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## Hiring Leaders in Catholic Schools

Camryn Marie Connelly

*Loyola Marymount University*, [camrynconnelly@gmail.com](mailto:camrynconnelly@gmail.com)

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Hiring Leaders in Catholic Schools

by

Camryn Connelly

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education

Loyola Marymount University,

In partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2014

Hiring Leaders in Catholic Schools

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by

Camryn Connelly

Loyola Marymount University  
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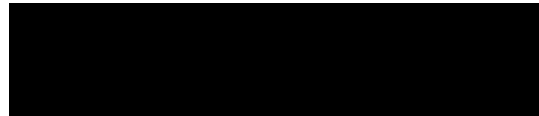
This dissertation written by Camryn Connelly, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

*May 8, 2014*  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

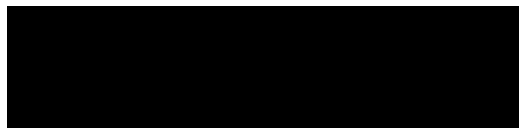
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Significance.....	6
Research Questions .....	7
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Methodology .....	9
Participants .....	10
Instrument.....	10
Data Collection.....	11
Limitations .....	12
Delimitations.....	12
Definitions.....	13
Summary and Organization of the Study.....	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Introduction.....	15
The Effective School Leader .....	16
What Makes an Effective Leader? .....	16
Situational Leadership Theory .....	17
The Catholic School Leader.....	18
Relationship with Parish and Pastor .....	20
Finances .....	22



Management.....	22
Supervising the Staff and the Instructional Program .....	23
Relating to Students, Parents, the Parish, and the Local Community.....	24
Effective Hiring Practices .....	25
Recruitment.....	25
Selection.....	28
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Introduction.....	32
The Hiring Protocol .....	34
Recruitment Planning.....	34
Selection Process .....	36
The Study .....	37
The Setting .....	37
School Make-up .....	38
Population and Participants.....	39
Interview Participants .....	39
Data Collection .....	39
Interview Data.....	39
Participant Observation and Archival Data .....	40
Data Analysis .....	40
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Introduction.....	42
Data Collection .....	42
Site Entry .....	42
Implementation of Protocol .....	44
Part I: Recruitment Planning.....	44
Preparation .....	44
Establishing Pool of Candidates .....	49
Part II: Selection Process .....	52
Structured Interviews .....	54

Site Visits .....	58
Final Selection .....	59
Participants' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Hiring Protocol.....	59
Choosing the Right Candidate .....	63
Finding the Right Fit.....	65
Adjusting the Protocol .....	69
Conclusion .....	73
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>74</b>
Committee Often But Did Not Always Followed Protocol .....	74
Implementation of the Protocol .....	75
Preparation .....	76
Establishing Pool of Candidates .....	78
Selection Process .....	78
Final Selection .....	82
Conclusion .....	88
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>APPENDIX C .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>APPENDIX D .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>APPENDIX E .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>APPENDIX F .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>APPENDIX G.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX H.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDIX I .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>APPENDIX J.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>APPENDIX K.....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>APPENDIX L .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>113</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Situational Leadership Model.....	9
2. Resume Rubric Results.....	53

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Student Ethnicity.....	38

## **ABSTRACT**

### Hiring Leaders in Catholic Schools

by

Camryn Connelly

In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, principals are often ill prepared for the demands of the job. According to Baxter (2012), every year in the Archdiocese approximately 30 principal vacancies are filled. Many of the Pastors who hire for these vacancies do not have an educational background, nor do they have much experience in hiring practices. With the increase of lay educators leading Catholic schools, not only are competent principals needed, but principals who can be Pastoral, educational, and managerial leaders (Manno, 1985). To increase the probability of hiring strong candidates for the principal vacancies in schools across the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a hiring protocol is needed to standardize the process, while encouraging collaboration and input from multiple stakeholders.

This case study implemented and evaluated a hiring protocol at one school site within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The protocol was designed to help Catholic schools hire qualified principals, and its development was guided by previous research on effective hiring procedures for such positions. The case-study data collected provides insight into the benefits and of using this specialized hiring protocol while also identifying potential changes to further strengthen the protocol. The results of the case study will be shared with the Department of Catholic Schools in

the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to provide a framework for a principal hiring protocol that can be used at all school sites.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this case study was to collect data on the use of a protocol designed to help Catholic schools hire qualified principals. To conduct this case study, the researcher reviewed previous literature on effective hiring procedures for Catholic school principals, implemented a hiring protocol based on research, and studied the implementation of the hiring protocol at one school site within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The data collected from the case study provides insight on the specifically designed hiring protocol that was created for use in this case study and identifies potential changes to the protocol. The results of the case study will be shared with the Department of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to potentially provide a principal hiring protocol that can be used at all school sites.

#### **Background of the Study**

In the fall of 2010, the Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Dr. Kevin Baxter, gave a presentation to all the elementary school principals regarding the state of the Archdiocesan schools. One of the slides in his presentation displayed the decline in enrollment in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 2000. Between the years of 2000-2010, there has been a 23% decline in enrollment, which corresponds to a loss of 15,254 students. DeFiore, Convey, and Schuttloffel (2009) identified several factors that can contribute to low enrollment: declining demographics, weak leadership, weak Catholic identity, academic problems, family financial circumstances, strong competition, and parents who do not sufficiently value Catholic education. Baxter (2011) recognized these challenges especially in urban schools and called upon the

people of the Church to recognize that they play a significant role in the success or failure of Catholic schools that, in turn, affects the vitality of the Catholic faith for future generations.

The researcher has spent most of her life in Catholic Education, as a student, as a teacher, and as an administrator. In the spring of 2009, she decided to apply to a principal position after serving as a principal for two years. The interview process was extensive, and she met with several groups of stakeholders such as the Pastor, faculty and staff, school parents, and parishioners throughout the month-long process. When she became principal in 2009, she was in her second year of a three-year administrative credential and master's program. When the researcher attended the Archdiocesan Principal Induction Program (PIP) as a first-year principal, she thought that many of the items discussed had been covered in her administrative training at Loyola Marymount University. In speaking with her colleagues, there were a variety of pathways that led them to become principals. Some had taken over the previous year in an interim position due to an unforeseen leave by the previous principal while some had been asked to be principal by the Pastor because they were the most veteran teacher at the school site or because they had taught eighth grade. As the researcher began attending principal meetings, she started to realize that not every principal had an administrative credential, and a rumored few did not have a teaching credential. It was then that the seed of this research was planted. The researcher began to question the very thing that DeFiore et al. (2009) identified as a weakness in Catholic education: the leadership of Catholic schools. She wondered, "How is a Catholic school leader chosen, by whom, and through what processes?" These are the questions that compelled the researcher to study the hiring practices currently used in Catholic schools.



On the employment website for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a listing for a principal's job contains the following description:

Applicants must be a knowledgeable and practicing Catholic with a thorough understanding of and commitment to the Catholic philosophy of education; have received a MA/MS degree in School Administration or another related area; hold a California Teaching and Administrative Credential; have successful administrative experience in Catholic schools; demonstrate a passion for students, faculty, and parents; exhibit excellent communication skills and strong technology skills. (July 13, 2011)

The profile of the leader is clear, but the process for hiring the principal leader differs at each school site.

When the Archdiocese is notified that a principal job is opening the following academic year, the Pastor of the parish school is sent a packet of materials to assist them in the hiring process. The packet contains a one-page letter with a 12-item suggested procedure and the following documents: job posting instructions, principal search matrix, elementary principal qualifications, principal application form, reference form, reference check forms and guidelines for interviewing and sample questions, EEO guidelines, interviewer note page, interview questions grid, confidential review of candidate form, interview matrix, and the principal agreement. *The Administrative Handbook* (2010), which provided to schools to guide the process for hiring principals, included two forms: the application and a form for recommendations. Further, underneath the general employment practices, the Archdiocese

provided common guidelines such as how to post a job, the timeline of reporting a new hire, and fingerprinting, but no guidelines to help in the hiring of an effective leader.

Baxter (2011) found that committed Pastors are essential to the success of Catholic schools, especially when aligned with the school leadership. DeFiore et al. (2009) believed the support of the Pastor was important in at least two ways: “First, he signals to the entire community about whether the school is an important mission of that parish and the Church. Second, his attitude affects the morale of both the principal and the faculty, those whose work gives life to the school” (p. 25). The support of the Pastor is also essential for a third reason: the Pastor has the final say on who is hired to lead the school. Due to the fact that many Pastors do not have an academic background in the field of education, it is crucial that they are provided with procedures and criteria to use in identifying an effective school leader.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, principals are often ill prepared for the demands of the job. In a lecture to an Educational class on April 2, 2012, K.C. Baxter said every year the Archdiocese fills up to about 30 principal vacancies. Not all principals placed in the role have completed a Master’s degree in Administration, nor have they received special training before becoming a principal (Wiley, 2011). Many of the Pastors who hire for these vacancies do not have an academic background in the field of education nor do they have much experience in hiring practices. With the increase of lay educators leading Catholic schools, not only are competent principals needed, but principals who can be Pastoral, educational, and managerial are needed (Manno, 1985). The process of hiring principals can vary greatly from tapping the shoulder of the most veteran teachers to search committees interviewing applicants over a

month-long process. These hiring strategies do not always guarantee a successful principal, but a hiring protocol can be developed and implemented to incorporate collaboration and input from all stakeholders to increase the probability of having a strong leader in all schools across the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this case study was to use previous research to develop a hiring protocol for an elementary school in need of a qualified Catholic school principal, to describe the implementation of the hiring protocol at one school site in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and to consider the effectiveness through the perceptions of the participants. The researcher contacted the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to locate a site that was hiring a new principal for the 2013-2014 academic year. She developed a protocol based on research, then worked with the search committee to implement the hiring protocol for the recruitment planning and selection process. Case study research was conducted at the school site as the protocol was implemented during the hiring process. The researcher acted as an observer participant to collect qualitative data as well as to ensure the designed protocol was followed. At the culmination of the process, three open-ended questions were asked of the participants. The first question was designed to gauge the participants' perceptions of the usefulness of the hiring protocol. The second question gauged their perceptions of how the protocol helped to select the right candidate for the position and assist in finding a leader with the site-identified strengths. The third question asked participants to identify any weaknesses they found in using the hiring protocol. The results of this study will be shared with the Department of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Los

Angeles in the hope that, if successful, the hiring protocol can be used to help elementary schools across the Archdiocese as well as other dioceses.

### **Significance**

Over the last ten years, the expectations of schools and those who lead them changed (Lambert et al., 2002). Clifford (2010) suggested the challenge of hiring school principals is compounded by the lack of adequate testing instruments of principal abilities which are not effective predictors of practice and districts do not allot enough time or resources to finding the right match. Many districts began to revise and standardize principal hiring practices to ensure the right principal was placed at their school site (Clifford, 2010). Clifford (2010) identified several practices ideal for recruiting: prepare for succession, allow time, obtain broad agreement on roles and responsibilities, set priorities via goals, reconsider the position, update school data, document each step in the process, and be strategic. Additional emerging selection practices were also found: consider standards and research, establish a consistent and reliable search committee, conduct a blind review of applications, screen with interviews, invite finalists to visit the school, meaningfully engage other stakeholders, and resist quick or emotional decisions (Clifford, 2010).

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles oversees over 200 schools with a large scope of resources and needs. Previous research on hiring techniques and qualities that make Catholic school leaders effective were reviewed in preparation for the present study. Prior studies informed the development of the hiring protocol used for this case study. If successful, the protocol could be usefully implemented in the future to help schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles select principals who are effective for specific school sites. Schools across the

Archdiocese will benefit from a research-based protocol, and schools can find an effective leader for their sites to ensure the viability for their schools.

Effective leadership in Catholic schools is necessary to provide a high-quality education to all students. With the drop-in enrollment since 2000, the Department of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles needs to do all it can to ensure that each school site is staffed with an appropriate leader. The Pastor at each site has the ultimate say, but providing a detailed protocol can ensure that the most effective leader is hired at each school, as a complement to the background of the Pastor.

### **Research Questions**

To contribute to the field of Catholic education, this case study identified best hiring practices and studied the implementation of a hiring protocol at one school site. The research questions that guided this case study were:

- 1) To what extent did Rosary Catholic School (pseudonym) implement the hiring protocol?
- 2) What are the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hiring protocol?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Bolman and Deal (2008) found that two of the most widely accepted leadership propositions offer divergent perspectives. One claimed that all good leaders have the “right stuff”—similar qualities such as vision, strength, and commitment. The other perspective relied on the notion that good leadership is situational; what works in one setting will not necessarily benefit another. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), both perspectives capture part of the truth. Prior research on effective leadership did not find any universal characteristics, but vision

and focus appeared most often (Collins, 2001; Kotter, 1988; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Another quality that was often mentioned was commitment or passion, as well as the ability to build relationships (Collins, 2001; Kotter 1988). Good leaders love what they do and care for the people they work with. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), beyond vision, passion, and trust, consensus broke down. The theoretical framework guiding this case study was Situational Leadership Theory (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

Several writers offered theories on situational leadership, but most took a limited view, treating leadership and management as interchangeable (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2007). These limitations have not prevented situational theory from becoming widely popular. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) believed that extensively varying circumstances require different forms of leadership. This situational leadership relies on two dimensions: task and relationship behavior. Hersey (1984) combined task and relationships to create four possible leadership styles. Depending on the situation one is leading, the use of relationship and task will vary (See Table 1). Fiore (2004) differentiated task and relationship behavior in that task behavior is one-way communication by outlining what each worker is to do and does not allow for feedback whereas relationship behavior which engages in two-way communication, feedback opportunities are ample and the leader acts as a true facilitator. Depending on the readiness level of the subordinates, the type of leadership might change (Hersey, 1984). Therefore, depending on the situation a leader is in and who is being led, leadership style may need to be adjusted.

Table 1

*Situational Leadership Model*

Leadership Style	Description	When to Use
High Relationship, Low Task	Leadership Through Supporting	Use when followers are “able” but “insecure”
High Relationship, High Task	Leadership Through Coaching	Use when followers are “unable” but “motivated”
Low Relationship, Low Task	Leadership Through Delegation	Use when followers are “able and “motivated”
Low Relationship, High Task	Leadership Through Directing	Use when followers are “unable” and “insecure”

*Note:* Adapted from *The Situational Leader* (p. 63) by P. Hersey, 1984, New York, NY: Warner Books, copyright 1983 by Warner Books, and *Reframing Organizations* (p. 349) by L. G. Bolman and T. E. Deal, 2008.. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, copyright 2008 by Jossey Bass Publishers. Used by permission.

According to Fiore (2004), Hersey and Blanchard’s model earned the name Situational Leadership Theory because of the “belief that a leader’s decisions regarding the appropriateness of task behaviors and relationship behaviors are tied directly to their perceptions of the followers’ job maturity and psychological maturity” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977, p. 31). School administrators can enhance their leadership abilities by matching the situation with the appropriate leadership style (Fiore, 2004). For Situational Leadership Theory to be successful, it is crucial that the leader be able to recognize the readiness levels of followers. This can be more challenging because of the many demands of the administrator’s job. Leaders must have both intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. According to Fiore (2004), the most effective school leaders are those individuals who understand how to combine their beliefs about student learning with the beliefs of all school stakeholders. Using the Situational Leadership Model, the protocol asked the search team to define the type of leader necessary for their school site.

**Methodology**

The research questions were answered by employing case study methodology. The hiring protocol developed for this case study was followed in one school setting in the

Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The researcher went to the school site to instruct the stakeholders on how to use the hiring protocol. As an observer participant, the researcher took field notes on how well the elements of the protocol were implemented. Following the hiring process, the researcher interviewed the participants on their perceptions of the protocol and the hiring process. The researcher also interviewed the selected candidate on her perceptions of the process. After the researcher collected and analyzed these data, the researcher will make recommendations to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

### **Participants**

The search committee team was comprised of representatives from the faculty and staff, parents, parish, school board, Pastoral Council, as well as the Pastor. The Pastor selected the committee members. The interview candidates and the hired candidate also acted as participants in the case study. All members of the committee were invited to participate in the study.

