended calendar in the 2010-2011 academic year. It was also chosen because the school is already a participant site for a larger study that is being conducted at Loyola Marymount University and through that study I had already made contact with your school principal and teachers.

My research and data collection at the school is scheduled to take place for a period of between 2-4 months beginning in September 2013. The goal of the study will be to share with other school communities the outcomes of your school's adoption of an extended calendar including the opportunities or advantages and the challenges that may exist.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions about the study at (949) 888-1990 ext. 157 or via email at cmuzzy@serraschool.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Catherine Muzzy

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

September 1, 2013

Loyola Marymount University
Implementing Calendar Reform in a Suburban Catholic Elementary School: A Case Study

1) I hereby authorize Mrs. Catherine Muzzy, a doctoral candidate student at Loyola Marymount University to include me (my child/ward) in the following research study: Implementing Calendar Reform in a Suburban Catholic Elementary School: A Case Study
2) I have been asked to participate on a research project which is designed to explore the extended school calendar at St. Agape School and which will last for approximately four months.
3) It has been explained to me that the reason for my inclusion in this project is that the study includes the perceptions of the pastor, administrator, teachers, students, and parents at a school site where the academic calendar has been extended.
4) I understand that if I am a subject, I will participate in interviews, classroom observations, and or focus group meetings. The investigator will ask me questions about the extended calendar.
5) These procedures have been explained to me by Catherine Muzzy, a doctoral candidate at Loyola Marymount University.
6) I understand that I will be audiotaped in the process of these research procedures. It has been explained to me that these tapes will be used for teaching and/or research purposes only and that my identity will not be disclosed. I have been assured that the tapes will be destroyed after their use in this research project is completed. I understand that I have the right to review the tapes made as part of the study to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or in part.
7) I understand that the study described above may involve the following risks and/or discomfort related to the discussion about how the extended calendar is used at the school and the opportunities and challenges that I feel exist.
8) I also understand that the possible benefits of the study include sharing how the extended time is being used at this school and the outcomes that may result from this initiative.
9) I understand that Cathy Muzzy, who can be reached at cmuzzy@serraschool.org or at (949) 888-1990 ext. 157 will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.

10) If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent reobtained.
11) I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time without prejudice to (e.g., my future medical care at LMU.)
12) I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my participation before the completion of the study.
13) I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent except as specifically required by law.
14) I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question that I may not wish to answer.
15) I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact David Hardy, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 258-5465, david.hardy@lmu.edu.
16) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

OR

Subject is a minor (age_____), or is unable to sign because _____

_____.

Mother/Father/Guardian _____ Date _____

APPENDIX E

Student Assent Form
Implementing Calendar Reform in a Suburban Catholic Elementary School

September 2013

Dear Student:

My name is Mrs. Muzzy. I am a principal at a Catholic school in Orange County. I am trying to learn more about the use of a 200-day academic calendar and will be conducting research at your school. I will also be writing about the 200-day calendar and the advantages and disadvantages of the new calendar as viewed by students. The paper is part of the work I am completing to earn my doctorate degree in Educational Leadership for Social Justice at Loyola Marymount University. If you would like, you are welcome to be in my study.

If you decide you want to participate in my study here is a little information about what you can expect. You will be with a group of 4-6 students from your grade level who will participate in a meeting with me. At this meeting you and your classmates will be asked questions about how you learned that the school would add twenty additional days to the school calendar. You will also be asked about how you felt about this change and some follow-up questions about how you feel the time is being used in your classroom.

Other people who attend the meeting will know that you are in my study. However, everything that is shared at this meeting will be recorded without using names so when I write about the meeting your name will be kept confidential. I will put the things that I learn in this meeting together with other parts of my study, so no one will be able to tell any comments that came from you. When I tell other people about my research, I will never use your name.

