JOURNAL OF
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION

# Preparing New Catholic School Educators for Inclusive Schools: An Analysis of University and Diocesan Teacher Training Research

Rebekka J. Jez, Ed.D.[1], Lauren H. Ramers, M.A.[1], Melissa M. Burgess, M.A.[1] and Julie C. Cantillon, Ph.D.[2]

**Abstract:** Educators can improve the academic and socioemotional wellbeing of their students if they are equipped with strategies and skills to support learners and families from diverse backgrounds and experiences—such as culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with differing abilities, and those who may experience trauma and/or socioeconomic challenges. To learn more about this topic, a Catholic university and local diocese partnered to examine the literature on the impact of Catholic teachers in under-resourced schools; practices for training Catholic educators with skills to meet the needs of all learners; and the structures needed to ensure that diocesan and university supervisors are able to effectively support the development of new teachers. The literature review was organized using the three pillars of the University Consortium of Catholic Education: service through teaching, community connections, and spiritual development. The review resulted in the following recommendations: train teachers in culturally responsive practices, incentivize educator collaboration, train supervisors in inclusive practices with purposeful faith-based integration, and mentor principals in effective methods of coaching and support for teachers.

**Keywords:** Catholic education, teacher attrition, mentorship, coaching, collaboration, teacher training, dual teaching credential, inclusive practices

1   University of San Diego (iD) https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5016-5039, (iD) https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8754-3205

2   Diocese of San Diego (iD) https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7577-855X (Julie Catillon)

*The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005, p. 10)*

The University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE) is a collaborative of 14 Catholic universities that provide teacher education programs to support PK–12 Catholic education throughout the United States. Each program is uniquely designed to address the contexts of the areas they serve. As a new member of the UCCE, the University of San Diego (USD)—a Catholic university on the West Coast—partnered with the Diocese of San Diego to unpack and discuss the challenges within the region's Catholic schools. Participants in the partnership realized there was a need to turn to the literature for answers about how best to support new teachers in Catholic schools. Using this information, the university designed a program to address these challenges and to prepare highly qualified teachers for San Diego's Catholic schools.

This article describes the process used by the Academy of Catholic Teaching (ACT) program (in both the university and diocese) to bridge research on Catholic teacher training into practice within the ACT schools. The process began by asking the following questions:

• How are Catholic schools different from public schools?

• What knowledge, skills, and dispositions do Catholic teachers need to meet the increasingly diverse experiences of their students and families?

• How can faith-based lesson integration be incorporated into university teacher preparation programs?

• What are best practices for coaching and mentoring new teachers in Catholic schools from the university supervisors and principals?

• How can this partnership benefit all stakeholders (students, families, schools, university, diocese, and the UCCE)?

## Literature Review

During the redevelopment of the ACT program, a review of the literature was conducted to inform each program question. Each section that follows summarizes the results of the research related to: (a) Catholic schools vs. public schools; (b) the necessary preparation of Catholic school teachers working in diverse settings; (c) the importance of faith-based lesson integration; (d) best practices for mentoring and coaching new teachers; and, (e) the benefits of university partnerships with Catholic schools, the diocese, families, and the UCCE.

## How are Catholic Schools Different from Public Schools?

Serving local and immigrant populations in the United States for more than 175 years, Catholic schools have shown success for their ability to provide a quality education and strengthen the fabric of urban and rural communities. (Grace 2002; Kelly, 2010; Watzke, 2005). Catholic schools are committed to educating the whole person, partnering with families, and serving local neighborhoods; success in this mission depends on faith-based exemplars and role models for students and families (Tamir, 2013). Educators who create environments that inspire young people transform the lives of the children and the communities they serve (Cho & Kwan, 2013; Scanlan, 2017).

### *Educating the Whole Person*

Catholic education provides a platform for educating the whole person by connecting pedagogy with the Catholic mission. One aspect that sets public and Catholic schools apart is the spiritual development of learners and families. Cho and Kwan (2013) found a relationship between Catholic teachers' faith (belief and intimacy with God and the pursuit of living in faith) and school commitment (commitment to the mission, commitment to the school, commitment to teaching, and commitment to students). This strongly suggests that Catholic teachers' faith intrinsically motivates the direction of their experience and activities within schools and may also predict their commitment to working in Catholic schools.

Because faith influences teachers in Catholic schools, exploring teacher preparation through the lens of spiritual development could be beneficial. Currently, pre-service teachers learn about pedagogy at the university and religion within the diocesan catechetical formation program. Without intentional integration of faith-based knowledge and practice within the schools, religion becomes a stand-alone component rather than an integral part of the learner's development.