### **Instrument**

The development of the hiring protocol instrument was informed by prior research on effective hiring strategies and assessment instruments designed to measure leadership competency (Boyle, 2010; Clifford, 2010; Manno, 1985). The hiring protocol consisted of two major components: 1) recruitment planning and 2) selection. The first component focused on recruitment planning by providing direction in creating a timeline, setting priorities for principal qualifications via shareholder feedback, reconsidering the position, and updating school information. Included in the recruitment-planning component was a sample job description that a school may post as well as suggestions on how to create the best pool of applicants. The second component focused on selection, which begins when a consistent and reliable search



committee conducts a blind review of applications. During the second component, it was also recommended that the committee conducts interviews and then invites finalists to visit the school site to have meaningful engagements with other stakeholders. Included in selection component were sample interview questions to assess a candidate's strength in several areas needed for an effective Catholic school leader and examples of authentic tasks a candidate can perform during the school site visit. Prior to implementation of the hiring protocol, training was conducted with all the search committee team members to ensure all had a solid understanding of implementation (See Appendix A).

### **Data Collection**

To find the site for the case study, the researcher requested the permission of the Elementary Superintendent of the Archdiocese to use a school site that was searching for a new principal for the 2013-2014 academic year. A regional supervisor informed her of a few schools that would be searching for a new principal. When the regional supervisor met with a Pastor who was starting a principal search, she referred him to the researcher who would be able to assist his search committee. The Pastor later phoned the researcher and she met with him and his committee the following week. During the meeting the researcher conveyed to the group the intent of the case study and what the expectation would be if she were to use their school. Following the Pastor's approval, the researcher met with the committee to present them with the hiring protocol. As an observer participant, the researcher was present during the process, recording field notes of the implementation. Following the completion of hiring process, the researcher interviewed members of the search committee as well as the hired candidate to gauge their individual perceptions of the hiring protocol.

## **Limitations**

This case study had several limitations. The site of the study was dependent on the sites that had principal openings during the 2013-2014 academic year. The Department of Catholic Schools had a significant role in what site was chosen, since they provided the list of vacancies and connected the researcher with the school site. The Pastor of the school had the final say in whether or not to allow the researcher to conduct the case study at his site. Another limitation was that during the concluding interviews, the researcher asked the search committee members to share their perceptions of the hiring protocol. The researcher assumed the participants were honest in the information they provided, but interviewees might have wanted to be agreeable, and therefore, respondents' impressions of weaknesses or problems with the hiring protocol may have been underrepresented in their comments. The possibility of researcher bias also existed. The researcher has spent her life in Catholic Education, as a student, as a teacher, and as an administrator. Her involvement and prior knowledge provided a bias that led her to observe from a heavily informed perspective rather than from the vantage point of a true outsider.

## **Delimitations**

Three delimitations in the study were:

- 1) The case study was conducted at one school site in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to other sites.
- 2) The study was conducted during one point in time with one set of principal candidates to select from. Therefore, the research was not longitudinal in scope.
- 3) The study was conducted over a one year time period, therefore the hired candidate only served as principal for eight months.

## **Definitions**

*Archdiocese of Los Angeles:* The Archdiocese of Los Angeles was established in 1840. It is the largest diocese in the United States with “approximately five million professing members” (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Parishes, 2011). There are three counties in the Archdiocese: Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara. In the “8,762 square miles, there are 287 parishes located in 120 cities” (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Parishes, 2011).

*Department of Catholic Schools:* A department within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles that oversees the preschools, elementary and high schools. Catholic schools began in the 1850s, and currently, the Department of Catholic Schools oversees 250 schools (Archdiocese of Los Angeles Catholic Schools, About Us, 2011).

*Canon Law:* The law governing the Church (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Parishes, 2011).

*Deanery:* The 218 elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are divided into geographical clusters called deaneries. There are 20 deaneries.

*Laity:* The people of a religious faith who are not clergy.

*Pastor:* The priest appointed by the local bishop to oversee every aspect of the parish.

*Religious:* In the Catholic Church, a member of a religious order, i.e., nun, brother, priest.

*Region:* The 287 parishes that make up the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are divided into five

Pastoral Regions: San Fernando, Our Lady of Angels, San Gabriel, San Pedro, and Santa Barbara (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Parishes, 2011).

## **Summary and Organization of the Study**

The purpose of this case study was to use previous research to develop an effective hiring protocol to hire a Catholic school principal and study the implementation of the protocol at one

school site in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, including a study of the perceptions of the participants. The researcher developed the protocol and was present during its implementation. Follow-up interviews were conducted to record individuals' experiences throughout the interview process. Chapter One presented background for the study, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, limitations, delimitations, definitions of terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature on effective hiring practices, effective leadership, and Catholic school leadership. The literature on effective hiring practices focuses on recruitment and selection. In the area of effective leadership, current trends are examined both in education as well as the business world to define the characteristics of an effective leader. Additional literature was reviewed to define what characteristics are unique to Catholic school leaders.

Chapter Three describes the research questions and the case study methodology. The methodology describes the participants and data collection.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study, including a discussion of how the data collected during the case study, survey, and follow-up interviews answer the two central research questions.

Chapter Five discusses the significance of study's main findings. It provides implications and makes recommendations in the area of effective hiring practices for the principals of the Archdiocesan Catholic schools. Areas of future research are also discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

Leading a school today is not an easy task. Catholic school principals, especially at the elementary level, wear many hats including curriculum coordinator, financial manager, staff evaluator, technology coordinator, public relations, mission driver, disciplinarian, public relations representative, and ambassador between school and parish life. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) noted “the Catholic school principal bears responsibility for financial management, development and fund-raising, public and alumni relations, faculty selection and supervision, student recruitment, and in many cases, discipline and instructional leadership” (p. 150). Sergiovanni (1987) claimed that principals see themselves in a variety of ways: the instructional leader of the school, the maintainer of a rapidly changing institution, the disciplinarian, the supply clerk, the protector of teachers from the parents, the conduit of the community to the school, the philosopher king, the benevolent dictator, and so on. The job of the principal does not stop at the school doors: “the principal must also maintain amicable relationships with the diocese, the neighboring parishes, the religious order, the local community, and the parent body” (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993, p. 151). Many Catholic school principals operate like small business owners. No task is too big or too small for the principal to undertake.

The role of the principal is not only unique; it is also crucial to a Catholic school’s effectiveness. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) found that school leadership is the second most significant contributor to what and how much students learn at school; it is second only to instructional quality. With school leadership so closely tied to school

effectiveness, it is essential to find a strong leader. Knowing the key characteristics of an effective leader is a piece of the puzzle, but schools must be able to find the appropriate principal for their school site since specific needs vary greatly across school sites. At the time of the study, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles served over 250 schools in the Greater Los Angeles Region (Archdiocese of Los Angeles Catholic Schools, About Us, 2011), and though all required effective leadership, no single type of candidate was the right fit for all of these educational institutions.

This chapter reviews the literature related to effective hiring practices and the characteristics of an effective leader. The previous scholarship described in this chapter guided the researcher in the process of assembling a suitable protocol for the task at hand: the process of vetting Catholic school principal candidates. The discussion of the hiring practices and leadership characteristics were supported by the theoretical framework of Situational Leadership Theory.

### **The Effective School Leader**

William J. Bennett, the Secretary of Education from 1985–1988, was asked if he could do one thing to improve schools, what would that be? He responded, “I would hire the best principal I could find and then give the person ample authority and heavy responsibility. A great school almost always boasts a crackerjack principal. Leadership is among the crucial elements in educational success” (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1987, p. 1).

### **What Makes an Effective Leader?**

According to Bolman and Deal (2008), “effective leaders help articulate a vision, set standards for performance, and create focus and direction” (p. 345). Good leaders care deeply

about their work and the people who do it. Yet another characteristic is the ability to inspire trust and build relationships (Bennis & Nanus, 2007; Kotter, 1988; Maccoby, 1981). Kouzes and Posner (2007) found that honesty came first on a list of traits that people most admired in a leader. Burns (1978), Gardner (1986), Kotter and Cohen (2012), and Heifetz and Linsky (2002) argued persuasively that leaders need skill in managing relationships with all significant stakeholders. Hoyle, English, and Steffy (1998) identified a list of skills that are commonly found in an effective school leader: visionary leadership, policy and governance, communication and community relations, organizational management, curriculum planning and development, instructional management, staff evaluation and personnel management, staff development, and educational research, evaluation, and planning. Marzano (2005) identified six characteristics of leadership: goal setting, establishing non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, aligning boards with and providing support for achievements and instruction, using resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction, and defining autonomy. It would be difficult for one individual to possess strengths in all of the above characteristics of a leader. Therefore it is best to try to categorize them in two behaviors to help match the appropriate leader to a site. All of these characteristics can be grouped into two dimensions: task behavior and relationship behavior, which Situational Leadership Theory describes.

### **Situational Leadership Theory**

According to Situational Leadership Theory (See Table 1), a leader's decisions regarding the appropriateness of task behaviors and relationship behaviors are tied directly to their perceptions of the followers' job maturity and psychological maturity (Fiore 2004). Fiore (2004) differentiated task and relationship behavior. Task behavior is one-way communication that

outlines what each worker is to do and does not allow for feedback. In contrast, relationship behavior engages in two-way communication; feedback opportunities are ample, and the leader acts as a true facilitator. The needs of the followers at each school site differ, therefore the needs at individual school sites will differ as well. In matching the situation with appropriate leadership style, school administrators can enhance their leadership abilities. Fiore (2004) contended that school administrators who apply Situational Leadership Theory to their practice will find that those they lead are more confident in their leader's ability to respond to issues. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2007) identified three competencies of a leader: understanding, adaptability, and communication. Leaders needed to be able to diagnose a situation by understanding what they were influencing. Leaders needed to have an "understanding what the situation is now and knowing what you can reasonably expect to make it in the future" (p. 7). Leaders needed to be able to adapt their behavior and other resources to meet the contingencies of the situation. It was this adaptability that allowed a leader to "close the gap between the current situation and what you want to achieve" (p. 7). Leaders also needed to be able to communicate to those around them in a manner that was easily understood as well as accepted. If a leader understood and adapted, communication was essential in meeting the leader's goal. The Situational Leadership Theory highlighted the need for a hiring protocol tool to identify strengths for future Catholic school principals.

### **The Catholic School Leader**

Defiore, Convey, and Schuttleoffel (2009) identified the following critical elements for the success of Catholic schools: effective leadership; enrollment; financial stability; academic quality, Catholic identity, and strategic planning. Many of these critical elements are directly



tied to the individual leading the school. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, it is often the principal alone that organizes the school's marketing plan, prepares the budget, oversees the curriculum, supervises the faculty, serves as a spiritual leader, and plans for the future. Defiore et al. (2009) believed that "leadership is embedded in how finance and governance play out in practice. Leaders guide the interactions that shape the school community" (Defiore et al., 2009, p. 16). The leadership of Catholic schools is manifest at three levels: diocesan leadership, parish leadership, and school site leadership. According to the *Administrative Handbook: Elementary & Secondary Schools* (2010), the administrative structure of the elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles described the role of Pastor as one who, in consultation with the Department of Catholic Schools, is required to employ the principal using the process established for this purpose.

Much research has been done specifically on what makes an effective Catholic school leader. In 2010, Loyola University of Chicago's Center for School Effectiveness (CCSE) and School of Education hosted the second in a series of six planned Catholic Higher Education Collaborative Conferences (CHEC) entitled "Developing and Sustaining Leaders for Catholic Schools: How Can Catholic Higher Education Help?" During the second session, "Who are Catholic Schools For and Who Should Lead Them?", three critical issues surfaced: lack of clarity in mission, the role of leadership development, and developing collaborative structures. Participants felt that schools have "become market driven as opposed to mission driven" (Boyle, 2010, p. 99). If a leader lacks in defining and developing the mission collaboratively with the other stakeholders, it will impact the vitality of the school. To ensure schools carry on the

mission of the Catholic Church, effective leaders must be hired for each school site across the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

The role of the Catholic school principal is most often divided into three general areas of responsibility: spiritual leader, educational leader, and managerial leader (Ciriello, 1996).

According to the *Archdiocese of Los Angeles Elementary Handbook* (2010), at the time of the research, elementary school principals were selected and evaluated by the Pastor in consultation with the Department of Catholic Schools. The Pastor has ultimate financial responsibility for the principal, and employment for principals is one year only with the possibility for renewal.

According to the *Administrative Handbook* (2010), the principal's responsibilities were divided into five parts: relationship with parish and Pastor; finances; management; supervising the staff and the instructional program; and relating with students, parents, the parish and the general public. Depending on the site of the school, a candidate's strength in one category over another may be needed. These five responsibilities guided the researcher to create a survey for school stakeholders to share their perspective on the strengths needed in a future leader.

### **Relationship with Parish and Pastor**

In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Pastors are typically assigned to one parish for six years. During their term they are the ultimate authority to their parish school. According to Canon Law (1983), the Pastor is responsible for providing and administering the educational, spiritual, and sacramental needs of the parishioners in accordance with the law. A Catholic parochial elementary school may be one of the ministries within a parish. Schafer (2004) explained "when a school is one of the ministries of a parish, the administrator of the juridic person of the parish also becomes the canonical administrator of the school and, therefore, has

ultimate authority within the school” (p. 241). Therefore, the Pastor also possesses the canonical authority to hire a principal to operate the school.

According to the *Administrative Handbook* (2010), the principal of a parish school had several responsibilities in relation to the parish and Pastor. The principal was responsible for meeting with the Pastor on a regular basis to keep him apprised of school business as well as all serious disciplinary matters concerning students or personnel should they arise. The Pastor should be invited to help implement the goals and objectives of the religion program and be advised of the actual progress in meeting those benchmarks. The Pastor should be informed of the school’s current financial status. The Pastor should be consulted in development of long-range plans such as enrollment, personnel, plant, finances, and curriculum. The Pastor’s involvement could differ site-to-site as well. Pastors differ in their feelings regarding Catholic schools some chooses to be very involved while others may see the school as a burden and would prefer it not to exist. Therefore, the relationship between the principal and the Pastor can look different at each site.

Principals must also have a Pastoral dimension of their own. The Pastoral dimension of the principal relates to their religious role at their school site. Manno (1985) believed “principals must be religious leaders and possess religious knowledge and skills reflected in their attitudes and actions” (p. 10). According to Schafer (2004), if the principal and Pastor do not have a clear understanding of their own roles in relation to the school, then a positive working relationship between these two leaders may be affected; as a result, the education and the formation of the children may also be negatively affected.

## **Finances**

The principal as the financial leader should be able to plan and manage the school's financial resources; ensure long-range planning, and seek resources beyond the school and parish. According to the *Administrative Handbook* (2010), the principal of a parish school had several responsibilities in relation to the school's finances. The principal was to prepare and submit the annual school budget, the adjusted budget, and the year-end report to the Pastor and the Department of Catholic Schools. Additionally, the principal had the responsibility to oversee record keeping, tuition collection, and payroll. This is a hat that is unique to Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles; therefore it is key that a hiring committee assesses a candidate's promise as a financial leader.

