June 2018

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The Characteristics of Catholic Schools: Comparative Perspectives from the USA and Queensland, Australia

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The faith-based identity of Catholic schools is increasingly problematic in a secularised society where the numbers of teachers belonging to religious orders are diminishing rapidly. Teachers' views regarding the characteristics of Catholic schools are an important aspect of the identity of such schools. The authors locate Catholic schools in the USA and Queensland, Australia, in their respective contexts and compare teachers' ratings of the importance of eleven given characteristics of Catholic schools as seen by 3,389 teachers in USA Catholic schools and 2,287 teachers in Queensland Catholic schools. When the mean ratings for each jurisdiction were statistically correlated, USA teachers were much more likely to rate these given characteristics as essential and the resulting χ^2 and associated Odds Ratio values indicated very statistically significant jurisdictional differences. Some tentative explanations are suggested including the differing political contexts, the conditions of teachers' employment and the support structures for the spiritual and faith formation of teachers in the respective jurisdictions.

Keywords

　　Catholic school identity; comparative study; essential characteristics of Catholic schools; teachers' employment conditions; faith formation of teachers.

The identity of faith-based schools is coming under growing pressure in an increasingly secularized society that is dominated by market values (Ball, 2012; Gleeson, 2015; Lingard, 2010) and is characterized by detraditionalization and pluralization (Boeve, 2005). Within this new environment, faith-based education in Catholic schools is challenged to embrace changing anthropological (Francis, 2015; Lane, 2015), ecclesiological (Boeve, 2005) and scientific (Treston, 2001) landscapes. For example, the Centre for Academic Teacher Training of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) has responded to such challenges by developing "a new empirical

methodology to frame the identity structure of Catholic educational organizations" (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010, p. 193).

Against that background, Catholic schools are facing something of an identity crisis. Youniss (2000, p. 9) noted that Catholic schools in the United States often bear little resemblance to their predecessors insofar as they "charge high tuition, place academic achievement first, are staffed by lay teachers, and have significant non-Catholic enrollment [and] … resemble only vaguely the system of Catholic schooling that developed over the past 150 years." While Belmonte and Cranston (2009) insist that the identity of Catholic schools is "fundamental to their existence, and when they cease to be Catholic, for all purposes they cease to exist" (p. 296), they recognise that Catholic schools in Australia have to serve many purposes, so that,

> …. challenged to maintain their overall character and ethos in a changing religious and social reality [they] must prove their validity as viable educational institutions, as well as satisfy the requirements of the Church, while simultaneously responding to government accountability and Church expectations (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009, p. 296).

The main purpose of this article is to compare the opinions of teachers in Catholic schools in the United States (Convey, 2012) and Queensland (Gleeson, O'Gorman, & O'Neill, 2018) with respect to the importance of given characteristics of Catholic schools. The empirical findings are prefaced by consideration of the identity and characteristics of Catholic schools and a general comparison of Catholic Education in the two jurisdictions. The discussion of findings attempts to explain the extraordinary inter-jurisdictional differences that emerge from the empirical data.

Identity and Characteristics of Catholic Schools

The identity of Catholic schools is integrally associated with the transmission of the Catholic faith. According to the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic school "strives to relate all human culture eventually to the news of salvation, so that the light of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life, and mankind (Abbott, 1966, p. 646). The Congregation for Catholic Education (1997) identified the fundamental principles of Catholic schools in terms of cultural identity, integral all-round Christocentric education and service to society so that, "from the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have

the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics" (p. 25).

This current comparison of teachers' perceptions of the importance of given characteristics of Catholic schools is grounded in Convey's (2012) model of Catholic school identity, as shown in Figure 1.
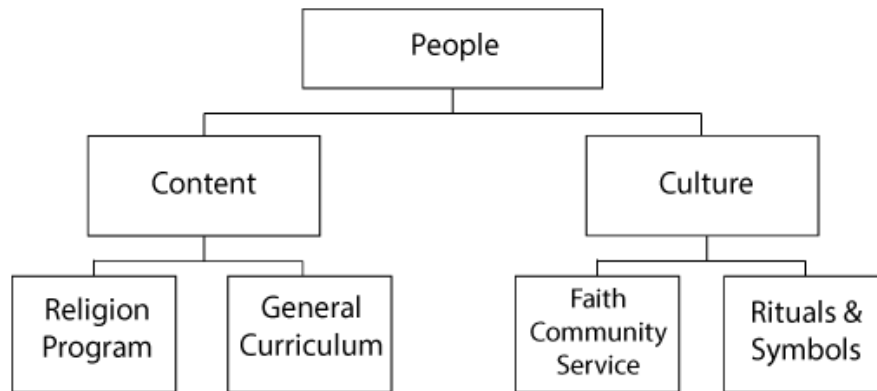

Figure 1. Components of Catholic school identity. Reproduced from "Perceptions of Catholic Identity: Views of Catholic School Administrators and Teachers," by J. J. Convey, 2012, *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 16* (1), pp. 187-214. Used with permission.

Convey (2012) sees the institutional identity of schools as being primarily driven by the people who belong to school communities–school principals, senior leaders, teachers, and students. School leaders are responsible for shaping a school culture that reflects Catholic identity. While recognizing that each school has its own unique culture and traditions, Convey (2012) saw the common institutional culture of Catholic schools in terms of faith community, service, rituals, and symbols. The formal curriculum, traditionally seen in terms of a selection from the culture made on the basis of ideology (Lawton, 1975) and the story we tell our children about the good or virtuous life (Trant, 2007), consists of the general curriculum and Religious Education. In the sections that follow, we explore each of these elements of Catholic identity.

Content: Curriculum
The Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) defines the specific mission of the Catholic school in terms of "a critical systematic transmission of

culture in the light of faith and the bringing forth of the power of Christian virtue by the integration of culture with faith and faith with living" (para 49). Many Congregation statements are clearly of relevance to the school curriculum well beyond Religious Education. The Congregation sees the "integral education of the human person through a clear educational project … [involving] ecclesial and cultural identity… love [and] service to society" (1997, p. 4) as a fundamental characteristic of the Catholic school and encourages Catholic schools "to go beyond knowledge and educate people to think, evaluating facts in the light of values" (2013, p. 66).