### *Spiritual Development*

Spiritual development is also strongly tied to family involvement in Catholic schools. In Catholic schools, the parent is considered the primary educator (Frabutt et al., 2013); thus, family involvement is an essential component of the schools' philosophy (Boyle & Bernards, 2017). Although this family-based approach is grounded in the Catholic mission, barriers exist within schools that affect full implementation of this ideal (Scanlan, 2017). Often, each school is a silo of learning due to the smaller size and limited capacity of each site (Boyle, 2017). Additionally, teachers are limited in the collaboration opportunities within their same grade level; however, they are able to plan and/or mentor each other in meeting the standards or integrating faith-based ideas at the whole-school level. Furthermore, due to limited resources, time, and educator capacity, many research-based practices—such as service-learning projects, field trips, and the use

of advanced curriculum materials—are not often available for Catholic schools in low socioeconomic communities. Another example of the strains on Catholic schools is the tuition assistance program: without financial stability within the school community, many Catholic schools struggle to accept and retain families with limited means. (Boyle & Hernandez, 2016).

### *Catholic and Public Schools*

Catholic schools serve their local community with a faith-based focus to support the academic, behavioral, and moral development of their learners (Grace, 2002). Students attending Catholic schools perceive their teachers as more helpful and involved, and as going above and beyond to meet student needs, compared to students attending public magnet schools (Kelly, 2010; Nelson & Bauch, 1997). Kelly (2010) compared the academic and behavioral challenges teachers face along with the instructional approaches used in both Catholic and public schools. Results indicate that although Catholic school teachers reported high expectations for their students' educational futures—an indicator linked to higher implementation rate of strategies—Catholic teachers were less likely than public school teachers to integrate developmentally appropriate instruction. Moreover, a study by Watzke (2005) found that Catholic schools reported more rigorous curricula, instruction, inquiry, and discussion, while public schools reported higher rates of critical reflection, reflective practices, and use of technology.

### *Shortage and Attrition*

Schoepner (2010) found that Catholic teachers shared a greater commitment to a common set of values and beliefs; however, a higher rate of teacher attrition was found in Catholic schools serving low-income and/or culturally and linguistically diverse students. To reduce attrition rates, Scheopner offers recommendations for addressing school culture, teacher identity, and teacher commitment to working in Catholic education. Furthermore, Tamir (2013) looked at the high rates of attrition among teachers in Catholic schools, and cited a lack of collaborative opportunities and administrative mentorship and support. In addition, he found that teachers were not sufficiently prepared to work in culturally diverse environments or contend with adverse school conditions in hard-to-staff schools.

The United States is experiencing a nationwide teacher shortage (Przygocki, 2004). While this shortage affects all schools, it is of particular concern to Catholic schools because they sustain a higher turnover rate than their public school counterparts (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; McShane, 2019; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005). Provasnik and Dorfman (2005) noted that in the 1999–2000 school year, teacher turnover was 16% due to teachers transferring schools or leaving the profession entirely. Regardless of whether or not teachers remained in the field, private schools experienced a greater amount of turnover than public schools. Private school teachers have been found to have a shorter tenure than their public school colleagues and are more likely to exit the profession

altogether (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005). Consequently, Catholic school principals and superintendents also report a greater burden in hiring and retaining teachers (Przygocki, 2004).

The increase in student population and aging teacher workforce also contributes to the national teacher shortage (Przygocki, 2004). Although Catholic teachers report higher overall job satisfaction, their primary reason for departing, particularly for teachers with five or fewer years of experience, is based on inadequate salary (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; Przygocki, 2004). It has also been found that teachers' decisions to leave Catholic schools were informed by higher public school salaries (McShane, 2019; Tamir, 2013). Consequently, a continuously changing school faculty makes it difficult to maintain a cohesive culture and a commitment to excellence (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; Przygocki, 2004).

Nevertheless, Tamir (2010) found providing content-specific teacher education to be positively correlated with teacher retention in Catholic schools. Furthermore, Brock and Chatlain (2008) state that Catholic teachers benefit from training programs that address the religious aspect of Catholic education. Additionally, along with increasing teacher salary and teacher professional development, teacher induction programs that provide a space where teachers can share about their individual faith have been cited as a method to encourage Catholic teacher retention (Kestner, 1984; Przygocki, 2004).

**What Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions do Catholic Teachers Need to Meet the Increasingly Diverse Experiences of their Students and Families?**

Students with diverse learning needs—such as differing abilities, disabilities, language development, socioeconomic stressors, and trauma—are enrolling in Catholic schools in higher numbers; however, schools vary widely in the types and levels of support they provide for these diverse learners (Boyle & Bernards, 2017). Since 1978, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has advocated for leaders and educators to be trained and supported on the integration of students with disabilities and other diverse needs into "programs of regular education" (USCCB, 1978, p. 8). At that time, the Bishops Conference also encouraged schools to build relationships with public and private entities, to ensure that all people are provided with educational supplements and services (USCCB, 1978). Since then, Bishops Conference has continued to identify ways to include all people within schools. The USCCB wrote that "all Catholics are equal in dignity and have the same divine calling" (USCCB, 1978, p. 8). In his 2016 address at the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Pope Francis challenged communities to "practice a true inclusion, full participation ... [which] requires not only technical and specific programs, but first of all recognition and acceptance of all faces" (p. 9).