## **Management**

According to the *Administrative Handbook* (2010), the longest list of a principal's responsibilities fell under management. Principals were listed as responsible for ensuring the implementation of all the policies and procedures in the school. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, some of the responsibilities included: principals were required to participate in regional and deanery meetings, hire faculty and staff, maintain accurate pupil and personal files, supervise maintenance, carry out safety regulations, and monitor all school-sponsored before- and/or after-school programs (*Administrative Handbook*, 2010). Owens and Valesky (2011) argued that the list of managerial tasks has deflected attention from the real business of schools, which is teaching and conceptualized leadership. Owens and Valesky (2011) understood that educational leaders must be able to manage to enable their organization to move towards a vision, but they argue that this is why leadership is more important than ever. Catholic schools in the

Archdiocese of Los Angeles work independently at their local sites. There is not a district office that tracks student's records or human resource issues. The principal at each site is required to oversee all management issues. The Archdiocese is there to provide advice and support, but it ultimately is the principal's responsibility to manage the school site under the supervision of the Pastor.

### **Supervising the Staff and the Instructional Program**

Assessing curriculum and evaluating teaching are two of the most important responsibilities of the principal (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1987). This dimension includes the principal's educational role in the development in curriculum. Principals need to "possess expert professional knowledge that influences how they diagnose educational problems, coordinate the development of curriculum, supervise, evaluate, counsel, and develop teachers, and provide for various forms of program development as well as personal and professional growth" (Manno, 1985, p. 10). During a 1999 forum on educational leadership conducted by the United States Department of Education, "most participants agreed that the number one characteristic of an effective leader is the ability to provide instructional leadership" (United States Department of Education, 1999, p. 4). To do this, principals were strongly advised to keep abreast of current research on curriculum design and development (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1987).

According to the *Administrative Handbook* (2010) the area of supervising the staff and instructional program was categorized in two different ways: Faculty and Instruction Program, and Support Staff. The principal was to provide articulation of the school curriculum and professional development opportunities to faculty and staff, as well as to select, with faculty

consultation, the basic and supplementary instructional materials. The responsibilities also included coordinating the required testing program, scheduling instructional programs in accordance with Archdiocesan time allotments, coordinating remedial and enrichment programs, coordinating government programs, and developing and implementing a technology plan. Minimally, principals should observe teachers twice per year and provide critical feedback for growth. The principal was to provide vehicles for communication and support as well as provide an orientation program for new teachers. Principals should provide a job description, needed direction, and evaluation for all support staff. At schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, curriculum selection and assessment outside of the annual standardized test is conducted at the each individual site.

### **Relating to Students, Parents, the Parish, and the Local Community**

Principals not only need to build positive relationships within their school, but in the surrounding community as well. Two-thirds of a principal's daily activity consists of brief exchanges, often on a one-to-one basis. They meet regularly with students, teachers, parents, advisory groups, and their own supervisors and peers (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1987). Therefore, excellent interpersonal communication skills are a must.

According to the *Administrative Handbook* (2010), a principal was required to establish vehicles for parent communication as well as involve parents in the faith formation program. Principals should participate in school-sponsored parent activities and support the parents' fundraising activities for the school. Within the parish, the principal had the responsibility of conveying the school programs to the parish community as well as establish a cooperative relationship with the personnel of the parish religious education program. Outside of the

immediate parish community, the principal should establish articulation with the local high schools, a cooperative and friendly relationship with the local public schools, and maintain an interest in the local civic community.

### **Effective Hiring Practices**

Finding the right leader is complex; therefore a well-established procedure is imperative. Effective hiring practices can be divided into two categories: recruitment and selection. Recruitment includes the establishment of goals, analyzing the job as it currently exists, and composing a job description. Selection includes the screening of applicants, performing interviews, conducting on-site visits, and executing reference checks. These two components were incorporated into the design of the hiring protocol.

#### **Recruitment**

Recruitment decisions can be life changing; therefore, the effectiveness of the recruitment program is of great importance (Webb & Norton, 2003). The cost of substantial programs can be great in both time and money, but the up-front costs far outweigh the costs that can occur when a candidate proves to be unsuccessful. The beginning of the recruitment process relies on the establishment of goals for the recruitment. Next are the development of the job analysis and the preparation of the job description (Webb & Norton, 2003). The end result is a pool of qualified candidates.

#### **Establishment of Goals**

A change in leadership can be emotional in any organization and without conversation about what change may bring, the organization may not be ready for a new leader. Clifford (2010) suggested engaging the current school principal and staff in conversation regarding goals

and plans is key. Before any action is taken to recruit for a vacant position, an assessment of need must be performed (Webb & Norton, 2003). This is important to understand if the position may not be needed, as it currently exists. According to Lambert and colleagues (2002), perceptions of teaching and learning have changed during the past ten years, and expectations of schools and the principals who lead them as well. According to Webb and Norton (2003), the assessment of need involves an analysis of information and data relative to the needs of the school. It is important that the needs assessment not just address the here and now. A strategic view of recruitment takes a long-term view of what the school wants to look like in five or ten years from now by analyzing where a school is and where it wants to be, determining what skills are needed to get there and then recruiting for those exact skills (Canada, 2001).

### **Job Analysis**

According to Webb and Norton (2003), job analysis is the process in which the skills, knowledge, abilities, and other characteristics of the position are identified. This process identifies the minimum education, certification, or license requirements of the job. When the job already exists then a considerable amount of information already exists about the job. With a neutral and experienced facilitator, stakeholders can collect data about school goals and discuss to what degree they have met and how the new school principal can help meet these goals and what types of knowledge, leadership styles, and attitudes the ideal candidate must possess (Clifford, 2010). According to Webb and Norton (2003) the following job objectives need to be met during the job analysis: a) clarify the details of the position for which recruits are to be sought, b) provide sufficient detail for the preparation of the job description, c) provide a base of information from which performance appraisal criteria can be developed, and d) identify where



the job fits into the current organizational structure. The researcher found this key in the hiring process due to the importance of finding the right fit for the school site. If a description is not specific to the unique needs of the school site it may not draw the appropriate applicants.

According to Whaley (2002), by completing this process “districts officials may avoid a common problem: vacancy announcements that are too vague, often not even specifying the particular school where the opening exists” (p. 14).

In a causal-comparative study conducted by Winter, Rinehart, Keedy, and Bjork (2004), it was found that there are many individuals who are certified but are not interested in taking on the role of principal. Winter et al. (2004) believed that “these findings signal to educational leaders and policy makers that individuals not actively pursuing principal vacancies soon after earning principal certification are unlikely to ever be job applicants” (Winter et al., 2004, p. 94). According to Murphy (1992), too much emphasis has been placed on changing the applicant pool while reform should aim at changing the job. Suggestions for restructuring include: decreasing district-level mandates, decreasing evening activities, reducing the work week and year, adding personnel support to help with paperwork, and redistributing principal duties to other personnel (McAdams, 1998).

### **Job Description**

Clifford (2010) recognized that the expectations and demands on school principals may have changed since the last vacancy and new principals report job stress as a significant factor in leaving the principal position. Schools should consider ways staff could take on additional tasks to relieve stress specifically during the transition period. The job description needs to be specific to each school site. It not only describes the job, duties, and responsibilities, but it also provides

information about the school site where the vacancy exists. According to Webb and Norton (2003), the job description should include the following: a) job title, b) required and desired qualifications, including education, skills, knowledge, experience, and certification, c) person to whom employee reports, d) person(s) supervised, e) performance responsibilities, f) evaluation, and g) terms of employment. Many job descriptions are already in existence, but should be reviewed to ensure that they are still valid in terms of accurately and completely describing the job to be done. According to Whaley (2002), “an announcement that lists the special needs and characteristics of a school is more likely to attract good candidates, as well as increase the chances of selecting the right person for the job” (p. 14). There are adequate numbers of individuals who are principal certified, however a majority are not applying for principal vacancies because they are not attracted to the job (McAdams, 1998).

### **Selection**

The job analysis and job description provide the basis for the specific criteria to be used in the selection process. These criteria should be established before any job is advertised or application received. The selection criteria “delineate those ideal characteristics, that if possessed by an individual to the fullest extent possible would ensure the successful performance of the job” (Rebore, 2001, p. 116).

### **Screening the Applications**

According to the handbook *Developing the Effective Principal*, screening is a two-step process. The initial screening is done to ensure candidates meet specific certification and experience followed by a more formalized step of paper screening of those remaining candidates. Anderson (1991) stated, what is needed during this latter step is a standardized ranking system

by which screeners can systematically rank applicants. Clifford (2010) recommended conducting a blind review of applications by eliminating names and significant identifiers from applications in order to reduce biases. During application review, all committee members should use the same rating form and submit responses independently. The goal is to identify the top ten candidates to be interviewed.

## **Interviews**

The employment interview is the most widely used selection technique and is a process of gathering information about an applicant (Webb & Norton, 2003). Anderson (1991) noted that if an interview is not conducted properly it is neither reliable nor valid. A typical interview is often unstructured, less than an hour and highly influenced by first impressions. Studies suggest that interviewers may decide on a candidate within the first five minutes of an interview (Anderson, 1991). During this process the interviewers and the applicant engage in conversation that explores the applicant's qualifications, skills, and experiences relative to the criteria needed for the position.

The first step in making an interview effective is to determine who will interview the candidates. Several persons should be part of the interview process such as diocesan representatives, Pastors, current principals, and students' parents who are not professional educators (Manno, 1985). According to Whaley (2002), interviewers should possess qualities such as alertness to cues, ability to make fine distinctions, and ability to suppress biases. Winter (1998) recommended training for interviewers, particularly teachers, who may search for an instructional leader and overlook other administrative qualities.

According to Webb and Norton (2003), the employment interview is an attempt to predict the job performance of an applicant one year after hiring. Since the best predictor of what an applicant will do in the future is what he or she has done in the past, the interviewers need to explore past work experiences and record the information that provides insight to the candidate's strengths and weaknesses. The quality of information obtained has a direct relationship to the following aspects of the interview process: a) physical setting for the interview, b) psychological atmosphere, c) interviewer's interpersonal skills, d) interviewer's listening skills, e) quality of note taking, and f) quality of interview questions and techniques. Anderson (1991) argues that an interview is more effective and reliable when all candidates are asked identical, predetermined, well thought out questions. Shaughnessy (1991) recognized that administrators want to gather as much job-related information as possible, but emphasizes that invasion of privacy must be avoided. According to Manno (1985), questions should invite and encourage quality responses by allowing the candidate to spend a period of time elaborating on an answer. Clifford (2010) emphasized that responses should be recorded and interviewers should identify three to five candidates for an on-site visit.

### **On-site visits**

A one-day, on-site visit by the finalists to the school can help stakeholders make decisions about the quality of the match. According to Clifford (2010), the on-site visit should include authentic tasks such as data reviews, building walk-throughs, and teacher observations. The assessment tool is absent from the literature; therefore, the researcher built an assessment tool for the hiring protocol.

## **Reference Checks**

The most commonly used methods of checking references are letters and telephone calls, with preference given to phone calls due to the efficiency and ability to get candid responses (Webb & Norton, 2003). At least three references should be contacted with one being the most recent supervisor (Webb & Norton, 2003). According to Shaughnessy (1991), applicants should be asked to sign a statement giving permission for background checks. Bass (1990) recommended protecting against hiring negligence, by obtaining as many references as possible and checking them carefully. Committee members should document each time a reference is requested. According to Manno (1985), the references should be called for anecdotal character information that can provide alternate perspectives of the candidate. The Pastor of the parish where the candidate is currently employed should be contacted as well.

The above practices cannot guarantee a successful principal, but following a hiring protocol incorporates collaboration and input from all stakeholders to increase the probability of having a strong and effective leader in all schools.

Schools need to be able to identify the needs of their community and find the leader that best fits their needs and situation. Being able to identify the schools needs combined with an effective hiring practice will increase the probability that an effective Catholic leader is hired. The case study methodology outlined in Chapter Three will link the effective practices of finding the right fit leader to an actual hiring process.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Over the last ten years, the expectations of schools and those who lead them have changed (Lambert et al., 2002). Research suggests that hiring school principals is challenging because available testing instruments to gauge principals' abilities are not effective predictors of practice, and districts do not allot enough time or resources for schools to find the right match (Clifford, 2010). Many districts have begun to revise and standardize principal hiring practice to ensure the right principal is placed at the school site (Clifford, 2010). Clifford (2010) identified several ideal practices for recruiting: preparing for succession, allowing time, obtaining broad agreement on roles and responsibilities, setting priorities via goals, reconsidering the position, updating school data, documenting each step in the process, and being strategic. Emerging selection practices were also found which included: considering standards and research, establishing a consistent and reliable search committee, conducting a blind review of applications, screening with interviews, having finalists visit the school, meaningfully engaging other stakeholders, and resisting quick or emotional decisions (Clifford, 2010).

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles serves three counties in the Greater Los Angeles Region: Los Angeles County, Santa Barbara County, and Ventura County. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles began its Catholic schools program in the 1850s and, at the time of the study, had over 250 schools (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2011). A review of literature on proper hiring techniques and research on characteristics of effective Catholic school leaders led to the development of a hiring protocol. The protocol tested in this case study could potentially be

adopted more widely in the future to help schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles select principals who are the effective leaders for specific school sites. Schools across the Archdiocese will benefit from the protocol, as schools can use it to identify effective leaders for their sites and ensure the viability of their schools. All schools should have leaders who possess the requisite credentialing, training, and skills to be effective leaders. To contribute to the field of Catholic education, this case study identified best hiring practices and studied the implementation of a hiring protocol at one school site. The following research questions guided the research:

- 1) To what extent did Rosary Catholic School implement the hiring protocol?
- 2) What were the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hiring process?

This chapter presents a) a description of the research design, b) a description of the setting, c) a description of the study's population, d) a description of procedures for collecting and recording data, and e) a presentation of procedures for data analysis.

### **Research Design**

The purpose of this case study was to use current research to develop a protocol to hire a Catholic school principal, to describe the implementation of the hiring protocol at one school site in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and to consider the effectiveness through the perceptions of the participants. The conceptual framework that guided this study was Situational Leadership Theory. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2007) believed that widely varying circumstances require different forms of leadership. With the wide array of needs of schools throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, it is key that schools find the appropriate leader for the specific school site.

This case study research included participant observation supplemented with interviews to gather data on the implementation of the hiring protocol. The methodology chosen was suitable because this hiring process, like others, took place in a complex social unit. The case study was conducted at Rosary Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, when the school was searching for a principal for the 2013-2014 academic year. The research design employed triangulation by utilizing a variety of methods: observations, interviews, and documents (Merriam, 2009). First, the researcher provided the school with the hiring protocol (See Appendix B). As the researcher, I was an observer participant during the implementation and execution of the hiring protocol. Semi-structured interviews of the participants including the hired candidate were conducted. Content analyses of school documents in relation to the unique school site were performed. All of these data were compiled over a twelve-month period from March 2013 to March 2014.

### **The Hiring Protocol**

The protocol instrument was developed through a thorough search of the current effective hiring strategies and assessment instruments designed to measure leadership competency (Boyle, 2010; Clifford, 2010; Manno, 1985). The hiring interview protocol consisted of two major components: recruitment planning and selection. The hiring protocol presented specific steps for both components. The recommended steps were given as follows.

### **Recruitment Planning**

**Preparation.** It was recommended that a search committee team made up of representatives from the parent community, parish, school board, Pastoral Council, faculty, and staff, as well as the Pastor, should be established. A survey was recommended to be



administered to all major stakeholders to receive feedback on what the community felt Rosary Catholic School needed in a future principal (See Appendix C). This search committee ideally would discuss the current state and vision of the school to ensure that the goals for the school moving forward are in line with the school's mission and philosophy. The committee would also discuss how the new school leader could help meet these goals and what types of leadership styles, knowledge, and attitudes the ideal candidate must possess. The search committee should use the results from the survey to ensure the needs cited matched the larger school community. The search committee should re-evaluate the position of principal to ensure the position was situated to best meet the needs of the school. The committee should review the current job description keeping in mind the goals discussed above and then revise the job description. The school's website also needs to be updated to bring it into compliance with the committee's revisions.