The Congregation (2014) challenges "contemporary educators [to] have a renewed mission [with] the ambitious aim of offering young people an integral education" (p. 10) and warns against simply responding to "the demands deriving from the ever-changing economic situation" (p. 64). It comments critically on the "merely functional view of education" taken by the European Union, OECD, World Bank and on the prevalence of "instrumental reason and competitiveness … [concerned with] the market economy and the labour market" (p. 12) found in many developed countries. What is important for them is that Catholic schools "think out their curricula to place centre-stage both individuals and their search for meaning [since] what is taught is not neutral, and neither is the way of teaching it" (p. 64). Many Catholic academics, including Murray (1991), Lane (1991), Grace (2010), Davis and Franchi (2012) and Arthur (2013) have expressed concerns about neo-liberal influences in education and advocated curriculum integration rather than separation, as does the Ontario Institute for Catholic Education (1996).

Culture: faith community and service

The Second Vatican Council defined the *proper function* of the Catholic school as the creation of "a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow" (Abbott, 1966, p. 646). Francis and Egan (1990) noted the strong historical support for the Catholic school as a faith community, while Groome (1996, p. 116) argues that the "very nature and purpose [of the Catholic school] calls it to be a community of Christian faith." The Congregation for Catholic Education portrayed the Catholic school as a place "in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony" (1997, para 11).

Drawing on the work of Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982), Convey (2012, p. 190) argued that a "Catholic school by its very nature should have a distinct Catholic culture" and pointed out that

> …research has shown that good Catholic schools have a "sense of community," which has a positive effect on the quality of life in the school and contributes to its effectiveness… The school's faith community is a functional community that produces social capital and is a major contributor to the effectiveness of the school. It's the faith community of the school that constitutes an integral part of the school's Catholic identity. (p. 190)

In light of the growing diversity of Catholic school communities, the modern Catholic school can no longer rely on the faith-based identity of parents and students to create institutional Catholic identity (Croke, 2017; NCEA, 2017).

From the cultural perspective of service, the Congregation for Catholic Education recognized the important role of education in improving the social and economic conditions of people's lives in declarations such as "the kind of education that is promoted by Catholic schools is not aimed at establishing an elitist meritocracy" (2012, p. 12) and proposing that the curriculum of Catholic schools must address "the unequal distribution of resources, poverty, injustice and human rights denied" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, p. 66). Scanlan (2011) highlighted the potential for linking Catholic identity and inclusivity, while Grace (2010, 2013) argued that Catholic social teaching should permeate the Catholic secondary school curriculum in three key areas: a) religious, moral, and cultural; b) economic, business, and enterprise; and c) social, environmental, and political. The Ontario Institute for Catholic Education regards curriculum as "transformative… [a] vehicle for social and personal change based on principles of justice and the view of the learner as agent-of-change" (1996, p. 26).

We now turn to the role of the symbols, rituals and liturgies in expressing the faith and culture of Catholic school communities.

Culture: symbols, rituals and liturgies.

Drawing on James Joyce's experience of Catholic education in his *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man,* Grace (2002) explained how

> Traditional Catholic liturgy…was a central part of Catholic schooling, especially where such schooling was provided by vowed religious or by teaching brothers. The rituals and devotions of the school year could generate a school ethos in which mystery, sacredness, power, symbol-

ism and dramatic theatre could be realised over and against the prosaic routines of everyday life. For some….this encounter was compelling. (p. 64)

Grace's research with UK head-teachers found "much disjuncture between the liturgical life of Catholic secondary schools … and the liturgical culture of parishes and churches" (2002, p. 220), while Flynn (1993), in his Australian study, identified school-based liturgies as the occasion where "the school community celebrate[s] its faith in Jesus Christ through prayer and the Eucharist… [and] builds up the spirit of Christian community" (p. 50). Flynn also highlighted the importance of "religious symbols [as] visible expressions of what the school stands for [including] school badges and mottoes, school assemblies and graduations, school handbooks, magazines and newsletters and school uniforms" (1993, pp. 43-44). Writing about Catholic elementary schools in the Midwestern United States, Scanlan (2011) described the use of icons, crucifixes, and regular Catholic rituals, such as daily school prayer, monthly masses, and prayer services as "ubiquitous" practices (p. 306).

Summary

This brief treatment of the content and culture of Catholic schools resonates with McLaughlin's (2000) conclusion that the aim of Catholic schools is to

> …. generate a challenging, authentic educational environment, faithful to the Catholic tradition of offering a synthesis of faith and culture, which, while promoting integral human growth, provides a catalyst for students to take the opportunity to initiate or continue a personal relationship with Christ, that witnesses its practical expression in an active, inclusive, care for others, while confronting contemporary injustices in economic and social structures. (p. 111)

Catholic Education in Australia and the United States

Having considered the generic features of Catholic education we now consider some particular features of Catholic education in American and Australia in order to set the scene for the comparison of teachers' ratings of the importance of given characteristics of Catholic schools, the primary focus of this article.

Catholic education in Australia

The 2016 census[1] classified 23% of the Australian population as Catholic, while 30% returned as "no religion.". Wilkinson (2013) found that some 11% of Australian Catholics attended Mass each week in 2011, while the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (2013) reported a Mass attendance rate of one-eighth on a typical weekend in 2011. This percentage has been falling fairly steadily since its peak in the mid-1950s.

Historically, the teaching force in Australian Catholic schools consisted mainly of religious (priests, female religious, and brothers) who "ensured that the learning environments, both in the formal curriculum and extra-curricular activities, were permeated by religious practices" (O'Donoghue & Burley, 2008, p. 184). However, most teachers in Australian Catholic schools today are lay people (Hansen, 2001) and Rossiter (2013) has highlighted how school charisms "maintain some sense of historical continuity with the distinctive spirituality and mission of their founding religious orders" (p. 9).

Following an arrangement between the government and the Catholic Church in the early 1970s (Maddox, 2014), Australian Catholic schools are independent and autonomous. Teachers' salaries are on par with the state sector and the National Catholic Education Commission (2013) reported that in 2011, 53% of the cost of educating a student in a Catholic school was covered by federal funds, 19% from state government funds, and 28% from private sources, mainly through school fees.