The call for support of all people—especially the traditionally marginalized and vulnerable—

was the basis for Boyle and Bernards' (2017) White Paper on exceptional learners. The authors note that the USCCB study (2002) found that 7% of children enrolled in Catholic schools have a disability (compared to 11% in public schools). Although Catholic schools are not required to follow the federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004), teachers are still tasked with serving students with hearing impairments, developmental delays, speech/language disabilities, blindness, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments (such as attention deficit disorder), and to a lesser extent mental retardation, autism, and emotional disorders. Furthermore, students with disabilities who are enrolled in Catholic schools by their parents are not entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and services; however, when those private schools participate in federal programs, school districts are required to spend a proportionate share of their funding on supporting these students, even if some students do not receive special education support (Russo et al., 2000).

The USCCB (1998) emphasizes that "cost must never be the controlling consideration limiting the welcome offered to those among us with disabilities" (p. 2) and that educating individuals with disabilities in Catholic schools allows all parties to live out the tenets of community, acceptance, and normalization. Clearly, then, the Church seeks to welcome all learners in schools, yet Moreau et al. (2006) found that many people feel students with disabilities would be better served in public schools. In response to this disconnect, Boyle and Bernards (2017) have provided a framework for creating an integrated system of support to increase schools' capacity for serving all learners—beginning with changing attitudes (dispositions) and increasing knowledge and skills for working with youth with disabilities within the classroom and at school, diocesan, and national levels.

Another issue when examining inclusivity in Catholics schools is the lack of information obtained and shared about students' previous supports and special education programs from school districts and/or parents when new learners are enrolled (Boyle & Hernandez, 2016). Catholic schools sometimes struggle to offer specialized programs with credentialed teachers for diverse learners (Boyle & Hernandez, 2016). A national examination into special education services indicated that students in Catholic schools are supported in resource rooms 68% of the time, and general education classes with accommodations 28% of the time (USCCB, 2002). According to diocesan records, in the 43 elementary schools in the Diocese of San Diego, only 17 have learning support programs and just one program is overseen by a teacher with a special education credential.

The rise of inclusive educational practices and co-teaching models has created a need for teacher training and support in effective instructional practices for struggling students and diverse learners (Salend, 2005; United States Department of Education, 2002). Teachers in Catholic schools rarely receive training in the legal, ethical, or pedagogical tenets of English language learners or special education services (Brown & Celeste, 2006). Additionally, Catholic schools serving low-income and minority students struggle to retain highly qualified teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; National

Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; Tamir, 2013).

## How Can Faith-Based Lesson Integration be Incorporated into University Teacher Preparation  Programs?

As the USCCB stated in 2005, "Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions" (p. 10). With this premise in mind, it is clear that one distinct difference between public and religious schools is that single-faith schools rely on their teachers to provide faith-based instruction and cultivate personal development as a faith-based person. Leaders are expected to create a school environment in which these aspects of education can flourish. During the school day, students learn about their Catholic faith via several avenues, which include learning about Catholic doctrine through faith-based lessons, mass or other religious ceremonies, and studying the Bible. In order for teachers to act as faith leaders, they, too, must participate in prayer and spiritual development of their own. However, this crucial aspect of developing one's faith for the purpose of becoming a Catholic school teacher is not prevalent in teacher education programs (Earl, 2005; McShane, 2019).

In his report on the "skill gap," McShane (2019) noted that 25% of the K–12 private school educators surveyed stated that "modeling faith in action" (p. 6) was a skill that they did not receive in their formal teacher training. McShane argues that this gap represents an area of growth for programs preparing teachers to serve in faith-based schools. In addition, McShane finds teachers need more training and support for integrating religious lessons and how to teach religious values.

As catechists, Catholic school teachers are tasked with integrating faith into their curriculum and instruction. Schaeffler (2008) has provided a framework for planning effective faith-based lessons, in which she recommends first "notic[ing] the holy" (p. 14) within one's self, others, and the surrounding world. Second, she recommends critically reflecting on past and present experiences using logic and creativity in understanding what has happened. Third, educators should make explicit connections to scripture, Catholic teachings, and current faith-based topics within the Church. Fourth, teachers can connect Catholic tradition to the lives of Catholics and how the tradition influences current lives. Finally, educators may identify next steps, including how to integrate their faith into their day-to-day lives.

This framework can also be used in developing lessons as part of the formal curriculum with faith-based integrations as another way to support and develop Catholic identity with students. In fact, new teachers benefit greatly from learning a lesson plan design that gives them "the ability to find the threads, the themes, and the patterns that give meaning to mere information" (Akers & Moon, 1980, p. 19). Integrating learning, faith, and practice is a unique challenge for teachers in Catholic schools; for new teachers in particular, a framework for designing lessons is helpful

alongside the larger goal of identifying unifying themes that tie together content knowledge, spirituality, and faith-based integrations.