**Establishing a pool of candidates.** The committee should write a clear description of qualifications a candidate must possess to be the leader at the specific school site (See Appendix D). An ideal description would include education level and professional experience needed to apply. The job should then be posted on the Archdiocesan website with qualifications for the principal as well as specific information unique to the school site. Additionally, the job should be advertised through graduate programs such as Loyola Marymount University and Mount St. Mary's College, as well as through professional associations. The protocol recommended that a team member document each step to ensure a formalized and systematic process so that, should questions arise, documentation can be produced.

## **Selection Process**

**Team training.** The search committee is instructed to review state and Archdiocesan standards for principals. The committee should then rate a mock application and discuss their decisions. The leadership team ideally should conduct a blind review of actual applications. A support staff member prior to sending the applications to this committee should eliminate names and nonvital, personal identifying information. All committee members should receive the same candidate information, use the same rating form (See Appendix E) and submit responses independently. Ideally the pool should be narrowed down to the top five candidates to be interviewed.

**Structured interviews.** A designated member of the committee should contact the top candidates and schedule interviews. The candidates who did not move on should be contacted with regret as well. The committee should create and review five to ten questions that align with hiring priorities and mission of the school (See Appendix F). The candidates should be asked the same questions and interviewed by the same committee members to best ensure consistency and fair hiring practice. Depending on the size of the school, sub panels may be formed to meet with the candidates as well. These sub committees can represent different needs of the school. For example, one panel can show a candidate a clip of demo lesson and have the candidate fill out an observation form. Question responses should be recorded for each candidate and team members should independently rate candidate (See Appendix G). After all interviews are complete, committee members should identify two to three candidates to visit the school site.

**Site visits.** The designated committee member should contact the candidates to set-up appointments to visit the school site. A one-day site visit by the finalists can include authentic

tasks and interviews with other stakeholders. Additional interview questions should be determined ahead of time, and responses should be collected systematically. At the conclusion of the visit, team members should debrief with candidate and rate the candidate's site visit performance (See Appendix J). When all finalists have completed their visit, team members should rank their top candidates.

### **The Study**

The school's search committee and principal candidates served as the case study participants and were observed in the field. As an observer participant, the researcher gathered data via observation and one-on-one interviews over a period of ten months. At the conclusion of the hiring process, semi-structured interviews with the search committee members and the selected candidate were conducted. Each interview began with a set of predetermined questions (See Appendix F), but the researcher instigated probing techniques in order to better understand and clarify the perceptions of the interview participants.

The study included data gathered throughout the hiring process such as résumés, cover letters, and rubrics used by the search committee. Data were also gathered regarding the specific school site through media such as the school website and WCEA/WASC documentation, as well as through the researcher's observations from spending time on the campus.

### **The Setting**

Rosary Catholic School is a co-ed, Catholic elementary school located in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The school was originally founded in 1948. The school site has a single classroom per grade and serves students in grades transitional kindergarten through eighth grade. During the 2012-2013 academic year, the enrollment at Rosary Catholic School was 240 students

(Archdiocese of Los Angeles Catholic Directory, 2013). The school site was chosen because they were conducting a search for a school principal for the 2013-2014 academic year.

### School Make-up

Rosary Catholic School has a total enrollment of 240 students. As of 2013, the demographic composition of the student body was 4% White, 30% Hispanic, 48% Asian/Filipino, 6% African American, and 12% Multiracial (Census Report, 2013). Fifty-seven percent of the students are male. Ninety-five percent of the student body is Catholic. According to the 2013 Census Report zero percent of the student population generate Title I funds.

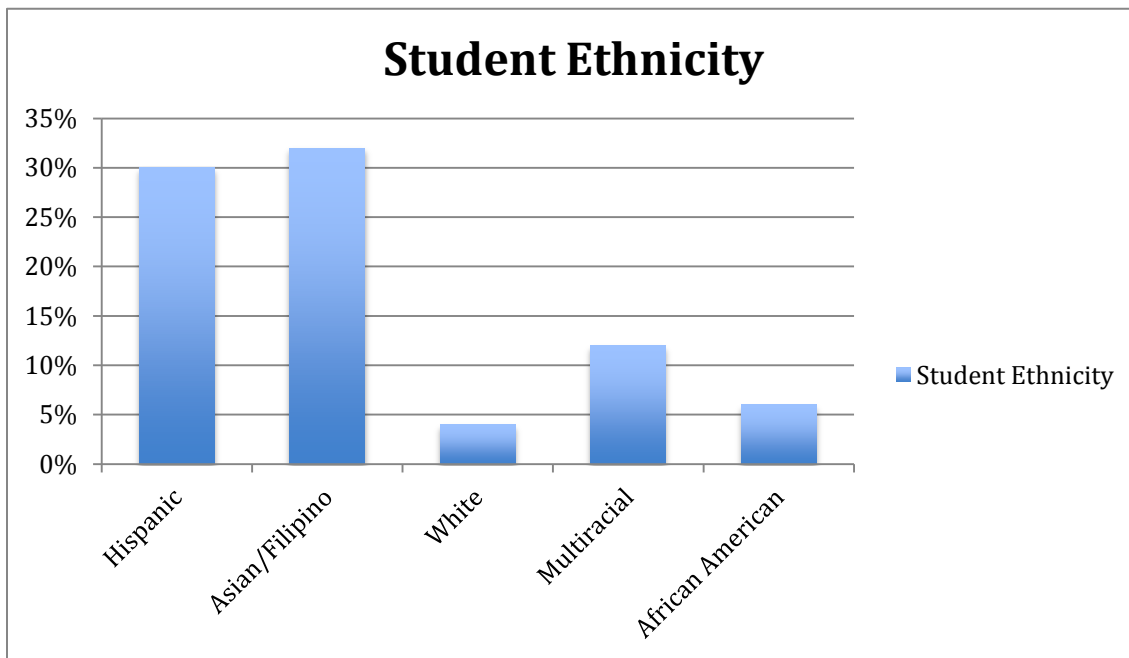


Figure 1. Student Ethnicity. Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). *Census Report: Los Angeles County, C.A.*

During the 2012-2013 school year, Rosary Catholic School employed nine full-time faculty, one administrator, and nine members of the support staff. The demographic composition of the faculty and staff of Rosary Catholic School is not reflective of the student body with 50%

white, 35% Hispanic, 5% African American and 10% Asian/Filipino. Thirty percent of the faculty and staff is male. Nearly 70% of all the faculty and staff had been employed at the school for five years or less. Ninety percent of the faculty is Catholic (Census Report, 2013).

### **Population and Participants**

This case study was conducted between March 2013 and March 2014. The primary population of this study was the search committee for Rosary Catholic School who were responsible for the implementation of the principal hiring protocol (See Appendix B). This committee included members of school's major stakeholders: faculty, staff, parents, and parish members.

### **Interview Participants**

Interviews were conducted with members of the search committee at Rosary Elementary, as well as the candidate who was offered the principal position. The search committee consisted of the Pastor, three parishioners including a past parent as well as a Pastoral Council member, two parents including the president of the parent board, and a teacher. The teacher chosen by the Pastor for the committee has worked full-time at Rosary Catholic School for three years. She holds a CA Multiple Subject Credential and Master degree. Search committee members were interviewed by the researcher regarding their perceptions of the principal hiring protocol. The selected candidate was interviewed as well to obtain her perspective of the hiring process.

### **Data Collection**

#### **Interview Data**

The initial interviews with the members of the search committee were conducted from May 2013 to June 2013. Follow-up interviews took place in February and March 2014. All

interview participants were informed ahead of time that they would be invited to take part in interviews about their perceptions of the implementation of principal hiring protocol. After the initial invitation, each participant was asked to sign the consent form. The researcher reached out to participants to be interviewed via email and phone immediately after the implementation as well as after the hired candidate had been in the job for eight months. Each search committee member was asked the same questions (See Appendix K). The hired candidate was contacted during the same timeframes to be interviewed as well (See Appendix L). The researcher took short-hand notes of the interviews.

### **Participant Observation and Archival Data**

The researcher was an observer participant throughout the hiring process. This type of participation allowed me an insider's role in collecting and analyzing interview data for this study. Field notes from my observation participation were recorded and collected into a binder and were labeled with the dates and times of the observations. In addition to the field notes, data sources included the following items: school records, participants' notes during the process, notes from parent and faculty meetings, WASC self-study reports, the parent/student handbook, and the school website.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Merriam (2009), a case study is a holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit in which conveying and understanding of the case is paramount. To begin the process of analyzing data, one must bring all the information together to create a study database (Yin, 2008). The interview and observation participation data were content-analyzed to derive themes and patterns. The Leadership Needs Survey drove how the data was categorized.

Responses were categorized to the leadership needs identified by the stakeholders for the prospective candidate to best serve the school site.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to hone a hiring protocol that schools across the Archdiocese of Los Angeles can employ to increase the likelihood of hiring an effective principal for their unique site. The data collected allowed the researcher to analyze and make modifications to better improve the hiring protocol prior to providing recommendations to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Department of Catholic Schools.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the data collected in this case study of the implementation of a hiring protocol to answer the two central research questions:

- 1) To what extent did Rosary Catholic School implement the hiring protocol?
- 2) What are the stakeholders' perceptions of the hiring protocol?

The data for the analysis consisted of field notes the researcher captured during the implementation of the protocol as well as interviews conducted with search committee participants and the hired candidate immediately after the hiring process and six months later.

This chapter is organized to present the data at each stage of implementation.

#### **Data Collection**

##### **Site Entry**

In early March 2013, a regional supervisor in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles contacted the researcher. The supervisor explained that she had recently met with a Pastor of a local school that needed to hire a new school principal for the 2013-2014 academic year. The supervisor believed the school would benefit from the hiring protocol designed by the researcher. The Pastor was given the name of the researcher to contact for help. The Pastor then contacted the researcher, and a meeting was arranged for the following week. During that initial meeting, the Pastor was introduced to the hiring protocol. In speaking with the Pastor, the researcher found that the search committee had been formed, the job posted, and resumes had started coming in to the school.



At the time of initial contact with the Pastor, a meeting with the newly formed search committee was scheduled. On March 18, 2012, the researcher was introduced to the partially assembled committee. The committee was made up of various parish and school stakeholders. One of the committee members was a retired superintendent from a local school district experienced in hiring principals and teachers. Another committee member was certified as a mentor coach and professional coach. It was evident to the researcher during this initial meeting that committee members would offer their opinions; however, it was done in a very meek manner and was often followed up with the acknowledgement that the Pastor had the final decision-making power. The researcher realized this was very different from the principal-Pastor relationship at her current site. The agenda for this meeting defined the members of the search committee, designated the time and means to receive input from faculty and parents, defined procedures to review resumes, and discussed the approach Rosary School would take to the interviews (Agenda minutes, March 2012). Accordingly, the researcher introduced the protocol in a manner that allowed this particular school to begin applying the protocol in the midst of committee selection rather than returning to the beginning of the formal protocol. The committee members mentioned above with hiring experience quickly skimmed the protocol and shared with the committee that they felt it would be an effective protocol to implement and expressed that the protocol had done much of the work identified in the agenda (Field notes, March 2012). The Pastor then asked for an electronic copy of the protocol, so that he could disseminate the protocol to the team to review prior to the meeting scheduled for April 3, 2013. The researcher emailed the protocol to the Pastor following the meeting, and the Pastor thanked

the researcher and shared that he felt the committee members would be happy to provide feedback following the meeting (Email communication, March 18, 2013).

### **Implementation of Protocol**

The following data answered the researcher's first research question regarding to what extent the hiring protocol was implemented at Rosary Catholic School. Data was collected at every stage of implementation: preparation, establishing pool of candidates, and selection process. During the structured interview and site visit steps, the committee's departed from the protocol that led to delays in the committee's progress. However, in some stages, notably preparation, the committee altered the protocol in an innovative way that improved the search process and the protocol.

#### **Part I: Recruitment Planning**

Recruitment planning included the activities related to Part I of the protocol: preparation and establishing a pool of candidates. Recruitment included the establishment of goals, analyzing the job, as it previously existed, and composing a job description.

#### **Preparation**

Before the researcher's entry into the research site at Rosary Catholic School, several members of the search committee had already been selected. The protocol recommended assembling a search committee consisting of teacher representatives, staff representatives, parent representatives, Pastoral representatives, and the Pastor. The Pastor had already assembled a search committee to assist in the search for a new principal. The team initially had a total of eight members including the Pastor. The committee included a retired public school superintendent, two past parents who served on the Pastoral Council, the current Pastoral

Council President, a current parent who coached the athletic teams, the current president of the parent organization, and the researcher who served as a local Catholic school principal. At that point, the researcher urged the Pastor to include a teacher representative as well. The Pastor agreed and selected a teacher for the committee based on other committee members' suggestions (Field notes, March 2012).

The protocol recommended administering a survey to key stakeholders such as parents and faculty to help identify strengths that are needed in the next principal. Due to time constraints of when the Pastor wanted to announce the new principal, the search committee opted instead to conduct focus groups. One meeting sought feedback from the school faculty and staff, while the other targeted the school parents.

The faculty and staff focus group was made up of ten teachers from transitional kindergarten to eighth grade. The meeting lasted for approximately two hours. To lead the focus group, the Pastoral Council President used question five (See Appendix B) from the protocol to guide the conversation. The protocol asked questions that would help a school identify if the community was in need of a relational leader or a task leader. Question five asked faculty to prioritize the following characteristics of a potential principal: relationship with Pastor and parish, visionary leadership; curriculum planning, ability to manage finances, managerial skills, supervision of faculty and staff, relationship with parents and students, and communication and community relations. During the faculty and staff meeting, teachers expressed a wide range of needs in a potential principal, including rapport with faculty and parents, as well as a palpable commitment to the school's family atmosphere and the culture of Rosary Catholic School

(Meeting notes, March 2013). The Pastoral Council President captured the following sentiments during the faculty and staff focus group:

The next principal needs to know the culture of Rosary. (Teacher A, March 20, 2013)

Teachers need to be acknowledged for their hard work. There is a serious need for a respectful and positive climate. (Teacher B, March 20, 2013)

A new principal needs to check lesson plans and hold teachers accountable. (Teacher C, March 20, 2013)

Needs to acknowledge our family atmosphere and have good rapport with parents. (Teacher D, March 20, 2013)

The new principal needs to know the importance of defined roles, subject specialization and designated class schedules. (Teacher E, March 20, 2013)

Strong faculty and staff development. (Teacher F, March 20 2013)

The faculty felt that the hired principal needed to possess all of the above strengths to be an effective leader of Rosary Catholic School. It was evident that there was a need amongst the

faculty to be recognized for their hard work and expertise, as well as a need for the history and family-like culture to be respected and nurtured.

During the parent focus group, somewhat different themes emerged, including needs for accountability for tuition payment, fundraising efforts, and teacher evaluations. The parent focus group was made up of 24 parents representing all grade levels. The meeting lasted for approximately two hours. To lead the focus group, the Pastoral Council President again used question five from the protocol (See Appendix B) to guide the discussion. The question asked parents to prioritize the following characteristics of a potential principal: relationship with Pastor and parish, visionary leadership, curriculum planning, ability to manage finances, managerial skills, supervision of faculty and staff, relationship with parents and students, and communication and community relations. Parents identified the following characteristics as necessary for a principal candidate to possess:

Needs administrative experience and business development skills. (Parent A, March 27, 2013)

Needs to communicate with parents. (Parent B, March 27, 2013)

Hold parents accountable to pay tuition. (Parent C, March 27, 2013)

Hold parents accountable for fundraising. (Parent D, March 27, 2013)

Need a principal that can make an immediate impact. (Parent E, March 27, 2013)

A respect for parents and acknowledgement of their volunteer contributions are needed. (Parent F, March 27, 2013)

Hold teachers accountable for their teaching effectiveness. (Parent G, March 27, 2013)

A newsletter is needed to report the school's finances. (Parent H, March 27, 2013)

The parents wished to be recognized for their contributions of time and talent to the school, but they also wanted parents who have not fulfilled their responsibilities to be held accountable. The parents also asked for better communication and transparency.