Research conducted by the Australian Scholarship Group (ASG) found that 2014 annual primary school fees in Catholic schools in Metropolitan Australia averaged AUD 3,600 per child, AUD 485 in government schools, and AUD 10,300 in Independent schools. The average annual fees at secondary level were AUD 9,000 in Catholic schools, AUD 980 in government schools and AUD 18,000 in Independent schools. Maddox (2014) noted that "the overall makeup of Australian education is shift[ing] …. with children [being] once again segregated by income, culture and religion" (pp. 86-87), with Catholic schools becoming the "schools of choice" for middle class non-Catholics, who constitute over 40% of Catholic secondary school students. The Australian Catholic Bishops (2013) reported that only 53% of Catholic students attended Catholic schools and Croke (2007) noted that

> … fewer Catholic families are choosing Catholic schools, even though their resources are better than ever [and] the growth in Catholic schools

1   http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/2024.0.

is being entirely sustained by middle class families of other Christian denominations, and non-Christian faiths (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu). (pp. 815-6)

According to a study of Brisbane students attending Catholic schools, "as society is becoming more secular, Catholic schools are becoming more popular than ever" (Dowling, Beavis, Underwood, Sadeghi, & O'Malley, 2009, p. 6) with upwardly socially mobile parents regardless of their religion. That study reported that parents enroll their children in Catholic secondary schools "for predominantly pragmatic rather than religious reasons [with a resulting] marked decline in religious commitment" (p. 38). It appears that parents are more influenced by the quality of general education while "the desire for a specifically religious education does not appear to be dominant, even amongst Catholic schools" (p. 20).

Meanwhile, McLaughlin and Standen (2013) reported that only one-in-three low-income Catholic Australian children attend Catholic schools, while the Catholic Bishops of New South Wales (2007) noted that "poorer Catholic children are increasingly attending State schools [and that] increasing accessibility for all students remains a significant challenge in some places" (p. 8). This led Croke (2007) to express concerns regarding the "authenticity" of "the Australian Catholic school of the early 21st century [with its] annually increasing proportion of non-Catholic students, along with students from mainly middle class Catholic families whose adhesion to their Faith is weak" (p. 823). As noted by Chambers (2012)

One issue that confronts contemporary Catholic schools is their increasing enrolment of students who are not Catholics… [which] brings into question traditional assumptions about the clientele of Catholic schools (Who belongs in the school?), the religious activity in Catholic schools (What is possible in catechesis?) and the ecclesial nature of Catholic schools (Is the school a faith community?). In short, this issue challenges the very nature and purpose of Catholic schools. (p. 186)

Meanwhile, Pascoe (2007) portrayed Australian Catholic Education as Janus-like:

In describing the nature and purpose of Catholic schools to potential students and parents, emphases are likely to be on the education of the whole person, on faith and religious education and on pastoral care and

learning outcomes. In liaising with government, emphases are likely to be on core purpose, support of democratic principles and institutions, parent choice, legislative compliance, good governance, sound educational practice, commitments to accountability, and fulfilment of elements of formal agreements. (p. 793)

Catholic Education in the United States

Just like Australia, the American Catholic Church has been shaped by immigration and a similar proportion (22%) of the US population was classified as Catholic in 2015. A higher proportion of US Catholics, approximately one-quarter, attend Mass on a regular basis (NCEA 2015). Catholic schools have existed in the United States for over 200 years, reaching their peak in the mid-1960s with 13,000 schools educating 5.6 million students, representing 12% of all American schoolchildren and almost 89% of all private school attendees (Cattaro & Cooper, 2007). The vast majority (95%) of the teaching staff at that time were priests or religious. By the 1990s, Catholic school enrollments had reduced by 50% and they have continued to decline. Meanwhile, conservative Christian school enrollments increased by 4% and unaffiliated/ independent and non-sectarian private school enrollments increased by 1% and 5% respectively. While some new Catholic elementary and secondary schools have opened, closures have been common in urban areas (Miserandino, 2017; Newman, 2005). McLellan (2000) identified the main reasons for the decline in Catholic school enrollments between 1970 and 1995 in terms of "the suburbanization of the Catholic population, racial population shifts in the central cities and the virtual disappearance of women religious teachers" (p. 30).

The religious affiliation of students enrolled in Catholic schools in the United States has also changed. In response to changing economic, social, and political conditions, Catholic schools during the 1970s transformed themselves from closed institutions focused on maintaining the status quo to pluralistic institutions that mirrored the religious plurality of society in general. While the Church continues to respond to the needs of the poor in urban city communities, a survey of 631 urban Catholic schools, conducted in 2000, indicated that 27% of students were non-Catholic, up from 2% in 1972 (O'Keefe & Scheopner, 2000). As a result of this changing student profile,

Catholic schools have drifted far from their origins as common schools for all Catholic children, with the mission of indoctrination and low-cost basic education… [A family that enrolls children in a Catholic

school] is significantly more likely to be wealthy is more likely to be non-white, and is more likely to pay a considerable tuition to attend the school [with the result that] almost one-half (45%) of all students in Catholic secondary schools in the nation are living in households in the top quarter of the income distribution. (Baker & Riordan, 1998, p. 17-19)

These authors characterized such families as "more demanding customers" with the result that "Catholic school leadership is compromising its older religious mission in favor of intensive academics" (Baker & Riordan, 1998, p. 19). Taking account of the 57% decline in the population of Catholic elementary schools and the 44% decline in Catholic secondary schools since the late 1960s and acknowledging that such declines would be far larger "were it not for the fact that a significant proportion of students attending Catholic schools are non-Catholics who are fleeing the public schools" (p. 22), Baker and Riordan posed the stark question: "what does it mean to run a school system ostensibly for religious socialization if only about two of every 10 Catholic children attend?" (p. 22).

As in Australia, minimal tuition fees were charged in US Catholic schools for members of the parish between 1930 and 1960 when most teachers, being members of religious orders, were not in receipt of salaries. As Cattaro and Cooper (2007) noted, "most children in the 1940s and 1950s attended their parish school free of charge, with tuition being collected in the Sunday collection, plus help from wealthier families" (p. 64).