As mentioned previously, a key element related to the mission of Catholic schools is to educate the whole child, integrating academics and faith formation (Ozar et al., 2019). Unfortunately, the majority of the work related to school effectiveness and standards has focused primarily on academics and on public schools (Ozar et al., 2019). In order to provide the Catholic school community with a common framework focused on Catholic identity and an accountability tool, the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) were published in 2012. According to Ozar et al. (2019), "the standards serve as a blueprint for assessment, accountability, accreditation, and action. Namely, those actions are transforming Catholic schools into highly effective, sustainable educational institutions, grounded in Catholic school culture" (p. 155).

Ozar et al. (2007) investigated the effects of implementing the NSBECS with fidelity on measures of school effectiveness. Results from their survey indicate that "the better NSBECS are understood, the more they are used; and the more they are used (across more programs and/or for longer periods of time), the greater the perceived impact" (Ozar et al., 2007, p. 50). Additionally, the results provide "solid evidence that relevant stakeholders are using the NSBECS for the purposes intended—namely, to provide agreed-upon, reliable criteria that the Catholic educational community can use to hold itself accountable for PK–12 schools that are excellent and Catholic" (Ozar et al., 2007, p. 20).

Ozar et al. (2007) also indicate in their report that "two-thirds of respondents reported that they see 'positive' or 'strong positive' outcomes from their implementation of the NSBECS, while less than 1% reported that they do not see any positive outcomes" (p. 23). Overall, the NSBECS are viewed as meeting the needs of the Catholic schools as they were intended to do. Indeed, users reported experiencing significant outcomes across all four domains—accountability, accreditation, planning, and guidelines (Ozar et al., 2017); according to the authors, "users have experienced success with the NSBECS as a catalyst for moving their organizations forward and as an agent of cohesion" (p. 50). It therefore appears that, through implementation of the NSBECS, the goals of Catholic education are being met and teachers are successfully integrating faith-based lessons and core curriculum.

## What Are Best Practices for Coaching and Mentoring New Teachers in Catholic School from the Universities and Principals?

Because Catholic schools provide unique pathways for becoming a teacher, a review of research on coaching and mentoring new teachers through teacher education and induction programs is helpful in understanding how best to support educators working in Catholic schools. New teachers

in Catholic schools share similar pedagogical and managerial challenges with those in public school, (Brock, 1988). McShane (2019) concurs: "Managing classrooms, planning instruction, administering assessments, and much of the day-to-day work of educators looks the same" (p.1) for educators in the private and public sectors. In fact, he believes the major problem is that "there are unique skills that private school teachers and leaders need that they are not receiving in their training" (p. 3). One skill includes teaching multiple subjects, and other skills highlight an aspect of teaching that has not been thoroughly addressed by research: the religious dimension. Chatlain and Noonan (2005) have suggested that "attention must be paid to the spiritual and religious aspects of education" (p. 501) because of the crucial role Catholic schools play in addressing "moral and ethical perspectives, doctrinal understanding, faith development, and commitment to a Catholic worldview" (p. 501). McShane (2019) also found that both educators and school leaders in private religious schools "need to act as faith leaders and models of faith" (p.1) - in other words, modeling faith in action.

### *University Coaching and Mentoring*

Formal and informal school, or diocesan - sponsored and supported induction programs and collegial mentoring opportunities help first-year teachers integrate the mission of Catholic education into their teaching and socialize into the Catholic school community (Cook & Engel, 2006). Brock and Chatlain (2008) found that Catholic teachers are "less prepared for the religious dimension of teachers' work" (p. 371). Together, they argue that "faith-filled individuals who have the ability to infuse Catholic values into academic content" (Brock & Chatlain, 2008, p. 371) must be better prepared to take on the additional challenge of integrating Catholicism into and promoting the formation of Catholic identity within the traditional curriculum. Accordingly, Brock and Chatlain (2008) advocate for induction programs that address three components crucial for the kind of satisfaction and success that leads to Catholic school teacher retention: pedagogical, managerial, and socializing. Squillini (2001) concurs that collegiality and professional conversation with colleagues contributes to job satisfaction, additionally noting that 51.6% of respondents in her study reported that support for new teachers would be an important step with which the Catholic school system might encourage retention.

Brock and Chatlain (2008) found that teacher induction programs in Catholic schools all reflected similar goals: (a) aligning teachers with the "mission and values of Catholic education" (p. 381); (b) improving teacher practice and performance; and, (c) decreasing attrition of new teachers. The foundation for all induction programs was "support for the ongoing faith formation of new teachers" (p. 381), and program delivery was, in certain cases, experienced via the values of Catholicism (i.e. through prayer, personal reflection, celebration of the Eucharist, sharing meals, and discussion). The authors report that the majority of respondents in their study "identified

mentorship of new teachers as one of the most beneficial components of their induction programs" (p. 376). Mentor training and clearly established responsibilities (e.g. regular communication, guidance and coaching, prioritizing needs, assisting with instruction, providing feedback on classroom observations and assisting with state or diocesan requirements) were also features of a beneficial mentor program. As noted above, Brock and Chatlain (2008) argue that, while not always present or given significant attention, effective features of induction programs should include: (a) a "religious dimension of Catholic education" that is "central to and one of the most beneficial components" (p. 378); (b) socialization (i.e. networking), into the unique culture of Catholic schools; and, (c) classroom management training, ostensibly because behavior challenges in the classroom can quickly lead to teacher dissatisfaction and frustration.