The parent and staff focus groups identified needs that the Situational Leadership Model identifies as a combination of task leader and relational leader (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hersey, 1984). The faculty focused on the need for academic support while the parents had more financial concerns. Both groups felt the need for a leader to build relationships and be motivational. According to the adapted Situational Leadership Model, the leadership style identified is high relationship, high task (Bolman & Deal, 2008). This leadership style identified the followers as unable, but motivated. The school community was eager to grow, but didn't necessarily have the tools or know how to move forward. Leadership through coaching would best engage the school community. From these data, it was specifically identified that the school

needed a principal with strengths in the following areas: financial, academic, relationship building, and motivational.

The protocol indicated that the above findings should have then guided a review of the principal position and a revision of the job description to reflect the school site's current needs. Again, due to the late entry of the researcher into the selection process, the job description had already been written. The researcher reviewed the job description and noted that it reflected all of the four needs stated above. In speaking with search committee members, it was revealed that the description was written by the one member with the background in mentor and professional coaching. The job description was posted on the Archdiocesan website. The protocol also suggested to advertise the position to research local universities, so after the researcher was given approval by the Pastor, the researcher reached out to Loyola Marymount University to have the posting distributed to current graduate students obtaining their administrative credentials (Email communication, March 20, 2013).

### **Establishing Pool of Candidates**

To establish a pool of candidates, the protocol recommended that the search committee generate a clear description of qualifications a candidate must possess to be a leader at the specific school site. The description must also include the minimum requirements for education and experience the candidates need to apply. The protocol recommended posting the job opening to the Archdiocesan website as well as advertising through local universities. It was not evident through the resume submittal process if either posting warranted more resumes than the other.

The following job description was posted on the Archdiocesan website and sent to the Loyola Marymount University Education Department (Email communication with associate director of the doctoral program, March 20, 2013):

Rosary Catholic School is a Transitional Kindergarten through Eighth grade, WASC-accredited elementary school with an enrollment of 240 students located in the heart of \_\_\_\_\_, CA. Since 1948, the school has been providing quality Catholic education based on the principles of faith, excellence, stewardship, and community. We are currently seeking a dynamic, energetic principal who will be responsible to support and administer the school's high educational standards; reinforce the school's policies, procedures, and its guidelines; and be deeply committed to the development of the faith life of teachers, staff and students. The successful candidate will possess effective leadership and communication skills. The candidate will also establish excellent relationships with the Pastor, parents, faculty, staff, students, and parish. The candidate will work collaboratively with the Pastor to seek and obtain external funding through written grants, scholarships, fundraising, and financial aid assistance. The position will be available on July 1, 2013. Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience.

Professional Qualifications:

1. Master's Degree and State teaching credential (California or comparable)



2. Annual participation in the Department of Catholic School's ongoing education program for principals
3. Three to five years' elementary school teaching/administration experience, preferably in Catholic school
4. Participation in the Principal Internship Program through the Department of Catholic Schools
5. Dynamic leadership ability as well as proven teamwork skills
6. Current grant writing certificate a plus
7. Basic Catechist Formation Certification a plus

Qualified candidates should submit electronically: 1) letter of introduction; 2) resume; 3) two current letters of recommendation, including one from a current supervisor; and 4) three to five professional references with contact information.

All material should be sent to [principalsearch@rosaryschool.org](mailto:principalsearch@rosaryschool.org) by March 30, 2013.

Even though the job posting was written prior to the researcher joining the principal search process, the posting matched the criteria set forth by the hiring protocol. For example, the focus groups stated one of the important qualities would be a strong understanding of finance; the job posting (2013) stated, "The candidate will work collaboratively with the Pastor to seek and obtain external funding through written grants, scholarships, fundraising, and financial aid assistance." Another quality identified was strength in academics, and the posting stated the need for the candidate to "support and administer the school's high educational standards." The

community also identified the need for a relationship builder and motivator, and the posting satisfied that criteria by stating, “We are currently seeking a dynamic, energetic principal ... The candidate will also establish excellent relationships with the Pastor, parents, faculty, staff, students, and parish.” The posting listed the characteristics identified by the focus groups even though the posting was written prior to the focus group meetings.

## **Part II: Selection Process**

The selection process included activities related to Part II of the protocol: team training, structured interviews, and site visits. Selection included applicant screening, candidate interviews, on-site visits, and reference checks.

The thirteen resumes were sent electronically to all of the search committee members via email on April 1 since that was the due date for all applications. The committee member who was a retired school superintendent informed the committee that legally the school must abide by the due date to ensure due diligence (Field notes, March 2013). The committee was asked by the Pastoral Council President to assess the resumes using the rubric included in the hiring protocol (See Appendix B). The committee members were asked to use the rubric and narrow down the applicants to their top three candidates (Email communication, April 1, 2013). The committee met on April 3, 2013 to review their findings.

Table 2 presents the graph the Pastoral Council President used to organize the candidate information. An “X” represents that the information on the candidate’s resume implied that a he or she possessed experience in that area. A blank cell indicates that the resume did not conclusively reveal whether the candidate had that experience. The “Interview” column indicates that the search committee wanted to bring the candidate to campus for an interview.

The ratings one through four in the interview column represents the candidates that are most desired to come in for an interview by consensus of the committee.

The job posting qualifications indicated the candidate must have three to five years of elementary school teaching/administration experience, preferably in a Catholic school. However, the rubric used to assess the candidates came from the protocol, which set a comparatively higher standard that the candidate has an administrative credential. The rubric was not adjusted to match the job posting qualifications. The researcher also found that many of the resumes indicated experience in areas that were not indicated in the graph.

Table 2

*Resume Rubric Results*

Ranking	Candidate	Business	Education	Budget	Credential	Principal Experience	Notes
1	A	X	X	X	X		GEOGRAPHY
2	B	-			X		
3	C		NO ELEM. EIGHTH GRADE		2014	VP	BILINGUAL AUTISM GUIDANCE COUNSELING
4	D		FOURTH GRADE				
5	E		X		X	X	NON-CATHOLIC EDU EXP
XX	F						
XX	G					NO LEADER- SHIP	
XX	H						
XX	I						
XX	J		NO ELEM. EXPERI- ENCE	X			NO EXP NO CRED
XX	K	NON- PROFIT ENTREP	PE				
XX	L						
XX	M						

*Note.* X= information on the candidate's resume implied that he or she possessed experience in that area. A blank cell indicates that the resume did not conclusively reveal whether the candidate had that experience. XX= the candidate was not ranked.

During the April 3, 2013 search committee meeting, the committee set forth an agenda to discuss their top three candidates further and consider inviting the fourth- and fifth-ranked candidates for interviews as well. The Pastor insisted that only three candidates be interviewed due to the tight timeframe that he had set to announce the new principal. Although several committee members expressed their concern, it was quickly confirmed the team would move forward with only three candidates as the Pastor had suggested. The protocol recommends interviewing seven to eight candidates (Meeting minutes, April 3, 2013). The interview schedule was also presented to the committee at this time (Meeting minutes, April 3, 2013).

### **Structured Interviews**

According to the April 3, 2013 Meeting Minutes, the interviews were scheduled for Friday, April 12, 2013. The three interviews would take place over a one-hour period in two sections. The search committee would be broken into two groups. The candidate would first meet with four search committee members in the rectory to answer general questions. The second search committee group made up of the local school principal, the parents, and teacher met with the candidate afterwards and asked more parent- and teacher-focused questions. Following the three interviews, the two search committee groups rejoined to debrief (Meeting minutes, April 3, 2013). The search committee members were then asked to review the interview questions from the hiring protocol, and the team would meet again on April 10, 2013 to finalize interview questions (Meeting minutes, April 3, 2013).

The hiring protocol (See Appendix B) recommended the candidates be asked the same questions and interviewed by the same team members to ensure consistency and fairness across

all candidates. The protocol indicated that depending on size, the school could create subcommittees to represent different needs of the school. When the search committee reconvened on April 10, two of the committee members suggested that all the search committee members should be present for each interview, so that everyone heard the same answers (Field notes, April 10, 2013). The Pastor listened but still insisted that the search committee team members split into two groups of four to interview the candidates. He felt that a group of eight would be too intimidating for the candidates (Field notes, April 10, 2013). The interview questions from the protocol were then divided based on the fit with the group. For example, questions geared toward curriculum and school climate were delegated to the school representatives, while questions focusing on finances and a principal's relationship with the parish were delegated to the parish committee. The subcommittees met prior to the interviews to identify which of the questions provided by the protocol would be used during the interview process. Each committee selected questions from the protocol and added questions such as "Do you have any questions for us?" or "Is there anything you would like to add?" (Field notes, April 10, 2013).

Designated committee members checked the references of the three top candidates prior to the interviews. The protocol Questions for Checking References (See Appendix H) and Checking Written References (See Appendix I) was used to conduct the phone calls and analyze written recommendations. The formal reference checks were all positive for the three candidates (Field notes, April 2013). Even though it was not indicated as a reference check in the protocol, a search committee member visited the website for Candidate A's most recent school employer

where she was able to access parent meeting minutes as well as a letter written from the Pastor to the school community which contained the following:

Since I arrived in July I have learned of a number of concerns that many members of the community have about our school leadership. These concerns were important enough that I contacted the Diocese of \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Catholic Schools to request their assistance ... There are some who wish a change in leadership, and there are some who are pleased with leadership. ... In consultation with Brandon Odom [pseudonym] Superintendent, and with [Assistant Superintendent Karen] Muzzy [pseudonym], we have addressed these issues with Candidate A, our school principal, who will remain as our school principal. (Pastoral letter, October 12, 2012)

The search committee member was also able to locate meeting minutes from a parent club meeting on November 7, 2012 in which parents were able to ask questions of Brandon Odom [BO] the diocesan superintendent:

Parent X: Is there accountability for governance?

BO: Yes. Karen Muzzy [assistant superintendent], Fr. Joe [pseudonym], and I talk. We have been working with many people to get the best direction moving forward. There are yearly evaluations on everyone. Everybody who works at this school is on a year-to-year contract.

Parent Y: We are very grateful to the Diocese and Fr. Joe. We are frustrated because when we bring our concerns forward, we get the response

of, Thank you for bringing it to our attention. We don't get answers to questions that are not that difficult. I can tell you that we've never had so many parents as a meeting, because we are hoping for honest and transparent communication.

BO: If any questions have to do with personnel, I can't talk about it. You have to try to have faith that we are working. I don't go to many meetings, but I came here to listen and talk. (Field notes, April 13, 2013).

By conducting a portion of the reference check online, the search committee member was able to obtain information that allowed the team to have an idea of how the candidate was performing at his or her current site. This process of on-line reference checking was not applied consistently across candidates.

After the interviews were conducted for Candidate A, Candidate B, and Candidate C, the two committees assembled to share their findings. Each member was asked to rank the candidates in order of best fit to least. The protocol does not offer suggestions on how to conduct the post-interview discussions. The parish committee unanimously placed Candidate C as their first choice, whereas the school committee unanimously placed Candidate B as their top choice. As the parish committee began to explain their ranking, a member of the school committee voiced the concern that none of the candidates were the right choice. The suggestion was made to return to the pool of applicants to identify other candidates that may be brought in for interviews (Field notes, April 13, 2013). If the protocol had been followed, the team would

have not had to take the time and effort at this point in the process because more candidates would have initially been interviewed.

After reviewing the resumes again as a group, the full search committee agreed to bring in Candidate D, Candidate H, and Candidate I. Although it was expressed that the team should interview as one large group due to the prior discrepancy, the Pastor decided to continue with the separate groups to ensure consistency among all candidates. Throughout the process it seemed to fluctuate when consistency was needed—the online reference check was an inconsistency that was permitted to inform the selection process.

The three candidates were reference checked, and subsequently, each one met with the two committees for interviews. The committees used the same questions as were used in the previous round of interviews. The two committees then reconvened as a full group. Again each person was asked to rank all the candidates. The Pastoral Council members all ranked Candidate C as their first choice with Candidate H receiving two second- and two third-place rankings. The school committee members all ranked Candidate H as their first choice, with Candidate C and Candidate I splitting the second- and third-place votes. The group then discussed why they ranked the candidates as they did. It was agreed that Candidate C and Candidate H would be invited back to meet with the Pastor. The Pastor was present for the final debriefing to hear each committee's opinions on the candidates.

### **Site Visits**

After the six interviews, two of the committee members were invited back to meet with the Pastor and the regional supervisor on April 22, 2013. Due to the short timeframe available for the hiring process, the candidate did not conduct an authentic task at the site visit as the



protocol suggests (See Appendix B). The protocol suggested that the candidate conduct a professional development or participate in a parent coffee for committee members to assess a task that is part of the daily job. The Pastor and regional supervisor were the only ones to meet with the candidates during the site visit. The regional supervisor had not been part of the process until this point, so was not apprised of any of the findings during the resume review or interviews.

### **Final Selection**

The Pastor then contacted the selected candidate and offered the Candidate H the job. On April 23, 2013, the search committee members were copied on an email to Candidate C to let her know that she had not received the job. The researcher was emailed later that day by the regional supervisor who confirmed that the Pastor would be meeting with Candidate H to sign her contract on April 26, 2013 (Email communication, April 24, 2013).

Rosary Catholic School implemented the protocol and followed the majority of the guidelines. They adhered strictly to the recommended procedures in establishing a pool of candidates and identifying the needs of their community. The search committee made several changes that confirmed the importance of sticking to the protocol including thoroughly reviewing the resumes and breaking into two committees for the structured interviews. They also made a few changes that helped to better the protocol such as including a local Catholic school principal and conducting a focus group to identify the needs of a community.

### **Participants' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Hiring Protocol**

To gain insight into the study's second central research question about the stakeholders' perceptions of the hiring protocol, the researcher conducted interviews with several members of

the search committee immediately following the announcement of the hired candidate. The researcher invited all eight search committee members and the Pastor of Rosary Catholic School to participate in interviews about their experience with applying the elements of the hiring protocol. Four search committee members agreed to respond to interview questions regarding the implementation of the hiring protocol: the Pastoral Council President, a past parent who is a member of the Pastoral finance council, a faculty member, and the parent association president. The Pastor was not available to respond to interview questions about the protocol. The researcher again reached out to the search committee for an interview after the hired candidate had been in her position for a little over six months. At that later stage, five of the search committee members responded: the Pastoral Council President, a past parent who is a member of the Pastoral finance council, a faculty member, the parent association president and a member of the Pastoral Council. An analysis of data gathered in the initial interviews with four of the search committee members indicates that, overall, the search committee found the protocol to be helpful in the hiring process. The search committee deemed the organization of the process and the sample interview questions to be the most helpful. Respondents believed that the resume rubric required some adjustments and revisions to make it more useful during the hiring process. The latter interviews suggest that the search committee members were split in whether or not the hired candidate was the right fit.

Overall, the participants found the process outlined in the protocol to be helpful in facilitating the search for a new principal. While the Pastor did receive a packet from the Archdiocese including Archdiocesan instructions and guidelines for the hiring process, the Search Committee found the protocol addressing the process step by step to be helpful in

structuring the overall hiring process. In the following excerpts, search committee members offered positive comments about the usefulness of the protocol as an organizational tool:

[The protocol] provided the team with structure for specific categories that delineated the qualities [of] leadership: Catholic Identity, Financial Management, Personnel Management, etc. (Pastoral Council President, May 23, 2013)

Having a process that we could start with and then could be tailored to our specific needs helped to cut the initial set up of the search committee and define our goals. (Pastoral Council Finance Member, May 20, 2013)

I was not available during the first meeting, which I believe was the resume-screening meeting. I think the ‘protocol’ worked in the sense that the parish, faculty and parents were represented in the search. What worried me was that had the parent/faculty group not been as vocal/aggressive, the process might have been abbreviated and the selection could have been compromised. The interview questions were set up to ensure questions were being asked to identify leadership in all the categories needed. (Parent Association President, May 20, 2013)

I find [the protocol] helped and hindered the process. It was my understanding that the Archdiocese opened up the job position, which did eliminate those interested to have already been involved or familiar with the Catholic school systems. That could be both a good or bad things. Good, if the particular school

was looking for someone previously affiliated; bad, because it limited who applied. (Teacher, June 25, 2013)

The above responses indicated the first time that the Catholic Identity of a candidate was specifically mentioned. It was not mentioned during the interview process nor identified as a strength the candidate needed. In the response provided by the teacher it indicated that experience in a Catholic school might not be a requirement from her perspective.