The number of religious teachers declined dramatically post-1970, resulting in an increase in the numbers of lay teachers[2] so that Catholic schools are now "reliant on tuition fees and subsidies from faith-based agencies" (Cattaro & Cooper, 2007, p. 63). The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) website reports mean costs of $5,847 per Elementary pupil and $11,790 per secondary pupil in 2016[3]. As in the case of Australia, some Catholic schools "have priced poor and working-class families out of their markets and have become viable only for middle- and upper-middle-class families seeking top-flight academic schooling" (Baker & Riordan, 1998, p. 22). Citing

2   In 1965, there were 12,271 teaching brothers while in 2005 there were 5,451, a 55% decline. An even more significant drop occurred for religious sisters with 179, 954 teaching sisters in 1965 dropping to 68,834 sisters in 2005 – a 62 % reduction (Cattaro & Cooper, 2007, p. 76).

3   http://www.ncea.org/NCEA/Proclaim/Catholic_School_Data/Schools_and_Tuition/NCEA/Proclaim/Catholic_School_Data/Schools_and_Tuition.aspx?hkey=e8a681a5-8d00-4d73-997b-4de7c6be68c1

the National Catholic Education Association [NCEA] (2013), Miserandino (2017, p. 1) notes that since

> … its peak in enrolment in the mid-60s [the Catholic school system] has experienced a decrease to approximately 2 million students. The loss has been most dramatic in the inner cities of America. Ironically, this is precisely where American Catholic schools first got their start in the late nineteenth century… The decrease is primarily due to school closings resulting from demographic change and the economic reality that Catholic schools are more costly to run today than in the 60s

Dependence on tuition fees inevitably has serious financial implications for teachers who "clearly make significant financial sacrifices to teach in these schools" (Schaub, 2000, p. 77). Bryk (1996, p. 27) reported that "Catholic high school teachers in our [seven purposefully selected] field sites were [on average] paid about 75% of prevailing local public school wages" and Przygocki (2004, p. 539) concluded that

> Teachers in Catholic schools may start off earning 20% less than their public school counterparts. This trend continues over the course of a career with an eventual disparity approaching 60%. Differences in salary between Catholic and public school teachers are greater at the elementary level than the secondary level.

Schuttloffel (2007, p. 91) notes that, in most areas

> … salaries and benefits continue to lag behind suburban school districts that are often perceived to be more attractive teaching locations… in a typical metropolitan area, suburban public school districts may offer as much as 50% more salary and benefits to their principals. Catholic school teachers and principals in suburban or large metropolitan urban areas have both lower wages and a higher cost of living.

Inevitably then, public schools lure away many Catholic school teachers with their higher salaries and better benefits, and it is estimated that 50% of those hired by Catholic schools have left these positions within five years (Przygocki, 2004). According to Provasnik & Dorfman (2005) the Catholic education sector has turned over 21% of its teachers since 2000 as against 15% in the case of public schools.

While there are many interesting similarities between Catholic Education in the two countries, the one glaring difference is that, unlike Australian Catholic schools, Catholic schools in the United States do not receive funding from either the federal or State governments. Against that background, the authors set out to compare the perceptions of teachers in Catholic schools in both countries of the importance of given characteristics of Catholic schools, a comparison not previously undertaken.

Method

This article reports on a secondary analysis of two data sets, one collected as part of a study of Catholic teachers in the United States (Convey, 2012) and congruent data collected in Queensland, Australia (Gleeson, O'Gorman, O'Neill, 2018). School leaders and teachers in Catholic schools in both jurisdictions were asked to rate the importance of given characteristics of the Catholic school on a 4 point Likert scale of *essential*, *very important*, *important*, *unimportant*. Since Convey simply reports the proportions of US respondents rating each characteristic as "essential," the focus of the current comparison is on that particular rating only.

The focus of Convey's study, conducted in 2010, was on "what the teachers understood by the term Catholic identity" (p. 196). The Queensland study, which was concerned with various aspects of the faith-based identity of Catholic schools, used Convey's instrument as its reference point for the characteristics of Catholic schools. The Queensland instrument, developed with input from representatives of the main partners, was disseminated in 2013. It used eleven items that were either identical or very similar to Convey's items as may be seen in Table 1 where the third column shows the "common" wording of each characteristic used in this article.

United States Study

Convey requested superintendents of Catholic schools in 47 dioceses to disseminate the online survey link to school principals, inviting them and their teachers to participate. Convey (2012) reports that 3,389 surveys were completed by teachers and administrators in US Catholic schools in 36 states. 14% of his respondents were classified as administrators with the remainder being teachers who were evenly distributed across grade levels. The vast majority of respondents were Catholic and over half of them had worked in Catholic schools for at least ten years. These respondents are not "statistically representative of all Catholic schools administrators and teachers since a statistical probability sampling procedure was not employed that would assure a representative sample" (p. 196).

Table 1
Characteristics of Catholic Schools: Survey Items Used in Each Jurisdiction

Category	USA	Queensland	Common
Culture	The school has a strong community of faith	The school is a community of faith	Community of faith
Culture	The school's day/each class begins with a prayer*	Prayer is integral to the school's daily life for staff and students	Prayer in daily life of the school
Culture	Schoolwide liturgies occur periodically	The school community celebrated liturgies frequently	Celebration of school liturgies
Culture	Students participate in Christian service	The school engages in outreach and social justice programs	Outreach and Christian service
Culture	A crucifix is present in every classroom	Christian symbols throughout the school	Display of Christian symbols
People	The principal is Catholic	The principal is Catholic	The principal is Catholic
People	The teacher of religion is Catholic	Teachers of religion are Catholic	Teachers of religion are Catholic
People	The vast majority of students are Catholic	The vast majority of students are Catholic	Vast majority of students are Catholic
People	The vast majority of teachers are Catholic	The vast majority of teachers are Catholic	Vast majority of teachers are Catholic
Curriculum	The Religion course presents the teachings of the Church	Religious Education programs present the teachings of the Catholic Church	RE programs present the teachings of the Church
Curriculum	Catholic teachings are integrated into academic subjects other than the religion course	The integration of Catholic teachings across ALL learning areas is intentionally planned	Integration of Catholic teachings across the formal curriculum

Note. *Convey included two items dealing with the prayer life of the school whereas the Queensland survey contained one such item. His item, *school day begins with a prayer*, is used in the current comparison because it had the higher mean score.