Brock and Chatlain (2008) report that while many superintendents and dioceses were satisfied with the current state of their induction programs, most had recommendations for improvement: These included more opportunities for mentors and new teachers to interact, increasing personnel available for and capable of participating, and balancing roles and responsibilities. In addition, in Brock and Chatlain's (2008) study, some participants raised the question of how much of the induction program should be directed by the school or diocese and how much should be directed by the mentor or new teacher. Time, money, demand (i.e. number of new teachers in varied schools), geography (i.e. distance between schools), and competing commitments were all cited as challenges and constraints to improving induction programs.

The critical nature of mentorship for new teachers in Catholic schools is exemplified in Chatlain and Noonan's (2005) study of induction programs, which emphasizes that the most "significant source of support" (p. 510) for the religious dimension of Catholic education was simply through "observation of the environment" (p. 510). This suggests that the teachers in their study were learning the culture, identifying the roles, and taking on the responsibilities of Catholic teachers only through watching, listening, and reflecting back the behaviors they observed. In other words, the transmission of Catholic school culture was occurring by osmosis and not through intentional design. This, then, signifies the importance of leadership in the development of new teachers. McShane (2019), summarizing the reasons that leadership is critical, argues that: (a) quality school leadership is related to student achievement, second only to quality teaching; (b) administrators select effective teachers and have a large influence over school culture; and, (c) school leaders guide the school towards achieving goals. In other words, the school culture that new teachers are observing and learning is highly influenced by school leaders.

Another critical, though often overlooked, aspect of Catholic school induction programs is the mentoring of, support for, and coaching towards those Catholic social values and religious beliefs that guide Catholic education. McShane (2019) recognized that "teaching in a religious environment is different than teaching in a secular one," revealing that "while the skill set of effective teachers

… has a great deal of overlap between educators in the public sector and educators in the private sector, … it does not overlap perfectly" (p. 4). In fact, catechesis "involves the lifelong effort of forming people into witnesses to Christ and opening their hearts to the spiritual transformation given by the Holy Spirit" (USCCB, 2019). This idea of the need to learn more about Catholic mentoring and support was also presented by Chatlain and Noonan in 2005.

### *Principal Mentorship and Coaching*

Catholic school principals face the challenge of hiring high-quality teachers. Williby (2004) posits that this challenge is due to limited resources, insufficient marketing and recruitment skills, and competition with neighboring public, private, and other Catholic schools. Additionally, principals often have difficulty retaining high-quality teachers. Lia (2016) reports that many Catholic school teachers face a lack of resources, limited administrative support, and isolation (as there is often only one teacher per grade level). According to Borman and Dowling (2008), there are a large number of environmental conditions that predict teacher attrition in addition to organizational factors (such as lack of support from administrators). Environmental conditions include, but are not limited to, low salaries, lack of instructional resources provided to teachers, isolation, and the characteristics of the schools' student population. Borman and Dowling's (2008) meta-analysis suggests that economically disadvantaged and minority students have less access to qualified teachers. Furthermore, as we have seen earlier, the highest attrition rates are in schools that serve low-achieving, economically challenged, and minority students.

To retain novice and early career teachers, school-based mentoring and coaching programs have been implemented with varying degrees of success. Principals are called to be mentors at their schools; however, according to Lia (2016), "feedback is often best received from someone who does not sign their paycheck or complete their evaluation" (p. 311). This is a challenge for Catholic schools, as there are often no additional support personnel on campus, such as instructional coaches, reading specialists, or full-time assistant principals. However, regardless of the availability of additional support personnel, principals are identified as a key component affecting the adjustment of novice teachers (Brock & Grady, 1998).

Principals provide the backbone with regards to facilitating quality mentoring, and novice teachers report principal involvement in the mentoring process as beneficial (Vierstraete, 2005). Principals' expectations for novice teachers include professional attitudes, content area knowledge, classroom management, communication skills, and espousing the belief that all students can learn; in turn, novice teachers expect the principal to be a leader and primary point of contact as well as an authority figure (Brock & Grady, 1998). Norman and Sherwood (2018), drawing on their shared inquiry with novice teachers, offer four recommendations for principals mentoring new teachers: (a) develop productive relationships with new teachers*;* (b) help them become familiar

with the culture on campus*;* (c) be a visible presence in their classrooms, and, (d) develop or sustain robust professional learning communities on campus. Additional research in this area is needed, as research on Catholic school principal mentorship is lacking; as such, the present review aims to contribute to the literature in this area, to support principals in their integration of best practices.