Once the candidate had officially started at Rosary Catholic School, the researcher was able to sit down and get the hired candidate's perceptions of the process. The hired candidate had been interviewing at other sites, but the candidate felt that this process was the most in-depth.

The process was very thorough. The questions truly reflected the school and the staff needs. (Hired Candidate, September 19, 2013)

After the hired candidate had occupied the principal position at Rosary Catholic School for several months the committee members were asked to revisit their perceptions of the protocol's effectiveness. Overall the committee remained positive about the protocol. The researcher was provided with the following responses:

I think the hiring protocol / screening process was effective in the sense that it brought out creative discussions on varied opinions on the various candidates. I would say that we selected the right candidate among the pool that emerged from the geographic search. (Parent Association President, March 6, 2014)

Our particular hiring protocol helped to see the different aspects of the candidates from multiple focus groups. This multilayer approach along with discussions between the groups helped us to pinpoint the characteristics that we said that we needed for the position. (Pastoral Council Finance Member, March 5, 2014)

The search committee members expressed satisfaction with the protocol's usefulness in ensuring a well-organized search. Those interviewed appreciated the protocol's emphasis on identifying candidates who possessed all of the desired leadership qualities and seemed pleased with how the protocol succeeded in representing the interests of multiple groups of stakeholders (e.g., "truly reflected the school and staff needs," "the parish, faculty and parents were represented in the search"). Other respondents praised the protocol's role in making the search process more rigorous ("thorough") and efficient ("cut the initial set up"). Only two negative remarks emerged from this query. Specifically, one respondent expressed concern that the success of the protocol depended on the parent/faculty group taking the initiative to be "vocal / aggressive." The other concern raised was about whether the job search should include applicants that applied after the deadline passed.

### **Choosing the Right Candidate**

During the interviews with the researcher, the search committee was also asked to describe how the protocol led them to find the candidate that matched the identified needs of the school community. Their initial reactions of the hired candidate fostered the following:

I think the protocol attempted to establish a more "scientific" process which I think is fair to the candidates. I think the right candidate was chosen in part

because of the uniformity of the questions as well as characteristics that became apparent during the interview process; maturity, self-confidence and determination. (Parent Association President, May 20, 2013)

Entirely from my perspective, I feel like [the local Catholic school principal] had a lot to do with the ability to select the right candidate for the position. That being said, I feel it absolutely necessary for the search committee to include at the very least, a principal in the Archdiocese, preferably one who has connections and can give adequate input! (Teacher, June 25, 2013)

I think that we were in a unique position because we had so many people on the committee with professional hiring experience that to decide to use this protocol that was made especially for hiring a Catholic school principal helped tremendously. We could use the tailor-made edition. It was really nice because people on the committee that were not familiar with any hiring protocols may not have felt that one or two people were leading the initial search. (Past Parent, May 20, 2013)

Overall, the search committee members responded positively to the protocol. The data collected in interviews and field notes suggest that members felt it to be more scientific, the right candidate was chosen, the uniformity of questions allowed for continuity, and they were able to tailor the protocol to meet their school's needs. The final observation made by the past parent brings to light the issue that no matter how thorough the protocol, the search committee members

and their backgrounds or experiences hold much influence. The participants played a large role in interpreting the candidates' attributes against the leadership needs identified for that site.

### **Finding the Right Fit**

At the beginning of the search process, Rosary Catholic School stakeholders identified that their ideal school principal would have the following strengths: Financial, Academic, Relationship Builder, and Motivational. During their interviews with the researcher, the search committee members were invited to reflect on the extent to which they felt the hiring protocol had assisted them in finding this type of leader. The interviewed search committee members found the protocol effective, as evidenced by the following remarks:

Based on the protocol, the committee was able to identify the categories important for a new school leader. (Pastoral Council President, May 23, 2013)

I think it helped that those needs were identified as the critical characteristics, and was incorporated in the questions. (Parent Association President, May 20, 2013)

I feel the questions we were able to form based on the concerns of each member of the hiring committee really assisted us in finding the type of leader suitable of those attributes. Each member brought certain concerns and was able to formulate question in scenario based situations that would or would not lead to the appropriate response. (Teacher, June 25, 2013)

Having two different groups to interview each candidate gave two different perspectives that we could compare and contrast when we came together as a whole group. In this respect I think that the protocol led us to select the right candidate for our school. (Pastoral Council Finance Member, May 20, 2013)

The interviewed search committee members agreed that the protocol provided them with the structure and the questions they required to identify a candidate that met the needs of their school. Not only was the protocol useful in delineating the categories (“based on the protocol, the committee was able to identify the categories important for a new school leader,” “those needs were identified as the critical characteristics”), but the protocol established a firm connection between the leadership qualities and the interview questions. This latter point comes through explicitly in the Parent Association President’s remark that the leadership qualities were “incorporated into the questions” and indirectly in the Teacher’s comment that the questions aided the committee in finding a “suitable” leader.

Six months after the candidate was hired, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with several of the search committee members and the newly hired principal. Unfortunately, the feedback from the search committee members at the six-month follow-up was less unanimously positive:

Our new principal seemed to match all of the areas mentioned with the exception of finance. This area was not a strong point since there was no professional experience in her resume. However, she was aware of her lack of expertise and very willing to learn from many sources in her field. It seems that our new



principal has demonstrated strength in the areas the hiring teams indicated. The school environment, the faculty and staff and the curriculum seem to be much improved in a few short months. (Pastoral Council Finance Member, March 5, 2014)

Our new principal does have many great ideas; however, our finances have not changed much. She has been proactive about collecting tuition. Although our Pastor has indicated that finances are not any better than in years past. She has been able to bridge gaps regarding finances with the parish and the School. (Teacher, March 26, 2014)

Our new principal has updated our Religion curriculum in all grades and has been proactive about obtaining new Reading/Language Arts curriculum. However, we run into a financial problem again. She has organized a few opportunities for professional development including Common Core workshops. She has also had our students participate in some learning fairs. (Teacher, March 26, 2014)

I believe she has leadership. I am not sure how she is doing with the other traits. It would be good to hear from the parents and the finance council on this to get a clearer picture. (Past Parent, January 18, 2014)

The individual selected has not exhibited any financial responsibility, any academic planning, has severed relationships with institutional families and has further damaged the motivation of the parents and teachers. (Parent Association President, March 6, 2014)

There have been no big improvements in [relationship builder and motivational] strengths of a leader. Our principal has ideas that she tries to implement; however, her visibility lacks the opportunity for these ideas to follow through. (Teacher, March 26, 2014).

The responses varied to which strengths the hired candidate possessed and for the most part provided supporting data to defend their perspective. The most stark response provided no feedback nor did it provide specific examples. The participants were split on whether or not they felt that the hired candidate still was the best fit for their school site. Earlier it had been identified that the site was in need of a high relationship, high task leader. The responses above are inconclusive and vary in regards to whether the hired candidate has strength in either category as the respondents were not consistent.

When the hired candidate was asked if she felt as though she was a relational or task oriented leader, she responded, “I feel that I am both. There needs to be a balance in a school setting. One needs to have vision as well as meet the day to day needs of the school” (Hired Candidate, September 19, 2013). The importance of this self-reported data is that the candidate identifies the same balance that stakeholders identified early in the search process.

When the hired candidate was asked eight months into her position whether she felt that her leadership style was a good fit for Rosary Catholic School, she said that she still felt that it was a good fit, but that she had encountered a few challenges (Field notes, February 18, 2014). She clarified with the following response during her interview:

I have had to change my leadership style to fit the needs of the Pastor. I think we have some cultural differences and I have had to alter my approach and tone with him to be less aggressive in how I approach things. (Hired Candidate, February 18, 2014)

The hired candidate went on to share that she is making change and if a few people are not comfortable with it they go immediately to the Pastor and he supports those few people instead of her as the principal (Field notes, February 18, 2014). This data highlights the importance of not only the Pastor in the hiring process, but in the day-to-day effectiveness of the principal once occupying the job. Unfortunately, the Pastor did not respond, so his perspective is not accounted for in these data.

### **Adjusting the Protocol**

During the interviews, the search committee members were asked what, if anything, they would have liked to change about the protocol. Their suggestions for altering the protocol are given in the following excerpts:

I think a group introduction and closing meeting are needed. I might have missed the introduction, but I know we did not have a closing meeting, wherein we discuss the decision, not as a means to change it if we are in disagreement, but

more to loop everyone in on the aspects of the final choice. (Parent Association President, May 20, 2013)

If I could change anything about the hiring protocol I would have definitely liked to really research each of the candidates, I would maybe eliminate some of the [search committee] members, although their input was appreciated, it might not have been necessary. I would have also liked to interview each candidate in one large group, that way we were all hearing the same answers, reading the same body language, and feeling the same moods. I would have also gone about the numbering situation at the end differently. Maybe done a pro and con of each and not just graded. I'm new to the process but I'm sure there is a better way to come together and formulate ratings of each candidate. (Teacher, June 25, 2013)

If there was something I could change it would be having a more defined way in presenting our interview impressions, determinations and evaluations to the entire hiring committee after the interviews of each separate group and not make determinations within our separate groups. In the first round of interviews, each of the two interview groups had separate discussions and then we all met. I found that this led to each group having to defend their choices not discuss the candidates. Since each group came up with, in some cases, entirely different impressions and evaluations of some candidates, it took the focus off the candidates and directed it towards us. It polarized the individual groups instead of

making it more cohesive and productive. Our next round of interviews was so much better. The whole committee and each interview group knew that the last meeting was really off base so a concerted effort was made to make sure the focus was on our goal. It was a natural tendency to create a protocol or agenda with rules outlined and stated so that the discussion would remain professional and productive. Having a well thought out protocol each step of the way seemed to insure that every member of the hiring committee could give their opinions no matter how much experience they had in interviewing and hiring. (Past Parent, May 20, 2013)

The participants have identified the need for more structure in areas in which subjectivity can become detrimental. Structure to the post-interview discussions was identified as a high need.

Several months later, the interviewed search committee members had more specific concerns regarding the process:

I think the hiring protocol is fine, my issue is the accountability and the so called checks and balances. The ability to evaluate progress and address issues before decisions are made. I think there were telling signs in the reference check process that may have hinted at the outcome. (Parent Association President, March 6, 2014)

The hiring protocol could have been improved by having our teams formed and meet to decide exact criteria and questions for each focus team. Since each team did not have foreknowledge of the questions of the other teams it caused some

confusion and misunderstanding when the teams discussed their individual interviews. Another helpful tool would be to set up guidelines for discussions of candidates. Having clearly written guidelines for everyone involved would help everyone to focus on their particular goals in the group. Have a specific moderator for each team and the main discussion group. A moderator that has experience would be ideal. The moderator would have helped to guide the questions, discussions and general organization of the meetings. (Pastoral Council Finance Member, March 5, 2014)

We were so focused on our previous leader's weaknesses that we didn't consider the basic recommendations of a principal, i.e., attendance, punctuality, visibility, participation, proximity, vested interest, etc. We should have been more elaborate in our questions and given more situational questions. (Teacher, March 26, 2014)

In addition, when the hired candidate asked if there was anything she would change, she responded:

I wouldn't change anything. I really enjoyed the process. The way the process was set up you couldn't fake your answers. You truly had to have a Catholic background and do research to understand the cultural beliefs and needs of Rosary Catholic school. (Hired Candidate, September 19, 2013)

The interviewees' ideas for how to change the process were all focused on areas in which the hiring protocol was not followed. In several of the candidates' responses it was noted that

the protocol should take into consideration the members of the committee and their experiences and backgrounds. It should also take into account the Pastor's role and his final say at all stages of the process.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the search committee felt the protocol organized the process for them and allowed them to identify the key characteristics needed for a future leader. However, as the hired candidate has started in her role, the search committee members provided differing opinions as to whether or not the identified needs for Rosary Catholic School had been fulfilled. Due to the Pastor's role in the process as well as being the supervisor to the hired candidate it is unfortunate to not have been able to collect data regarding his perspective. After repeated attempts, he did not respond.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This case study on the implementation of a protocol advanced the development of a formalized hiring protocol for school use with principal candidates. The study addressed two central research questions:

- 1) To what extent did Rosary Catholic School implement the hiring protocol?
- 2) What were the stakeholders' perceptions of the hiring protocol?

This chapter first addresses the first research question, regarding the extent to which the search committee actually used the protocol as intended by the researcher. The next section addresses the perceptions of the search committee in regard to whether or not the hired candidate met the identified qualities for the new leader. Next, the major findings and conclusions of the study are recounted. The results are connected to both the theoretical framework and findings from previous relevant scholarship. Finally, the implications of this study are addressed, including recommendations for future research.

#### **Committee Often But Did Not Always Followed Protocol**

As the task of hiring a new principal can be fraught with challenges, the protocol aims to ease the process by creating structure and providing practical tools that encourage fairness, efficiency, and transparency in a school and committee's search for the "right" candidate. The experience of implementing the hiring protocol at Rosary Catholic revealed many useful insights into how the protocol can be implemented and revised to better serve the needs of future search committees. Drawing on the insights of the case study, this section describes how the protocol should be adjusted to better meet the needs of future search committees.



The search committee implemented the protocol to the extent that they could due to the researcher joining after the process was already underway. Due to the time constraints, the researcher found the process seemed rushed, which both helped and hindered the implementation of the protocol. Because the committee members perceived the protocol as a time-saving device, they relied heavily on it to guide their process. In this respect, time constraints encouraged the committee's use of the protocol. Simultaneously, however, certain stages of the protocol could have been implemented more thoroughly if time had allowed. For example, since the search committee had already been formed and several of the committee members had a background in hiring, the training for the protocol was not done since the process had already begun. Other items (e.g., the resume rubric) were not altered to fit the job description posted by Rosary Catholic School nor did time permit for the principal candidates to present an authentic task.

### **Implementation of the Protocol**

After conducting the case study of the implementation of the hiring protocol, the researcher recommends several key changes to the protocol to better assist the hiring of the right fit principal for each school site: At the preparation stage, four key changes are recommended: include the regional supervisor at the initial stage, an introductory training meeting, the inclusion of a local Catholic school principal on the search committee, and an option for input from parent and faculty focus groups. During the selection process, adapt rubric to ensure a uniform approach in reviewing resumes, search committee interviews a candidate as one team, create a standardized rubric for online research of candidate, and standardize discussions post-interviews. During the final selection stage, the findings from the Leadership Needs Survey should be shared with the hired candidate.

## **Preparation**

It is important for the protocol to be implemented from the initial stage of the principal search. Recruitment decisions can be life changing; therefore, the effectiveness of the recruitment program is of great importance (Webb & Norton, 2003). It is essential that the school has evaluated its current reality prior to defining the needs for a future leader. Contacting the regional supervisor at the Department of Catholic Schools will provide a needed perspective of the school's current reality. The regional supervisor would have information regarding standardized testing and how the school compares to other Catholic schools as well as whether or not the reports due to the Archdiocese are being submitted (i.e., budget, WCEA documents). Before any action is taken to recruit for a vacant position, an assessment of needs must be performed (Webb & Norton, 2003). Unfortunately, since the researcher entered the site after the search process had already commenced, it was logistically impossible to schedule an introductory training with the search committee to define goals, needs, and priorities before the candidate search was underway. Winter (1998) recommended preparatory training for interviewers, particularly teachers, who may search for an instructional leader and overlook other administrative qualities. The need for such training was apparent to the Pastoral Council President, who remarked, "It would have been beneficial if the protocol had been verbally explained and the committee members would have been told how it can help" (May 23, 2013). At this meeting a facilitator should be appointed to lead the committee through the search process. In the absence of an introductory meeting to give the search committee an overview of the protocol and the search process as a whole, several inefficiencies arose. Had the whole protocol been presented to the committee in a formal session, questions could have been raised

and addressed prior to the start of the hiring process. Instead, issues arose throughout the process, such as the number of candidates to be interviewed that affected consistent review across all applicants.