Convey's survey items dealt with culture (faith, prayer, liturgies, symbols, service), people (principal, students, teachers), and content (whole curriculum and Religious Education) as may be seen in Table 1. Convey's overall conclusion was that:

> The vast majority of respondents viewed the school's culture or faith community as the most important component of its Catholic identity…. Other aspects of Catholic identity that received high ratings were prayer, the content of the religion course, who taught religion, liturgical celebrations, and participation in service. The respondents viewed the percentage of Catholic students as the least important aspect of Catholic identity. (p. 187)

Queensland Study

With the assistance of the five Queensland Catholic Education Offices, the Queensland survey was sent to 6,832 teachers in March 2014 using Qualtrics software. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 11 given characteristics of Catholic schools as outlined in Table 1. A total of 2,278 complete responses were received of which two-thirds were submitted electronically. The remaining responses were collected at school staff meetings in 18 Archdiocese of Brisbane schools from teachers who had not submitted electronic responses. Whereas one might expect that the attitudes of teachers who had volunteered to respond electronically would be more positive, statistical tests found that this was not the case.

The overall response rate was 33.5% of whom 73% were female and 58% were primary teachers. They included a broad range of teaching experience and half of them had taught for more than 10 years in Catholic schools. Over 80% identified as Catholic with one-third saying that religion is very important to how they live their lives (subsequently referred to as *religiosity*), while one-third had added professional responsibilities ranging from Principal to "Position of Added Responsibility." Almost two-thirds had current or past experience of teaching Religious Education and/or Study of Religion. While these proportions correspond closely with the profile of Catholic Education teachers in Queensland by gender and level of school (QCEC, 2013) this sample cannot be regarded as strictly representative due to difficulties associated with access.

The vast majority of Queensland respondents believe that the faith-based identity of Catholic schools is important or very important. More than half of them gave the "environment of Catholic schools" as their main reason for

working in Catholic schools, followed by "commitment to the Catholic faith." Providing a "safe and nurturing environment" was also the most popular choice for the purpose of Catholic schools, ahead of more explicitly faith-based options, while "caring community" (not included in the US survey) was by far the most popular characteristic of Catholic schools (Gleeson, O'Gorman, O'Neill, 2018).

Data Analysis

The Pearson chi square was used to examine the statistical significance of differences in endorsement frequency between samples. A 2 x 2 contingency table was formed for each comparison of interest by tabulating frequency of endorsement of the *essential* category versus endorsement of any other category for a particular characteristic (e.g. all members of the US sample versus all members of the Australian sample). Because there were 77 such contingency tables a Bonferroni adjustment (Schaffer, 1995) was used to maintain the family-wise error rate at .05. This meant each individual test of a chi square value was made at $p < .0006$ (.05/77).

To estimate effect size, we used the odds ratio (OR) which indexes by how much the probability of an event (in the present case, endorsing the *essential* category on the scale rather than not endorsing that category) differs between the US and Australian samples. OR computes the odds of an event occurring in one group (say, the US sample) divided by the odds of an event occurring in the other group (the Australian sample), where odds are the probability of the event divided by 1 minus the probability of the event. The odds ratio varies from 1 (when there is no difference in odds between the two groups) to infinity, with increasing (or decreasing) values indicating larger effect sizes. For example, an OR of 2 means that the event is twice as likely for one group as it is for the other. Put another way, for every 1 respondent endorsing the essential category in one group there are two endorsing it in the other. These comparisons are presented for all respondents, administrators, teachers, non-Catholic respondents and religion teachers (Tables 2-5), for Primary and Secondary teachers (Table 6) and for non-Catholic (Table 7).

Limitations

Convey's (2012) survey was disseminated nationally in the United States while the Queensland study was confined to one State. Whereas 2,287 responses were received from Queensland, representing one-third of all teachers in Catholic schools there, Convey's larger number of respondents (3,389) amounts to some 2% of teachers in Catholic schools in the United States. 42% of US respondents had worked in Catholic schools for less than ten

years. When the authors invited Professor Convey to comment on the representativeness of his US sample he responded that he "would presume that teachers [who were] more favourable toward Catholic identity would have responded to the survey" a point that might be reasonably made regarding the Queensland respondents as well. Convey also went on to explain that "it would be a mistake to think that those who did not respond did not have a favourable view of Catholic identity [due to the] very heavy emphasis on the spiritual leadership of the principal and the development of the faith community in Catholic schools [over the past 25 years]" (personal communication, September 21, 2016).

It should also be noted that there was a gap of three years between data collection in the US and Queensland and that minor changes were made to the wording of some of the Queensland items in response to feedback from key stakeholders.

Results

The percentages of US and Queensland respondents who rated each given characteristic as essential are presented in Table 2, together with associated Chi square (χ^2) and OR values for each correlation.

Table 2
Overall Ratings of Given Characteristics as "Essential" by Jurisdiction

Characteristic	% US (n=3389)	% Qld (n=2287)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	91	58	878.88	7.32
Prayer in daily life of the school	92	57	1033.47	8.68
Celebration of school liturgies	89	41	1471.78	11.64
Outreach and Christian service	87	52	853.35	6.18
Display of Christian symbols	77	39	831.27	5.24
The principal is Catholic	74	46	464.79	3.34
Teachers of religion are Catholic	82	15	2492.17	25.81
Vast majority of students are Catholic	15	5	140.12	3.35
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic	39	11	517.11	5.17
RE programs present the teachings of the Church	90	45	1387.11	11.00
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum	61	15	1170.47	8.86

Note. All of these differences were statistically significant at *p*< .0006.

US respondents were far more likely to rate each of these items as essential and some of the odds ratios were particularly large: Teachers of religion are Catholic (25.81); celebration of school liturgies (11.64); RE programs present the teachings of the Church (11.00); integration of Catholic teachings across the formal curriculum (8.86); and prayer in the daily life of school (8.68).

While a similar pattern emerged when administrators' ratings were compared, the inter-jurisdictional differences were not as great.