## How Can Partnerships Benefit All Stakeholders (Students, Families, Schools, Universities, Dioceses, and the UCCE)?

It is beneficial for Catholic higher educators to work in partnership with Catholic elementary and secondary schools, as they are strongly connected by mission and purpose (Boyle, 2017). The programs of the UCCE illustrate the power of sustained and meaningful partnerships between arch/dioceses and Catholic universities (Smith, 2007). By developing educators to serve in under-resourced K–12 Catholic schools, the universities in the UCCE help form intentional connections between Catholic social teaching and sound pedagogical training.

The critical nature of Catholic school teacher preparation grounded in strong religious and secular knowledge is found in Church documents, such as Pope Paul VI's (1965) Declaration on Education *Gravissimum Educationis*:

> But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. (para. 27-28)

Watzke (2005) argued that the UCCE also serves as a reminder of the responsibility to Catholic colleges and universities of their shared call to advance K–12 Catholic education through their K–12 educational opportunities and through their design of teacher preparation programs that integrate the Catholic mission. The UCCE helps repair the divide that is often felt between teacher preparation programs and K–12 Catholic schools by taking seriously the mission to integrate what it means to be a Catholic educator into its pedagogical programs (Smith, 2007).

## Implications

As a new member of the UCCE, the ACT program was tasked with providing a program based on UCCE's three pillars: service through teaching, community, and spiritual development. The review of the literature indicates that new Catholic school teachers may benefit from: (a) an understanding of the role of Catholic school teachers; (b) an increased awareness of the skills necessary to support the increase of diverse learners in Catholic Schools; (c) knowledge of how to integrate faith into

lessons; (d) explicit mentoring and coaching; and, (e) collaboration between the university, Catholic schools, dioceses, families, and the UCCE. The implications for each pillar are detailed below.

## Service Through Teaching Pillar

As teachers in Catholic schools, educators are called to be "stewards of vocation" who "play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan" (USCCB, n.d., para. 7). The UCCE pillar on education tasks fellows within their programs with demonstrating service through teaching by completing "graduate coursework at their respective universities to develop their capabilities as competent Catholic educators … serving as educators who contribute to promoting and enriching their Catholic school communities" (UCCE, 2019, para. 1).

Each ACT fellow has signed a teaching contract with a Catholic school and is enrolled in the Beginning Teacher Academy for the diocese. The ACT program fulfills the service through teaching pillar, beginning with the summer institute and orientation prior to placement where they learn the basic skills necessary for setting up their classroom environment and management systems, assessment, unit and lesson planning, collaboration, and setting professional growth goals. In addition to learning skills needed in their classrooms, the fellows observe veteran teachers and create a network of mentors. Each month, fellows are brought together for support meetings in which they discuss ways to integrate faith-based lessons into practice. The program provides university supervisors who observe and provide feedback and coaching on their teaching practice. The formal teacher observation forms have been updated to include faith-based integration in addition to the required teacher performance expectations. Finally, the teachers participate in a service-learning Changemaking project with Catholic school educators in Malawi, where they share their experience, curriculum, and resources.

## Community Pillar

The ACT program embraces the pillar of community through various activities that are intended to bring together students, the university, Catholic school leaders, and UCCE alumni. For example, alumni who are teaching in local Catholic schools and school principals are invited to participate in events related to Catholic history, spirituality, networking, and community-building hosted by the university and professional development opportunities facilitated by program staff and faculty. In addition, students engage in community with one another at events such as the university-hosted Day of Reflection and the annual Fall Silent Retreat, organized by the ACT program and facilitated through the USD Ministry team. Finally, stakeholders gather regularly for potluck dinners and other social events as their relationships strengthen and deepen.

Community is also a fundamental part of the Catholic school experience. While high teacher turnover rates can disrupt the creation or sustainability of community, Catholic schools build intentional partnerships in various other ways. For example, by inviting parents to join teachers in

the education process, Catholic schools demonstrate a deep commitment to fellowship beyond the classroom. Additionally, community can be strengthened between teachers and the Catholic school system by way of supporting graduate programs and teacher professional development programs. Finally, by upholding a devotion to the spiritual dimension within the educational process, Catholic schools encourage interaction and facilitate relationship-building with the more infinite community of which their members are a part: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Spiritual Development Pillar**

The majority of skills that make an educator successful in public schools are also important in the Catholic school setting (McShane, 2019). For example, most teacher preparation programs focus on skills such as classroom management, pedagogy, and the day-to-day work of being a teacher. However, there is also a specific set of skills that Catholic school teachers need that their public school counterparts do not. Among these skills is the ability to model the Catholic faith and serve as faith leaders in their school communities.

There is an opportunity for private, Catholic universities to assist in addressing the catechetical and spiritual needs of future Catholic school teachers. The University of Notre Dame developed the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program in 1993 to serve the specific needs of Catholic school educators. Rooted in the success of ACE, additional Catholic universities came together and formed the UCCE in 2005. Currently, 14 UCCE universities meet regularly to share best practices and exchange information in order to serve students in PK–12 Catholic schools through educating future Catholic school leaders (UCCE, 2019).