In the initial protocol, it was not explicitly recommended to have a local Catholic school principal as part of the search committee. After implementing the protocol at Rosary, a setting in which the Pastor included a principal from a neighboring Catholic school on the search committee, it was evident what an essential role this individual played in the process. Several persons should be part of the interview process such as diocesan representatives, pastors, current principals, and students' parents who are not professional educators (Manno, 1985). The principal understands the current reality of the job and can listen with a critical ear to candidates' responses, registering information that people without this specific professional experience will not be attuned to. One of the search committee members was a parishioner who had served as a public school principal prior to serving as superintendent. However, this particular individual had since retired and was unable to provide the Catholic school aspect that can differ greatly from public schools. Due to the difference in job descriptions of a Catholic school principal and of a public school principal, it is critical to have a Catholic school principal who knows the unique needs of the position. Depending on the circumstances of why the current principal is leaving the school, the Pastor can decide to include that person or not. The current principal can bring insight that no other person can provide. If this is not in the best interest to the process, a team member may wish to reach out to the current principal for their insight.

The protocol calls for a survey to be administered to faculty, staff, and parents. Rosary instead opted for two separate focus groups: one for faculty/staff and one for parents. The

researcher would add this as an option to the protocol depending on the needs of the school site as well as the timeline allotted for the search. Depending on the school population, focus groups may be well suited to accessing the opinions and needs of the school community. The focus groups may also allow shareholders to share concerns not listed on the survey. The focus groups also maximized the strengths of two committees' membership.

### **Establishing Pool of Candidates**

Rosary Catholic School did an effective job in preparing a job description that matched the school's needs, though it was written and posted prior to the implementation of the hiring protocol. According to Whaley (2002), "an announcement that lists the special needs and characteristics of a school is more likely to attract good candidates, as well as increase the chances of selecting the right person for the job" (p. 14). Rosary Catholic had several parishioners with strong interviewing backgrounds, which significantly aided in the development of the job posting. If a Pastor is not familiar with the interviewing process, including members on the search committee who possess such a background could be beneficial to help develop the job posting, conduct the focus groups, and review the resumes.

### **Selection Process**

**Team training.** After implementing the protocol at Rosary, the researcher recommends reevaluating how resumes are reviewed. Critical information was overlooked in the resume rubric process. The revised protocol should instruct the search committee to review resumes as a team to ensure specific certifications and experience are not overlooked. Clifford (2010) recommended conducting a blind review of applications by eliminating names and significant identifiers from applications in order to reduce biases. After the committee decided to interview

more candidates, the search committee as a group revisited the resumes. The local Catholic school principal was able to give insight into the role of vice principal at some Catholic schools and how that experience could look different at each site. The committee gave more value to other leadership experiences even if they were not given a title such as vice principal.

Additionally, it seemed as though committee members overlooked some relevant degrees earned by the candidates if they did not fit a specific title. For instance, a candidate with a doctorate was overlooked because he did not have a master's degree in administration.

The revised protocol should make explicit that the rubric used to evaluate resumes must match the qualifications listed in the job description. In this case study, the protocol rubric that was used to evaluate the resumes was not adjusted to match the qualifications that were identified in the job posting. As discussed in the literature review (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Collins, 2001; Kotter 1988; Kouzes & Posner, 2007), the school's goal is to find the best fitting candidate for their particular site; therefore, the protocol should specifically state that the resume rubric must be adjusted to fit those needs. What one site may value, may be less relevant at another. The researcher also recommends that the protocol be followed to interview five to eight candidates. In the case study, three initial candidates were selected for interviews. When the search committee failed to reach consensus on which of these candidates would be best suited for the position, the committee had to backtrack to the resume review stage to select additional candidates for interviews. Returning to the resumes after the first round of interviews created two problems: first, it made the process less efficient, and more importantly, it made the evaluation process inconsistent across candidates.

**Structured interviews.** Like the resume rubric, candidate interview questions must be crafted to reflect the needs of the school. Rosary Catholic was effective in evaluating the provided questions to match the questions with the site's needs. The researcher advises future search committees against splitting the committee into two interview teams. It was evident from the interview data that Rosary's decision to split into two teams for the candidate interviews proved to be problematic in subsequent discussions of the preferred candidates. Rather, it is essential for all members of the committee to hear the answers to all of the interview questions. While it might be intimidating for the candidate, it is key to arriving at a mutually agreed-upon candidate. The candidate will have to acclimate to speaking to large bodies of adults, so this also can serve as a test of that skill. According to Webb and Norton (2003), the employment interview is an attempt to predict the job performance of an applicant one year after hiring. The protocol did not take into account the members' tendency to informally discuss candidates immediately after the interview. Ideally, this would not happen, but initial impressions can serve as valuable information as well. The protocol should also provide guidelines to standardized post-interview discussions. The participants felt that the ranking activity that Rosary Elementary Catholic School chose to do did not meet their needs. They felt it would have been beneficial to discuss candidates prior to ranking the candidates. Meeting as one large group promotes greater efficiency and transparency. It saves committee members from having to relay information back and forth, which takes time and creates opportunities for miscommunication. The number of search committee members can be altered based on the size of the school site.

Reference checks were administered for each candidate. The protocol provides reference check sheets for both written recommendations and phone call recommendations. One

committee member went online to research one candidate's school site and found information for the committee about that person's role at their current site. The researcher would recommend that if online research is conducted as part of candidates' background checks that this process be applied uniformly to every candidate as this is best hiring protocol. Search committees may find that online research into candidates' current and previous school sites can provide a broader picture of the candidates' accomplishments and potential. The protocol should be revised to include an additional reference sheet to standardize this type of online reference search.

The protocol suggested that the reference checks be conducted after the interviews. Rosary Catholic School conducted the reference checks prior to the interviews. The researcher would recommend that the protocol be followed as it would save time to only conduct reference checks on the candidates moving forward and prevent committee members from bringing preconceived impressions of the candidates into the interview setting.

An additional item should be added to the resume rubric and reference checks to note the number of school changes in relation to the number of years serving schools. Often, the amount of time spent at one school site can be indicative of the candidate's performance at the school; whereas in other cases, there may be specific circumstances such as relocation or being asked to take over a failing school.

**Site visits.** The protocol recommends that the final two candidates visit the school site and to demonstrate a task that is related to the principal role there such as a leading faculty through professional development or hosting a parent coffee. Due to time constraints, the search committee in this case study opted to skip this step. However, the researcher reiterates the value of this step of the protocol, because skipping it prevents the search committee from seeing the

candidate in an important “real-world” application of their skill set. According to Clifford (2010) the on-site visit should include authentic tasks such as data reviews, building walk-throughs, and teacher observations.

### **Final Selection**

In a parish Catholic school, the Pastor always has final choice in the hiring process (Canon Law, 1983). One can hope that the Pastor, if not experienced in hiring, will utilize the multiple resources that are available. These resources can include the information sent by the Archdiocese, including the Department of Catholic Schools regional supervisor in the final selection stages or information provided by the search committee. The protocol should be revised to recommend that the regional supervisor from the Department of Catholic Schools provide input in the final selection of the candidate. This regional supervisor works with principals in the yearly submitting of various documents as well as assisting the hired principal in running the school as needed. Although the Pastor is the hired principal’s official boss, the regional supervisor works with the principal directly in a variety of circumstances.

The results of the Leadership Needs Survey should be shared with the hired candidate. The school community has clearly identified its needs and it would benefit the leader to know exactly what areas have been identified. This will also allow the hired candidate to identify the “followers’ job maturity and psychological maturity” (Fiore, 2004, p. 31). For Situational Leadership Theory to be successful, it is crucial that the leader be able to recognize the readiness of levels of his or her followers.

An overarching theme throughout the implementation of the protocol was time. Rosary Catholic School will most likely not be the only school that encounters this problem. The



researcher would change the protocol to address the issue of time by highlighting what parts of the protocol should not be skipped if time constraints are presented.

### **Participants' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Hiring Protocol**

To gain insight into the study's second central research question about the stakeholders' perceptions of the hiring protocol, the researcher conducted interviews with several members of the search committee. The researcher invited all eight search committee members and the Pastor of Rosary Catholic School to participate in interviews about their experience with applying the elements of the hiring protocol. Four search committee members agreed to respond to interview questions regarding the implementation of the hiring protocol: the Pastoral Council President, a past parent who is a member of the Pastoral finance council, a faculty member, and the parent association president. After the six-month period, five of the search committee members responded: the Pastoral Council President, a past parent who is a member of the Pastoral Finance Council, a faculty member, the parent association president and a member of the Pastoral Council. The researcher believed that the non-response from the remaining three participants was attributable to a few different reasons. The researcher believed that busy schedules for the Pastoral Council member and the parent caused them to not respond. The Pastoral Council member and the researcher had set up a phone interview, but another meeting caused the Pastoral Council member had to cancel the interview. Later follow-up yielded no response from the Pastoral Council member. For the parent who had a full-time job, served as a coach, and had a family, no response was given at any time via email or a returned phone call. The researcher assumes this was due to an impacted schedule. The lack of response from the Pastor was disappointing because he had the ultimate choice as well as oversees the candidate on a daily

basis. The researcher believed initially there was not a specific reason for the response except for a busy schedule and lack of interest in the study. However, after speaking with the hired candidate and hearing about their initial interactions, the researcher believed he possibly did not reach out because they were experiencing challenges in working together (Field notes, February 2014). The perceptions of the interviewed search committee members changed between the initial interviews at the time of the candidate's hiring and the follow-up interview, which took place six to eight months into the new principal's contract.

### **Choosing the Right Candidate**

The majority of search committee members interviewed responded to the protocol positively. The data collected in the interviews and field notes suggested that the search committee members felt it was a more scientific approach to identifying the right candidate. It was also evident that the background and knowledge of the specific people who make up the search committee are of critical importance. It is essential to have search committee members who possess experience in hiring as well as members who understand the day-to-day duties of a principal. The researcher was disappointed that the search committee member who had served as a superintendent and a principal in a local school district did not respond. The researcher believed that this could have been because he felt superseded by the presentation of the hiring protocol because up until that point he had served as the experienced search committee member leading the committee through the hiring process.

### **Finding the Right Fit**

The interviewed search committee members differed in their opinions in whether or not the right fit had been found for their particular school site. The researcher believed these

differing opinions may have been due to the case study's limitations of not allowing the hired candidate enough time to serve in the role as well as people often having an adverse initial reaction to change.

One committee member worked with the hired candidate on the parish level and found that she had all but one of the identified qualities needed in a leader. In contrast, the parent association president felt that she did not have any of the qualities. According to the hired candidate, the parent association president does not always support her because she does not always decide to do what he thinks is best (Field notes, February 2014). Due to the fact that the hired candidate is now onsite and possibly making decisions that are not always pleasing to all stakeholders, this potentially had an effect on the interviewed search committee members' perceptions on finding the right fit for their school.

The teacher who served as a member of the search committee offered insights as well, specifically, that the hired candidate might be lacking basic qualities of a leader in regards to punctuality, visibility, and vested interest. For effective leadership, vision and focus are the qualities that are identified as needed (Collins, 2001; Kotter, 1988; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). However, another quality that is often mentioned is commitment or passion (Collins, 2001; Kotter, 1988). The above mention of lack of visibility and tardiness can reflect in a leader not being viewed as committed to the job they are doing. The teacher was concerned that the team was focused on the higher level needs while some of the day-to-day task needs were overlooked. Her responses affirm the need for what Bolman and Deal (2008) identified in the Situational Leadership Model as a High Relationship, High Task Leader. Based on the interviewed teacher's responses, the faculty seems motivated but they do not feel able. It seems as though

the school's finances are a debilitating component. It is surprising to the researcher that the principal has been proactive in ensuring the collection of tuition, yet the Pastor reports that finances have not improved. In Catholic schools, tuition combined with development covers the majority of the operating budget.

One of the search committee members, the parent association president, mentioned that he took issue with the checks and balances of the protocol and that the committee ignored "telling signs in the reference check process that may have hinted at the outcome." The researcher revisited the reference check documents to identify the "telling signs"; however, only positives were noted, and the reference check was conducted by that particular search committee member (Field notes, April 2013). The researcher believed that this had to do with the hired candidate making some changes that the committee member, as a parent, did not like (Field notes, February 2014).

### **Strengths and Limitations**

A noteworthy strength of this particular committee was that four out of the eight search committee members had a background in hiring, which the researcher believed helped ease the implementation of the protocol. For instance, the retired superintendent had used a hiring process similar to the format of the hiring protocol. A limitation was that the study was done at only one school site. This search committee might have been idiosyncratic in their perceptions of the process. Another limitation of the study was that not all the search committee members responded to the request for an interview, and the replies were not consistent between the initial interviews and the six-month follow-up. The Pastor never responded even after several attempts. Time also served to be a limitation in the implementation of the hiring protocol. The time

constraints set by Rosary Catholic School put pressure on the search committee that resulted in them skipping several steps in the process that ultimately affected the process.

### **Future Research**

Future scholarly research should focus on the Pastor's role in the hiring process. While it is important to include multiple stakeholders, the principal-Pastor relationship is the most important because the Pastor is the one to oversee the principal on a daily basis, and if they do not have a good working relationship, it can be problematic for the running of the school. Assessing the needs of the school and addressing the Pastor's strengths according to Situational Leadership Theory could have an immediate impact on the needs of the right fit principal. At Rosary School, there has been a large learning curve for the principal and adjusting her leadership temperament to best serve the Pastor (Field notes, February 2014). Even if a principal is a perfect fit for a school site, without the Pastor's support, it is close to impossible for that leader to be successful.

Research should also be done to evaluate the current principal role at the elementary Catholic school level. Are today's principal job demands too much for one individual? It is nearly impossible for one individual to possess strengths in all areas needed. Other dioceses, such as the Diocese of Orange, have a more centralized structure. This organizational structure allows principals at each local site more time to oversee faculty and staff as well as the day-to-day operations of their school instead of tasks such as managing human resources.

The researcher would also ask the hired candidate about her feelings toward her faculty and staff because the Situational Leadership Model is tied directly to the leader's perceptions of her followers (Fiore, 2004). If a leader identifies the followers as able but insecure, he or she

may take an approach of leading through support while followers identified as unable and insecure would benefit from directing. The researcher in conversation was able to gather that the hired candidate did have positive feelings toward the staff and felt they were able, but did not specifically ask.

If this study were to be replicated, the researcher would recommend that the relationship should be one of complete observer or participant observer. As a search committee member fulfilling the role as a local Catholic school principal, the researcher felt it was her obligation to use her knowledge to help Rosary Catholic School select the best principal candidate possible. The researcher believed that had she not been conducting the survey she would have engaged in a similar manner, but to ensure that that variable be controlled she would change the researcher's role in future case studies.