Table 3
School Administrators' Ratings of Given Characteristics as "Essential" by Jurisdiction

Characteristic	% US (n=457)	% Qld (n=130)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	91	87	1.92	1.51
Prayer in daily life of the school	94	88	6.11	2.14
Celebration of school liturgies*	93	73	39.72	4.91
Outreach and Christian service*	90	71	30.32	3.68
Display of Christian symbols	72	67	1.25	1.27
The principal is Catholic	84	82	0.45	1.15
Teachers of religion are Catholic*	89	22	240.46	28.69
Vast majority of students are Catholic	17	09	5.83	2.07
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic*	41	24	12.64	2.20
RE programs present the teachings of the Church*	93	72	42.27	5.17
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum*	70	34	56.22	4.53

* These differences were statistically significant at $p < .0006$.

Administrators in both jurisdictions were very likely to regard community of faith, the principal is Catholic, and display of Catholic symbols as essential. Higher proportions of US administrators rated other characteristics as essential and the odds ratios are particularly large in the case of: teachers of religion are Catholic (28.69); RE programmes present the teachings of the Church (5.17); celebration of school liturgies (4.91); integration of Catholic teachings across the formal curriculum (4.53); Christian service and outreach (3.68).

The majority of respondents in both jurisdictions identified as being Catholic and the percentages of Catholic respondents who rated each characteristic as essential are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Teachers' Ratings of Given Characteristics as "Essential" by Jurisdiction

Characteristic	% US (n=2895)	% Qld (n=1858)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	93	43	1454.57	17.01
Prayer in daily life of the school	92	59	730.12	7.99
Celebration of school liturgies	90	45	1141.77	11.00
Outreach and Christian service	88	53	739.46	6.50
Display of Christian symbols	79	43	647.37	4.99
The principal is Catholic	77	51	349.67	3.22
Teachers of religion are Catholic	84	17	2104.37	25.63
Vast majority of students are Catholic	14	06	75.11	2.55
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic	43	14	445.57	4.63
RE programs present the teachings of the Church	92	48	1161.01	12.46
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum	64	17	1017.21	8.68

Note. All of these differences were statistically significant at *p*< .0006

In line with the overall ratings (Table 2 above), US teachers (excluding administrators) consistently rated the importance of each item higher than their Queensland counterparts. The odds ratio values were particularly large in the case of: teachers of religion are Catholic (25.63); the school is a community of faith (17.01); RE programs present the teaching of the Church (12.46), celebration of liturgies (11.00) and integration of Catholic teachings across the formal curriculum (8.68).

The proportions of Religion teachers who rated the importance of each given characteristic as essential are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Religion Teachers' Ratings for Particular Characteristics as "Essential" by Jurisdiction

Characteristic	% US (n=1481)	% Qld (n=1448)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	93	62	412.89	8.14
Prayer in daily life of the school	94	63	427.21	9.20
Celebration of school liturgies	94	50	814.36	15.67
Outreach and Christian service	89	52	489.56	7.47
Display of Christian symbols	84	45	484.01	6.42
The principal is Catholic	79	48	310.46	4.08
Teachers of religion are Catholic	85	15	1422.10	32.11
Vast majority of students are Catholic	16	06	71.89	2.98
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic	48	14	401.36	5.67
RE programs present the teachings of the Church	93	51	648.78	12.46
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum	68	17	778.10	10.38

Note. All of these differences were statistically significant at $p < .0006$.

Consistently higher proportions of US teachers of Religion rated each of the given characteristics as essential. The odds ratios were particularly large in the case of: teachers of religion are Catholic (32.11); celebration of school liturgies (15.67); RE programs present the teaching of the Church (12.76); integration of Catholic teachings across the formal curriculum (10.38); prayer in the daily life of the school (9.20); community of faith (8.14). It should be noted that teachers of Religion were more likely than other teachers to rate these characteristics as essential in both jurisdictions (Convey, 2012; Gleeson, O'Gorman, O'Neill, 2018).

It is hardly surprising that similar inter-jurisdictional differences emerged when the ratings of primary/elementary and secondary teachers were compared.

Table 6

Comparison of US and Queensland Primary/Elementary and Secondary Teachers on Characteristics Endorsed as Essential for Catholic Identity of a School

Characteristic	Primary Teachers			
	% US (n=457)	% Qld (n=130)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	93	64	455.32	7.53
Prayer in daily life of the school	94	67	431.78	7.85
Celebration of school liturgies	91	48	784.89	11.10
Outreach and Christian service	88	50	585.31	7.27
Display of Christian symbols	83	46	502.56	5.68
The principal is Catholic	77	48	283.78	3.50
Teachers of religion are Catholic	83	16	1464.01	25.67
Vast majority of students are Catholic	16	06	80.46	3.10
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic	45	15	317.46	4.53
RE programs present the teachings of the Church	92	52	710.78	10.58
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum	64	18	684.26	8.13
	Secondary Teachers			
	% US (n=708)	% Qld (n=969)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	85	49	230.89	5.91
Prayer in daily life of the school	84	41	319.56	7.72
Celebration of school liturgies	82	33	400.46	9.41
Outreach and Christian service	82	54	141.56	3.87
Display of Christian symbols	62	29	178.26	3.94
The principal is Catholic	63	43	68.67	2.30
Teachers of religion are Catholic	76	14	660.67	19.89
Vast majority of students are Catholic	12	3	42.01	3.54
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic	22	6	93.10	4.36
RE programs present the teachings of the Church	85	35	422.36	10.75
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum	48	12	276.27	7.07

All of these differences were statistically significant at $p < .0006$

The odds ratio values were particularly large for both primary/elementary and secondary respondents in the case of: teachers of Religion are Catholic (25.67 Primary; 19.89 Secondary); RE programs present the teachings of the Church (10.58 Primary; 19.89 Secondary); celebration of liturgies (11.10 Primary; 9.41 Secondary); prayer in the daily life of the school (7.85 Primary; 7.72 Secondary); integration of Catholic teaching across formal curriculum 8.13 Primary; 7.07 Secondary); community of faith (7.53 Primary; 5.91 Secondary).