A letter has been sent home to all of the parents in your class with detailed information about my research. If you are receiving this letter, it is because your parent(s) has/have given permission for you to participate in this meeting. However, you get to choose if it is something that you want to do. If you don't want to be in the study, no one will be upset with you.

You can call me if you have questions about the study, or if you decide you don't want to be in the study any more. The school number is (949)888-1990 and my extension is 157. You can also email me at cmuzzy@serraschool.org. I will give you a copy of this form in case you want to ask questions later.

Agreement

I have decided to be in the study even though I know that I don't have to do it. Mrs. Muzzy has answered all my questions, and I know I can contact her via telephone or email at if I have more questions.

_____ _____
Signature of Study Participant Date

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §24172, I understand that I have the following rights as a participant in a research study:

1. I will be informed of the nature and purpose of the experiment.

2. I will be given an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the medical experiment, and any drug or device to be utilized.

3. I will be given a description of any attendant discomforts and risks to be reasonably expected from the study.

4. I will be given an explanation of any benefits to be expected from the study, if applicable.

5. I will be given a disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures, drugs or devices that might be advantageous and their relative risks and benefits.

6. I will be informed of the avenues of medical treatment, if any, available after the study is completed if complications should arise.

7. I will be given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study or the procedures involved.

8. I will be instructed that consent to participate in the research study may be withdrawn at any time and that I may discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

9. I will be given a copy of the signed and dated written consent form.

10. I will be given the opportunity to decide to consent or not to consent to the study without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, coercion, or undue influence on my decision.

APPENDIX F

Implementation Plan

Expectations in Planning for the Extended School Year

I. Extended School Year Redesign Supports a Clear, School-wide Academic Focus

The school's plan for implementation of the extended school year is aligned with the school's overall academic focus. This academic focus drives instructional improvement and continuous measurable growth in student learning throughout the redesigned day and year. The design and implementation of ELT is based on a data-driven assessment of student needs and works to support a clear set of school-wide achievement goals.

- **Shift from a textbook driven curriculum to a standards-based curriculum at all grade levels.**
- **The use and integration of technology must be a priority in order to support a learning environment that prepares students to be successful in today's world.**
- **Data collected from ITBS scores and EasyCBM shows a weakness in math and reading comprehension.**

II. Additional Time for Core Academics

The school uses additional time in order to accelerate learning in **core academic** subjects by making meaningful improvements to the quality of instruction in support of school-wide achievement goals.

- **Increase math instructional time for grades K – 4**
- **Focus on essential standards allowing students more time practicing and working with particular information and ideas**
- **Emphasis on science and social studies for grades 1 and 2**

III. Additional Time for Enrichment

The school uses additional time (either in core and/or specialty classes) to offer **enrichment** opportunities that connect to state standards, build student skills and interests, and deepen student engagement in school/learning in support of school-wide achievement goals.

- **Integrate fine arts (music and art) and technology in religion, science, and social studies for grades 3 – 8**
- **Introduce extra-curricular, multi-age activities according to student's interest.**
- **Equip students with teamwork and problem solving skills**

IV. Additional Time for Teacher Leadership and Collaboration

The school uses additional time to build a professional culture of **teacher leadership and collaboration** (e.g., designated collaborative planning time, on-site targeted professional development) focused on strengthening instructional practice and meeting school-wide achievement goals.

- **Mapping of the curriculum**
- **Group and project based learning**

V. Focused and Collaborative Leadership

The principal as instructional leader and the leadership team are fully committed to expanding learning time to improve instructional practice and to bringing many other; teachers, students, families, partners, and the community, into the process of redesign and implementation in support of school-wide achievement goals.

- **Plan developed and reviewed by faculty, school board and parent-teacher committee.**

VI. Resources Are Aligned and Focused

The school demonstrates clear evidence that it is making decisions around resource allocation (time, people, talent, energy, and money) that are aligned with the successful implementation of the extended school year redesign and focused on meeting school-wide achievement goals.

- **Tuition adjusted to reflect additional salaries**

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