Closer partnerships between diocesan offices and Catholic universities can help address the gaps in faith knowledge and leadership that new Catholic teachers currently report experiencing (McShane, 2019). The NSBECS (2012) were developed through collaboration among Catholic institutions of higher education: a number of Catholic university leaders have also committed to collaborating around better disseminating the standards and developing resources that will assist dioceses and schools in fully implementing them (Ferguson, 2013). When integrated into Catholic university teacher preparation programs, the NSBECS can provide a common framework for pre-service Catholic school teachers to incorporate faith lessons into their teaching and model spiritual leadership.

Furthermore, Catholic university programs could prepare future teachers in the development of their spiritual lives and faith knowledge by supporting their catechetical preparation through university coursework and helping them set spiritual goals alongside professional goals. New Catholic teachers at Catholic universities have the benefit of interacting with campus ministry who will engage in spiritual conversations or support teachers' spiritual development at events such as spiritual retreats.

## Conclusion

This review of the literature highlights the need for additional components to be added to the traditional university teacher training programs. One recommendation that has emerged from the review is the need to train teachers in culturally responsive practices. With the learners and families from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs, the job of a teacher in Catholic schools has shifted. The traditional lecture style of teaching students needs to be adjusted to meet students with differing learning abilities, multiple languages, various experiences with traumatic events, and socioeconomic challenges. Dioceses and schools would benefit by incentivizing educator collaboration in providing additional mentorship and guidance, especially to new teachers who may not know to whom they can turn for support or questions. Programs should provide additional training for supervisors on inclusive practices and purposeful faith-based integration. Because teachers would benefit from living and teaching within the spirit of the Catholic mission, providing guidance on integrating faith into their lessons would be helpful for the fellows as they begin to establish norms and exemplify Catholic social teaching in practice. Finally, providing principals with effective methods of coaching and supporting teachers can ensure that all teachers are provided with the necessary pedagogical, professional, spiritual, and community growth opportunities with which Catholic schools have been established.

**References**

Akers, G. H., & Moon, R. D. (1980). Integrating learning, faith, and practice in Christian education. *The Journal of Adventist Education*, *42*(5), 17–31. http://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae198042051715.pdf

Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*(3), 367–409. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308321455

Boyle, M. J. (2010). Developing and sustaining leaders for Catholic schools: A summary of the conference proceedings of the second Catholic higher education collaborative conference. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *14*(1), 94–106. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1401062013

Boyle, M. J. (2017). Supporting students with disabilities in Catholic elementary and secondary schools: *A Catholic higher education perspective. Update,* 43(3), 14-15.

Boyle, M. J., & Bernards, P. R. (2017). *Exceptional Learner's White Paper: One Spirit, One Body*. NCEA.

Boyle, M. J., & Hernandez, C. M. (2016). An investigation of the attitudes of Catholic school principals towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. *Journal of Catholic Education, 20*(1), p. 190--213.

Brock, B. L. (1988). *First-year teachers in Catholic schools: A study and analysis of perceptions of undergraduate preparation, entry-level assistance and problems, and development of a model of assistance* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Brock, B. L., & Chatlain, G. (2008). The status of teacher introduction in Catholic schools: Perspectives from the United States and Canada. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *11*(3), 370–384. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1103062013

Brock, B. L., & Grady, M. L. (1998). Beginning teacher induction programs: The role of the principal. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *71*(3), 179–183. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098659809599355

Brown, C. W., & Celeste, M. (2006). Answering the call to prepare special education teachers at institutions of Catholic higher education. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *9*(4), 473–498. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0904082013

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2018). *Preliminary education specialist teaching credential program standards and teaching performance expectations*. https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/education-specialist-standards-pdf.

Chatlain, G. (2002). *Teacher induction in Catholic schools* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Chaitlain, G., & Noonan, B. (2005). Teacher induction in Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *8*(4), 499–512. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0804062013

Cho, R., & Kwan, Y. (2013). The relationship between the Catholic teacher's faith and commitment in the Catholic high school. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *15*(2), 117–139. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1502022013

Cook, T. J., & Engel, M.T. (2006). Prediction retention of Catholic high school religion teachers in the United States. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, *19*(2), 163–181. https://doi.org/10.1163/157092506778884490

Earl, P. H. (2005). Spiritual formation for Catholic educators: Understanding the need. *Journal of Catholic Education,* 8(4), 513-530.

Ferguson, S. M. (2013). *Partnerships with Catholic colleges support schools* (3-2013). Center for Catholic Education Publications. http://ecommons.udayton.edu/cce_pub/1

Frabutt, J. M., Holter, A. C., Nuzzi, R. J., Rocha, H., & Cassel, L. (2013). Pastors' views of parents and the parental role in Catholic schools. *Journal of Catholic Education, 14*(1), 9.

Grace, G. (2002). *Catholic schools: Mission, markets, and morality*. Routledge.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).Retrieved from https://sites.ed.gov/idea/

Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(8), 30–33. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/62eb/a3fb558446a652222515d542f1db53dd34a6.pdf

Kelly, S. (2010). The prevalence of developmental instruction in public and Catholic schools. *Teachers College Record*, *112*(9), 2405–2440.