With 94% of US respondents and 85% of Queensland respondents identifying as Catholic, the comparative ratings for Catholic teachers corresponded closely with the overall ratings already reported in Table 2. The "essential" ratings for teachers who did not identify as Catholic are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Comparison of Non-Catholic Teachers in US and Queensland Samples who Endorsed Given Characteristics as Essential

Characteristic	% US (n=319)	% Qld (n=335)	χ^2	OR
Community of faith	87	24	263.99	21.19
Prayer in daily life of the school	85	44	119.52	7.21
Celebration of school liturgies	79	27	178.00	10.17
Outreach and Christian service	82	48	83.03	4.94
Display of Christian symbols	57	24	74.88	4.20
The principal is Catholic	54	26	53.36	3.34
Teachers of religion are Catholic	64	06	243.92	27.85
Vast majority of students are Catholic	18	01	56.49	21.73
Vast majority of teachers are Catholic	10	01	26.92	11.00
RE programs present the teachings of the Church	79	33	139.16	7.64
Integration of Catholic teaching across the formal curriculum	35	01	59.00	4.85

All of these differences were statistically significant at p< .0006

Five of the same characteristics that returned large inter-jurisdictional differences when the overall ratings were compared (Table 2 above) also produced large differences here: teachers of Religion are Catholic (27.5);

celebration of school liturgies (10.17); RE programmes present the teachings of the Church (7.64); prayer in the daily life of the school (7.21); integration of Catholic teaching across formal curriculum (4.85). It is noteworthy that large differences also emerged in the case of three other characteristics: community of faith (21.19); vast majority of students are Catholic (21.73) and vast majority of teachers are Catholic (11.00).

Discussion

Compared with Queensland respondents, US teachers were consistently more likely to rate the given characteristics of Catholic schools as essential. The comparisons were statistically significant in almost all cases and Table 8 summarises such differences in terms of the OR index where the effect sizes for particular characteristics were especially large.

Table 8
US and Queensland ORs for Ratings of Given Characteristics as "Essential"

Characteristic	All	Admins	Teachers	Non-Catholics	RE teachers
Teachers of religion are Catholic	25.81	28.69	25.63	27.85	32.11
RE programmes present the teaching of the Church	11.00	5.17	4.63	7.64	12.76
Integration of Catholic teachings across the formal curriculum.	8.86	4.53	8.68	4.85	10.38
Celebration of school liturgies	11.64	4.91	11.00	10.17	15.67
Community of faith	7.32	1.51	17.61	21.19	8.14
Prayer in daily life of the school	8.68	2.14	7.99	7.21	9.20
Christian service/Outreach	6.18	3.68	6.50	4.94	7.47

The first two characteristics in Table 8 are clearly concerned with transmission of the Catholic faith in classrooms with "teachers of religion are Catholic" consistently emerging with very large OR values. There were also significant inter-jurisdictional differences with respect to the perceived importance of the celebration of school liturgies, school as a community of faith and the importance of prayer, as well as the curriculum integration of Catholic teachings (Gleeson & O'Neill, 2017) and Christian service/Outreach.

Inter-jurisdictional differences between administrators' ratings were generally smaller than in the differences for teachers. Both sets of administrators rated "the principal is Catholic" item more highly than their teachers while US administrators also gave higher ratings than their teachers to "the religion teacher is Catholic" and to the integration of Catholic teaching (Convey, 2012). Queensland administrators rated all given characteristics more highly than their teachers, particularly "community of faith" and "prayer in the daily life of the school." It is worth noting that length of service in Catholic education was positively associated with "essential" ratings in both jurisdictions (Convey, 2012; Gleeson, O'Gorman, O'Neill, 2018).

There are, as noted earlier, many similarities between these two systems which are heavily influenced by globalisation and by neo-liberal, market values. The proportion of Catholics in both countries is similar with Catholic schools enrolling greater numbers of students from diverse religious traditions and becoming increasingly expensive. Such similarities make it all the more difficult to come up with plausible explanations for the differences that have emerged, differences both in the case of Catholic and non-Catholic. Notwithstanding the limitations noted earlier it is incumbent on the authors to suggest some possible explanations for these very large inter-jurisdictional differences. Two factors that may shed some light on this matter are now discussed – school funding policy differences and professional development structures.

Catholics, often immigrants from poor countries, were historically subservient in both countries. However, Catholic schools in Australia receive strong Federal and State support while Catholic schools in the US do not, with the First Amendment of the Constitution stating that "the government may neither establish an official state religion nor act to prohibit on the contrary practices thereof." As Schuttloffel (2007) remarks "[US] Catholic education runs parallel to American public education and in tandem with the history of the American Catholic Church" (p. 85), while Earl (2007) observes that "debates over 'Church vs State' occupy much of the political realm, especially during campaigns for election and recent hearings of Supreme Court Justices' qualifications and ability to take the bench" (p. 39). In the context of this judicial policy US Catholic schools "fought for the right to exist and won some public support, and won under federal programming, but lost access to full or even partial tuition support, until recently when vouchers were made available [in some states] to private and Catholic school families" (Cattaro and Cooper, 2007, p. 63).

It seems reasonable to suggest that teachers who work in a self-funding system for significantly lower pay than their professional colleagues are likely to have a stronger sense of faith-based identity than teachers working in a system that has strong State support with teachers receiving the same levels of remuneration as their public sector colleagues. The teacher salary differential between US public and Catholic schools has been outlined earlier and Convey (2014, p. 14) found that slightly more than one-fifth of the teachers in his survey "identified salary as a serious threat, with elementary school teachers indicating salary more frequently than high school teachers". He also notes however that religious factors play an important role in teachers' levels of job satisfaction insofar as

> … the school's environment and the teachers' love of teaching were high motivators for continuing to teach in a Catholic school for both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers. The results also show that teachers' comfort with their schools' academic philosophy and its environment contributes to their higher levels of job satisfaction. (p. 22)

Conscious that Convey's (2012) respondents represent a relatively small proportion of all teachers in US Catholic schools, the authors invited him to suggest some possible explanation for the emerging differences between the responses of Queensland and US teachers' ratings. Professor Convey responded as follows:

> For the past 25 years or so in the US, there has been a very heavy emphasis on the spiritual leadership of the principal and the development of the faith community in Catholic schools. The steep decline of teachers from religious congregations prompted this. The bishops have been strong in promoting this emphasis and so have the superintendents, so it is not surprising that the results overall were positive (personal communication, September 21, 2016).