### **Conclusion**

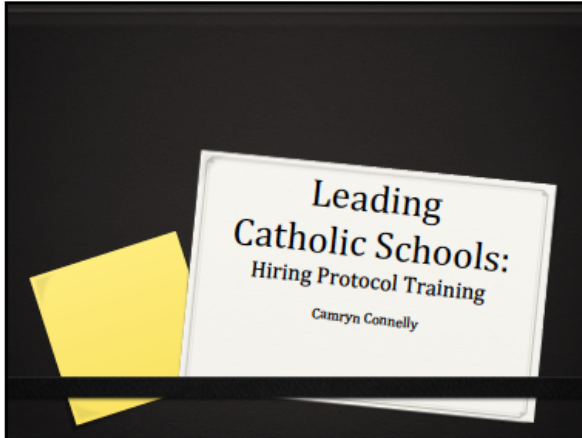
Overall, the implementation of the hiring protocol was effective in that it highlighted changes to be made, but it also confirmed much of the research designed protocol such as organization, identifying specific leadership needs, and having all search committee members conducting one group interview for a candidate. It provided a structure to the process that was needed by the committee. The researcher intends to make the changes discussed above and to help other schools in their hiring of a principal. The majority of the changes suggested were directly related to items in the protocol that the committee did not follow. If the search committee had followed the protocol explicitly, many of the concerns that arose could have been avoided. Additionally, multiple interviewees did not reiterate suggestions for change. This

suggests that, rather than honing in on structural weaknesses or problems in the protocol that posed challenges for everyone, people's ideas for change were more or less idiosyncratic.

This case study supports the research in interviewing protocols because it affirms the fact that each site has specific needs in a leader that need to be identified prior to the interviewing process. The research also helped shape the interview questions to align these identified needs to questions that could be asked to gauge the expertise in each area for the candidates. Due to the fact that the case study supports situational leadership over universal leadership, it is key to note that the hiring protocol is flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs of each specific school site.

## APPENDIX A

### Hiring Protocol Training



#### Overview

- Congratulations! If you are sitting here today, it means you have been chosen to be part of the search committee!
- So, what now?
  - Agenda
    - Overview of Process
    - Fill out proper paperwork
    - Timeline

#### First Steps

- Send survey to stakeholders
- Discuss and try to define what the school needs in the next principal
- Review the current job description and modify if needed
- Does the feedback from the stakeholders align with search committee discussions?
- Ensure school's website is up-to-date

#### Pool of Candidates

- Once qualifications are clarified and a job posting is written...
  - Post on Archdiocesan website
  - Advertise through graduate programs such as LMU and MSMC



## Team Training

- Review state and Archdiocesan standards for principals
- Rate a mock application
  - Discuss our decisions as a group
- Conduct blind review of resumes received
  - Names will be blacked out
  - Use rating scale found in Appendix C of your hiring protocol

## Interviews

- Designated person will contact the candidates and set interview times
- Team will refine questions to be used with each candidate (See Appendix D).
  - Appropriate vs. Inappropriate Questions
- During Interviews, record responses and rate candidate individually using the form in Appendix E.
- Using the ratings, two to three candidates will be invited to visit the school site.
- Designated person will check the finalists' references. (See Appendix F & G).

## Site Visits

- A One-day Site Visit
  - Candidate should perform an authentic task
    - PD with Faculty, Coffee with parents, etc.
- At the conclusion of the visit, team members should debrief and rate the candidate's performance (See Appendix H).

## Final Selection

- Pastor will offer the job to selected candidate
  - Negotiate terms and sign contract
- Arrange times for the new principal to meet with all major stakeholders (parents, students, faculty/staff, etc.)

**APPENDIX B**

**Hiring Protocol**

# **Leading Catholic Schools: A Principal Hiring Protocol**

**Presented by:  
Camryn Connelly**

# **Part I: Recruitment Planning**

Preparation

Establishing a Pool of Candidates

# Preparation

1. Identify a search committee consisting of teacher representatives, staff representative, parent representative, school board representative, Pastoral council representative(s), and Pastor.
2. Distribute survey to key stakeholders (parents, faculty) to identify the strengths that are needed in the next principal. (Appendix A).
3. With the survey results, the search committee should discuss the current state and vision of school to ensure that the goals for the school moving forward are in line with the school's mission and philosophy. Discuss how the new school leader can help meet these goals and what types of leadership styles, knowledge and attitudes the ideal candidate must possess.
4. Re-evaluate the position of principal. It may have been several years since the last principal was hired. Review current job description keeping in mind the goals discussed above to revise the job description.
5. Ensure school's website is up-to-date with current information.

## Establishing a Pool of Candidates

1. Write a clear description of qualifications a candidate must possess to be leader at the specific school site. Include educational and experience needed to apply.
2. Post position opening on Archdiocesan website with qualifications for principal as well as specific information unique to your school site. Advertise through graduate programs such as Loyola Marymount University and Mount St. Mary's College, as well as professional associations. (See Appendix B).
3. Document each step of the way to ensure a formalized and systematic process. Should questions arise, documentation can be produced.

**Part II:  
Selection Process**

**Team Training**

**Structured Interviews**

**Site Visits**

# Team Training

1. Search committee should review state and Archdiocesan standards for principals.
2. Have the team rate a mock application and discuss their decisions.
3. Have core leadership team conduct a blind review of applications.
  - a. A support staff member prior to sending the applications to the committee can eliminate names and nonvital information.
  - b. All team members should use the same candidate information, use the same rating form (See Appendix C) and submit responses independently. Ideally the pool will be narrowed down to the top 7 or 8 candidates to be interviewed.

# Structured Interviews

1. The team should create and review five to ten questions that align with hiring priorities and mission of the school. The candidates should be asked the same questions and interviewed by the same team members to best ensure consistency and fairness for all applicants. (See Appendix D)
  - a. Depending on the size of the school sub panels may be formed to meet with the candidate as well. These sub committees can represent different needs of the school. For example, one panel can show a candidate a clip of demo lesson and have the candidate fill out an observation form.
2. Question responses should be recorded for each candidate and team members should independently rate candidate. (See Appendix E).
3. After all interviews are complete, team members should identify two to three candidates to visit the school site.
4. Designated Search Committee Member will check finalists' references (Using Appendix F & G).



## Site Visits

1. A one-day site visit by the finalists can include authentic tasks and interviews with other stakeholders. Additional interview questions should be determined ahead of time, and responses should be collected systematically. A plan to collect a writing sample should be incorporated as well.
2. At the conclusion of the visit, team members should debrief with candidate and rate the candidate's performance.
3. When all finalists have completed their visit, team members should rank their top candidates.
4. Pastor will meet with each candidate at the end of his or her visit.

## **Final Selection**

1. Pastor will contact selected candidate to offer him/her the job.
2. Pastor will negotiate salary and sign contract.
3. Arrange times for new principal to meet with all major stakeholders (faculty/staff, parents, student, parishioners, etc.)



## Leadership Needs Survey

**5. On a scale of 1-8 (8 being the most important), please rate the following characteristics of a potential principal:**

	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Relationship with Pastor and Parish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visionary Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to Manage Finances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managerial Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervision of Faculty/Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with the Students and Parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication and Community Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Current and Future Leadership

**6. What is positive about the current leadership of the school?**

**7. What is important to you as qualities and actions of a new leader?**

**8. What are your hopes for the future of the school?**

Thank you for your help in this process! I look forward to introducing you to the new principal of St. Blank Elementary!

Msgr. Tom

## APPENDIX D

### Sample Job Posting

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL** – St. Blank Catholic Church, located in Los Angeles, California, is accepting applications for the position of school principal beginning with the 2013-2014. St. Blank Elementary employs 20 faculty and staff and is a single classroom school with approximately 250 students in grades K-8. The principal administers the entire school program and develops long-term goals and plans for the school. Excellent leadership and communication skills and enthusiasm for maintaining a top religious and fully accredited academic program are a must.

Qualifications include:

- Actively practice and understand the Catholic faith;
- Exhibit high moral standards with a reputation for integrity and vision;
- Understand and be dedicated to the ministry of Catholic education;
- Recognize and value the unique role of the Catholic elementary school within the Parish community;
- Received a MA/MS degree in School Administration or another related field;
- Have administrative experience, including two or more years in a Catholic elementary school;
- Demonstrate proven experience in instructional leadership, curriculum development, and teacher supervision; and
- Hold a California Teaching and Administrative Credential (Clear) or one from a state with an interstate agreement (or be eligible for California certification).

Please visit our website at [www.stblankelementary.org](http://www.stblankelementary.org) for more information. This exciting position reports directly to the Pastor, Monsignor Tom Connelly, and offers competitive salary, benefits and professional development opportunities. Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Please send letters of interest with a current resume to: St. Blank Elementary School Principal Search Committee, c/o St. Blank Church, 123 4th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90066. **Resumes will be accepted through April 15, 2012.**

**APPENDIX E**

**Resume Rating Scale**

Resume Screening Worksheet for Principal Qualifications

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Screener Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Screening: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum Qualifications

**Catholic**

YES NO NOT SURE **(IF NO, STOP RATING)**

**Teaching Credential**

YES NO **(IF NO, STOP RATING)**

**California Administrative Credential**

YES (4) NO (0) IN PROCESS (2)

**MA/MS in School Administration or other related field**

YES (4) NO (0) IN PROCESS (2)

**Administrative Experience**

YES (4) NO (0) OTHER (2)

Cover Letter/Resume

- 4 Very strongly states criteria
- 3 Strongly states criteria
- 2 Adequately meets criteria
- 1 Fails to state criteria

- 1. A strong Catholic philosophy of education and a deep commitment to Catholic values
 

4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---
- 2. Exhibits a desire for professional growth
 

4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---
- 3. Experience with a similar school setting
 

4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---
- 4. Experience in supervising faculty and staff
 

4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---
- 5. Experience with financial practices
 

4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---

## APPENDIX F

### Sample Interview Questions

#### Pastoral Competencies

- How can you help a school grow in its Catholic Identity?
- How does your personal faith life influence your work on a daily basis?
- What is your view of how religion should be “taught” at a Catholic school?

#### Professional Competencies

##### *Administration*

- What are some elements you think essential to any philosophy of Catholic schools?
- What would an average day as principal of the school look like to you?
- What is the role of the administration in the daily life of the teacher?
- Describe your management style and how you personally organize the tasks at hand.

##### *Leadership*

- Describe the leadership qualities about yourself you think would be more beneficial to this school.
- How would you incorporate and communicate the mission/vision of the school to staff, parents, and the community in your leadership style?

##### *Budget*

- What things do you take into consideration when developing budgets on a yearly basis and for individual academic areas?
- How do you ensure the school facilities are well maintained?

##### *Curriculum*

- How would you handle controversial content material and/or subjects to be taught in the classroom?
- If you were presented curriculum unfamiliar or new to you, how would you go about gaining a better understanding of it?
- How do you use data to guide what is taught in the classroom? What experience do you have in looking and analyzing data? Please provide some specific examples of ways you have utilized data to improve instruction.

- Please describe your familiarity with technology and how you would integrate it into the academic program.

### *Management*

- Give an example of how you organized and motivated a group to solve a problem.
- Scenario: A teacher has been struggling since the beginning of the year. It is now mid-year and has shown little improvement and is below expectations. What are your next steps?
- In making critical decisions concerning policies, how would you go about receiving input and advice?
- Scenario: A small, but vocal group of parents are unhappy with discipline decisions concerning their child with a particular teacher. They are spreading rumors and they are causing disruption among both staff and other parents. How would you handle the situation?
- What do you perceive as your greatest challenge in supervising a K-8 school?

### *School Climate*

- What type of school-wide discipline plan do you think is most effective?
- How would you ensure that rules are followed while respect is given?
- What moral imperative does the Church have with regard to students with special needs?
- Please discuss your experience working with special needs students.
- What would you do to foster a sense of school pride, overall enthusiasm, and school spirit?

### *General*

- What are your areas of professional strength? In what areas do you especially need to grow?
- In what ways do you perceive Catholic schools to be different from public/private/charter schools?



**APPENDIX G**

**Interview Rubric**

**Prospective Principal Interview Rubric**

Principal Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 4 Very strongly demonstrates criteria
- 3 Strongly demonstrates criteria
- 2 Adequately meets criteria
- 1 Fails to meet criteria

**The candidate appears:**

General Information

4      3      2      1

**Understanding of Student Needs/Curriculum**

4      3      2      1

Committed to a Program of Personal and Professional Growth for Self and Teachers

4      3      2      1

**Catholic Philosophy**

4      3      2      1

Action Plan/Strategies

4      3      2      1

Financial Management

4      3      2      1

Personnel Management/Supervision and Administration

4      3      2      1

Public Relations Techniques

4      3      2      1

**Comments:**

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H

### Questions for Checking References

Candidate Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Called \_\_\_\_\_

This is \_\_\_\_\_. I am the head of the search committee at St. Blank Elementary. \_\_\_\_\_ has listed you as a reference and we would like to ask you a few questions.

1. How long have you known the candidate and what is your relationship?
2. How would you view the candidate's qualification for the principal position?
3. How well does he/she work with the faculty and staff?
4. How well does he/she interact with your parent population? Student?
5. What do you consider to be his/her greatest strengths? What area do you feel the candidate should seek improvement?
6. Do you know of any qualities, incidents, or experiences that might make the candidate unsuitable for this position?
7. If the reference is a previous or current supervisor? Would you hire this candidate again? Why or why not?

## APPENDIX I

### Checking Written Recommendations

	+	--
1. Does the reference state relationship to the candidate?	_____	_____
2. Are the candidate's duties in current position noted?	_____	_____
3. Does the references state how well the candidate performs his/her duties?	_____	_____
4. Are interpersonal relationship abilities noted?	_____	_____
5. Are administrative skills noted?	_____	_____
6. Are specific instances of excellent performance noted?	_____	_____
7. Are there positive comments similar to other references?	_____	_____
8. Do there seem to be any hidden messages?	_____	_____
9. Are any personality traits described?	_____	_____
10. Are student, faculty or parent relations mentioned?	_____	_____

**APPENDIX J**  
**On-Site Evaluation**

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Authentic Task:

+

--

- |   |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1. Candidate was confident in leading the task?   | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Promoted discussion among the stakeholders?    | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Seemed enthusiastic about the subject matter?  | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Seemed knowledgeable about the subject matter? | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Presentation was engaging?                     | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Related material to real -life experiences?    | _____ | _____ |

Relationships

- |   |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
| 7. Candidate interacted well with faculty & staff?    | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Candidate interacted well with students?           | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Candidate interacted well with the Pastor?         | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Candidate interacted well with other parents?     | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Candidate seemed to be a "fit" for the community? | _____ | _____ |

Additional Comments:

## **APPENDIX K**

### **Search Committee Interview Questions**

#### Post-Implementation

1. Can you talk about the ways the protocol helped your school in your search process or hindered your school in your search process?
2. From your perspective in what ways did the hiring protocol lead you to select the right candidate for the position?
3. As you remember in the survey, the school indicated that your school site was in need of a task/relational leader, to what extent did the hiring protocol assist you in finding this type of leader?
4. If you could change anything about the hiring protocol, what would it be?

#### Post-Implementation (6+ Months Later)

1. From your perspective, in what ways did the hiring protocol lead you to select the right candidate for the position?
2. As you remember in the survey, the school indicated the your school/site was in need of a task/relational leader, do you find your new principal to match this type of leadership?
3. Reflecting on the last six months, is there anything you would have changed about the hiring protocol, what would it be?

## **APPENDIX L**

### **Hired Candidate Interview Questions**

#### **Post-Implementation**

1. What was your perception of the hiring process?
2. Have you interviewed at other sites? If so, how would you compare the process?
3. Would you identify yourself as a relational or task leader?
4. What do you see as your leadership skills that will benefit St. Blank Elementary?
5. If you could change anything about the hiring process, what would that be?

#### **Post Implementation (6+ Months Later)**

1. Reflecting on the last 6 months, does your leadership style seem to be a good fit for St. Blank Elementary? Can you provide some examples?
2. How do the strengths you have as a leader help the needs of St. Blank Elementary (if not answered by the question above)?
3. Reflecting back on the hiring process, is there anything you would have changed or done differently, not knowing the school culture?

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