Kestner, J. L. (1994). New teacher induction: Findings of the research and implications for minority groups. *Journal of Teacher Education, 45*, 39–46.

Lia, M. (2016). Using an observation coaching checklist to provide feedback to teachers. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *20*(1), 311–323. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.2001152016

McShane, M. Q. (2019). *The private school teacher skills gap: What K–12 private school educators know and what they need to know.* EdChoice. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595065.pdf

Moreau, J. (2006). Response from the field. Catholic Education: *A Journal of Inquiry and Practice,* 9(4), 466-468.

Murnane, R. J., Reardon, S. F., Mbekeani, P. P., & Lamb, A. (2018). *Who goes to private school? Long-term enrollment trends by family income*. EducationNext. https://www.educationnext.org/who-goes-private-school-long-term-enrollment-trends-family-income/

National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1998). *Welcome and justice for persons with disabilities: A framework of access and inclusion.* United States Catholic Conference. https://www.usccb.org/upload/justice-persons-disabilities-bulletin-insert.pdf

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2003). No dream denied: A pledge to America's children. Author.

Nelson, M. D., & Bauch, P. A. (1997, March). *African-American students' perceptions of caring teacher behaviors in Catholic and public schools of choice* [Paper presentation]. American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED410358.pdf

Norman, P., & Sherwood, S. (2018). What first-year teachers really want from principals during their induction year: A beginning teacher study groups shared inquiry. *Journal of Practitioner Research*, *3*(2), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.5038/2379-9951.3.2.1074

Ozar, L. A., Weitzel-O'Neill, P., Barton, T., Calteaux, E., Hunter, C. J., & Yi, S. (2019). Making a difference: The promise of Catholic school standards. *Journal of Catholic Education,* 22(1), 154–185. http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.2201102019

Paul VI. (1965). *Declaration on Christian education gravissimum educationis.* http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html

Provasnik, S., & Dorfman, S. (2005). *Mobility in the teacher workforce* [NCES Report 2005-114]. National Center for Education Statistics. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED485860.pdf

Przygocki, W. (2004). Teacher retention in Catholic schools. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *7(4),* 523–547. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0704082013

Russo, C. J., Massucci, J. D., & Osborne, A. G. (2000). The delivery of special education services in Catholic schools: One hand gives, the other hand takes away. *Journal of Catholic Education, 3*(3), 375-389.

Salend, J. S. (2005). *Creating inclusive classrooms: Effective and reflective practices for all students* (5th ed.). Pearson-Merrill Prentice Hall.

Scanlan, M. (2009). Moral, legal, and functional dimensions of inclusive service delivery in

Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *2*(4), 536–552. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1204072013

Scanlan, M. (2017). Meeting students' special needs in Catholic schools: A report from the USA. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, *9*(1), 58-75.

Schaeffler, J. (2008). The secret to effective lesson planning. *Religion Teachers Journal*, *42*(4), 14–15.

Scheopner, A. J. (2010). Irreconcilable differences: Teacher attrition in public and Catholic schools. *Educational Research Review*, 5(3), 261–277. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2010.03.001

Smith, P. A. (2007). The University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE): A response to sustain and strengthen Catholic education. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *10*(3). 321–342. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1003052013

Squillini, C. (2001). Teacher commitment and longevity in Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *4*(3), 335–354. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0403052013

Tamir, E. (2010). The retention question in context-specific teacher education: Do beginning teachers and their program leaders see teachers' future career eye to eye. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*, 665–678. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.002

Tamir, E. (2013). What keeps teachers in and what drives them out: How urban public, urban Catholic, and Jewish day schools affect beginning teachers' careers. *Teachers College Record*, *115(6)*, 1–36. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1020292

United States Catholic Conference. (1978). *Pastoral statement of US Catholic bishops on people with disabilities*. Author. https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/Pastoral-Statement-of-U-S-Catholic-Bishops-on-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2002a). *Catholic school children with disabilities*. Author. http://www.usccb.org/education/fedasst/ideafinal.pdf

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2005). *Renewing our commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the third millennium*. Author. https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/upload/renewing-our-commitment-2005.pdf

University Consortium for Catholic Education (n.d.). *Pillars*. http://www.ucceconnect.com/history.html

Vierstraete, S. (2005). Mentorship: Toward success in teacher induction and tetention. *Catholic*

*Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 8*(3), 381-392.

Watzke, J. L. (2005). Alternative teacher education and professional preparedness: A study of parochial and public school contexts. *Journal of Catholic Education, 8*(4), 463-492. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0804042013

Williby, R. L. (2004). Hiring and retaining high-quality teachers: What principals can do. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *8*(2) 175-193. https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0802042013

Wodon, Q. (2019). *Student performance on learning assessments* [NCEA Knowledge Note 2]. National Certificate of Educational Achievement. https://images.magnetmail.net/images/clients/NCEA1/attach/note_2_student_performance_on_learning_assessments.pdf