It appears then that support structures for the spiritual and faith formation of teachers in Catholic schools provide a second possible explanation for the stark inter-jurisdictional differences reported above. The declining numbers of religious in schools impacted significantly on the spiritual leadership of US Catholic schools (Earl, 2007) with concerns being expressed regarding teacher education opportunities because of the "minimal encouragement

to serve in Catholic schools by Catholic teacher preparation institutions…
[while the] high tuition rates at Catholic colleges and universities preclude
these students from taking a position in a Catholic school at a lower salary"
(Schuttloffel, 2007, p. 90).

Krebbs (2000) recalls that the Catholic Archdiocese of New York estab-
lished the Educational Community Opportunity for Stewardship initiative as
early as 1972 "to prepare Catholic school educators in infusing Catholic values
throughout the curriculum" (p. 309)

The University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE) and the As-
sociation for Catholic Leadership Programs (ACLP) have been

> … major contributors to the renewal of Catholic education by provid-
> ing a steady supply of valuable, well-prepared professionals to serve
> as teachers and administrators'…. [They] have positioned themselves
> to respond to the dramatic transition in the staffing of K-12 Catholic
> schools that has taken place over the last 50 years. (Smith & Nuzzi,
> 2007, pp. 103-104.

The ACLP, which now serves over 50 dioceses through more than 30 Catho-
lic universities, was established as far back as 1983 to promote post-graduate
programmes for Catholic school principals. ACLP provides

> … free-standing graduate formation programs for experienced teach-
> ers interested in leadership that… offer the requisite academic back-
> ground for the principalship [and] replicate in some way the spiritual
> and religious formation that the previous generations of vowed and
> ordained men and women experienced within their respective com-
> munities (Smith & Nuzzi, 2007, p. 110).

The University of Notre Dame recommitted itself in the early 1990s to "the
revitalization of America's Catholic schools through the Alliance for Catho-
lic Education" (Smith & Nuzzi, 2007, p. 111) and this Alliance "forged the
path for the UCCE" (p. 112) which is "taking seriously the mission to inte-
grate what it means to be a Catholic educator into its pedagogical programs"
(p. 117). The Alliance supports Catholic colleges and universities in the design
and implementation of teacher formation programmes that are both profes-
sional and spiritual in nature and are aimed at "energetic college graduates
who are poised for vocation and ministry" (p. 109). UCCE teachers live in
faith communities where they are

… released from financial preoccupations that often burden lay teachers who must support a family [and] are able to offer monetary sacrifices with greater freedom…. [They] are often elevated by their youth, enthusiasm, and an initial otherness as strangers in a new community. (p. 109)

From an Australian perspective, Croke (2007) highlights the importance of faith-based professional development while noting widespread concerns about the capacity of many young teachers and student teachers to contribute meaningfully to the goals of a Catholic school and concluding that "ensuring quality of teachers, and eventually leaders, may well turn out to be the most difficult and threatening challenge to the future of Catholic schools in Australia" (p. 823).

Hansen (2001) argues that the Australian Church neglected the importance of the role of the lay Catholic school principal in a context where the Catholic school is the only experience of religiosity and Church for many young people (Engebretson, 2003; Rymarz & Graham, 2005). He remarks that, while the transition from religious to lay staffing and governance in Australian Catholic schools that began soon after the close of the Second Vatican Council was "almost complete by 1985, three years before Rome formally acknowledged that it was occurring", diocesan literature continued to regard the role of the Catholic school principal as being "pre-eminently the preserve of religious sisters, brothers, and priests" (Hansen, 2001, p. 37).

Dorman and D'Arbon's (2003) study of school leadership succession in Australia reported that the added challenges of leading a Catholic school community "are a deterrent to persons applying to become principals" (p. 483). More recently, Belmonte and Cranston (2009) found that

… principals [of Australian Catholic schools] had had only a minor exposure to formal development programs, even though principals themselves viewed it as a priority for the promotion and maintenance of the Catholic identity in their schools. There is a major conflict in a system of schooling that exists to nurture the faith of young people, yet fails to realize and address the traditional spiritual capital of its leadership. (pp. 303-304)

Neidhardt and Lamb (2016, p. 59) remark that, due to the diminution of commitment to religious beliefs Catholic schools are shifting their attention

"to faith leadership… and there are new expectations being placed on the principal to preserve the Catholic identity and culture of the school and thus ensure the success of its evangelizing mission."

It would appear however that, operating in a less friendly environment, the US Church was quicker "off the mark" than its Australian counterpart with respect to maintaining Catholic school identity.

Conclusion

Remarkably large differences have emerged between the two jurisdictions with respect to the people, cultural and curriculum characteristics of Catholic schools included in this study. It is important to acknowledge that neither sample is statistically representative and that the proportion of Queensland respondents was much greater than in the case of the US. And, of course, there is no guarantee that sentiments expressed in survey responses translate into behavior in schools. That being said, these results are encouraging for Catholic authorities in the US, while posing some challenging questions for Catholic school authorities in Queensland, particularly with respect to faith formation and development. It seems reasonable to suggest that such differences are reflective of government policies on faith-based schooling as well as teachers' conditions of employment and approaches to professional development for school leaders and teachers in Catholic schools in each jurisdiction.

Looking ahead, school leadership succession is a growing problem in Catholic schools internationally. Drawing on data from 60 Catholic secondary head teachers in England and Wales, Grace (2002, p. 237) expressed concern regarding the religious formation of principals, and notes that, while "current principals drew on experiences gained from members of religious congregations… the new generation of teachers and leaders have had no affiliation with living out the norms of religious orders." According to Smith and Nuzzi (2007, p. 118), "the most recent study of Catholic school leadership needs [in the US] found several alarming trends," with over half of new principals and 95% of those hired from the public school system lacking theological and spiritual formation. Meanwhile, the religious dimension of Catholic schools in Australia is being marginalized by the pressure for academic success (Flynn & Mok, 2001) and by media influences, people's disengagement from the Church (Rymarz & Graham, 2005) and the secular culture of Australian society (McLaughlin, 2002; Croke, 2007). The challenges for Catholic education leadership in both systems under consideration in this article are indeed considerable!

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